

Proceedings of the Second Session of the first Assam Legislative Assembly, assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935

The Assembly met at the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 11 a.m. on Thursday, the 5th August, 1937

CONCILIATION BOARD FOR SETTLEMENT OF THE STRIKE IN THE DHUBRI MATCH FACTORY

KHAN SAHIB MAULAVI SAYIDUR RAHMAN: On a point of information, Sir. Yesterday before we divided, the Hon'ble Minister for Revenue gave us an assurance that a Conciliation Board would be formed. May we know from him whether he still sticks to that assurance and whether he is going to form a Conciliation Board to effect a settlement between the Match strikers and the management?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, although, in spite of the fact that I gave an assurance, some of the hon. members of this House thought fit to censure the Government, I propose to stick to the assurance which I gave and shall take early steps to form a local Conciliation Board.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

Appointment in the Nowgong Forest Office

SRIJUT PURNA CHANDRA SARMA asked :

*33. Will the Government be pleased to state who has been appointed to fill up a vacancy in the Forest office at Nowgong recently and what is his nationality?

THE HON'BLE SHAMS-UL-ULAMA MAULANA ABU NASR MD. WAHEED replied :

33.—One Mr. Dionell Roy, who is a Khasi, has been appointed.

SRIJUT PURNA CHANDRA SARMA: I have not heard the Hon'ble Minister. Will he please repeat his answer?

THE HON'BLE SHAMS-UL-ULAMA MAULANA ABU NASR MD. WAHEED: The answer is that one Khasi boy of the name of Mr. Dionell Roy has been appointed.

SRIJUT PURNA CHANDRA SARMA asked :

*34. Is it a fact that the candidate selected is not a local man of Nowgong?

THE HON'BLE SHAMS-UL-ULAMA MAULANA ABU NASR MD. WAHEED replied :

34.—Yes, Sir, he is not a local man.

SRIJUT PURNA CHANDRA SARMA asked :

*35. Will Government be pleased to state the number of applications for the post from local candidates and whether there was not a qualified candidate amongst them?

THE HON'BLE SHAMS-UL-ULAMA MAULANA ABU NASR MD. WAHEED replied :

35.—Forty-four applications were received. All of them had necessary minimum qualifications.

SRIJUT PURNA CHANDRA SARMA asked :

*36. Whether the candidate selected possesses any special qualification, which the local candidates have not, and, if not, why a local candidate was not selected ?

THE HON'BLE SHAMS-UL-ULAMA MAULANA ABU NASR MD. WAHEED replied :

36.—Sir, he was the only candidate from the under-represented community with previous office experience, which was considered a special qualification.

SRIJUT PURNA CHANDRA SARMA: Was it, Sir, a provincial service ?

THE HON'BLE SHAMS-UL-ULAMA MAULANA ABU NASR MD. WAHEED: No, it was not a provincial service.

SRIJUT PURNA CHANDRA SARMA: Was there any other candidate from any other under-represented community ?

THE HON'BLE SHAMS-UL-ULAMA MAULANA ABU NASR MD. WAHEED: I am not aware of that. I want notice of this question.

SRIJUT PURNA CHANDRA SARMA asked :

*37. Who was the authority to appoint the particular candidate and was there any private or official instruction from any quarter for the appointment and if it was official, was it mentioned in the advertisement inviting applications ? If the instruction was private will the Government state from whom it came ?

THE HON'BLE SHAMS-UL-ULAMA MAULANA ABU NASR MD. WAHEED replied :

37.—The Conservator of Forests was the appointing authority. There was official instruction to the effect that preference was to be given to candidates from the under-represented communities. That was mentioned in the advertisement.

SRIJUT PURNA CHANDRA SARMA: Did the Conservator of Forests report that there was no candidate from the under-represented community of the district ?

THE HON'BLE SHAMS-UL-ULAMA MAULANA ABU NASR MD. WAHEED: No, Sir. He did not make such report to Government.

