

**Proceedings of the First Session of the Assam Legislative Assembly
assembled under the Sovereign Democratic Republican
Constitution of India**

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 10 A. M., on Monday, the 13th March, 1950.

P R E S E N T

The Hon'ble Mr. Lakshesvar Borooah, Speaker, in the Chair, the Seven Hon'ble Ministers and Thirty-four Members.

**Governor's Message re: appointment of the Hon'ble Speaker as
the person before whom Members should take Oath**

The Secretary to the Assembly: The following order has been received from His Excellency the Governor—

Order

"In exercise of the power conferred by Article 188 of the Constitution of India, I hereby appoint the Speaker of the Assam Legislative Assembly, and in his absence, the Deputy Speaker of the said Assembly, as the person before whom the Members of the Assam Legislative Assembly shall make and subscribe their oath or, when the Assembly is in session and both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker are absent, the oath shall be made and subscribed before the person who may be presiding over the Assembly for the time being.

SHILLONG:

The 1st March 1950.

SRI PRAKASA,

Governor of Assam."

Welcome Speech of the Hon'ble Speaker

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Friends, we meet here for the first time after the establishment of the Sovereign Democratic Republic in Bharat. This august Assembly, according to the Indian Constitution, has acquired a new status, i.e., that of a Legislature of a State, which is a constituent of the Indian Union. I have the proud privilege of welcoming you, gentlemen, to this august Assembly.

Friends, in order to clothe you with the necessary authority to function in this august House, I, with pleasure, call upon you to take the oath or affirmation prescribed by the Indian Constitution. The Secretary will call out the names of the hon. Members in order and the hon. Members will come to the table and take the necessary oath or affirmation.

Oath of Allegiance

The following Members were sworn in under the Constitution of India.

The Hon'ble Srijut Gopinath Bardoloi.

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. Nichols-Roy,

The Hon'ble Srijut Bishnuram Medhi.

The Hon'ble Srijut Ramnath Das.

The Hon'ble Srijut Rupnath Brahma.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Abdul Matlib Mazumdar.

The Hon'ble Srijut Omeo Kumar Das.

Maulavi Saiyid Muhammad Saadulla.

Mrs. Bonily Khongmen.

Srijut Purna Chandra Sarma.

Srijut Mahendra Mohan Chaudhury.

Srijut Hareswar Das.

Srijut Bimala Prosad Chaliha

Srijut Dharanidhar Basumatari.

Srijut Motiram Bora.

Srijut Sarat Chandra Sinha.

Srijut Purandar Sarma.

Srijut Lakshmidhar Bora.

Raja Ajit Narayan Deb of Sidli.

Babu Khagendra Nath Samaddar.

Srijut Hem Chandra Hazarika.

Srijut Haladhar Bhuyan.

Srijut Harinarayan Barua.

Mr. Larsingh Khyriem.

Srijut Dalbir Singh Lohar.

Srijut Dhirsing Deuri.

Srijut Chanoo Kheria.

Maulana Mahomed Tayyebulla.

Srijut Gauri Kanta Talukdar.

Srijut Siddhinath Sarma.

Srijut Rajendra Nath Barua.

Mr. Kedarmal Brahmin.

(Mr. Hardman rising to take the oath)

Srijut SARAT CHANDRA SINHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. May I know whether a person who is not a citizen of India shall be qualified to sit in the Legislature? Mr. Hardman is, I think, not a citizen of India.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Under the provision of Article 382 (1) of the Constitution of India Mr. Hardman is quite competent to sit in this Legislature.

Mr. J. S. Hardman.

Srijut Dandeswar Hazarika.

Srijut Bejoy Chandra Bhagavati.

Srijut Beliram Das.

Srijut Purnananda Chetia.

Maulavi Abdul Halim.

Dr. Emran Husain Chaudhury.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(To which answers were laid on the table)

Assaults and maltreatment on the Railway Muslim Passengers

Maulavi ABUAL MAJID ZIAOSH SHAMS asked :

1. (a) Are Government aware—

- (i) That there have been incidents of assaults and maltreatment on the Railway Muslim passengers from Golakganj Station to Sorbhog Station in the last week of December, 1949 and first week of January, 1950, by the people of Barpeta *Elaka* ?
 - (ii) That the Muslim passengers going up had been indiscriminately detained at Sorbhog Station ?
 - (iii) That on the 18th January, 1950 some Muslim passengers were assaulted at Bongaigaon Station ?
 - (iv) That the attention of the Hon'ble Premier had been drawn to these facts by two sufferers and an M.L.A. by telegrams ?
- (b) Will Government be pleased to state :—
- (i) What steps have Government taken on those telegrams ?
 - (ii) Whether any attempt has been made by any authority to find out the culprits ?
 - (iii) Whether they are aware that there have been cases of repercussions at some Railway Stations in Pakistan as a measure of retaliation to the above assaults in Assam ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI replied :

1. (a) (i) and (ii)—Yes. There have been a few incidents of Muslims from East Pakistan being detained and sent back by the next available train.

(iii)—It is possible that persons were roughly handled.

(iv)—Yes.

(b) (i)—Armed men of Railway Protection force were rushed to these stations and accompanied selected trains.

(ii)—Investigation is proceeding.

(iii)—Yes.

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: I would like to draw your attention to question No.1(b) (iii), Sir. The answer is "Yes". But I want to add the words—"But it is also known that Hindu passengers in Pakistan were similarly treated" after this word "Yes".

Maulavi Saiyid MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Is this correct, Sir, that "there have been a few incidents of Muslims from East Pakistan being detained and sent back by the next available train"—; when this matter was first brought to my notice I made a representation to the Hon'ble Premier in the first week of January and in the reply which he sent to me by post it was distinctly mentioned "East Punjab" and not "East Pakistan".

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: With reference to what happened in Golakganj, Bongaigaon and such other places, the answer is there. But my point is that I want to make some additions to my answer to Question 1(b)(iii)—“Whether they are aware that there have been cases of repercussions at some railway stations in Pakistan as a measure of retaliation to the above assaults in Assam?” I have said “Yes”, but I have pointed out to this House that in order to make the answer complete I want to add that “similar treatment was also meted out within Pakistan to Hindu passengers”.

Maulavi Saiyid MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am afraid the Hon'ble Leader of the House has not followed my point. In regard to Question 1(a)(i)—“Are Government aware that there have been incidents of assaults and maltreatment on the Railway Muslim passengers from Golakganj Station to Sorbhog Station in the last week of December 1949 and first week of January 1950, by the people of Barpeta Elaka?”, I said that on receipt of telegrams from the people affected I sent a representation to the Hon'ble Premier in the first week of January 1950 and he has been good enough to send me a reply by post—although I am in Shillong and he is also in Shillong—and that there it is distinctly mentioned that what took place was with regard to immigrants from “East Punjab” and not “East Pakistan”.

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: It must be a mistake, Sir. It is “East Pakistan” and not “East Punjab”.

Appointment of Women Jurors

Mrs. BONILY KHONGMEN asked:

2. (a) Are Government aware that some States in India appoint Women Jurors and get great benefit thereby?
- (b) If so, do Government propose to appoint Women Jurors in Assam in the near future?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA replied:

2. (a)—Government have no information.
- (b)—The suggestion will be considered.

Mrs. BONILY KHONGMEN: Will Government take it from me that in Madras they have Women Jurors?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: It may be a fact, Sir, but I will now make enquiries whether other States have got Women Jurors.

Srijut BELIRAM DAS: Is the Jury System working satisfactorily?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: This is an altogether different Question.

Condolance Motion on the death of the Shri Sarat Chandra Bose and Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before you are pleased to take up other items of the agenda to-day, I would like to make mention of the passing away of a great leader and outstanding personality from the horizon of India,—I refer to the death of Sree Sarat Chandra Bose. There

are, I am sure, very few Members present in the House to-day who do not know him. He was not quite an infrequent visitor to this Capital, but he was more known, as we all know, on account of his outstanding ability in the Bar and surely more outstandingly in the field of politics. He was a staunch fighter against everything he considered wrong and in that fight no sacrifice was too small for him to undertake. We all know how he had to pass several years of his life in jail. Even while acting as a Member of the Congress Working Committee he always upheld the cause of what he considered good. So far as this province is concerned, I am not divulging any secret when I say that the Resolution on Groupings which was adopted by this House unanimously, was drafted by him. In that hour of darkness that we saw before us he brought some hope into us and gave us courage and impetus to fight out what we considered to be wrong. Towards the end of his life he did not see eye to eye with the prevailing politics of the day, but even there I felt that he was fighting what he considered to be wrong. He had been a leftist throughout his life and he always led his life as a leftist. With his philosophy or his politics we may not agree, but I am sure there will be very few in this House who will not pay the tribute that is due to a valiant fighter and a person who stood against what he considered to be wrong. I, on behalf of the House, pay that tribute and wish, Sir, that our condolence be conveyed to the bereaved members of the family.

Maulavi Saiyid MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I endorse fully what has fallen from the lips of the Hon'ble Leader of the House. I knew the late Sarat Chandra Bose as early as 1920, when we were colleagues in the Calcutta Bar. A man of very amiable disposition, an eminent lawyer, and above all a staunch patriot, he fought anything that he considered wrong. He always stood valiantly to speak out his mind without favour or frown from any quarter. It is sad to think that when the conditions in both Bengals are in a desperate stage, the cruel hand of death has snatched away a very valiant worker for peace, for patriotism of a high order and for communal harmony. It is an irony of fate that he died within half an hour of dictating a message of goodwill and peace to the residents of the two Bengals for his paper, the "Nation". We all mourn his loss and I agree with the Hon'ble Leader of the House that we should send a message of condolence and sympathy to the bereaved family.

Sir, in this connection I would have liked the Hon'ble Chief Minister to mention the passing away of another great and eminent Indian,—I refer to the late Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha of Bihar. He has left his mark as a jurist and ardent educationist. He was the first President of the Constituent Assembly of India, which sat to frame the Constitution under which we have taken our oaths to-day. It will be fit and proper if we pass a Resolution of condolence about him as well. I hope the Hon'ble Leader of the House will accept my suggestion.

The Hon'ble Srijiit GOPINATH BARDOLOI: Sir, on behalf of this side of the House I fully and most whole-heartedly accept the suggestion and the proposal which have been put forward before the House by the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition. We condole the death of Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha as sincerely as we did in moving the Resolution in regard to Sree Sarat Chandra Bose. I hope, Sir, that our condolences will be conveyed also to the family of that illustrious person.

Mr. J. S. HARDMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of the Group I represent, we desire to associate ourselves with the Motion which has been so ably moved by the Hon'ble Chief Minister and so capably supported by the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition.

Sree Sarat Chandra Bose has been an outstanding personality and has made his mark in the legal profession, as a journalist and as a politician. Though politically our views have been very different, we cannot but admire his sincerity, his steadfastness of conviction and his independence of thought.

I am very glad that the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition proposes to associate with the Motion the name of Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha, as I had the pleasure and privilege of knowing him personally over a large number of years. He was a person of outstanding literary ability and his services for education had been very considerable. As the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition has rightly said, he has made a very notable contribution to political life.

With these few words, I support the Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : This Assembly deeply condoles the deaths of the late Shri Sarat Chandra Bose and Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha and requests the Chair to convey the sympathy of the House to the members of the bereaved families.

I endorse every word that has been said with regard to the departed souls by the Hon'ble Leader of the House, the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition and the Hon'ble Leader of the European Group. Shri Sarat Chandra Bose was one of the bravest fighters in India's struggle for freedom. The sufferings which he underwent and the indignities he brooked with indomitable courage and fortitude evoked the admiration of us all. India is poor today by the loss of a leader of the calibre of Shri Sarat Chandra Bose. Dr. Sachchidananda was the maker of what Bihar is to-day. With these words, Gentlemen, I request you all to accept the Motion moved by the Hon'ble Leader of the House by standing for a minute in reverence to the departed souls.

(The house adopted the Motion standing for a minute.)

Friends, His Excellency has arrived and I proceed to welcome him to my chamber.

Panel of Chairmen

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The following Members will form the Panel of Chairmen for the Budget Session, 1950.

1. Srijut Rajendra Nath Barua,
2. Srijut Purandar Sarma.
3. Maulavi Md. Abul Kashem.
4. Prof. P. M. Sarwan.

Allotment of days for Private Members' Business

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : In pursuance of Rule 18 of the Assam Legislative Assembly Rules, I hereby allot in consultation with the Hon'ble Chief Minister the following days for Private Members' Business during the present Session of the Assam Legislative Assembly :—

Saturday, the 1st and 8th April—Motions, if any and Resolutions.

Private Members' Business will also be taken up on the following days, after disposal of Government Business fixed for those days :—

Monday, the 20th and 27th March	...	} Resolutions.
Tuesday, the 21st March	...	
Thursday, the 23rd March	...	
Friday, the 24th March	...	
Saturday, the 25th March	...	
Friday, the 31st March	...	} Motions, if any and Resolutions.
Thursday, the 6th April	...	

This order shall be subject to my revision, if necessary, from time to time.

Committee of Petitions relating to Bills

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Under Rule 112(1) of the Assembly Rules, I nominate the following Members to constitute a Committee on Petitions relating to Bills for the current Session of the Assembly :—

1. Srijut Purandar Sarma.
2. Mr. J. S. Hardman.
3. Maulavi Md. Nazmal Haque.
4. Srijut Dhirsingh Deuri.

Under the rules, the Deputy Speaker will be the Chairman of the Committee.

House Committee

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Under rule 135 of the Assembly Rules, I nominate the following Members to constitute a House Committee for the current session of the Assembly :—

1. Babu Romesh Chandra Das Choudhury.
2. Dr. Emran Husain Chaudhury.
3. Srijut Siddhi Nath Sarma.
4. Srijut Karka Dalay Miri.
5. Srijut Harinarayan Barua.
6. Mr. Maniram Marak.

Message regarding assent to Bills

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Information has been received from the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor of Assam that, under the provisions of Section 75 of the Government of India Act, 1935 as adapted by India (Provisional Constitution) Order, 1947, His Excellency the Governor has assented to the following Bills which were passed by the Assam Legislative Assembly in its meeting held in September, 1949 :—

- (1) The Assam Local Rates (Amendment) Bill, 1949.
- (2) The Assam Assessment of Revenue Free Waste Land Grants (Amendment) Bill, 1949.

(3) The Assam Land (Requisition and Acquisition) (Amendment) Bill, 1949.

4 The Assam Urban Areas Rent Control Bill, 1949.

2 Intimation has also been received from the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor of Assam that His Excellency the Governor General has also assented under the provisions of Sub-Section (1) of Section 76 of the Government of India Act, 1935 as adapted by India (Provisional Constitution) Order, 1947, to the following Bills which were passed by the Assam Legislative Assembly in its meeting noted against each:—

(1) The Assam Management of Estates Bill, 1949 March (Budget), 1949.

(2) The Assam Maintenance of Public Order September 1949.
(Second Amendment) Bill, 1949.

(3) The Assam Co-operative Societies Bill, 1949 Ditto.

(At this stage His Excellency was conducted into the Chamber.)

Unveiling of the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Friends, on a solemn occasion like this, when we meet for the first time after the establishment of the Democratic Republic in Bharat, our hearts and our thoughts turn naturally to the memory of the great saint, politician, philosopher and martyr-Bapuji, under whose leadership millions were able to earn for themselves their God given right of freedom.

The hallowed memory of Mahatmaji is enshrined in every Indian heart, and everything associated with such a hallowed memory is considered sacred by all. Pursuant to the wishes of a large majority of hon. Members of this House a portrait of Mahatmaji has been placed in a place considered appropriate by us of this Hall. I am very glad to be able to say that we have got in our midst our Rajyapal Sree Sri Prakasaji, a valiant fighter under the leadership of our Father of the Nation—Bapuji. I would with great delight request His Excellency the Governor of Assam to unveil the portrait of Mahatmaji, painted by one of the famous artists of Assam, namely, Srijut Muktanath Bardoloi.

His Excellency the Governor (Shri SRI PRAKASA): Friends, it is difficult for anyone who has had the privilege of sitting at the feet of the Master for long decades, to think of him without emotion; and so, solemn and auspicious as this occasion is, I dare not speak much. I am most grateful to you all for the honour that you have done me by inviting me to unveil Mahatmaji's portrait this morning in this Hall, where the representatives of the people are assembled, and will continue to assemble, in counsel and in debate, for the forging of the ways and means for the welfare of the State and of the men and women who live therein. I pray that this portrait may serve the purpose of his living presence amongst us, and may always inspire us to those great ideals that he gave to us, and enable us to think, speak and act as he would have liked us to think, speak and act. The two great planks on which Gandhiji stood undaunted, through all the storms of his long life of patient and noble endeavour, were truth and non-violence, and the two objects for which he lived and died were national liberty and communal harmony. May the great message that he had left behind always inspire us, and may we be worthy of our Master who gave us all that we have today.

(The portrait was then unveiled, and all present rose in their seats.)

Address by His Excellency the Governor

His Excellency the Governor (Shri SRI PRAKASA):
Colleagues and Friends, the Hon'ble Mr. Speaker and Members of the State Assembly :

Once more it is my pleasant duty to meet you in Session assembled for the fulfilment of the heavy tasks that lie before you. When last it was my privilege to be amongst you, I came at the specific invitation of the Hon'ble the Speaker to address a few words to you at the close of the previous Session of the Assembly on September 20, 1949. Many things have happened since then ; and doubtless the most outstanding event of the intervening period not only in our own history but, in a way, in the history of the world, because of its uniqueness both in the background and in the method of its fulfilment, is the proclamation of our country, the great and ancient land of Bharat, as a Sovereign Democratic Republic ; and our hearts must be lifted in reverence to our Master who made it possible ; who saw the light in the midst of darkness ; who gave us strength in our weakness ; and hope in our despair. To him must also go the gratitude of mankind for having showed the way of fighting the fiercest battles without violence and without bitterness, and winning over the erstwhile opponent with his friendship not only intact but very greatly strengthened and consolidated. This is the phenomenon which we witness today ; for we and the British people who struggled each with each, for many a long decade, were never on more cordial terms than we are now ; and never was the anxiety of either so great as to-day that the association formed through the stress and storm—even the blood and tears—of the earlier centuries, may now last for ever to mutual advantage and in mutual esteem, in eternal peace and amity.