MAULAVI MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: What was the qualification of the candidate ?

THE HON'BLE SHAMS-UL-ULAMA MAULANA ABU NASR MD. WAHEED: I have already answered that question, Sir.

SRIJUT RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: Sir, is it the policy of the Government to appoint the local candidate if he is found qualified ?

THE HON'BLE SHAMS-UL-ULAMA MAULANA ABU NASR MD. WAHEED: Yes, but he should come from the under-represented community.

Remission of land revenue in the *Nisf-kheraj* estates

SRIJUT SIDDHI NATH SARMA asked :

*38. Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge please state if remission of land revenue is granted to the proprietors of the *Nisf-kheraj* estates to that extent to which the proprietors of the *Kheraj* estates have been granted for the last few years ?

*39. If the answer to question 38 is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister in charge please state the reasons for not granting the same remission to the proprietors of such *Nisf-kheraj* estates ?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied :

38. & 39.—If by remission, the hon. member means temporary reduction of land revenue which has been granted for the last few years, then the reply is in the negative. Government considers that the *nisf-khirajdars* who pay half rates on cultivated portions of their holdings, and nothing on the uncultivated portions, are in a much better position than those who pay full rates, since in comparison with the latter they already enjoy a remission of more than eight annas in the rupee.

SRIJUT GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: On a point of information, Sir. May I ask the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Revenue whether Government intends to grant any reduction in land revenue for the current year in respect of *khiraj* lands ?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, I am not prepared to say anything about *khiraj* land as the question does not arise here.

SRIJUT SIDDHI NATH SARMA asked :

*40. Will Government be pleased to state whether they propose to give such concessions to the proprietors of such estates, on giving undertaking that similar concessions will be granted to the under-tenants ?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied :

40.—Government are not prepared to increase the concessions already enjoyed by the proprietors of these estates except under circumstances provided for by rules for the suspension and remission of land revenue in cases of widespread local and private calamities.

SRIJUT SIDDHI NATH SARMA: Has the Government power to compel the proprietors to grant remission or reduction of land revenue to their under-tenants if such remission is granted to the proprietors by Government ?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I could not follow. I shall be obliged if the hon. member will put a shorter question.

SRIJUT SIDDHI NATH SARMA: Are Government empowered to compel the proprietors of the *Khiraj* estates to grant remission or reduction of land revenue to their under-tenants if such remission or reduction is granted to the proprietors by the Government ?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I am not prepared to answer this legal question.

SRIJUT GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: We want to know whether Government recognises that the under-tenants of *Nisf-khiraj* estates are undergoing great hardship because they are not getting reduction of land revenue whereas the tenants of the *Khiraj* estates are getting, at least for the last few years, reduction in the land revenue.

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: On a point of order, Sir. This is another miniature speech (laughter).

SRIJUT SIDDHI NATH SARMA asked :

*41. Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge be pleased to state the area of cultivable and habitable waste lands (fallow) in Assam—district by district—showing area in hills and plains separately ?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied :
 41.—The areas of cultivable waste other than fallow in the various districts are as follows—

District			Cultivable waste other than fallow	Current fallow
<i>Plains</i>			Acres	Acres
1. Cachar	...	...	1,215,439	48,021
2. Sylhet	...	...	811,646	241,709
3. Goalpara	...	...	932,157	114,430
4. Kamrup	...	...	418,050	151,968
5. Darrang	...	...	718,890	130,609
6. Nowgong	...	...	1,438,790	46,189
7. Sibsagar	...	...	1,482,573	128,265
8. Lakhimpur	...	...	1,486,599	89,212
<i>Hills</i>				
1. Khasi and Jaintia Hills	...	...	1,031,579	121,475
2. Naga Hills	...	...	2,013,109	168,000
3. Lushai Hills	...	...	3,575,676	236,700
4. Garo Hills	...	...	1,698,221	9,942

SRIJUT LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has stated the figures of waste lands and fallow lands of the province; may I know if the areas stated include professional grazing grounds and village grazing grounds?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: No. They do not include lands which are reserved for professional grazing.