2. To the negotiating skill and the lofty vision of the great disciple of the Master, our present Prime Minister, must go the spontaneous praise of our hearts for having evolved a unique formula without precedent in history, by which it has been made possible for us to remain a member of the Commonwealth and still assume the full status of a Republic. A thing like that would have been deemed impossible if it were not actually functioning before our very eyes, for verily a constitutional conundrum appears to have been solved ; and our hearts' grateful thanks must go to the great statesmen of Britain as well, for cheerfully acquiescing in a position that would otherwise have been unthinkable in the hoary traditions of the British people to which they cling with praiseworthy persistence and which they follow with unwavering loyalty. It has thus been possible that while claiming our utmost freedom to do what we like to achieve our own ideals and objectives in our own way, we still voluntarily and cheerfully remain a member of the great comity of

Nations that has been built up by the facts of history, through the recent centuries of man's evolution in a settled society aspiring after universal brotherhood. Human as I am, I must confess that I felt a proud man when it was given to me to make the requisite Proclamation on January 26, 1950, before the citizens, the civil and the military services—and in a way to all men and women of the world—in our capital town of Shillong, that we of Assam here are henceforth a State, a component unit of the Union of India that has assumed the mantle of a Sovereign Democratic Republic, determined to exercise all powers and functions of Government and administration in accordance with the Constitution framed by our own representatives after three years of incessant labour in the Constituent Assembly sitting, session after session, in our great and age-old metropolis of Delhi.

3. Today, however, I come before you as required by the said Constitution, at the commencement of your session, to inform you of the causes of your summons; and I invite you in all earnestness to your labours in the fullest confidence that with cordiality and goodwill, and exercising the fullest freedom that as members of a Legislature it is your right to enjoy, you will readily perform the duties that are yours for the sake of the people who have entrusted their welfare to your safe keeping. When last I met you, I spoke of the clouds of financial embarrassments that were gathering around us; and I hoped that they would soon be dispelled and that we should come to our own before long. That hope has, however, not been fulfilled; for the darkness has only deepened; and as you meet in your Budget Session, you find before you Bill after Bill which seeks in some form or another, greater and still greater sacrifices on the part of our people, so that the exigencies of the situation might be met; so that the various difficulties and impediments in our path might be removed; and the Government enabled to carry on its work in a manner that may lead to the eventual well-being of the men and the women and the children of the State. My Finance Minister will in his Budget Speech, present before you the whole picture of our financial position, and indicate to you all the difficulties my Government have been experiencing; the policies that they have been at pains to follow regardless of the obstacles in their way; the hopes—despite their being blasted over and over again—they are still entertaining; and tell you all that they are straining every nerve to achieve and accomplish. The usual Finance Bill will be placed before you, as also many other Money Bills for the amendment of many Acts such as the Stamp Act, the Court Fees Act, the Amusement and Betting Tax Act, the Sales Tax Act, and the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act.

4. So far as these Money Bills are concerned, you will regretfully see in the Statement of Objects and Reasons of every single one of them, the painful iteration and re-iteration of the sad fact that

the added burden of taxation that you are called upon to levy on the resources of the men and women of the State, is entirely due to the increased demands that are being made on Government for the provision of money—and still more money—for the social services ; and to balance the Budget after meeting these. As you doubtless know, the sudden upsettall in our economy that has taken place, is due to the fact that we had planned for expenditure on social welfare of our long-neglected people, on the basis of grants that we had confidently expected from the Union Government at the Centre. These grants have been unfortunately—and most unexpectedly—withheld ; and we have to make the utmost sacrifices in order to save our economy from collapse ; and at the same time to maintain to the largest extent possible those services without which freedom would mean little to the forlorn and the distressed, the ignorant and the ailing. It may be true as the political scientist will tell us, that the man has yet to be found who loves to pay taxes—though those who want to levy them may not be so scarce—still it is also true that at a moment of crisis, human beings are quite capable of rising above the limitations of their ordinary human nature and sacrificing their utmost for the common good, and for the safety of the State and Society that alone can make man's life worth living. So far as the Government are concerned, they have already adopted—though with much reluctance—various means for the retrenchment of officers and secretariat establishments. My Ministers have themselves voluntarily surrendered a portion of their own salaries. One of them has resigned his high office in a noble spirit of sacrifice. This renunciation on the part of their valued colleague has been accepted with deep regret, and is very highly appreciated by them. If Government at the present moment calls for all that the citizens of Assam can give, I have every hope that their appeal will not be in vain ; and that you will look upon the proposals with sympathy and accept them in a spirit of co-operation, so that the tasks before us may not be impeded and the wheels of society kept going till really happy times return and all is well with us again.

5. To revert to our financial position which so overshadows our life and adversely affects all our hopes and aspirations, may I refer, for a moment, to the Deshmukh Award which you will no doubt have seen. It is not for me to say anything on the subject ; but I cannot help expressing the feeling of disappointment of the Government and the people alike that we have not been better accommodated. In fact, while we were hoping that we would be generously facilitated, we have the unhappy feeling that we have not got even what we deserved in justice and in equity, on account alike of our needs and the strategic position we occupy in the economy of the land. We supply the world with tea. It is our most flourishing industry ; and still we feel we do not get all the profits that we should, out of its contributions to the public exchequer. My Government have

already sent a memorandum on the subject of our share of income-tax, excise duties, export duty on jute and kindred matters ; and we have every reason to hope that our representations will meet with sympathetic response from those in authority over us. The subject is of the utmost urgency and importance for us, for we need the immediate strengthening of all our social services and the amelioration of the economic conditions of the people that these alone can do. My Government and I fully realise that mere police activities, mere stringent laws, do not and cannot solve the fundamental human problem. Proper standards of life, happy domestic existence, assured means of livelihood, proper work and recreation, labour and leisure, make for contentment and for the creation of those forces that build up the proper public spirit which in its turn helps to eliminate and voluntarily liquidate the anti-social elements that disturb and disrupt society and cause suffering to the innocent and the unwary. Some serious incidents in various places—though brought under control almost immediately—are still a pointer ; and while it is and must be our duty to keep lawlessness in check, it is an even greater duty of ours to root out all legitimate causes and grievances that create it. For that, adequate funds are necessary ; and situated as we are, we feel it our right to ask for these from all who can give as much for their own sakes as for ours. ✓

6. Among the other Bills, there are two that seek to put on a proper legal basis the provisions of the earlier laws pertaining to the Salaries and Allowances of Hon'ble Ministers and the Speaker ; and I have no doubt that you will have no difficulty in agreeing to the measures proposed. Another Bill that will be placed before you pertains to the impending elections to Local Boards. These elections ordinarily should have been held before April 1, 1949, but were postponed for a year by requisite legislation. They were thereupon ordered to be held by March 10, of this year ; but various objections were received on the ground of the electoral rolls not being sufficiently full and accurate to ensure a fair election. There were other suggestions also regarding the delimitation of constituencies for the purpose of making them single member ones as far as practicable. The fulfilment of all these preliminaries require time ; and so it becomes essential to postpone the elections for another two months necessitating the Bill in question ; and I have every confidence the same will meet with your approval. It would not be out of place for me to mention that the proposal was mooted in some quarters that the elections should be further postponed so that they may take place under the scheme of adult suffrage, for it was held that any amendments to the existing electoral rolls as they stand, would only mean tinkering with them and not completely overhauling them. In the opinion of my Government this would have meant the postponement of elections for some years, for we

should all soon be very busy with work for the general elections for the State Legislature and the Central Parliament towards the end of the year, as envisaged in our new Constitution. The organisation of elections is no easy matter, and entails a great deal of labour alike on the State, the various political organisations and even the public-spirited individual citizen, as we all who have been through them, know only too well. A series of elections in quick succession for various Legislatures and Municipal Bodies would be harassing to a degree, especially when the franchise would be practically the same. My Government therefore think that it would be best to get the Local Board elections over before preparations for the general elections for Legislatures come seriously to be taken in hand; and have the Local Board elections on the extended franchise in their own good time on some day later. That would doubtless be convenient to all parties concerned and fulfil all the purposes required.

7. My Government have all along been zealous in guarding the rights of the tenants. In the furtherance of this objective, the Assam Non-Agricultural Urban Areas Tenancy Bill, seeking to regulate the relations between landlords and tenants in the urban areas of the State, and to safe-guard the rights of the tenants, is being placed before you. Among the other Bills you will be called upon to consider, are the Assam Animal Preservation Bill, intended to prevent the indiscriminate slaughter of useful cattle; the Assam Animal and Pests Diseases Bill, providing for the effective control of certain specified insects, pests and noxious weeds through governmental agencies; the Assam Land Requisition and Acquisition (Amendment) Bill, seeking to provide flood-affected and displaced persons with land for cultivation at reasonable rates of compensation; the Assam Cement Control Amendment Bill, seeking to extend control over the movement, distribution and price of cement which is still in such short supply, by another two years beginning from May 12, 1950; the Assam Jute Control of Price Bill, providing for the control, in the interests of the jute industry, the price of jute in view of the situation arising out of Pakistan's refusal to devalue its currency; and the Assam Forest (Amendment) Bill, providing for the detection and prosecution of cases of theft of forest produce not actually discovered in transit. Again, in view of the coming into force of the new Constitution, some of the existing enactments require modifications of a technical nature, to conform to the provisions of the present Constitution; and for this purpose the Assam Maintenance of Public Order (Amendment) Bill, the Assam State Legislature Members Removal of Disqualifications Bill and the Assam Contingency Fund Bill, are being placed before you. It has also been considered necessary, in view of the present conditions within and on the borders of the State, to delegate enhanced powers to certain categories of police officers, as also to provide for the speedy trial of persons accused in connection

with the recent outrages in Naliapool, with which you are all only too painfully familiar. Accordingly, the Assam Enhanced Police Disciplinary Powers Bill and the Assam Special Courts Bill are being presented to you. Further, consequent on the separation of a major portion of Sylhet from Assam, it has become necessary to apportion the revenues of certain estates, which are now situate partly in Sylhet and partly in the Karimganj Subdivision of Cachar district; and the necessary principles governing such apportionment are incorporated in the Assam Land Revenue, Rent and Cess Apportionment Bill to which you will be asked to give your consent. The only remaining Bill for the session, the Assam Famine Relief Insurance Amendment Bill, seeks to facilitate the maintenance of proper accounts of the relevant Fund, make it more stable, and put it on a sound footing, and provides for the transfer to it at the end of each financial year, the unspent balance of the amount provided for general famine relief work in the State Budget. As you will doubtless see, the Bills enumerated above are all designed with a view to improve the lot of the common man; and I have, therefore, much pleasure in commending them to you for your ready acceptance.

8. My Government had a scheme for the nationalisation of much of our commerce and industry. For various reasons, particularly financial, we have now decided that that is not a practical proposition in the present conditions; and so that policy has been given up and we are inviting private parties to help us in the industrialisation of the State and the enhancement of its commerce. The Money Bills to which you will doubtless give your assent, are but temporary expedients and cannot help in the solution of the fundamental problem. This will and can only be solved by systematic development of our industries. As I wander about—layman as I am—I cannot help feeling that the jute that we grow can easily feed a jute factory; that the large clusters of bamboos are only calling for the deft fingers of the expert to be turned into pulp for the manufacture of paper in abundance that we can, but do not make; and cotton and sugar mills can also be fully nurtured by our own produce. We can also generate electricity in plenty from volumes of water that fall from the hills apparently in vain today, and our giant *halok* and *halong* trees can give much more than they yield at present in timber and in plywood. Agriculture, sericulture, apiculture too are all waiting to be improved and advanced indefinitely. The charm of our hills and dales is such that enterprising men and women can develop many spots which can be turned into pleasure resorts for travellers and sanatoria for those in search of health. A tourist traffic is a very profitable and a very legitimate means for the prosperity of a country that is blessed with such beauty spots as we

have. Then I also feel that our vast and magnificent forests and our game sanctuaries can be made attractive for hunters, and our endless stretches of grass that is today allowed to burn itself out year after year by a process of natural combustion, could be collected and utilised for supplying attractive roofs to our houses in the place of the ugly corrugated iron sheet that hurts the eye wherever one goes. These thoughts have been in the mind of my Government ever since they came in power, and their proposals for development had been embodied in the enunciation of their industrial policy, many of which they had put forward for immediate implementation. It would be the merest truism to say that these alone can help to make us a prosperous people no more depending on palliatives in the form of irritating taxes, for they will surely put at our disposal large reservoirs which would be so full of wealth that we should not have to stretch our hands for doles here, there and everywhere. In the words of our President, the first of our Republic to whom I offer on your behalf and on mine, our cordial and respectful greetings, we also hope and pray that Free India will throw up from generation to generation, men and women in adequate numbers who by their initiative and enterprise, their courage and resourcefulness, will help to build a great society which would for ever be happy and strong and free. Nature has given us much here in Assam; and what we need is men and women to come forward and put their hands and hearts and heads to make the best of her gracious bounty. Let us cast off the stigma of being too contented and therefore a totally unenterprising people. Let us gird up our loins and do our very best to bring happiness and prosperity in abundance to our people.

9. You will, no doubt, expect me here to say something pertaining to our hills which present problems unique in themselves, and the measures that are being taken by my Government to resolve them. Every Charter of Liberty imposes on the persons concerned, numerous obligations and responsibilities which they cannot escape. It is, therefore, only natural that our new Constitution that enshrines our innermost ideals and aspirations, calls on our Government, Legislature and People alike, to fulfil added and difficult duties. The provisions of the Sixth Schedule, in the shaping of which my Chief Minister and other members of the Constituent Assembly from Assam, have contributed so much, have invested our brethren of the hills with the responsibilities for their day-to-day administration in a number of important spheres. The beauty of it lies in the fact that while it recognises that our tribal fellow-citizens have their own laws, customs and culture which need to be respected and safe-guarded, and provides for the development of their age-old customary institutions along sound and healthy lines, it weaves the tribal people and the people of the plains into a single

multi-coloured fabric, which may be alike durable and attractive. This finally breaks the artificial barrier that had been raised in the past between the hills and the plains; and affords all concerned the splendid opportunity to unite the denizens of the tribal areas with the inhabitants of the neighbouring valleys. The new provisions thus forge an effective link between those living in the remote mountain fastnesses on our strategic frontiers, and the rest of the people inhabiting this great land of Bharat, the principle being that every tribe and sub-tribe, will in the same manner as any others, have an important part to play in the affairs of our country.

10. To work out a scheme of the nature envisaged by the provisions of the Sixth Schedule, I need hardly re-iterate that my Government will need all the good will, sympathy and co-operation of all the people of the State, no matter whether by the freak of geography, their lot happens to be cast in the well-watered and fertile valleys, or up in the picturesque and mountainous regions of the border. My Government is doing and will continue to do all that they possibly can to improve the lot and raise the standards of living for the hill people who have been the victims of such utter neglect in the past. The problem of developing these areas is a stupendous one, but a modest beginning has already been made. In the course of the last two years, my Government have spent an average amount of very nearly a crore of rupees a year in these areas in excess of the receipts accruing therefrom, in the improvement of communications, in the establishment of hospitals and schools, in teaching the people improved methods of agriculture, and in other nation-building avocations and institutions. The Government of India have already recognised the extreme urgency of promoting the welfare of the tribal people, developing the resources and raising the level of administration of those areas. Their anxiety is so great in this behalf that the Prime Minister sent his Deputy, Dr. B. V. Keskar, to tour with me and see things for himself last November. They are also bound by Article 275 of the Constitution to finance development schemes undertaken with their prior approval, in addition to paying the State of Assam as grants-in-aid, the average excess of expenditure over the revenues during the two calendar years immediately preceding the commencement of the Constitution, in respect of Tribal Areas, for such development purposes. My Finance Minister will, no doubt, give you all the necessary details pertaining to these figures. I would however like to mention that my Government have already formulated a number of such schemes, covering the fields of communication, education, forests, medical facilities, cottage industries, and kindred matters, expected to cost about eighty lakhs of rupees, to be executed in a period of three years. These schemes have already been forwarded to the Government of India for their scrutiny and approval. When these schemes are fully implemented, I have every hope

that we shall be nearer the goal to which our minds are riveted, and so bring within the reach of our brethren of the hills, the ordinary amenities of civilised existence.

11. Yet it makes me sad indeed to find that despite our best attempts to do all that we can for the tribal people, even in the crippled state of our finances, there should still be persons who think in terms of separatism and isolationism. This may be due to certain complexes and inhibitions implanted by tradition, which some people are finding it hard to give up. I do not despair, for I am convinced—and this I say from my personal contacts and experience—that the vast majority of the hills people do appreciate the changes that have come, and are eager to play their proper part therein. The unhappy tendencies of others, are mere legacies of the past, and I have no doubt that with the progressive implementation of proper schemes of development, and the constitution of the autonomous district and regional councils as a concrete proof of our desire to enable the tribal people to mould their own destinies, such feelings of suspicion and distrust as may still remain, will rapidly disappear and become things of the remote past. We have all to be most careful in all that we say and do; but there is no doubt that when active sympathy and understanding are extended by those who are in power today, to those who have always been without it, all misunderstandings begotten of ignorance of each other will fade away. I am sure that the progressive policy of my Government in behalf of this problem will make our worst critics, our best friends; and the future will see us all united in bonds of true Unity and Brotherhood for which our hearts so devoutly yearn.

12. Although not immediately pertaining to the responsibility of our State as such, you will perhaps not mind my referring to the three States on our frontiers which have had such close relations with us. Of these, Cooch Behar that was first taken over by the Centre as its own charge, has now gone to West Bengal; and Tripura and Manipur have been taken over by the Centre and continue to be administered directly from there. Your Governor, however, still continues to be a co-ordinating factor between the States and the Centre *inter se*, and keeps in touch with these States through their Chief Commissioners. Manipur borders on Burma and Tripura on Pakistan; and they thus have their own difficulties. Their defence is still my concern; and battalions and platoons of the Assam Rifles continue to function there as before, and fulfil all their duties with courage and efficiency.

13. You will please pardon me if I do not confine myself today to the formality of merely discharging the obligations imposed upon me by the Constitution, but avail myself of this occasion to speak to you of many other matters, near to your hearts and mine, for I may not be meeting you again till the opening of another session late in

the year. Many events of importance have taken place since last we met ; and with your permission, I should like to make brief mention of them on this occasion. We were happy at the privilege that we had of receiving the last Governor-General—though the very first from amongst our own countrymen—when His Excellency Shri C. Rajagopalachari paid us a very welcome and long-expected and long-deferred visit last November. From Warren Hastings to Rajaji, the history of our land presents a wonderful panorama, the first representing the unavoidable violence that preceded the formation of Empires in the past ; and the last symbolising the recovery of the lost soul by a great people by methods entirely peaceful, proving if anything has proved it, that peace has its victories and its glories far more renowned than war. We cannot also forget that even in those times, a century and a half back, the heart of the English people as such was sound ; and their great Parliamentary leaders took Warren Hastings very seriously to task for what he had done in India. This innate love of justice in the Englishman was as much responsible as any other factor that we can think of, in making it possible for the ultimate installation of our own Rajaji on the highest pedestal in the land ; and we deemed it a great honour that he was able to visit us before he laid down the reins of his high office which he filled with such dignity and success. I am happy to record that he was very pleased with all that he saw of the beauty and the colour of our variegated life and expressed warm appreciation of all we are seeking to do.

14. Another event to which I feel I must refer, is the opening of the new railway link that now connects Assam directly with the rest of India. India through centuries past, had grown up as a Unity ; and as such her economy had taken no account of racial, creedal or provincial considerations as it progressed from stage to stage by inevitable processes of natural evolution. The sudden emergence of a two-Nation theory with the demand for a separate Muslim State to be carved out of the fair body of our Motherland, came with a great shock of surprise to all who were building a free United India of the future. In the conditions that ensued and the atmosphere that was artificially created, which will serve no useful purpose to review today. Partition was agreed to and was effected. A portion of what was Assam was also taken out to join on to what is now East Bengal, a province of the new independent Dominion of Pakistan. Unfortunately various complexes followed giving rise to various difficulties ; and direct contacts became not only difficult but almost impossible between Assam and the rest of the country, greatly disturbing our age-old social and economic relationships. All our communications by water and land—by steamer and rail—had been for ages through the territories now forming a part of Pakistan. It is a thousand pities that it has not been possible to keep to the earlier arrangements that had been peacefully and

naturally evolved through the decades past ; and it thus became imperative to have a new rail link that would take passengers and goods to the other parts of India without touching Pakistan territory.

15. I was invited to start the first passenger train from Amin-gaon on the eve of the inauguration of our Republic ; and though the thousands that gathered at the station and its environs and the hundreds that were in the train itself, were full of enthusiasm, as from the inside of the engine I pulled the lever and started the train, my own heart was sad because of the circumstances that had made this link so immediately necessary. All of us, whether in Pakistan or in Bharat, have pleaded for the interest of the common man ; but despite the best of intentions, it is the common man unfortunately that seems to have suffered the most in the changes that have been brought about by the new alignments necessitated by the Partition. I pray in all sincerity and with all fervour, that we might follow the path of wisdom and have a proper appreciation of the values of life, so that all unnecessary conflicts might be avoided and the life of the humble secured from all harm and allowed to flow undisturbed in its accustomed channels. Our great highway of trade and commerce and pilgrimage, has been the mighty Brahmaputra, the diversion of whose course, unlike that of the rail, would tax the wit of man to the breaking point. The waters continue to flow, for they do not recognise Partition and persist in following Nature's law ; but the traffic of men and goods that used to flow with these life-giving waters, has been sadly interrupted ; and tea and jute and timber that gave joy and comfort and occupation to hundreds of thousands are now being deprived of their utility in diverse bottlenecks. The curious fact which has only to be stated to be appreciated, however, is that practically all persons who were employed in river navigation are men from East Bengal who are in obvious danger of losing their livelihood by short-sighted activities of others. Thus we see that any disturbance in the arrangements that had been prevalent, harms the citizens of both the Dominions ; and the realisation of this fact as it affects the humble who are and should be the main concern of all in positions of power and authority, can and should bring about a speedy and satisfactory solution of the many problems that tax our minds and thoughts today.

16. While on this topic, I should like to recall that the Bagge Commission set up by the two Dominions of Bharat and Pakistan, has recently given its award regarding, *inter alia*, the boundaries between Assam and East Bengal. We have every reason to hope and expect that as both the parties are bound by mutual Agreement to accept the verdict of the Tribunal, all doubts and difficulties that had arisen, would be set at rest finally, and the tension that had

been noticeable for some time past on the borders, would disappear for ever. It is my earnest hope as it must be of countless others, that normal life will once more return for the common man. It is unfortunate indeed that there has been a serious recrudescence of communal violence in East Bengal, the effects of which have been woefully felt on our borders as well. There has been an unexpected influx of refugees from East Bengal to Assam creating a problem of serious import for my Government. The harrowing tales of suffering brought by these unfortunate men and women from across the borders, have had their inevitable repercussions; and there have been most unfortunate incidents here as well—particularly in Goalpara—which we cannot but greatly condemn and deplore. It is, however, a matter of some sombre satisfaction to me to be able to assure you that the forces of law and order are all at their posts of duty; and the situation everywhere from Goalpara to Cachar has been quickly brought under control. To the officers and men serving my Government, must go my unstinted praise and admiration for the prompt and admirable manner in which they successfully handled an ugly situation. I may express the confident hope that the good sense of the people concerned on either side will enable them to give up all improper and unlawful intentions and continue to live in peace and in amity accepting the position as has been dictated by the Partition, and reconciling themselves to the changed social and political set-up which they themselves for any reasons may not favour.

17. Assam and what is now Eastern Pakistan, have a thousand and one ties—social, economic and cultural—that bind them each to each; and it does seem most unfortunate that there should be any difficulties raised, disturbing the accustomed ways of life and conduct along the six hundred miles of border that stretches between the two Dominions. We have to realise that the dividing line is in the very nature of things, invisible as it not unoften takes a zig-zag course over hill and land and water; and *bona fide* mistakes can be made by individuals and parties as they go about their daily avocations; and one cannot but deplore that arrests should have been made and long terms of imprisonment given to our officers by East Bengal authorities where there might have been obvious errors of judgment as regards any innocent trespassing across. Then because of the complete blockade of the old and accustomed avenues for the passage of oranges from our Khasi Hills through Sylhet to Calcutta, we have had to meet a serious and unexpected situation in the practical starvation that faced so many of our simple innocent Khasi people. We have to be grateful to the Government of India for having so readily come to our rescue and to have enabled us to construct air-strips in the record time of less than a fortnight, whence there has been a regular service of aeroplanes carrying at times over a hundred thousand oranges during the course of a single day, from

the tops of our Khasi Hills to the markets of Calcutta. This can, at best, be only a temporary expedient, and can, in no way, afford adequate relief to all places on the borders. The Government of India, despite their own difficulties, will be placing money at our disposal for the construction of feeder roads, so that trade may be able to flow easily from the interior to the main highways leading to Shillong and Gauhati and thence on to the world at large. The best thing, of course, would be to go back to the old markets and to the old channels. If, however, that would not be permitted, we cannot allow our men to die but must do the best we can for their behoof.

18. I cannot help making a passing reference to the discussions in Parliament on the two pieces of legislation, one of which entirely concerns us dealing as it does with the problem of immigration into Assam of persons not desired by us, coming from territories now foreign to us ; and the other with the problems of evacuee property and the conditions of refugees in general which also affects us in part. As you all know better than I do, that under the belief that Assam has unlimited lands to spare, there had been a steady immigration from Eastern Bengal to Assam for a long time past. This had already created various social and economic problems ; and succeeding Governments of the Province have tackled it—encouraged or discouraged it—as moved their fancy or conformed to their wishes. With the definite separation of these two contiguous territories as parts of different independent Dominions, the problem has assumed an altogether new aspect getting complicated as was inevitable, with political considerations ; and has got naturally and unavoidably to be met in a different way. The legislation that has just been passed by the Central Parliament gives power for the expulsion of those whom Assam does not want. There is no element of vindictiveness, there is no desire to be cruel. The personnel of the Government of Assam in all its departments, the pattern of Assam's Society, all go to prove, if any proof were needed, that no possible charge of lack of generosity or hospitality can be laid at our door ; but in the conditions as they are and the atmosphere as it has been created and which is not of our seeking, we cannot afford to take risks of a total upsettal of our economy and the scheme of things in our State. I do hope that those concerned will appreciate the position as it is, and so conduct themselves that it would not be necessary for us to apply the rigours of the law which will be as painful to us as to those directly concerned. Even a cursory glance at the discussion that has taken place in Parliament at Delhi, would convince anyone of the very strong feelings on these subjects in the minds of the generality of our fellow-countrymen throughout the land ; and I should like to pay my tribute to the Members of Parliament that represent our State for putting our point of view forcibly and effectively, and helping to maintain a

balance in the light of actual conditions whenever there was danger of emotion getting the better of reason.

19. I had originally come to Assam for only one year ; and during this period, due to the generosity and considerateness of the Government and the courtesy and kindness of my fellow-citizens, I have been able to make the acquaintance of the people, the problems and the territories of practically the whole of Assam except the Lushai Hills. I have however been ordered to remain where I am for the present ; and I ask for your continued indulgence, assistance and favour, and also pray that I might have the strength and capacity to serve you well. The more I see, the more am I struck by the beauty and the grandeur of our hills and dales and the simplicity and the kindliness of the people. I should like to express my heart's gratitude for all I have received from this great State and all the good men and women who live therein. I shall, however, be pardoned by you if I add a few reflections of my own regarding the part we have to play in the immediate future for the building up of the great New Republic of India and the strengthening of our own State. My Government fully share my sentiments. It is indeed distressing to find that our people have not yet realised that the Government and themselves are one, and that the Government in the present set-up is and must be a reflex of the people themselves in every way. The pathetic demand that everything should be done by the Government as if the Government had some mysterious reservoirs of men and money apart from the citizens themselves, is very often heart-breaking. If people will not extend to the Government the assistance of their persons and resources and still ask from Government everything that they desire, I fear they will often meet with inevitable disappointment ; and mere criticism of others when one's own wishes are not fulfilled, will lead no one anywhere, I plead for self-confidence, self-help, self-dependence, initiative, enterprise, sympathy, understanding, co-operation amongst us all ; and then the Government, whatever its personnel, and the People in general, can and shall work together, hand in hand, engaged in common endeavours for the common good. If, however, the general mass of our people continue to regard the Government as something different from themselves, then Swaraj can mean but little. I know that communications and hospitals and schools are essential for the well-being of the State ; but in the present financial stringency through which we are passing, it is indeed impossible for more to be done till more avenues are opened up for the creation of more wealth ; and these will depend far more on the enterprise of the citizen than the initiative of the man in office.

20. I am sure that non-official efforts can very greatly and effectively help by active participation in the rearing of institutions both for educational and medical purposes, and even in the cutting

through of reasonably satisfactory roads and air-strips—as experience has proved—till better ones can be constructed under official auspices. There are many things that we can do in our own way if only we knew how to utilise our time and talents better than we do. If we are to maintain our Swaraj and keep it safe from all harm, we shall have to imbibe a great deal of genuine civic education and develop in ourselves a strong social sense that can make individuals combine together for varied activities of public well-being. Thus alone shall we learn what Swaraj is most intended to teach—self-dependence and self-respect. The Government does and must welcome criticism in the Press, in Parliament and on the platform. That is necessary for the building up of democracy and keeping those in authority on the strict path of duty and righteousness. If we avoid imputation of personal motives ; if we keep ourselves free from malice ; if we are willing to give praise where praise is due and offer criticism wherever this is necessary ; if we extend co-operation and assistance in all good causes and refrain not from opposition of all that is bad ;—we should be marching along together doing our duty without fear and without favour and helping all others to do the same as well.

21. I should like once more to pay a tribute to the services, civil and military, for standing loyally at their posts of duty in the most adverse of circumstances and in adapting themselves in all sincerity to the changed conditions and serving the new Government loyally and well. The alacrity and enthusiasm with which the Army took up the “Grow More Food Campaign”—to take just one illustration—was remarkable and praiseworthy to a degree. To the citizens, men and women alike, I must also give my whole-hearted meed of praise for having cheerfully borne the burden of life though the times have been difficult—very difficult indeed—for them with high prices and alarms of all sorts ; and carried on their hard monotonous duties of daily existence with courage and with fortitude, for on that ultimately really depends the safety, the stability and the continuity of the State and Society. As we look around us, we find that we along with the rest of our great Asian continent have, consciously or unconsciously, struck our tents and are on the march. Nobody may know where this march will lead and what may be the pitfalls gaping on the route ; but we of Assam, in our own way, have also to take our full share of the heat and the dust of the journey, and contribute the best we can to the consummation of the hopes and the realisation of the dreams of the resurgent East rising from its stupor of centuries, and rightfully yearning once more to be strong and brave and free ; and to contribute again and yet again as it has so bountifully done in the remote past, in the enriching of the life and the ennobling of the thought of Man.

Motion on His Excellency's Address

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Under rule 19A of the Assam Legislative Assembly Rules, as adapted, I hereby report to the Assembly that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to make a speech, a copy of which is laid on each Member's table.

I have received notice of a Motion from Srijut Purna Chandra Sarma which is as follows:—

“That a respectful address be presented to His Excellency the Governor of Assam as follows:—

‘Your Excellency,

We the members of the Assam Legislative Assembly assembled in this Session offer our humble thanks to Your Excellency for the most illuminating speech which Your Excellency has delivered to this House’.”

I hereby fix Tuesday, the 14th March, 1950 as the date for discussion of the Motion or matters referred to in His Excellency's speech. This will be taken up as the first item immediately after “Questions” on that day.

Notice of any amendment to the Motion or the address made by His Excellency the Governor may be given so as to reach the Assembly Secretariat before 3 P. M., today.

Srijut PURNA CHANDRA SARMA: মাননীয় অধ্যক্ষ ডাঙৰীয়া, মই প্ৰস্তাৱ কৰো যে—

“Your Excellency, We the members of the Assam Legislative Assembly assembled in this session offer our humble thanks to Your Excellency for the most illuminating speech which Your Excellency has delivered to this House.”

এই প্ৰস্তাৱ সমৰ্থন কৰি বেচি কথা কোৱাৰ কোনো আৱশ্যক বিবেচনা নকৰো। তথাপি আমাৰ ৰাজ্যপাল ডাঙৰীয়াই আমাৰ জাতিৰ নেতা আৰু জাতিৰ পিতা মহাত্মা গান্ধীৰ ছবিখন আজি আমাৰ এই সভাৰ সন্মুখত মুকলি কৰি দিয়াৰ বাবে তেখেতলৈ আমাৰ শলাগৰ শব্দই আগবঢ়াইছো। নতুন বিধান মতে হোৱা এই প্ৰথম বিধান সভাত আমাৰ জাতিৰ পিতাৰ ছবিখন আমাৰ সন্মুখত পুতিয়া কৰিবলৈ সুযোগ পাই আজি আমি নিজকে ভাগ্যবান মনে কৰিছো। মোৰ বোধেৰে এই ছবিখনে আমাৰ সকলোকে কৰ্তব্য পথত অগ্ৰসৰ হবলৈ উদগনি দিব।

তাৰ পিচত আমাৰ ৰাজ্যপাল মহোদয়ে আজি এই বিধান সভাত যিবিলাক সমস্যা সম্বন্ধে ইঙ্গিত কৰিলে, সেই বিলাক সমস্যা সমাধানাত আমাৰ গভৰ্ণমেণ্টে যিবিলাক নীতি বা কাৰ্য্যপন্থা গ্ৰহণ কৰিব, তাত আমাৰ সকলোৰে সহায় আৰু সহযোগ নিশ্চয় থাকিব। এই বিধান সভাৰ তৰফৰ পৰা স্পষ্টকৈ ইয়াকে কব পাৰো যে আমাৰ গভৰ্ণমেণ্টে এই সমস্যাবোৰৰ সমাধান কৰে বা দেশত শান্তি আৰু শৃংখলা ৰক্ষাৰ কাৰণে যিকোনো সহায়, সহযোগ বা সুবিধা বিচাৰিব, মোৰ বিশ্বাস তাক আমাৰ সকলোৰে পৰা পাব।

ইংৰাজী ১৯৫০ চনৰ ২৬ জানুৱাৰীৰ পৰা আমি সৰ্ববৃত্তোভাৱে স্বাধীন আৰু পৃথিৱীৰ যিকোনো স্বাধীন দেশৰ নাগৰিকৰ সমকক্ষ আৰু অধিকাৰ সম্পন্ন হलो। কাজেই এতিয়াৰে-পৰা ভাৰতৰ সংবিধান সত্ত্বে যিকোনো কাম বা অনুষ্ঠান কৰিব লাগিলে তাক আমি নিজে স্বতন্ত্ৰ ভাবে কৰিব লাগিব। সেই কাম বা অনুষ্ঠান সম্পন্ন কৰিবলৈ স্বাধীন দেশৰ নাগৰিক হিচাবে আমাৰ যি কৰ্তব্য, সেই কৰ্তব্য পালনত আমাৰ পক্ষৰ পৰা কোনো ত্ৰুটি নেপাব বৰং গভৰ্ণমেণ্টে আমাৰ পৰা সকলো বকমৰ সহযোগহে সদায় পাব। সবশেষত আমাৰ তৰফৰ পৰা আশ্বাস দি ৰাজ্যপাল মহোদয়ক শলাগ জনাবলৈ বুলি মই এই প্ৰস্তাৱ দাঙি ধৰিলো।

Mrs. BONILY KHONGMEN: Sir, I beg to second the Motion moved by my hon. Friend Srijut Purna Chandra Sarma, the Chief Whip of our Party, that we the Members of this House should offer our thanks for the illuminating speech made by the His Excellency the Governor of Assam.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned for lunch till 1.20 P.M.

After lunch.

Statement regarding course of Government Business

The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI: With your permission, Sir, I desire to make a statement about the course of Government Business during this Session.