SRIJUT HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTI: The Hon'ble Minister has given us a long list of cultivable waste lands. May I know the reason why such big areas of land are lying uncultivated?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I think for these lands no application has been made for settlement and particularly because some of these lands are swamp and unfit for cultivation also.

SRIJUT KAMESWAR DAS: May I know how the figures have been obtained—whether by deducting the total settled area from the total acreage available or from the total area or was there any survey made of the available waste lands?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I am not in a position to say whether there was a survey or not, but this is what we have got from reports from our District Officers.

MAULAVI ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY: On a point of information, Sir. Do Government propose to throw these waste lands open to immigrants?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I am not prepared to answer that question at this stage.

DR. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: Are Government aware that thousands of indigenous Assamese are asking for settlement of these lands?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I want notice of that question, Sir.

SRIJUT KAMESWAR DAS: May I know the mode of arriving at these figures?

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: The question was put by hon. member before.

BABU HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTI: On a point of order, Sir. I find the Hon'ble Minister's replies are contradictory. He has given us a list of cultivable waste lands and when I asked the reason why these lands are not cultivated he has given us a reply that most of the lands are not fit for cultivation. So, Sir, I find there are contradictions; how can he reconcile them?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I said this because some of the land will not be considered fit or profitable for cultivation by the cultivators. They are of course cultivable in the strict sense of the term but they are not considered profitable enough for cultivation.

SRIJUT KAMESWAR DAS: How were these figures arrived at?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The answer has already been given that these figures were obtained from the District Officers, and we have not asked them how they are obtained.

SRIJUT LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: Are the figures accurate or approximate?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I think they are fairly accurate as they stand.

MAULAVI ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURI: May I know from the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Revenue what is the difficulty in opening them out to immigrants?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: That will depend to a great extent on the result of debate which we are expecting on the subject.

Registration of Midwives and Nurses and names of Members of Assam Medical Council

MISS MAVIS DUNN asked:

*42. Will Government state if it is a fact that in other Provinces there is Legislation for the Registration of nurses and midwives?

*43. (a) Is the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge aware that there is a demand for the registration of nurses and midwives?

(b) If so, do Government propose to introduce legislation in Assam on the same lines as in other Provinces?

(c) Do Government propose to consider the question of the registration of nurses and midwives by the Assam Medical Council?

*44. Will the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge be pleased to state the names of the members of the Assam Medical Council?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied:

42.—Yes.

43. (a)—It does not appear that there is any strong demand on the part of the public but the matter has recently been brought to the notice of Government by the Assam Medical Council.

(b)—Government are considering the question.

(c)—The question of introducing a Nurses and Midwives Registration Bill is under consideration.

- 44.—The Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals, Assam is the President,
 The Director of Pasteur Institute and Medical Research Institute,
 Shillong,
 The Director of Public Health,
 Civil Surgeon, Khasi and Jaintia Hills,
 Chief Medical Officer, Welsh Mission Hospital, Shillong,
 Dr. Kumidini Kanta Banerjee, Shillong,
 Dr. Kali Kumar Das, L.M.P., Sylhet,
 Dr. Nora Proctor Sims, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., M.C.O.G.,
 Dr. G. D. Madhak, L.R.C.P. & S.L.R.F.P., S.L.M., D.P.H., D.T.M.,
 Dr. Dibakar Hazarika, M.B.,
 Dr. Radha Ranjan Chaudhuri, M.B.,
 Dr. Md. Khaliler Rahman,
 Dr. Ghanashyam Das.

MR. NABA KUMAR DATTA: May I know how many are nominated and how many elected?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Ten members are nominated by Government and three are elected.

MR. NABA KUMAR DATTA: May I know on what principle nomination is made?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: I require notice of that question.

MISS MAVIS DUNN asked:

*45. (a) Is it a fact that there is no lady doctor in the Assam Medical Council?