2. The Government Business which is to be taken up today, tomorrow and till the forenoon of the 16th March is shown in the agenda which has been placed on each Member's table. I need not detail it again. If the motions for taking into consideration the Bills mentioned in the agenda are carried by the House on any of the days mentioned above, we propose that (1) The Assam Local Board Elections (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 1950, (2) The Assam Amusement and Betting Tax (Amendment) Bill, 1950, (3) The Assam Sales Tax (Amendment) Bill, 1950, (4) The Assam Stamp (Amendment) Bill, 1950, (5) The Assam Court-Fees (Amendment) Bill, 1950 and (6) The Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 1950 be considered clause by clause and then be passed on the 30th March 1950 and the rest on the 3rd and 4th April. We propose to move for consideration of the Assam Finance Bill, 1950 on the 30th March and to have it considered clause by clause and then passed on the very same day.

If the motions for taking into consideration of the Assam Contingency Fund Bill, 1950 and the Assam Appropriation Bill, 1950 sought to be introduced on the 18th and 28th March respectively be accepted on those days, we propose to have these Bills also considered clause by clause and then passed on the 30th March, 1950. We propose to present the Authenticated Schedule of Authorised Expenditure in relation to Supplementary Demands for Grants for 1949-50 on this day also i.e. 30th March.

3. On the 16th March (from 1 P.M. or earlier on that day if time permits) 17th and 18th March we also propose to take up the following Government Business in addition to the Bill fixed for the 18th March as stated above:—

(1) General discussion of the Budget.

(2) Discussion, if any of the estimates of expenditure charged upon the Consolidated Fund of the State.

(3) Presentation of the Supplementary Statement of Expenditure for 1949-50.

4. We propose to take up voting on Demands for Grants on the 20th, 21st, 23rd, 24th, 25th and 27th March.

5. On the 28th March we propose to take up the following Government Business in addition to the Assam Appropriation Bill, 1950 as mentioned above:—

(1) Discussion, if any, of Supplementary Statement of Expenditure charged upon the Revenues of the State during 1949-50.

(2) Voting on Demands for Supplementary Grants.

6. Any Government Bill fixed for 30th March, 1950, if remains unfinished on that day will be taken up on the 31st March. On that day we also propose to take up the following Government Business:—

(1) Presentation of the Report of the Select Committee on the Assam Non-Agricultural Urban Areas Tenancy Bill, 1950 and Motion for consideration of the Bill as reported by the Select Committee.

(2) Introduction and motion for consideration of (i) The Assam Cement Control (Amendment) Bill, 1950, (ii) The Assam Forest Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 1950, and (iii) The Assam Enhanced Police Disciplinary Powers Bill, 1950.

7. On the 3rd and 4th April we propose to take up the following Government Business in addition to the Bills fixed for those days as stated above:—

(1) Presentation of the Finance Account and Appropriation Report for 1947-48.

(2) Presentation of Amendments to the Assam Primary Education Rules.

(3) Consideration of Amendments to the Assam Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940, item by item and motion for their adoption (in case there is notice for further amendments).

8. Any Government Business which remains unfinished on previous days will be taken up on the 6th April, 1950. On that day we also propose to have the following Bills considered clause by clause and then to move that they be passed:—

(1) The Assam Non-Agricultural Urban Areas Tenancy Bill, 1950 as reported by the Select Committee ;

(2) The Assam Cement Control (Amendment) Bill, 1950 ;

(3) The Assam Forest Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 1950 ; and

(4) The Assam Enhanced Police Disciplinary Powers Bill, 1950.

Oath of allegiance

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member Srijut Bhadra Kanta Gogoi is present, will he kindly take his oath ?

The following member was sworn in :—

Srijut Bhadra Kanta Gogoi.

Presentation of the Budget for the year 1950-51 and Budget Speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister

The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI: Mr. Speaker,

Sir, as I rise to present the Annual Statement and Budget estimate of Receipt and Expenditure of the State of Assam for the year 1950-51 under Article 202 of the Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Bharat, I am fully conscious of having the unique honour and privilege of presenting the first Budget after the proclamation of India, *i. e.*, Bharat as a Sovereign Democratic Republic. I consider it a historic and unique occasion and count it as a rare privilege that the duty has fallen on my humble self as Finance Minister of presenting the first Budget of the State of Assam forming the most important strategic North-East Frontier of the Sovereign Republic of Bharat.

The birth of India as Sovereign Democratic Republic, with her Constitution guaranteeing :—

- (1) Justice (social, economic and political),
- (2) Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship,
- (3) Equality of status and opportunity to all its citizens, and
- (4) Promoting fraternity amongst the people who inhabit this vast country and follow different religions, speak various languages,

marks the consummation of one important phase of our national struggle and fulfilment of the pledge taken by us some 20 years ago under the command of the Indian National Congress and under the guidance of Mahatmaji.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not remember the Father and the maker of the Indian Nation and Apostle of Truth and Non-violence, who by a magic "Mantra" inspired a new life and kindled a new hope and led us to this glorious temple of freedom, and pay my respectful homage and bow down my head to him in reverence. I offer my humble tribute also to those known and unknown men, women, young and old who sacrificed their lives and fell martyrs during the non-violent struggle.

I convey my congratulations also to our patriotic leaders who as members of the Constituent Assembly accomplished a task of such a tremendous magnitude which they had undertaken about three years ago after taking over power by the accredited leaders and the

representative of the people. The passage of the Constitution which will govern more than 32 crores of people will mark a landmark in the history of the struggle for Indian independence. It is up to us now to re-dedicate our lives to preserve and protect the independence we have won and make it really bear fruit for the common man in the street. The country which we had inherited from the British was in a chaotic condition with all elements scattered in fragmentary manner. When the British decided to leave this country, they transferred the power on condition of accepting the division of India. They also further declared that all the treaties and engagements, they had with the different Princes of about 600 States covering more than one-third of the territory of India and one-fourth of the population of the country, had lapsed.

With the declaration that the treaties and paramountcy had lapsed, it was open to any Prince or any combination of them to assume independence and even enter into negotiations with any foreign power and thus become islands of independent territory within the country. It must be said to the credit of the States Ministry under the wise and far-sighted guidance of our Deputy Prime Minister that by the time the Constitution was getting ready the States are more or less in the same position as the provinces and it has become possible to describe them including the Indian States and provinces as States in the Constitution. During this period, it had not only been possible to integrate about 600 States into homogeneous units, and to set up Tribal republics for Tribal areas but also to convert the whole of this vast land, extending from Kashmir in the North to Cape Comorin in the South, from Kamrupa and Cocanada in the East to Kathiawad and Kutch in the West, into a homogeneous country under a strong Central Government with a Federal structure.

The two outstanding facts which symbolised the re-birth of India as an independent country were the territorial integration and the democratic political structure embodied in the Constitution based on adult franchise. The mere coming into being of a State with an area of over 1,200,000 sq. miles and a population of more than 32 crores with an electorate forming about one twentieth of the total population of the world under a single authority is a fact of major significance.

It is gratifying to note that the Tribals and the Tribal areas in Assam have been given wider powers through their District Councils and autonomous Regional Councils. The 25 Khasi States covering an area of 6,020 sq. miles with a population of one lakh and twenty thousand, voluntarily accepted merger with Assam on the 26th

January 1950 and Constituted themselves with the rest of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills into United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district in order to form an autonomous District Council with wide powers given under the Sixth Schedule. I convey my greetings to the Siems, Myntries and to the people of the various States for their wise decision for constituting an autonomous district with the people of non-State areas.

The Constitution had abolished untouchability and separate electorate with the introduction of the joint electorate on the basis of adult franchise. These are some of the principles advocated by Mahatmaji and had been incorporated in the Constitution (which contains in itself the necessary elements of growth and flexibility and expansion). The people will be free under this Constitution to choose and mould their economic life in any manner they like.

I have been repeating the financial injustices under the Otto Niemeyer Award and the peculiar problems with which we have been confronted since the partition in almost all my budget speeches and indicated reasonable grounds why the Centre should part with more revenue and place adequate funds at the disposal of Assam to bring her administration and social services up to the level of other prosperous States.

✓ Our financial difficulties, however, had further been accentuated by a sudden reduction of the divisible pool of Jute Export Duty and denial of her claim for a share of Export Duty on tea grown in the State, and sudden stoppage of the Post-War Development grants. As a result the State of Assam is practically heading to a financial crisis.

Assam is a strategic State guarding the North-East frontier of India which extends almost 2,200 miles along the boundary of Pakistan, China and Burma. I had indicated last year how as a result of partition the economic life of the entire border areas inhabited by the Tribes and backward people has been upset due to sudden stoppage of normal trade relation by Pakistan and that Government had to commence construction of roads involving huge expenditure for relieving the distress by diversion of trade and rendering other help. ✓

In view of the strained relation between India and Pakistan the situation has still further deteriorated and the normal trade relation had entirely been paralysed. Attempts are also being made to create panic amongst the border people by Pakistan border Forces occasionally trespassing into our area causing harassment to the people and driving Communists and the simple minded Hajongs into our territory

In addition to these, the infiltration of undesirable Muslims into Assam has added to our difficulties.

✓ With forces of Communism raising their heads in land across the border, the undesirables and irresponsible political elements under the inspiration from the people of their way of thinking living in the border, are trying to exploit the ignorant and simple minded people and create trouble, chaos and disorder in the country. It is known that these unsocial elements not only made a few attempts to occupy thana and other places of importance and over-awe the police in the discharge of their duties by violent means, *i.e.*, throwing acid bulbs, bombs, handgrenade, using fire arms, etc., but also went to the length of committing murder, dacoity and arson leading to the destruction of public and private properties. The whole country should fully realise the dangerous activities of these bands of gangsters who are bent on creating chaos and disorder in the country for their own ends. I appeal to all right thinking people to organise defensive measures against such illegal activities and to co-operate with Government in their effort to find out such enemies of our newly born republic.

I gave indication last year why we had to strengthen the Police Force not only in the border areas but in other districts as well for preservation of internal peace and order which is not only essential for well being and development of the State but also for safety and security of the rest of India.

The House will agree with me that the Police Force alone cannot root out the evils of Communism. This can only be effectively met by increasing expenditure on social services for raising the general standard of living of the people whom they exploit and mislead due to their ignorance and by undertaking other ameliorating measures for removal of the root causes of discontent, *viz.*, ignorance, want, disease and squalor.

I have repeated on different occasions and have been trying to impress on the Government of India that the meagre financial resources of the State are unable to bear any additional burden for taking up appropriate measures for solution of all these difficult problems with which Assam has been confronted.

I have made it abundantly clear in successive budget speeches that even after burdening the people with various taxations open to the State, the normal budget could not be balanced, not to speak of undertaking any development measures necessary to meet the basic needs of the province in keeping with its autonomous status and to raise the administrative and social standards to the level obtaining in other States.

I venture to state that in the magnitude and complexity of our vital requirement for development and existence as a strategic frontier province confronted with so many complicated problems created by partition and the Communist menace knocking at the border, we have few equals.

Last year I drew the pointed attention of the House how an *ex parte* decision was taken by the Centre and as a result of such an unilateral action 80 per cent. of the proceeds of Jute Export Duty was being appropriated in place of $37\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., while the provincial divisible pool had been suddenly reduced from $62\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to 20 per cent. in exercise of wide powers under the Provisional Constitutional Orders, 1947. The Government of India Act, Section 140, allocated 50 per cent. as the irreducible minimum of proceeds of Jute Export Duty to the Jute growing provinces, as the only source of elastic revenue and this minimum was raised by an Order in Council to $62\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., the rate at which proceeds of Jute Export Duty used to be distributed since the Otto Niemeyer Award, till it was suddenly reduced in 1947-48 without examination of the needs of the State.

This unilateral action of the Government of India in reducing the divisible pool in 1948 has cost this State over $1\frac{1}{2}$ crores during the last two years. This amount as anticipated by me would have wiped out not only the budget deficit but would have enabled the State to continue some Post-War Development Schemes.

But on the other hand the Government of India had appropriated Rs.14,00 lakhs (in 1948-50) in place of Rs.6,56 lakhs calculated at the rate of $37\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Thus it is apparent that Government of India became the sole beneficiary of this wind-fall to the extent of Rs.7,44 lakhs by this unilateral action causing our budgetary difficulties, although the adverse effect of partition of India have been felt by the border States like Assam which have been confronted with so many problems awaiting solution, as a direct result of this partition.

I was greatly disappointed to find that Shri Chintamon Deshmukh did not go into the question how Assam and other Jute growing States had been adversely affected and how their budgetary position has been upset by the unilateral action of the Government of India by sudden reduction of the divisible pool of Jute Export Duty from $62\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to 20 per cent. when Assam was badly in need of financial help to wipe out her deficit but passed his so-called Award on the unilateral decision of Government of India reducing the divisible pool without examination of the question *denovo* to see if such decision was justified.

He has not also taken into consideration the basic financial needs and requirements of an undeveloped border State like Assam confronted with various difficulties arising out of partition and Communist forces raising their heads all along the border, in allocating the released percentage of Income Tax, almost the entire portion of which should have been distributed to the States adversely affected by partition.

By this decision he has not only given a fresh lease of life to the injustice under which Assam had been labouring under Otto Niemeyer Award but also deprived her of the only benefit that might have accrued to her after the partition, by maintaining the unilateral action of the Government of India on the basis of which compensation of Rs.40 lakhs only has been allotted to Assam. I had already stated how the wind-fall was appropriated entirely by the Government of India at the sacrifice of Jute growing States. In fact, Assam got Rs.44 lakhs in 1947-48 and on the basis of figures supplied by Union Government she will get Rs.56 lakhs in 1949-50 but unfortunately the amount has now been reduced by him to Rs.40 lakhs only. The result of maintaining such unilateral action of the Government of India is to leave no incentive to States for growing more Jute.

Article 273 of the Constitution has made one fundamental change vitally affecting Assam regarding allocation of Jute Export Duty. The Article 254 of the Draft Constitution similar to Section 140 of the Government of India Act provided that certain percentage of proceeds of the Jute Export Duty will not form part of the Consolidated Fund of India but will be distributed to the Jute growing Provinces. In view of the persistent, just and reasonable demand from Assam for a substantial share of the Export Duty on tea grown in Assam on the analogy of the Jute Export Duty, responsible quarters felt unable to resist such consistent and just demand with the retention of the draft Clause regarding Jute Export Duty and tried to avoid the embarrassing precedent and opposed the retention of the draft article 254 and pressed for its substitution by Article 273 which takes away by a single stroke the only elastic source of revenue allocated to the most needy States like Assam and deprived her and other States of their legitimate claim for share of Export Duty on tea grown in the respective States.

In view of ultimate purpose of the Constitution for economic betterment of the common man the total amount of State revenue needs to be augmented so that the function imposed on the States relating to Agriculture, Village Industries, Public Health, Medical, Labour Welfare, Road Communication, Development

of Rural Areas, Improvement of Rural Water Supply, Education, Flood Prevention Measures, etc. can be effectively carried out with a view to raise the general standard of the people and serve as a Welfare State.

It is the fundamental objective of the Union and the State Governments forming the Union to achieve all-round progress to improve the standard of living of the common man and to give him a contented and healthier life, free from want and disease. This being the ultimate purpose under the new set up with the establishment of a Sovereign Democratic Republic of Bharat, it is logical to expect that Assam which is yet undeveloped and less prosperous will receive a fair deal and adequate financial help to enable her to get rid of disease, poverty and ignorance and come up to the level of more prosperous Units.

In view of our financial difficulties and special needs of the State I laid great stress last year for assigning at least 75 per cent. of Export Duty on tea produced in Assam and Excise Duty on Tea, Petrol and Kerosene. The total production of Tea in Assam comes to about 350 million lbs., i. e. about two-third of the total production of India. For development and encouragement of this Tea Industry, Assam had to sacrifice not less than 25 crores of rupees in the shape of revenue and other concessions in respect of fee simple and other grants offered at nominal revenue. As a result the most prosperous village industries like silk weaving and rearing which were once the pride of the Province gradually went into decay for want of adequate financial help and the population become solely dependent on agriculture. But for this concession it is doubtful if the Tea Industry which is one of the best dollar earners now would have developed and have such prosperity and enabled the Centre to raise annually 2 crores of rupees in the shape of Excise Duty and about 3 crores of rupees in the shape of Export Duty. Besides, Central Government annually derived revenue of about 2 crores of rupees by way of Excise Duty on crude oil and its products, produced in Assam for the past twenty years. The process which enables the Central Government to collect and appropriate this Duty causes irreparable loss to the State's natural resources and the only legitimate use of such revenue is to make at least some portions of it available for the development of the State which is being exhausted of its natural resources in this process. A sum of about 6 lakhs annually realised as royalty is insignificant and insufficient to make up for this loss. Assam contributes at enormous sacrifice annually more than 9 crores to the Central coffer and receives an insignificant sum of Rs.30 lakhs as subvention. The provision in Article 272 of the Constitution is meant to treat such Excise Duties as a balancing factor to impart

elasticity to financial structures between the Union and the States as envisaged in the Constitution.

In view of the impending financial crisis with which the State is confronted due to stoppage of Post-War Grants, it is essential that under Article 272 of the Constitution, Parliament should provide by legislation that at least 75 per cent. of Excise Duty on Tea, Petrol and Kerosene and increased grants-in-aid under Article 275 should be made available to Assam to meet her basic needs and to enable her to continue such essential development and welfare schemes undertaken to raise the standard of living of the people and to bring her up to the level of other prosperous states and maintain her autonomous character.

In refuting the suggestion that there was a kind of conflict between the financial objectives of the Centre and the States, Hon'ble Dr. John Matthai, Finance Minister, is reported to have stated that "nothing would be farther from truth than this. As things are shaping to-day and as we are realising more and more the need of the united structure for the country both politically and economically the identity of interests between the Centre and the State is absolutely complete. If for example in the operation of provision of any of the Article relating to finance it is found that the finances of a State are rendered difficult, it was a problem which will cause anxiety not merely to the State but to the Centre as well. Therefore if the operation of any provision was going to have the effect of causing budgetary difficulties to any State, it would be in the interest of the Centre as it was in the interest of the State to see that necessary adjustments were made in that matter".

In view of the above declaration, I now request him to act up to his declaration and come to our rescue and provide sufficient money as indicated by me by making necessary adjustment to save Assam from a financial crisis due to circumstances stated above and earn the gratitude of an undeveloped State by rendering adequate financial help to wipe out the deficit and to carry on her essential development schemes to meet her basic needs.

Under the circumstances unless adequate and sufficient help in the shape of grants-in-aid be made available from the Consolidated Fund of India under Article 275(2) by the President pending setting up of a Finance Commission and legislation by Parliament to wipe out the deficit amounting to about 87 lakhs to enable us to start with a clean slate after the inauguration of the new Constitution, Assam will have to remain undeveloped and continue her career with an unjust financial handicap which will be beyond her ability to make up. The maintenance of high standard of efficiency in administration in the strategic frontier province and social service is a matter of All-India importance. It will be a potential danger

to the whole of India if for want of adequate fund she is unable to raise the efficiency of administration and improve the standard of living of the common man and to give him contented and healthier life. It is expected that this aspect will be fully appreciated and taken into consideration by Hon'ble Prime Minister and Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister and other Members of the Central Cabinet and the President and provision will be made by them to find out money to meet the basic needs of the State. In comparison to the subvention per annum of one crore and one crore and ten lakhs given to North-West Frontier Province and Sind respectively at the time of inauguration of the Government of India Act, 1935, our claim for Rs.87 lakhs only at the commencement of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Bharat seems to be very moderate.

I am emboldened to press this demand by the recent declaration made by our President to the effect that those who are backward in the race for life deserve and claim measure for bringing them into line with others.

A notable feature of the Constitution and one which we welcome is the provision made in Article 275 by which we can expect an adequate grants-in-aid out of the Consolidated Fund of India to cover the capital and recurring expenditure of schemes of development as has been undertaken with the approval of the Government of India for promotion and welfare of the Scheduled Tribes, *e. g.* Kachari, Mikir, Miris, Nagas, Khasis, etc. and for raising the level of administration and social services of the Scheduled Areas forming about two-third the areas of the State of Assam to that of the level of administration of the rest of Assam. A three-year plan involving an expenditure of about 80 lakhs has been prepared and forwarded to Government of India for approval.

In addition to such development Schemes, Assam is entitled, under the same Article, to be paid out of the Consolidated Fund of India as grants-in-aid to the revenue of the State of Assam, sum (capital and recurring) equivalent to the average excess of expenditure over the revenue during the two calendar years immediately preceding the commencement of the Constitution in respect of the administration of the Tribal Areas specified in the Schedule VI which amounts to Rs.34 lakhs. Besides, we are entitled to a sum of Rs.30 lakhs necessary for financing the continuance of the development schemes already started with the approval of the Government of India in those areas. These two amounts however are likely to be increased by Rs.46 lakhs in case the cost of construction of the portion of Jowai-Haflong-Silchar Road falling within scheduled areas is taken into consideration at the time of calculation of the amount under the Article. We have already moved Government of India for inclusion of these two items also under the Article. It is

expected that these two amounts will be available to reduce our deficit of Rs.87 lakhs to 11 lakhs only.

I need hardly explain the importance of the provision for setting up a Commission under Article 280 within two years of the commencement of the Constitution and thereafter at the expiration of every fifth year for periodic review and investigation of the financial position and needs of the different States and the Union so that a system of distribution of Revenue, both fair and scientific, can be evolved to the satisfaction of all. India forms an economic unit with the component parts, *viz.*, the States. In view of the fact that economic life is undivisible and economic forces represent no political boundaries it may be necessary in the new system to treat Centre as a suitable agency for levying taxes on behalf of the Units and for distribution of the proceeds on rational and scientific basis to the benefit of the entire country.

To enable the Commission to come to a correct decision accurate and comprehensive statistics will be indispensable. It is therefore necessary to take steps to collect, compile and maintain statistical information on certain basic matters, such as, value, volume and distribution of production, distribution of income, the incidence of taxes, both Central and State, the consumption of important commodities, particularly those that are taxed and likely to be taxed, etc. It is expected that the Statistics Department started by us will collect necessary data in support of our claim for a just and fair deal regarding distribution of revenue.

For want of adequate finance, we had no alternative but to include (under the Five-Year Post-War Development Plan) almost all schemes of reconstruction for establishment of institutions for training of personnel as well as such other institutions and measures we considered absolutely essential for equipping the State for its autonomous role and for well-being of the people and for meeting basic needs of the State with the expectation of getting sufficient grant from the Centre until a more generous financial settlement is arrived at. We simultaneously pressed for a fair and scientific financial settlement regarding allocation of revenue between the Centre and States, with the expectation that Assam would receive a fair deal in the new set-up of things, to enable her to meet the additional recurring expenditure at the end of the completion of the Post-War Development programme approved and financed by the Centre.

After partition we revised our plan as desired by the Government of India by omitting expenditure for schemes located in Pakistan (Sylhet). This revised scheme involving expenditure of about 40 crores was approved by the Government of India after scrutiny by all the Administrative Departments and Planning Department. We started work on definite promise of assistance from the Government of India.

We are grateful to the Government of India, specially to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, for accepting our reasonable demand and for assistance they have given so far in financing such schemes in recognition of the special needs of Assam, which had suffered war damages, and occupies the most strategic position as a frontier State, confronted with so many problems.

We are also grateful to them for generously waiving the condition of contributing 50 per cent. for Post-War Development expenditure out of the State resources for these years.

In view of the approaching financial difficulties and in the light of the advice given by the Government of India, construction of concrete and permanent buildings for location of the various institutions was postponed as an anti-inflationary measure and a modest revised Post-War Development programme (contained in the 4th Draft) involving an expenditure of about Rs.12 crores only was prepared by drastic curtailment of expenditure and abandonment of non-essential projects and by slowing down some of these schemes and was submitted to the Government of India for final approval. In preparing the revised programme, projects on which work had not been started to any appreciable extent were postponed for better days. At the same time care was taken not to abandon essential schemes altogether or reduce expenditure in such a way as would result in the wastage of the expenditure already incurred, and great care was taken to include in the revised draft almost all essential projects to meet the basic needs of the State. On the 3rd September 1949 this revised scheme was approved by the Government of India pending final allocation of the financial resources between the Union and the States in the line of the proposed enquiry. A sum of about 3 crores and 25 lakhs was only spent in two years and we expected that the balance of 8 crores and 75 lakhs would be available in the remaining three years ending 31st March, 1952 for implementation of the revised Post-War programme approved by the Government of India. In anticipation of getting, on the average, a grant of rupees 3 crores per annum a budget provision of about 2 crores and 40 lakhs was made for the year 1949-50 as it was considered impossible to reduce the expenditure on the essential development projects any further without detriment to the national welfare. It was also expected that a further sum of Rs.3 crores and 5 lakhs would be available for 1950-51 for cotinuanace of the projects already approved in the 4th Draft Scheme.

The Government of Assam was going ahead with these schemes approved by the Government of India in full speed on the basis of such firm promise and assurance of full financial assistance to meet the entire expenditure required for them without any

contribution from the State revenue. After we had proceeded on with the various schemes in full speed, the Union Government in the middle of the year, *i. e.* about a month after the approval of the schemes, suddenly without any previous warning, informed by their letter, dated the 2nd of October, 1949 that Assam had been allotted only Rs.160 lakhs including Rs.23 lakhs earmarked for grow-more-food schemes for the year 1949-50 as development grant in place of the expected amount of 2 crores and 40 lakhs (the minimum requirement for the year), and that they are examining the position regarding grants for 1950-51 and subsequently by their letter of the 29th October, 1949 informed that it would not be possible to assist the State at all by way of grant for financing the development schemes for the year 1950-51. It was unfortunate that the Government of India had to come to such a decision vitally affecting the State like Assam without ascertaining the amount of irrevokable commitment made by them on the basis of the firm promise and assurance of the Government of India and how the stoppage of such grants will retard the progress of this undeveloped State. The stoppage of Government of India's contribution amounting to not more than 20 per cent. of the total expenditure required for development programme of more prosperous and developed States which are rich enough to meet the balance of 80 per cent. out of their own revenue, does not affect them much as it means that they may go on with the different schemes after reducing the expenditure by 20 per cent. In case of Assam, however, where the Government of India took the entire responsibility of financing Post-War development schemes approved by them in consideration of the special problems and the needs, the sudden reduction of the grant in the year 1949-50 from 2 crores and 40 lakhs to 160 lakhs and the sudden stoppage of total grant of 3 crores 5 lakhs for the year 1950-51 amounts to forcing the State of Assam to abandon all development schemes. The result is likely to lead to the huge wastage of money and also to retard the progress of an undeveloped State in her efforts to meet the basic needs of the people.

The responsibility under the circumstances, rests entirely with the Government of India to find out money to enable the State to round up the plans and the schemes so that the amount already spent may not be wasted and that the State can go slowly and continue other essential schemes with the minimum expenditure.

I am sure the Union Government under pressing necessity of combating the unsatisfactory financial position had to stop the development grant as a measure of economy to reduce the budgetary gap and desires us to help the Centre in this economy drive.

Assam forms an integral part of the economic Unit of the Indian Union and cannot afford to be idle spectator while the whole country is passing through an economic crisis but must play her part and help herself as well as the Union Government for improvement of the financial position in order to raise the prestige of the new Sovereign Democratic Republic of Bharat and play her part in bridging the budgetary gap as far as possible by reduction of expenditure and by augmenting the revenue wherever possible so that we may relieve the Centre by refraining from asking the Centre for help, except when it is unavoidable till by our joint efforts we succeed in tiding over the impending financial crisis. With the abundance of good will and sympathy of Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister and their desire to help Assam and consider her claim as a first charge on any amount that may be scrapped by the Finance Ministry, I am sure, our efforts will be appreciated, and we will ultimately succeed in getting a fair deal in the matter of allocation of revenue between the Centre and Assam, and adequate financial assistance as soon as the financial position of the Centre improves.

I hope in this background I will get the help and co-operation and whole-hearted support of the Hon'ble Members of this House and the country at large in our proposal for reduction of expenditure and for increasing the revenue to bridge the budgetary gap as far as possible.

I have thus given a general background of our financial and other difficulties and the problems that have confronted us due to partition and other factors. I hope, Sir, that the review of the financial position which I now proceed to make would be considered and judged by the Hon'ble Members of the House against the background of events and problems I have just narrated. In taking the Hon'ble Members through the Budget Estimates I propose to refer only the important variations, as the Budget Memorandum containing all details, I presume, had already been examined by the Hon'ble Members of the House.

I draw the attention of the Hon'ble Members to the accounts of the year 1948-49 as it will be convenient to compare the actuals of that year with the original Budget Estimates.

Actuals of 1948-49.—The anticipated revenue deficit in the Budget for 1948-49 was Trs.1,49,59, but the net result of the actuals, however, reduced the deficit to Trs.32,01 as shown in the table given below for ready reference :—

	Budget, 1948-49	Revised, 1948-49	Actuals, 1948-49	+ or -
	Trs.	Trs.	Trs.	Trs.
Revenue Receipts .	13,11,62	7,94,67	9,23,68	+1,29,01
Revenue Expenditure ...	14,61,21	8,21,67	9,55,69	+1,34,02
	<hr/> —1,49,59	<hr/> —27,00	<hr/> —32,01	<hr/> ...

		Budget, 1948-49	Revised, 1948-49	Actuals, 1948-49	+ or -
		Trs.	Trs.	Trs.	Trs.
Capital Receipts	...	11,28,21	14,80,21	34,41,01	+19,60,80
Capital Expenditure	...	10,90,60	12,45,97	34,21,75	+21,75,78
		+37,61	+2,34,24	+19,26	...
Total Receipts	...	24,39,83	22,74,88	43,64,69	+20,89,81
Total Expenditure	...	25,51,81	20,67,64	43,77,44	+23,09,80
		-1,11,98	+2,07,24	-12,75	...
Opening Balance	...	3,20,91	2,33,46	2,33,46	...
Closing Balance	...	2,08,93	4,40,70	2,20,71	-2,19,99

From the above table it will appear that the actual revenue receipt was up by Trs.1,29,01 while the revenue expenditure also went up by Trs.1,34,02. The receipts under Capital and Debt heads as well as expenditure under these heads were up by Trs.19,60,80 and Trs.21,75,78 respectively while the total receipt as well as expenditure went up by Trs.20,89,81 and Trs.23,09,80, respectively. The net result was to reduce the closing balance by Trs.2,19,99 (*i.e.* from Trs.4,40,70 to Trs.2,20,71) as shown at page 7 of the Budget Memorandum.

The taxes on income showed a decided improvement due to a larger share of Income Tax and better collection of Agricultural Income Tax. Improvement was also shown under the heads—Customs, Land Revenue, Excise, Forest, Other Taxes, Contributions and Civil Works, etc., while receipts under Jails, Police, Agriculture, etc., went down. Expenditure under Education, Forest, Civil Works, etc., went up while the same under Other Taxes, etc., went down. The remarkable increase in expenditure by Trs.14,18 was due mainly to increased grants to aided colleges and schools and grants to non-government Primary schools for taking up large number of Venture schools.

Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Works show a considerable increase in expenditure due to the taking up of several important schemes for prevention of flood and erosion.

Civil works and Development schemes also record a large increase due to the satisfactory progress of important projects.

Other variations are shown in detail in the Budget Memorandum.

A loan of Trs.44,00 to revitalise the Co-operative Credit Movement, of Trs.1,00 to finance Co-operative Marketing and Trs.3,00 for construction of residential buildings of Assam Medical College was taken. The expenditure on Capital outlay on schemes of State Trading increased to the extent of Trs.2,40,48 as explained in the Memorandum.

Revised Estimates for 1949-50.—Turning now to the current year, the table below will explain the position for 1949-50 in relation to the Budget Estimates for the coming year :—

		Budget, 1949-50	Revised, 1949-50	+ or —	Budget, 1950-51
		Trs.	Trs.	Trs.	Trs.
Revenue Receipts	...	8,91,77	9,07,42	+15,65	9,01,64
Revenue Expenditure	...	9,52,35	9,66,28	+13,93	9,88,53
		<u>—60,58</u>	<u>—58,86</u>	<u>+1,72</u>	<u>—86,89</u>
Capital Receipts	...	13,58,67	15,77,52	+2,18,85	16,89,73
Capital Expenditure	...	15,61,58	16,02,52	+40,94	15,60,20
		<u>—2,02,91</u>	<u>—25,00</u>	<u>+1,77,91</u>	<u>+1,29,53</u>
Total Receipts	...	22,50,44	24,84,94	+2,34,50	25,91,37
Total Expenditure	...	25,13,93	25,68,80	+54,87	25,48,73
		<u>—2,63,49</u>	<u>—83,86</u>	...	...
Opening balance	...	4,40,70	2,20,71	...	...
		<u>—2,63,49</u>	<u>—83,86</u>	...	...
Closing balance	...	1,77,21	1,36,85	40,36	1,79,49

The budget estimates for 1949-50 were framed with a full realisation of the necessity of giving effect to schemes for improvement of the villages, to ameliorate the lot of the common man and to maintain and develop those institutions which were meant for turning out trained personnel to carry out the schemes of national betterment. At the same time our enthusiasm was tempered by a realisation that funds to the required extent will not be available. Though Government of India promised a Post-War Reconstruction grant of Rs. 1,60,00,000 only for the year, the original budget provided for a contribution of Trs.2,30,00 as indicated in the beginning. It was hoped that after the solution of the Hyderabad and Kashmir problems Government of India will be in a position to come to the succour of this undeveloped province and will reconsider the urgency of raising the grant, as a special case, to about Trs. 2,40,00 at least.

But the expectation did not materialise. The problem of Kashmir was not solved. Food imports continued. Stabilisation of prices could not be achieved, and a continuous adverse balance of Inter-national payments forced us to devalue the rupee in terms of the dollar. As a consequence of all these the Government of India had to drastically cut down all expenditure including Post-War Reconstruction grants. Far from raising the grant, even the promised grants to several States were reduced. On our persistent representation to Government of India and to the Hon'ble Prime Minister and the Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister for increased Post-War Reconstruction grant of Rs.240 lakhs for 1949-50 to meet our basic needs, the grant was not reduced to a figure less than that for the preceding year as stated at the beginning. We are however greatly disappointed as our anticipated grant under Post-War Development was reduced by 70 lakhs from the budgetted amount.

This forced us to reduce the expenditure on most of our important development projects.

Due to the reduction of the budgetted and anticipated Post-War development grant by Trs. 70,00 and to the increase of expenditure mainly by Trs. 21,00 under Education the anticipated deficit of Trs. 60,58 should have shot up to over $1\frac{1}{2}$ crore of rupees. But I am glad to inform the Honble Members that the deficit under the Revised Estimates is only Trs. 58,86, i.e., less than the anticipated deficit.

This happy event has been brought about by a combination of increase in receipts under certain heads and reduction of expenditure under certain heads.

Revenue Receipts.—Receipts show considerable increase particularly under *Customs*—owing to larger share of Jute Duty, *Income Tax*—due to larger share of the tax; *Excise*—due to increase in Vend fees; *Forest*—owing to a good market; *Other Taxes and Duties*—owing to improvement in management and collection of taxes on Trades, Professions and Callings.

Revenue Expenditure.—Although the revenue expenditure under various service heads has had to be curtailed owing to decrease in Post-War Grants and also in an attempt to reduce the deficit, reduction of expenditure had not been possible under the following heads for reasons stated below:—*Land Revenue*—owing to Resettlement operations in 5 districts, *Jails*—owing to increase of Jail population; *Police*—owing to need for greater vigilance to counteract the activities of anti-social elements and undesirable foreigners.

The original budget provided for a capital outlay of Trs.1,69,00 while the Revised provides for Trs. 1,72 only for financing the Sugar Projects at Bokajan and for the Textile machineries for which orders

were placed in 1948-49. Provision for a loan of Trs.58,00 to be obtained from Government of India to finance the rehabilitation of the Co-operative Credit Movement through the Apex Bank was made in the current year's budget.

The Revised estimates a closing balance of Trs.1,36,85 against the original estimate of Trs.1,77,21. The decrease is due mainly to increase in expenditure under Debt and Deposit head.

The following table shows at a glance how allotments of Post-War Reconstruction grants to different Departments had to be reduced suddenly when Government of India informed that our anticipated grant had been reduced to Rs.160 lakhs.