(b) If so, why not?

(c) Do Government propose to take steps to include a lady doctor in the Assam Medical Council?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied:

45. (a)—The reply is in the negative.

(b) & (c)—do not arise.

MR. NABA KUMAR DATTA: Do the Government contemplate to nominate a lady on the Committee?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: The reply is in the negative. As there is already a lady on the Committee the question of nomination does not arise.

MISS MAVIS DUNN asked:

*46. (a) Is it a fact that the discipline of nurses is under the control of the Assam Medical Council?

(b) Is it a fact that there are few, if any, members of the Assam Medical Council who have any dealings at all with the training of nurses and therefore do not understand the nurses' difficulties?

(c) Do Government propose to have a Sub-Committee to deal with nurses in which lady doctors and Nursing Superintendents are members?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied:

46. (a)—The reply is in the negative. The Assam Medical Council deals only with Medical Practitioners.

(b)—No, the Chief Medical Officers both of the Welsh Mission Hospital and of the Ganesh Das Hospital, Shillong, are on the Assam Medical Council. As the hon. member is aware the Welsh Mission Hospital is well-known for the training of nurses.

(c)—Presumably this refers to a Sub-Committee of the Assam Medical Council. Under the Assam Medical Act the Medical Council deals only with medical practitioners and nurses do not come within the scope of the Act. If a Nurses Bill is introduced it will provide, among other things, for an "Assam Nursing Council".

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Sunamganj Local Board

MAULAVI ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURI asked :

20. Will Government be pleased to state :

(a) Whether a resolution of the Sunamganj Local Board passed in January 24, 1935, recommending an increase and redistribution, in the number of its members on the basis of population amongst the different communities, was received by Government ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to take action on the lines suggested in the said resolution, in the next election ?

21. Are Government aware that there is complaint from the public that grave injustice was done to the Mahommedan community in the matter of the distribution of seats in the Sunamganj Local Board ?

22. Has the attention of Government been drawn to the resolution passed in the Sunamganj Subdivisional Muslim Conference held at Mainpur on February 24, 1936, demanding immediate action on the above-mentioned resolution of the Sunamganj Local Board ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied :

20. and 21.—The hon. member is referred to the reply to a similar question asked at this session by Maulavi Dewan Md. Ahbab Chaudhuri.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER : I said that I would allow supplementary questions on No.20.

MAULAVI ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURI : May I know whether such a resolution was received by Government ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : Yes, that was received.

MAULAVI ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURI : Have Government taken any steps on that resolution ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : The question of increasing the number of members of Local Boards is under the consideration of Government.

MR. NABA KUMAR DATTA : Was there a complaint from the public ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : Yes, there was a complaint from the public.

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied :

22.—The reply is in the negative.

MR. NABA KUMAR DATTA : Did the Government receive a copy of the resolution from Sunamganj ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : The reply is in the negative. We did not get a copy of the resolution.

Employment of Contractors in Public Works Department

SRIJUT PARAMANANDA DAS asked :

23. Will the Hon'ble Minister for Public Works Department be pleased to state :—

(a) whether any preference is given to the local contractors in giving Public Works Department contracts ?

(b) If so, the extent of such preference if there be any ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :—

23. (a)—Yes.

(b)—The extent of such preference cannot be stated in mathematical language as it must depend on the individual circumstances. A copy of the Chief Engineer's instructions to all Executive Engineers is placed on the Library Table.

KHAN BAHADUR MAULAVI KERAMAT ALI: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that in the letter referred to in the reply under (b) the Chief Engineer says that he does not like the idea of replacing old foreign contractors by new local contractors ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If the House wants, Sir, I can read out the whole letter. I have already laid it on the Library table.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Minister can read the substance.