Heads				Allotment under the original budget for 1949-50	Allotment made under the Fourth Draft	Allotment as reduced
				Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1.—Forest...	...	...	...	12,00,000	12,00,000	9,84,640
2.—P.W.D., including N. E. D.	...	...	...	93,44,000	60,00,000	55,00,000
3.—Education	...	...	...	20,09,000	49,24,960	21,35,420
4.—Agriculture (Excluding G. M. F.)	...	...	...	41,57,000	7,96,404	6,17,404
5.—Medical	...	...	...	14,02,000	30,30,818	29,73,400
6.—Public Health...	...	...	...	14,03,000	12,03,408	3,79,581
7.—Co-operation	...	...	...	4,02,000	3,89,673	2,77,644
8.—Rural Development	...	...	...	17,74,000	17,97,878	10,73,000
9.—Cottage Industries	...	...	...	3,58,000	3,05,934	70,000
10.—Veterinary	...	...	...	3,03,000	4,50,000	3,80,040
11.—Sericulture and Weaving	...	...	...	3,58,000	4,07,001	1,87,000
12.—General Administration and Miscellaneous.	...	...	...	6,88,000	12,06,700	10,80,202
13.—High Court	...	...	...	...	...	57,000

Budget for 1950-51.—Before taking the Hon'ble Members through the budget figures for the next year I may be permitted to mention that due to the sudden reduction of Post-War grant for the current year by Rs.70 lakhs and the total stoppage of the Post-War grant, except the amount earmarked for Grow-More-Food Schemes, I had no alternative but to include the most essential Post-War Development Schemes and those which cannot be abandoned without undue wastage in the normal budget of the year 1950-51 after curtailment of expenditure wherever possible for the current year as

well as in the next year. In selecting the schemes two important basic principles have been borne in mind, *viz.*—

(1) Schemes which go to the benefit of the villagers should have a priority.

(2) The institutions meant for training of personnel must be continued and maintained even in hired houses so as to meet the basic needs of the State.

The table below will show the provisions of Development grants for selected schemes under different Departments in 1950-51 as well as the estimated expenditure on those schemes in the 4th Draft involving 12 crores for 1950-51.

1	Expenditure estimated for 1950-51 under 4th Draft			Budget estimate for 1950-51		
	Non-recurring	Recurring	Total	Non-recurring	Recurring	Total
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Trs.	Trs.	Trs.
10.—Forest	6,44,000	1,38,000	7,82,000	3,00	1,09	4,09
25.—General Administration .. ..	..	1,90,000	1,90,000	3,03	3,72	6,75
37.—Education (General)	70,000	3,32,000	4,02,000	..	3,45	3,45
37.—Education (Basic)	2,91,600	8,74,188	11,65,788	10	6,06	6,16
37.—Education (Technical)	3,71,678	1,28,322	5,00,000	1,66	1,20	2,86
38.—Medical	14,53,000	13,11,000	27,64,000	12,00	13,94	25,94
29.—Public Health	20,000	2,92,600	3,12,600	..	1,99	1,99
40.—Agriculture	5,37,799	9,13,594	14,51,373	1,76	8,71	10,47
41.—Veterinary	71,500	3,78,500	4,00,000	..	2,99	2,99
42.—Co-operation	7,57,686	6,87,683	14,45,069	..	4,03	4,03
42(a).—Rural Development	10,10,000	17,80,000	27,90,000	..	5,04	5,04
43.—Sericulture and Weaving	15,28,800	9,82,100	25,10,900	..	3,03	3,03
43.(a).—Cottage Industries	3,10,303	18,83,760	21,94,063	..	1,00	1,00
47.—Miscellaneous—Hydro-Electricity. .. ..	..	69,000	69,000	..	51	51
48.—Public Works Department	47,90,000	2,10,000	50,00,000	18,04	1,32	19,36
Miscellaneous—(a) Work (b) Maintenance. .. ..	..	..	..	..	1,14	1,14
Total	1,18,56,346	98,20,400	2,16,56,793	39,59	66,22	1,04,21

It will appear that in spite of our financial difficulty and embarrassment due to sudden stoppage of Post-War grant upsetting our budgetary position, I have provided more than a crore of rupees for implementation of the essential schemes which cannot be abandoned without detriment to the national interest and welfare of the State. The estimated expenditure on these schemes have been reduced by retrenchment and by slowing down the schemes wherever possible.

I, however, regret to inform the Hon'ble Members of the House that the Government had most reluctantly to slow down some of these schemes and abandon others involving about 53 lakhs. I may mention also that in our heroic efforts and drive for retrenchment we had the most unpleasant duty of discharging as many as 1,083 persons employed in connection with the various development schemes, with a view to reduce expenditure by Rs.1,265 thousands. Our sympathy will always be with those who had thus been thrown out of employment. Government will endeavour to absorb as many of them as possible for utilising their valuable services as soon as financial position is improved and stabilised. The reduction of Rs.282 lakhs, which was considered as irreducible minimum after drastic cut in preparing a twelve crore plan for essential development of the State, to Rs.104 lakhs will inevitably retard rapid development of the Province and prevent extension of the benefits under Rural Development Schemes as rapidly as we desire to do so. But in view of the compelling circumstances stated before I had this unpleasant task of curtailing expenditure to Rs.104 lakhs as I consider it undesirable to increase the budgetary gap by taking up the full burden of Rs.282 lakhs which is beyond the capacity of the State to bear.

I may further state for the information of the House that the Government have undertaken to explore avenues of economy and to reduce expenditure to the minimum in various Departments consistent with efficiency and propose to examine this matter in detail after the Budget Session with a view to save some money by reduction of expenditure wherever possible and to utilise the saving for extending the benefits under the Rural Development Scheme to other areas.

We have already introduced a scheme of compulsory cut in pay in the case of the highest paid public servants and a compulsory saving by contribution to the Provident Fund in the case of public servants of certain other categories. His Excellency the Governor, the Hon'ble Ministers and the Hon'ble Speaker have also accepted

a voluntary cut of salary ranging from 15 per cent. to 10 per cent., and I convey my thanks to them for their good gesture which will help in focussing the urgency of economy in all our Departments.

In absence of any new field for taxation we have no alternative but to make the last heroic effort for augmenting our revenue by increasing the rates of taxes imposed by the different Acts in force now.

(1) The rates of Entertainment Tax under the Amusement and Betting Tax Act is considerably lower than that in West Bengal and other States. It is therefore proposed to introduce a Bill for amending the Act for levying Entertainment Tax on percentage basis and also on complementary tickets. It is further proposed to levy Rs.2 per show.

(2) The Stamp and Court Fee Acts passed in 1899 and 1870 respectively, with the old rates fixed more than half a century ago, are now in force as the amended Acts of 1936 lapsed on 31st December, 1939. Other States have already increased the rate by appropriate amending Acts. It is therefore proposed to introduce two amending Bills for consideration of the House for revising the rates of duties leviable under these Acts to that contained in the amended lapsed Acts of 1936 and to add in a few new items wherever possible.

(3) The existing rates under the Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1936 are considerably lower than those rates in other States. It is therefore proposed to introduce a Bill to amend the Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1936 with a view to raise the rates so as to bring them in conformity with the rates levied in other States.

(4) It is proposed to change the rate of Agricultural Income Tax a little by the Assam Finance Bill to be introduced before the House. The new rate is much lower than that obtaining in Bihar and other States. Bihar has already imposed super tax under the Agricultural Income Tax Act but we do not propose to do so for the present. The rate for the individuals has been maintained as in the present Act but slight modifications have been made in the rate applicable to the Companies to bring it in conformity with the Central Income Rate (excluding Super Tax).

The increase of revenue expected from these measures for levying enhanced rate of taxes is estimated to be about Rs.41 lakhs

and has helped to reduce the budgetary gap by that amount. I hope the Hon'ble Members will give their whole-hearted support to these measures for augmenting our Revenue essential for stabilising our financial position and for helping us in continuing some of the essential schemes.

A sum of Rs.5 lakhs is proposed to be earmarked for improvement of Rural Water Supply and Rural Communications out of these receipts and to increase the amount to Rs.7 lakhs in case the estimated receipts come upto more than our expectation.

The year is expected to start with an Opening Balance of Trs.1,36,85. Total Revenue receipts are estimated at Trs.9,01,64. This appreciable increase over the revised estimates for 1949-50 is due to :—

- (i) estimated proceeds from the enhanced rates of taxation as stated above,
- (ii) an estimated receipt of Trs.34,00 from Government of India on account of the excess of expenditure over Revenue in respect of the Scheduled Areas of the State under Article 275 of the Constitution,
- (iii) an estimated receipt of Trs.20,17 from the Union Government as grant-in-aid for rehabilitation of Refugees, and
- (iv) estimated increase in the yield of some other taxes as will be seen from the financial statement.

The Revenue expenditure for the coming year is estimated at Trs.9,88,53.

Important variations in estimated expenditure are detailed at page 11 of the Memorandum. The only point I would like to bring specifically to the notice of the Hon'ble Members is that despite the stoppage of P. W. Grants we have decided to continue many of the P. W. D. Schemes at a cost of rupees one Crore and four lakhs in 1950-51 out of normal revenues.

Hon'ble Members, I hope, will agree that in spite of the deficit budget, we cannot remain static without responding to the crying needs of the State and the people in the new set-up of things. Every endeavour therefore has been made in the budget to cater to those needs consistent with financial stability.

The details of the New Schemes for the year 1950-51 are given in Appendix A of the Memorandum. These schemes involve a non-recurring expenditure of Rs.2,60,798 and a recurring expenditure of Rs.2,87,837 with an ultimate cost of Rs.2,58,148 and Rs.5,46,327 respectively. The table below compares the budget position with that of 1948-49 and 1949-50 :—

	1948-49	1949-50	1949-50	1950-51
	(Actuals)	(Budget)	(Revised)	(Budget)
	Trs.	Trs.	Trs.	Trs.
Basic Revenue ...	7,63,68	6,54,30	7,47,42	9,01,64
Basic Expenditure ...	7,95,69	7,14,88	8,06,28	9,88,53
	—32,01	—60,58	—58,86	—86,89

From the above table it will be seen that the net result of the year 1950-51 is a revenue deficit of Rs.86,89,000. Our anticipated receipt of Rs.34 lakhs (as grant-in-aid), which does not include the expenditure incurred in the portion of Jowai-Haflong-Silchar Road falling within the Scheduled Areas, is likely to go up by 46 lakhs in case the expenditure on this portion of the road is taken into account in calculating the excess expenditure under Article 275 of the Constitution. The amount will be a charge on the Consolidated Fund of India as stated at the beginning and the State is entitled to get this amount as a grant-in-aid, as well as 30 lakhs as indicated above.

Since our assumption of office it has been our constant and earnest endeavour to provide more money for essential nation building Departments, *viz.*, Education, Communication, Agriculture, Forest, Water Supply, etc. The figures given in the Table next page will indicate how far I have been successful in my efforts in this direction :—

Heads of expenditure	Including Sylhet			Excluding Sylhet			Percent- age
	Expenditure 1944-45 actuals	Percentage of expen- diture	Expenditure 1948-49	Percent- age	Revised ex- penditure 1949-50	Budgetted expendi- ture 1950-51	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
10.—Forests	Trs. 1.84	.3	34.07	3.5	39.33	Trs. 36.39	3.8
18.B.—Navigation Embankment and Works.	3.85	.5	9.63	.1	14.94	8.67	.9
25.—General Administration	46.75	8.5	63.43	6.6	61.56	67.22	6.8
27.—Administration of Justice	13.36	2.4	11.49	1.2	11.49	13.58	1.4
28.—Jails and Convict Settlement	13.39	2.4	14.45	1.5	14.83	14.28	1.4
29.—Police	49.49	9	96.67	1.1	80.05	78.33	8.1
37.—Education	50.67	9	99.08	10.4	132.30	146.80	15.2
48.—Medical	19.55	3.5	26.15	2.7	37.90	39.40	4.09
40.—Agriculture	26.45	4	11.43	1.2	39.61	52.86	5.4
42.—Co-operative Societies	2.88	.5	3.27	.3	4.73	5.27	.5
42.A.—Co-operation R. D.	3.42	.6	....	....	10.50	5.02	.5
43.—Industries S. & W. .. .. .	....	....	1.50	.01	4.75	5.10	.5
50.—Civil Works	57.82	10.5	1,83.65	19.1	2,85.35	2,13.14	22.09

The figures for the year 1950-51 do not include any Post-War Development grants and the figures for 1944-45 (*i. e.*, the year immediately preceding the taking over office by us) include expenditure for Sylhet now in Pakistan.

The expenditure on General Administration and Police in 1939-40 was 13·4 per cent. and 11·3 per cent. of the total expenditure but in 1950-51, in spite of multifarious problems of law and order the expenditure under these heads has been brought down to 6·8 per cent. and 8 per cent. whereas in the year 1944-45 it was 8·5 per cent. and 9 per cent., respectively. In spite of the fact that there will be no development grant the expenditure on Education alone for 1950-51 has gone up to Rs.1,46,80,000 from an insignificant sum of Trs.37·83 (including Sylhet) in the year 1939-40 and Trs.50·67 in 1944-45, *i. e.*, in the year immediately preceding the year we took office. The expenditure on Civil Works including Communication, etc., under Post-War Development in 1950-51 similarly has gone up by about 4 times of that in the year 1944-45.

Management of Estates.—Immediately after the passing of the Zamindari Acquisition Bill by the Assembly it was reserved for the consideration of His Excellency the Governor-General and was forwarded to him as required under the Government of India Act and is now pending before the President for consideration under Article 201 of the Constitution.

Taking advantage of this delay some of the agents of the absentee Zamindars are forcibly ejecting tenants in actual occupation of such land for a pretty long time in order to settle it with others at speculative premium and rent. Forest which is a source of natural wealth is being denuded of trees and exploited with a view to collect maximum amount without caring to preserve it. Fisheries are being given settlement for unusually long terms and premium and rent at speculative rate are realised in advance. In my recent visit large number of poor peasants complained to me about the acts of oppression and the tyranny of some of the agents of the Zamindars and narrated how they have been rendered homeless by such actions.

It is essential to prevent such wanton destruction of forest wealth and bring about an adjustment between the landlords and the tenants by protecting the innocent cultivators from unnecessary harassment so that they may not be exploited by the subversive elements for their own ends. With these objects in view, Government have decided to take over the management of all the Zamindaries in the district of Goalpara under the Assam

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Management of Estates Act which came into force on the 16th November 1949 after it received the assent of His Excellency the Governor-General on the 9th of November 1949.

On taking over management Government not only expect to give the tenants much fairer deal by protecting them from unnecessary harassment but also expect to get an insight into the state of affairs in these Zamindaries and to be able to prevent all contemplated fraudulent actions to frustrate the purpose of the Acquisition of Zamindari Bill now pending for the assent of the President. Further, under such management it will be possible to get a correct estimate of the amount of compensation and to prepare the records of right of the different interest of the intermediaries and obtain all necessary data for preparation of a plan for re-organisation of the agricultural economy of the State, pending the acquisition of Zamindaries after the Act comes into force.

It must however be said to the credit of the few leading and prominent Zamindars of Dhubri that they welcome the idea of taking over their Estates by Government and in fact, offered whole-hearted co-operation in this vital matter affecting them and the tenants. Government fully appreciate such a reasonable attitude on their part, specially of the different proprietors of Gauripur Estate, and convey thanks to them for their good gesture and have instructed officers to take advantage of their co-operation and seek their advice in connection with the taking over of the management of such Estates.

Settlement.—The Deputy Commissioners, Sub-Divisional Officers, Sub-Deputy Collectors and Land Record Staff have been impressed with the urgent necessity of rendering all possible help to the landless cultivators in obtaining settlement of land in a systematic way, so that they may be encouraged, where necessary, to migrate from congested areas, for growing more food crops, to places where land is available—and form themselves into groups or Co-operative Societies for joint cultivation.

In case the number of deserving landless people in particular area is large and cannot be provided with economic holdings in a particular Circle, the Circle Officer should report to the Deputy Commissioner or Sub-Divisional Officer, who should try to provide them in surplus waste land of other Circles. In case the Deputy Commissioner cannot find land in his district, he should report to Government suggesting the district to which they are willing to migrate and send their names after verification to other District Officers for providing land to them.

As a result of our efforts and steps taken so far regarding the drive for extension of settlement for providing land to deserving landless and flood-affected people and those who have uneconomic holdings to enable them to grow food crops, about 1½ lakh bighas of land in different localities have been offered for settlement under various schemes, including planned settlement and development schemes. But the major portion of the land is situated in the sub-montaneous areas which require large scale reclamation and irrigation. Want of medical facility and good drinking water is likely to retard the speedy reclamation in some areas situated in unhealthy localities.

To expedite distribution of available waste land as rapidly as possible to deserving Scheduled Caste people, Tribals, flood-affected people and others and to encourage them to grow more food crops and Jute the local officers have been directed to divide the available waste land into blocks of 200, 400 or more bighas in case it is not possible to divide the land immediately into plots for settlement to individuals and allot on temporary basis to groups or individual cultivators on the following conditions :—

- (1) Individuals forming the groups and their leaders selected by them should execute a bond making them liable jointly and severally to pay the *tauzi-bahir* revenue assessed by the Land Revenue staff. Individual cultivators of particular localities should be encouraged and organised to form groups of individuals, irrespective of caste and creed for undertaking joint cultivation.
- (2) Such groups should undertake to reclaim and cultivate the land allotted to them and to leave no portion of the area fallow or unutilised.
- (3) In case the area is not brought under cultivation within a reasonable time, the allotment will be liable to cancellation.
- (4) Any individual found afterwards to have more than 30 bighas of land will have no claim for settlement.

To encourage reclamation of land under deep and heavy jungle, Government had decided in some places to give remission of full revenue for two years and half revenue for succeeding three years, where it is considered necessary, provided food-crops are grown.