KHAN BAHADUR MAULAVI KERAMAT ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister read out paragraphs 3 and 6 please ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The letter has got only 5 paragraphs and not 6. I am reading from paragraph 3. "The only reason an Executive Engineer could have for requiring to see a contractor's domicile certificate is to avoid giving a contract to a foreigner who has no such certificate. Government accept the same principle as laid down in rule 307(i) of the Executive Manual in regard to allowing domiciled contractors (which includes their family) to tender for works.

SRIJUT DEBESWAR SARMAH: I could not hear the Hon'ble Minister, Sir.

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The hon. gentleman has just come. Then the paragraph goes on—"but I consider that Assamese should anyhow be given preference over new contractors of foreign origin even if the latter do obtain a certificate of domicile."

I suppose the hon. member has heard me.

SRIJUT DEBESWAR SARMAH: Yes, thanks.

KHAN BAHADUR MAULAVI KERAMAT ALI: Sir, there is another letter printed which is laid on the table of the House and I referred to that and in paragraphs 3 and 6 of the letter the Chief Engineer says that he does not like the idea of encouraging old foreign contractors being replaced by new local hands.

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I suppose my hon. friend is referring to this portion. "The general policy... is that Assamese and old contractors domiciled in Assam should have preference and that foreign contractors should drop out and new contractors of foreign origin should not be encouraged even though they may secure a certificate of domicile".

KHAN BAHADUR MAULAVI KERAMAT ALI: No, Sir, that is not the thing.

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAM. AD SAADULLA: Then I have no other letter in the file before me.

SRIJUT PURNA CHANDRA SARMA: May I know if these instructions are being carried into effect by the local officers?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have no reason to think that they are not being carried into effect. At least attempts are made to enforce all instructions and Government orders.

MR. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: May I know whether the Hon'ble Minister is aware that no such preference is given to the local contractors at Gauhati?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have received a complaint and I have instituted an enquiry.

SRIJUT DEBESWAR SARMAH: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that local contractors are practically driven out by subterfuges and preference is given to outside contractors and the Assam-Bengal Railway?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have not received any complaint, Sir, to that effect.

MAULAVI SYED ABDUR ROUF: May I know if Government suffer economically by giving contracts to local men?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Where the difference in rates quoted by a foreign contractor and a local contractor is not very great, preference is generally given to the local contractor.

SRIJUT DEBESWAR SARMAH: If these intentions of Government are not given effect to, and there are many subterfuges by which this can be evaded, will Government see that their instructions are enforced?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: That is a very hypothetical question. If the hon. member will deign to give me cases of such contractors, I will start an enquiry.

SRIJUT DEBESWAR SARMAH: May I take it that it is a promise?

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: Oh, yes. It is a clear promise.

DOCUMENTS OR STATEMENTS PLACED ON LIBRARY TABLE

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: I may repeat for the information of the House that all documents which are referred to in the answers as being placed on the Library table of the House will from to-day be placed on this table on my left.

SRIJUT PURNA CHANDRA SARMA: On a point of information, Sir; from to-day if the answers to questions are stated to have been placed on the table, it ought to be mentioned in the replies to those questions which will be put on our desk. Otherwise, it is not possible for us to get the answer then and there. Even if they are starred questions they should be put on the desk so that we may put supplementary questions.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: I may tell the House that if any supplementary question is put with reference to any documents placed on the Library table and if any hon. member cannot find the document on the date on which it is put, on the following day I shall allow the hon. member to put supplementary questions relevant to it.

Construction of Haripani Bridge in Jogighopa-Chapaguri Road

SRIJUT PARAMANANDA DAS asked:

24. (a) Will the Hon'ble Minister for Public Works Department be pleased to state whether Government propose to construct Haripani Bridge in the Jogighopa-Chapaguri road?

(b) If so, when Government propose to take up the construction?

25. Will the Hon'ble Minister for Public Works Department be pleased to state:—

(a) the conditions of the Assam Trunk Road from Gauhati to Fakirganj?

(b) whether the portion of the Trunk Road is motorable throughout the year?

(c) why Government did not take up the construction of the Dudnai bridge this year?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

24. (a)—No.