In spite of all these efforts, it has not been possible to find waste land for all deserving persons. A large number of applications for settlement of land has now accumulated in different districts from the indigenous cultivators who have no economic holding or whose land had been eroded or is subject to repeated flood and the local officers have not been able to provide land to them for want of sufficient available waste land in their respective jurisdiction. In order to provide land to deserving persons, Government had no alternative under the circumstances but to requisition land lying under deep jungle which has become the abode of wild animals causing depredation in the locality involving loss of life to a large number of people and which is lying unutilised and surplus to the requirement of the tea industry, as the holders of grants failed to respond to my appeal for surrender of the surplus areas voluntarily. I had consulted the representatives of the tea industry and they agreed that it is not their intention to set up Zamindari over land specially allotted for development of tea industry by importing outside labour for cultivation of surplus land and that they have no objection to requisitioning their surplus land after due enquiry. As desired by them, I had issued instructions to all Deputy Commissioners and Subdivisional Officers that they should consult the local Land Settlement Advisory Committee which should co-opt as a member the Circle Chairman of the particular Tea Association of which the estates concerned is a member and give a hearing to the proprietor or manager of the estates concerned, before coming to a final decision for requisitioning of compact isolated blocks found surplus to requirement. As soon as the lists are ready, Deputy Commissioners and Subdivisional Officers have been directed to provide land in blocks to Co-operative Societies or groups of deserving cultivators who undertake to make themselves liable jointly or severally to pay compensation in lieu of rent.

Resettlement Operation.—Resettlement operation in the town of Gauhati and that in the district of Cachar, where it was due in 1938 and where unit rate of revenue is the lowest is Assam, amounting almost to half of that in the district of Sibsagar, had already been started in April 1948 and the operation had made fair progress and is expected to be completed in the year 1950-51. Besides, the resettlement operation is overdue in many immature areas in different districts. Resettlement operation in such areas is expected to be taken up in the year 1950-51 and notifications have been issued to that effect. The estimated increase of revenue is expected to be about 4 lakhs per year.

The total Revenue Receipt up-to-date at the flat rate of Re.1 per acre under the Assam Assessment of Revenue Free Waste Land Act for the first two years amounts to about Rs.9½ lakhs, which is estimated to go up to about Rs.10½ lakhs per annum next year when all these grants are fully assessed in 1950-51.

Refugees.—The total number of displaced persons in Assam according to the last census (held in July) was 1,14,501 comprised of about 24,625 families. Some displaced persons have come into Assam even after the census and their number, though not known exactly, is considered not to be very small. A number of displaced persons have by this time rehabilitated and some have purchased landed and house properties at speculative prices and some are living in rented houses.

According to the census the number of actual agriculturist families depending solely on actual cultivation does not exceed 4 per cent. The latest reports from the Deputy Commissioners however indicate that some others who were not actual agriculturists desire now to take up cultivation and their number appears to be not insignificant.

The Director of Statistics, Assam ascertained by recent random sample survey that the number of landless agriculturists families in the six plains districts of the Brahmaputra Valley alone would not be less than 1,86,121. In order to provide economic holding 18,61,210 acres of land are required. The total area available is quite insufficient even to provide land to landless local cultivators including about 50,000 flood-affected people and several thousand others who had been recently displaced from their homestead land and deprived of paddy land due to acquisition of land in connection with various Railway projects at Pandu, Bongaigaon, Dibrugarh and other Railway colonies for accommodation of about 30,000 additional Railway employees and their dependents mostly from East Bengal. It is needless to say that the claim of these agriculturists deserves special consideration.

In spite of all these difficulties we are trying to solve the problem of rehabilitation of the unfortunate refugees who had been forced to leave their hearth and home due to major communal clash and circumstances beyond their control and had already come into Assam and are in distress from a humanitarian point of view. I stated in my broadcast speech in October 1948 that Assam's hospitality will be at the disposal of those who are in need of relief and rehabilitation provided those who are well-off and have made their own arrangement do not complicate the problem by mixing up their case with those in distress.

It must, however, be realised that Government in providing land will have to give preference to actual cultivators of the State who are landless and have got no economic holding and are in need of land.

It is expected that the refugees should consider their interest as identical with that of the people of the State and try to get

themselves absorbed in the economy of the State and offer whole hearted co-operation to Government in their effort for solution of their problem as well as that of the landless agriculturists of the State instead of playing into the hands of the politicians, money-lenders, speculators and political parties who are trying to use them as their tools for their own ends.

After a good deal of pressure Government of India sanctioned one lakh of rupees in last June for giving relief to refugees. A sum of Rs.1,00,000 had already been placed at the disposal of the Deputy Commissioners, Cachar, Goalpara, Kamrup, Nowgong and Lakhimpur for immediate relief of displaced persons in distress, i.e., destitute women, infirm men and unattached children and also for issuing small loans to displaced persons jointly or on a co-operative basis for rehabilitation including building houses. A sum of Rs.71,000 was placed at the disposal of the Deputy Commissioner, Cachar where the largest number of refugees numbering about 55,000 was found at the time of census. He had already spent the amount and reports that a large number of loan petitions are pending disposal and that fresh petitions are being filed. Government in January last requested the Government of India to place a further sum of Rs.50,000 for the purpose in the current year, and I am glad to inform the hon. member of the House that this Rs.50,000 has been sanctioned.

In last May, instructions were issued to all Deputy Commissioners for constitution of District Welfare Committees with a view to rehabilitate the refugees who had already come into the State and who can be absorbed in the economy of the State without detriment to the interest of the State and to submit schemes of rehabilitation after due and necessary enquiry and in consultation with the respective Welfare Committees. In the month of July, 1949 all Deputy Commissioners especially the Deputy Commissioner, Cachar were directed to ascertain blocks of surplus fallow land in any of the grants which are suitable and could be made available for rehabilitation and submit list of such areas with probable cost of requisition and acquisition in order to settle real refugees in distress and the flood-affected and landless persons and they were asked also to prepare schemes for rehabilitating them. In order to eliminate local friction and facilitate absorption of refugees in the economy of the State in all such schemes the Deputy Commissioners were directed to mix up the refugees with about 10 per cent. of local people of the same trade or occupation.

Various schemes for relief and rehabilitation of the refugees in distress were submitted to the Government of India but almost none of them had been approved till the end of January. It is gratifying to note that the Members of the Standing Finance Committee discussed the various schemes in the middle of January at Shillong and have sent their recommendation regarding schemes for rehabilitation involving more than Rs.20 lakhs as grants and Rs.2,12 lakhs

as loans for various schemes. The schemes for establishment of a new market to provide stalls for 400 refugees and also for construction of 500 houses for refugees for their residence in the suburbs of the town have recently been approved by the Government of India permitting us to go ahead with the scheme. Steps have been taken to implement the scheme. Another scheme for a training centre to organise weavers, carpenters and blacksmiths amongst the refugees for the purpose of their rehabilitation had already been approved and steps have been taken to implement the same. As soon as other schemes are approved by the Government of India and fund placed at the disposal of Government of Assam to meet the expenditure, steps will be taken to implement them and provision has been made in the Budget in anticipation of the formal approval of the Government of India.

Education.—I propose briefly to state the significant aspects of progress in the matter of Education since we have been called to serve the country.

Grants to Local Boards for primary education rose up from Rs.12,56,311 in 1944-45 for undivided Assam to Rs.24,86,171 in 1948-49 after partition.

The Primary Education Board set up in 1948-49 had been expanding its activities and took 683 Primary Venture Schools mostly in Tribal Areas during 1948-49 and 1069 in the current year out of which 677 new Primary Schools were started mostly in Tribal Areas. Fifty new Primary Schools have been started in current year in the backward areas predominantly inhabited by Miris, Kacharies, etc., and the *ex-tea* garden labourers where endi spinning has been introduced as a craft; and the total grant on Primary Education has gone up to Rs.55,63,302 for 1950-51.

Primary Education has been made compulsory in 7 towns and more than 1200 villages. Sanitation, scientific agriculture, intensive farming, weaving, spinning, etc., are some of the subjects introduced in some of these schools, with a view to introduce basic ideas and spirit in those institutions. Seventy Primary Schools and 4 Secondary Schools have been opened in the Hill Districts and grants have been given to 16 Primary Schools and 9 Secondary Schools.

The number of aided H. E. Schools and M. E. Schools rose from 203 and 440 in the year 1944-45 to 230 and 450 respectively in the year 1949-50. Two High Schools in the Tribal Areas, 9 M. V. Schools including 5 in the Excluded Areas and 4 M. E. Schools in the Excluded and 2 in the Partially Excluded Areas have been provincialised involving an expenditure of Trs. 1,20.

During the year 1949-50, as before, special attention was given for educational facilities of students of Tribal and Scheduled Castes and tea garden labouring classes and Tribals in the Hill Areas. With that end in view number of scholarships and free-studentships in all institutions were considerably increased and as a result 199 Primary scholarships, 20 M. V. scholarships, 6 M. E. scholarships were made available ; 30 College scholarships and 35 free-studentships for Plain Tribal and Scheduled Castes students were created, while 10 College and 125 Secondary scholarships were created for students of Hill Areas so long known as Excluded Areas.

A sum of Rs.16,000 has been sanctioned for grants-in-aid to Colleges for loss of fee income for granting such free-studentships to Tribal students in Colleges besides 9 such free-studentships in Cotton College.

A sum of Rs.24,450 was sanctioned for raising the Dearness Allowance of the staff of Aided Colleges and a sum of Rs.8,36,940 was sanctioned for giving relief to employees of Aided Secondary Schools.

Rural Development Department.—As a result of the total stoppage of Post-War Development grants many schemes under this Department as well had to be held up and slowed down in spite of the Government's desire to continue and expand the benefit under these schemes to the rural areas. They have however decided to retain the existing 15 Rural Panchayats, the Missamari Co-operative Colony, and the Marketing Organisation and provided Rs.50 thousands. We have also decided to maintain the Joysagar Rural Polytechnic which is expected to be self-supporting.

In view of the splendid results of the Self-help Enterprise Scheme we have also provided a sum of Rs.1,00,000 in the new Schedule under the Scheme in the year 1950-51. It may be of interest to the Hon'ble House that the value of the works done by the rural people under this scheme is 300 to 400 per cent. if not more, of the Government contribution.

Co-operative Department.—This Government believe that if economic exploitation of the common man has to be ended it must be through the Co-operative Movement. Therefore, in spite of the dark financial picture this Government has not thought it desirable to effect much retrenchment in this Department. As soon as the Government of India announced their intention of re-imposition of control on Textile, the Government took the opportunity of and decided to re-organise the Co-operative Societies in proper line for distribution of cloth and yarn, procured by Government, exclusively through the Trading Co-operative. The principle of patronage dividend was introduced

and a new Act was passed and new bye-laws were framed to guide the activities of the Co-operative Movement in the right direction and to give the impetus to the Co-operative Movement by re-orienting their activities in the proper line. Its activities were also extended to Hill Areas as well. As a result of this drive to organise the Co-operative Societies throughout the State about one thousand new Trading Co-operative Societies with a total membership of $3\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs in addition to the existing 1500 Co-operative Consumers Societies with about $1\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of membership were formed and registered throughout the State including the Hills. In spite of the transport difficulties holding up 30,000 bales of cloth in Calcutta for several months together, and serious competition from foreign handloom and power-loom cloth flooding the different subdivisions, 38,333 bales of cloth and yarn worth about Rs.3,48,20,394 were purchased by Government by taking advance from time to time, from the Imperial Bank on a letter of credit and began distribution of cloth and yarn fairly and equitably in different areas through the various Trading Co-operative Societies. The number of Co-operative Societies which was only 3,218 with a membership of 172,680 in 1945-46 rose upto 4,129 in 1949-50 with a membership of 417,636. By the end of 1949 the share capital of Trading Co-operative Societies and Consumers Co-operatives and others rose upto Rs.22,24,229, Rs.32,32,781 and Rs.55,536 respectively. Their working capital came up to Rs.22,24,229 and Rs.81,12,747 and Rs.9,02,212 respectively and the Consumers Societies and others built up a reserve fund of about Rs.3,14,042 and Rs.4,74,017 respectively. The balance sheets of all these Societies reveal that almost all of them have made profits amounts to several lakhs and those Societies have distributed more than 2 crores worth of textiles. But unfortunately just at the time the Co-operative Movement was gaining the hold in the mind of the people in spite of the competition and opposition of the individual traders, it received a set-back with the relaxation of control and sudden reduction of prices of cloth and yarn by the Government of India. The Government under the circumstances, in order to save the Societies from loss had to modify the policy of distribution of Textile in order to enable the Government to dispose of the stocks of cloth and yarn as rapidly as possible. As a result a sum of Rs.232 lakhs had already been repaid to the Imperial Bank with interest leaving only a balance of about Rs.116 lakhs at the end of January, 1950. It is expected that the stock will soon be disposed of and the balance due to the Imperial Bank will be repaid. The balance sheet and the profit and loss account in connection with the procurement of textile will be prepared as early as possible.

Food.—Our attainment of the status of Sovereign Democratic Republic of India and the complete political independence will soon cease to have any meaning if we are to remain dependent on foreign countries for essential foodstuff such as rice and wheat, etc., which can be produced in abundance in our country. It is essential that we should realise that our immediate task is to produce enough food and cloth to meet our basic need. It may not be out of place here to mention that India has to use up her foreign currency which was so essential for purchase of her capital goods for development of industries to the tune of 140 crores for importing food-grains from outside.

Only with the active co-operation of the millions of our countrymen—particularly the actual cultivators devoting themselves in carrying out intensive cultivation over vast areas of agricultural land on war-footing, it is possible to reach the target of making India self-sufficient in the matter of food in the year 1951. To achieve self-sufficiency in essential foodstuff, India is to grow 48 lakhs tons of food-grains more than that produced in the year 1947-48. For this purpose, targets for increased food production have been given for different States and Assam is expected to produce about 1,66,000 tons and 2,35,000 tons in 1950-51 and 1951-52 respectively.

This target for increased production is proposed to be achieved through big and small irrigation projects (bunds, embankments and *dongs*) to be executed through the N. E. D. Section of the P. W. D. and Agricultural Department. During the current year Government of India have sanctioned 12 big Irrigation Projects involving an expenditure of Rs.30,19,000 under Grow-More-Food Scheme to be completed by the end of 1950-51 and expected to benefit about 1,08,000 acres of land which is likely to produce 24,000 tons of additional food crop.

A provision of about 8 lakhs has been made for minor irrigation to be executed by the Agricultural Department during 1950-51 of which two-thirds will be met from the Government of India grant for "Grow More-Food-Campaign" and the balance by Assam. An additional sum of Rs.2,73,000 has also been provided out of Food Bonus Fund for minor irrigation schemes. These irrigation schemes are expected to benefit an additional area of 2,38,500 acres and produce about 33,000 tons of extra food.

In addition to the above major irrigation scheme 17 more irrigation projects have been sent to the Government of India of which four are proposed to be financed from the Food Bonus accruing to the State. These four schemes involving an additional expenditure of Rs.89,017 are expected to benefit 31,000 acres of land likely to produce 7,000 tons of additional food crop. The remaining 13 irrigation projects involving an expenditure of

Rs.28,16,000 are expected to benefit about 91,250 acres of land and the total production is estimated to be 19,000 tons of food crop per annum at the second year.

No provision, however, of this amount has been made in the Budget as we have not got any assurance as yet from the Government of India regarding these projects, but it is hoped that these projects will be approved and the amount sanctioned by the Government of India under the grow-more-food scheme. Government expect to take up the work as soon as sanction is received from the Government of India and propose to come before the Assembly for approval.

Efforts have been made to introduce and encourage *Boro* cultivation primarily in the flood-affected parts of Nowgong and Goalpara Districts with the help of power pumps during the last few years after the partition. The area brought under *Boro* cultivation, so far, in these two districts comes up to about 5,000 acres producing about 2,500 tons of rice. To meet the increasing demand from different localities specially flood-affected parts, efforts will be made to increase the number of power pump sets to help cultivators in extending *Boro* cultivation in suitable areas. If the areas under *Boro* cultivation can be increased by about 5,000 acres we may easily produce at least 2,500 tons of additional rice.

The yield per acre of land can be definitely increased from 15 to 20 maunds of paddy to about 40 maunds of paddy by use of selected variety of seeds. It is therefore proposed to produce good variety of seed in large scale in different farms for distribution of seeds under the Seed Multiplication and Distribution Schemes from different centres for increasing the production.

From the available figures it appears that about one-seventh of the total cultivated area is only grown more than once in Assam whereas almost the entire area is utilised for growing double crops in other States. If we can increase the area under double crops, *Ahu* and *Sali*, by about one lakh acres we can easily produce 10,00,000 maunds or 37,000 tons of additional paddy. It is therefore proposed to encourage double crop by supply of oil-cake and bone-meal at concession rates in the plains districts and a sum of about 3 lakhs has been provided under the Food Bonus scheme. Schemes have also been formulated to prepare compost manure of about 50,000 tons in 1950-51 for distribution as manure.

With a limited number of tractors the Agriculture Department has been encouraging mechanised cultivation and a few tractors centres have already been opened so that the public may avail of it for machanised cultivation of fallow and waste land at reasonable hire charges per acre.

The success of mechanised cultivation at Jaoni Chapori and other places has been a great encouragement to the cultivators and the demands for mechanical help have considerably increased.

The State Farm at Moamari has been a great success for production of winter crop such as mustard, pulses, etc. It is estimated that about 20,000 maunds of mustard seeds had been produced in about 8,000 bighas.

Damage of crop by pest during recent years had been increasing to such an extent that it has caused serious obstacle in our drive for increased production. To meet the menace a plant protection scheme has been formed at a cost of Rs.2,00,875 which includes expenditure on training of staff and equipment. But success of the scheme largely depends upon the measure of co-operation rendered by the cultivators themselves.

Experiments are being conducted also to grow better and improved variety of paddy in the deficit hill areas of the State and the result of the First year's experiment seems promising.

I again repeat my appeal to the youths and peasants of the country to shake off their lethargy and play a worthy part by devoting their energy in the production drive for growing more food to make India self-sufficient in 1951 and help in preventing the huge drainage of India's resources in importing food-grains from abroad.

If the people whole-heartedly co-operate in the various schemes organised in connection with the Grow-More-Food Campaign and carry on intensive cultivation and reclamation of fertile virgin soil thrown open for settlement, Assam will succeed in producing food-grains in abundance and be able to help other parts of India even after meeting her increasing demand.

Procurement Department.—For the success of the Food Self-Sufficiency Scheme the production alone could not be sufficient unless the food-grains are procured and equitably distributed. For that purpose great importance has been given by the Government of India and also by the Governments of the States for maximum procurement. Our State also has to help the Government of India by arranging export of as much rice as we may spare during the current *Khariff* year.

Measures for greater protection of the borders against smuggling have already been adopted and along with it the procurement department is being reinforced with additional staff for increasing the procurement. Co-operation of the people of the State is requested for the success of the procurement.

Industrial Development.—Assam being situated in the remotest corner of India, almost isolated from the rest of India, hemmed in almost all sides by foreign States, our first idea was to start and develop such industries for production of essential commodities like cloth, yarn, sugar, paper, cements, etc., with the raw materials available in abundance so that she may at least be partially self-sufficient and meet her requirement of these commodities within the State.

With that object in view, it was decided to start Textile Industry, Paper Industry, Sugar Industry, etc., as State-owned enterprises on the expectation of financing such productive schemes with loans from the Government of India on their definite assurance that money would be available.

In view however of the financial difficulties and the advice given by the Union Government now, we have been forced most reluctantly to abandon the policy of State-ownership regarding all these big industries for the present. Government are however, anxious to see these industries started and developed in the State and are prepared to offer all reasonable facilities and data and material, so far collected, in connection with these industries, for the purpose of helping and encouraging deserving and enterprising private parties willing to start these industries in Assam.

I indicated last year the importance of an early development of the hidden coal fields and the lime-stones in the Garo Hills which have not yet been fully developed due to lack of transport facilities. In the middle of May 1949 on our representation a conference was held in Delhi where it was explained that Assam was extremely anxious that something should be done immediately to open the coal-fields in the Garo Hills. After discussion it was decided to undertake the location and engineering survey for connecting the area by Railway line and to start the prospecting operation for proving coal deposits simultaneously, early in the month of November. After the coal deposits are examined the question of developing these coal fields either by the Union Government or the State Government or both combined or private parties would be examined. A few Geologists have been sent for carrying on the prospecting operations but the roads for taking heavy drilling machineries have not yet been started as the Government of India has not finally sanctioned the amount, for the purpose.

It is gratifying to note that the Union Government fully appreciated the enormous transport and other difficulties of a border State like Assam bounded on the North by Tibet and Bhutan, and hemmed between Burma, Pakistan and China in other directions and felt the urgent necessity of connecting this isolated States directly by rail for political, strategic and commercial reasons and

decided to give first priority for construction of a direct rail link and ordered to undertake the construction immediately on the 28th January 1948 at an estimated cost of about 9 crores. It reflects great credit on the Railway authority that by their ceaseless efforts the passenger and goods traffic had already been opened even before the target date and helped us in relieving our difficulties to some extent.

I convey my thanks on behalf of the Government and the people to the silent and sustained endeavours of the sacrificing and patriotic band of engineers and workers who devoted their energies for days and nights together in a notorious unhealthy locality well known for wide-spread malaria and black water fever and made it possible to construct 142 miles long metre gauge Railway line over the various hill streams and rivers like Tista and Torsha within an incredible short time. It will, of course, take some time before this line can take the full load to meet our demands. It was a great relief to us that this line began to carry passengers and goods just at the time when Pakistan, in contravention of the Inter-Dominion Agreement, stopped our goods by rail and steamer while on transit and created uncalled for difficulties.

Transport.—In view of the interruption of steamer traffic which unfortunately had to pass through Pakistan and unnecessary detention of goods worth several lakhs going out of Assam and coming into Assam on transit, by Pakistan Government and the detention of the Railway wagons the need for development of well-planned road transport as public utility service has increased in importance for political, strategic, as well as commercial and other reasons to serve as a subsidiary route to help congestion of Railway and to bring essential commodities into Assam for distribution evenly throughout the State. Being encouraged with the successful working of the State Transport service over the routes already taken up, operation of the State Transport for goods and passengers had been extended from Jorhat to Dibrugarh from 1st October 1949.

The Transport service for goods and passengers over the most important life-line linking Shillong with important rail and steamer heads which has been run and managed efficiently and to the satisfaction of all has brought a net income of about Rs.19 lakhs for the year ending 31st December 1949 after deducting total direct expenditure of Rs.16,63,000 for staff, petrol, lubricant, maintenance, etc., from the total earnings. Similarly the net income from other routes from the same period amounts to Trs.4,34 after deduction of the total direct expenditure of Rs.2,82,000 from the total earning.

Labour.—In the field of industrial labour which is mainly plantation labour, the Department of Labour which was brought into existence as a temporary measure has been looking into the working

of the various Acts already passed to ensure the rights of labour. The new Act relating to Shop Assistants has been enforced in some areas of the State. The Department has tried to maintain an amicable relation between labour and capital. Tripartite Conferences and the like have been held from time to time to bring about mutual understanding. A comparative study shows that the weapon of strikes has been resorted to in less number of cases than in the previous years. The number of strikes which was 118 in 1948 involving more than 15 thousand labourers has declined to 19 in 1949 involving nearly 4 thousand labourers. 1

Speedy disposal of disputes is another factor which can remove the causes of discontent. In previous years no separate Tribunal could be set up and the cases had to be referred to the Additional Sessions Judge. There has been much delay in the disposal of such cases. Delay in the disposal of labour dispute exasperates labourers and in many cases seriously compromises the position of the Government. Now a separate Tribunal has been appointed as a temporary measure and the pending cases are being speedily disposed of. Labour Department has settled 413 labour disputes during 1949 by measures of conciliation.

Before the inauguration of the new Republic, the present Government had realised the necessity of welfare facilities for labourers. But limitations of finance had been a great obstacle to promoting such facilities. It is for the Central Government which has been enjoying the full benefit of our tea industry by way of Excise and Export Duties to help this State for promotion of such activities. It is for them to create a Welfare Fund on the lines of the Coal Labour Welfare Fund.

Improvement in housing condition of labourers is an important item in the programme of welfare of labourers. Government of India had set up an improved standard of housing which the industry had not yet accepted and had suggested some alterations in the specifications. Nearly two hundred thousand houses under new specification will have to be constructed to accommodate a million of plantation workers. In spite of the fact that some gardens had commenced constructing houses of better standard, it will take some time to complete the programme.

Improvement of Rural Water Supply.—We have been feeling the urgent and imperative need of improving the supply of drinking water in the rural areas throughout the State. As soon as we were entrusted to serve the people, adequate provision was made every year for that purpose and a total sum of Rs.19,34,102 was distributed in three years ending 31st March 1950 through different Local Boards. In spite of financial difficulties another sum of Rs.3

lakhs has been provided in the Budget Schedule for Rural Water Supply and Government propose to increase the amount in case the proceeds from Court Fees and Stamp Amendment Act bring more revenue. A mere glance at the Budget figures for 1944-45 and 1945-46 will only show an insignificant sum of Rs.4,894 and Rs.11,989 for similar purposes. A sum of Rs.10 lakhs has also been proposed to be advanced as loan to various Municipalities for improvement of drinking water supply in the respective towns.

	1944-45	1945-46	1946-47	1947-48	1948-49	1949-50	1950-51
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Grants to Local Bodies for Medicines and Dispensary Building.	1,57,110	1,86,249	2,18,409	3,70,081	4,10,800	3,06,356	6,32,991
						10,87,237	
Grants to Local Bodies for Water Supply and Public Health purposes.	4,894	11,989	8,734	7,61,447	9,57,736	2,14,919	3,15,819
						19,34,102	
Grants-in-aid to Local Bodies for Communications.	3,66,453	3,55,458	4,78,446	4,30,543	12,50,869	9,00,354	5,33,409
						25,18,766	
Total ..	5,28,457	5,53,696	7,05,589	15,62,071	26,19,405	14,21,629	14,82,219
						56,03,105	

From the figures in the table given above it will appear that in addition to the provision for affording medical relief through the different Government hospitals and dispensaries and Public Health centres a sum amounting to Rs.56,03,105 was distributed to all Local Bodies in Assam excluding Sylhet for rural communication, medicine, dispensary building and Public Health purposes for providing facilities for treatment through the various Local Bodies dispensaries during the triennium ending 31st March 1950 as against Rs.17,87,742 in the triennium ending 31st March 1947 for undivided Assam. In spite of financial difficulties a provision for Rs.14,82,219 has been made for 1950-51 in the Budget for similar purpose.

Medical Relief.—To afford increased facilities for medical help in rural areas the number of subsidised dispensaries has been increased from 9 in the year 1944-45 to 76 in the current year and the emoluments of the doctors have also been increased and a sum

of about Rs.2 lakhs has been spent in the shape of emoluments to subsidised doctors during the last three years, whereas only a sum of Rs.11,519 was spent in the year 1944-45. In addition to this, 10 travelling dispensaries have been started for catering to the needs of the village people. The number of Government hospitals and dispensaries has also been increased to 102. A sum of Rs.98,000 has been provided for subsidised doctors in the next year's Budget in spite of our difficulties. In addition, a sum of Rs.2½ lakhs is provided in the next year's Budget for distribution to Local Boards to enable them to purchase medicines and equipment. Besides, a sum of Rs.3,82,000 has been provided as grant to different Local Board hospitals, dispensaries now existing in the rural areas. The remaining 5 district headquarters hospitals in the plain districts which were so long ill-equipped and under-staffed due to the slender resources of the Local Boards, were provincialised in July 1947 and the Local Boards were relieved of the responsibility of running them with their limited resources.

It is gratifying to note that all the Government hospitals are now provided with better and adequate equipments including laboratories and X-ray equipment from surplus American stores purchased by the Government at a cost of about 3 lakhs, and are affording better and improved method of medical treatment to the suffering public.

Nursing facilities have also been introduced with the taking over of these hospitals. Besides, a well-equipped hospital with 300 beds for treatment of all kinds of diseases is being run by the Medical staff, who are specialists for different diseases, and is attached to the Medical College already started and approved by the Medical Council and affiliated to the University for the M. B. Course.

The ill-equipped Ganesdas Hospital—the only hospital for women and children—has also been provincialised in the year 1949 and has been well-equipped and kept in charge of a qualified doctor.

With a view to afford better arrangement for treatment of patients suffering from T. B., the Reid Chest Hospital was provincialised in the year 1947 and the number of beds had been increased by 25. In addition to all these centres for treatment, there are 76 Public Health Dispensaries and 76 Leprosy centres and 5 *Kala-Azar* centres and a few dispensaries for treatment of *Kala-Azar* which are maintained in different localities under the Public Health Department.

The demand for the Ayurvedic system of treatment in Assam is as great as in any part of India. The Government

of Assam, therefore, appointed a Committee in 1947 to prepare a scheme for the study and development of the Ayurvedic system in Assam and in accordance with the recommendation of this Committee, the Government have established a regular Ayurvedic College at Gauhati, and it was formally opened on the 20th December 1948 and is, at present, located in some of the houses built by the P. W. D. for the Engineering College. In spite of our difficulties a sum of about Rs.50,000 has been provided in the next year's Budget. It is expected that the members of the staff of this College will try to manufacture medicines and develop a herbarium and prepare a scheme for meeting part of the expenditure necessary to run such an institution by sale of medicines, etc.

Communications.—I need hardly emphasise the importance of construction of new roads connecting inaccessible villages with the market places and places of importance and improvement of roads poorly serving other villages and how it plays a vital part in the economic development of the country. It has always been our endeavour to provide fund whenever possible for improvement of rural communication under a plan for the well-being and economic development of the people living in the villages.

A total sum of Rs.25,81,766 was distributed through the different Local Boards during the triennium ending 31st March 1950 for improvement of rural communication in their respective areas, and a sum of Rs.5,33,409 has also been provided in the next year's Budget for the purpose. The Local Boards have fully taken advantage of these increased grants for improvement of roads in the villages. Besides, more than 5 lakhs of rupees had been provided under self-help grant fund under Rural Development Department to encourage the habit of self-help amongst the people. Reports disclose that the major portion of this fund has been utilised in construction of new village roads and improvement of existing village roads. The most redeeming feature is that, in many instances, the villagers of the locality combined themselves and constructed many miles of roads. The value of such public works according to P. W. D. rate is estimated to be more than 10 lakhs. A lakh of rupees has been provided in next year's Budget for self-help fund under the Rural Development Department.

Besides, 867.28 miles of roads estimated to cost Rs.2,20 lakhs were taken over by the Government (under the Post-War Development Plan) during three years ending 31st March 1950 from the different Local Boards for improvement and to enable these Local Boards to spend more money for areas not served by these roads. Almost earth work in about 679 miles of road had already been completed and about 188 miles have already been gravelled. During

the period Public Works Department built another 271 miles of new roads including those under Petrol Tax Projects.

A sum of Rs.21,29,000 had to be spent in the year 1949-50 by the Public Works Department for maintenance and repair of newly constructed roads and those taken over from the Local Boards whereas the expenditure on communication was only Rs.8,65,260 in the year 1946-47 before partition.

The cost involved in maintenance of roads taken over and improved comes upto 10½ lakhs per annum. It is, therefore, proposed to make over some of these roads to Local Boards for maintenance in view of the paucity of fund and sudden stoppage of Post-War grants.

In addition, the Union Government have allotted under Article 275 a sum of Rs.45 lakhs for road development in the Scheduled Areas during three years out of which 8 lakhs will be available in 1950-51.

A three-year plan has been prepared for construction of roads to serve those border areas most adversely affected by partition in order to render relief to the unfortunate tribals and save them from economic strangulation due to stoppage of normal trade relations. The work of construction will be taken up in the order of urgency.

It is most gratifying to note that due to prompt and drastic retrenchment and economy in all spheres and the additional receipt estimated to be about 41 lakhs from proposed enhancement of taxes the apprehended huge deficit in the normal State Budget of more than 3 crores has been reduced to 87 lakhs even after inclusion of 1,04 lakhs of rupees required for the various Development Schemes. This deficit includes a provision of 35 lakhs for constitution of the Contingency Fund for which a Bill will be presented before the House for acceptance. This amount, however, is not an expenditure in the true sense, but is merely a fund to provide for unforeseen contingency. Had not the Government of India suddenly stopped the Post-War Development grants forcing us to include 104 lakhs of rupees in the expenditure side of our Budget for 1950-51 without a corresponding receipts from the Government of India, I would have been able to present to the House a surplus Budget by about Trs.51,82. This is, no doubt, a great achievement in these days of financial difficulties and discloses a bright aspect of our financial resources.

The fact that Assam had voluntarily reduced the requirement for Post-War Development plan involving 542 lakhs to 264 lakhs (in two years ending 31st March 1951) by retrenchment and slowing

down and abandoning some of the projects and made a heroic effort of raising revenue to the tune of 41 lakhs by increasing rate of taxes in order to reduce the budgetary gap, will convince the Centre that the Government and the people are fully helping the Union Government in their drive for economy and that the Union Government will appreciate our efforts and come forward to help us with a grant of 87 lakhs to wipe out the deficit so that she can somehow pull on slowly with her plan till the financial position improves. Besides, Assam can claim a sum of Rs.76 lakhs, being the cost of the Shillong-Silchar Road for the portion falling with the Scheduled Areas and the sum necessary for the continuance of the Development Schemes already started in the Scheduled areas with India's approval, as grants-in-aid under Act 275 of the Constitution per annum in addition to Rs.34 lakhs shown in the Budget and a fair share of the Excise Duty on tea, kerosene and petrol grown in the State, and produced out of her natural mineral resources, so that she may meet the recurring and non-recurring expenditure necessary to implement her schemes for meeting her basic needs. Our demand for Rs.87 lakhs as grants-in-aid, under the circumstances, cannot be said to be unreasonable. I appeal to the Government of India to put an end to the financial injustice under the Otto Niemyer Award and be pleased to part with this amount ungrudgingly to help an undeveloped frontier State.

I am confident, Hon'ble Prime Minister and Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister and other Members of the Cabinet, who are fairly acquainted with the needs and problems of this strategic State will sooner or later concede to our rightful claim and put an end to the gross financial injustice under which Assam has been labouring. Our deficit is negligible in comparison to our rightful claim to the share of taxes as already stated.

Under the circumstances, there seems no reason to be pessimistic regarding the future of our State which cannot be left undeveloped any longer by the new born Republic of India. The development of Assam forming the North-East Frontier will have to be taken up as an All-India problem and cannot be neglected any further. I have full confidence that in our noble efforts to solve our problems and difficulties the Union Government will respond with adequate financial help either by allocation of our just share of Central duties and taxes, or by way of grants-in-aid, not only to wipe out the deficit of 87 lakhs but also to meet our basic needs including the special problem of developing the various communities including the Tribals of the Hills and the Plains and integrating them with the rest of Assam so that we may be strong to serve as a sentinel to defend the North-East Frontier of the new-born Republic of India.

I appeal to the Hon'ble Members to excuse me for taking such a long time in introducing to them the Budget and impressing on them our problems and difficulties and how we have been trying to tackle them.

At the conclusion, I again lay emphatic stress on the need for making our beautiful State, with fertile soil and natural resources, self-sufficient in the essential foodstuff.

The development of agriculture by extensive and intensive cultivation and reclamation of virgin soil on the basis of co-operative, or joint cultivation, and development of rural areas are some of the items in our programme which deserve attention. Without willing and intelligent co-operation of the people in general no activities can have the desired result. I, therefore, appeal on behalf of the Government to all sections of the House as well the people outside to extend their whole-hearted co-operation and goodwill in all our endeavours for serving the people of the country.

In conclusion, I request the Hon'ble Members to discuss all matters dispassionately and help Government with constructive criticism of the measures brought before the House.

I thank the Finance Secretary and the Staff for their ungrudging co-operation and assistance that I have received and also the Superintendent of the Press and his hard-worked staff for getting the Budget printed within a short time in spite of the last moment changes.

Sir, with these remarks, I beg to introduce the Budget for the year 1950-51 for the approval of the House.

“ JAI BHARAT ”

‘ JAI HIND ’

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 10 A.M. on Tuesday, the 14th March, 1950.

Dated Shillong.

The 15th April 1950.

A. G. P. (L. A. No.190/49—118+2—18-4-1950.

R. N. BARUA,

Secretary, Assam Legislative Assembly.