(b).—Does not arise.

25. (a)—From Gauhati to Lakhipur good; from Lakhipur to Fakirganj only a fair weather track is maintained.

(b)—From Gauhati to Lakhipur ... Yes.

From Lakhipur to Fakirganj ... No.

(c)—The Government of India did not allot funds for this work from the Road Funds—"Reserve" until the latter part of April 1937.

MAULAVI MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: I find that some grant has been given and what I want to know is if an estimate has been prepared.

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Everything is ready and work will be started during the cold weather.

Diversion of Kulsi River

SRIJUT GOPINATH BARDOLOI asked :

26. Will Government be pleased to state whether they received a largely signed petition on behalf of the people of Chaygaon and Borduar Mouzas, dated 21st April 1937, regarding the course of the Kulsi River ?

27. If so, does Government propose to cause any enquiry to be made with a view to satisfy itself that the suggestion made by the signatories of the petition that a small channel cut at the source might divert the water to its original bed, is a proper one ?

28. Will Government be pleased to state whether they propose to take any action in the matter ?

29. If the answer is in the affirmative, what action do Government propose to take ?

30. If the answer is in the negative, why, no action should be taken.

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

26.—Government have received a petition.

27.—Government have already made several enquiries and have been advised against similar proposals by their experts.

28.—A further investigation will be made after September next.

29.—This will depend on the result of the investigation, *vide* question 28 above.

30.—Does not arise.

System of ballot voting in the Local Board Election

SRIJUT JOGENDRA NARAYAN MANDAL asked :—

31. Will Government be pleased to state :—

(a) Whether they received resolutions from different places in the province asking the Government to adopt the system of ballot voting instead of open voting in the next Local Board election ?

(b) If so, whether Government propose to adopt the system of ballot voting according to the wishes of the public ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied :

31. (a)—Yes.

(b)—The matter is under consideration. Government will certainly do their best to meet the wishes of the public.

SRIJUT JOGENDRA NARAYAN MANDAL: Can we accept the Hon'ble Minister's statement that "Government will certainly do their best to meet the wishes of the public" in reply to (b) as amounting to "That Government decides to introduce the system of ballot voting in the coming local board elections to meet the wishes of the public" ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Sir, I have already replied that it is understood that if it is the wishes of the public and their wish is made known by this House we shall surely do it.

SRIJUT GOPINATH BARDOLOI: Has the Hon'ble Minister no say of his own?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: The Government also want to know the opinion of the House.

SRIJUT PURNA CHANDRA SARMA: Is there any proposal on the Government side in regard to this?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: The proposal is to introduce the secret ballot.

SRIJUT LAKHESVAR BOROOAH: Was opinion invited from the public with regard to this matter?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Yes.

SRIJUT LAKHESVAR BOROOAH: Was the volume of opinion in favour of this system of voting?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: The rules for elections under the Act were published once. These rules are under consideration. In these rules there is a proposal to have the ballot just as we have now and there were many public bodies who objected and who wanted secret ballot.

MR. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: When will the result be known to the public?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: When the question of postponement of the local board elections has been decided by Government, a Bill will have to be introduced in the next session of the Assembly and in that Bill we shall make known the decision of Government.

SRIJUT MAHI CHANDRA BORA: Am I to understand that this will not be before the next election?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: It will be decided before the next election.

SRIJUT MAHI CHANDRA BORA: Do the Government want the secret ballot by symbols?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: That is the idea.

Number of officers in Public Works Department office in Dhubri

SRIJUT JOGENDRA NARAYAN MANDAL asked:

32. Will Government be pleased to state:—

- (a) The number of officers under the Public Works Department in the Executive Engineer's and Subdivisional Officer's offices at Dhubri, stating their names, monthly pay and home districts?
- (b) The number of officers who are *bona fide* inhabitants of the district of Goalpara in the offices mentioned at (a) above?
- (c) Was there any vacancy of temporary cash clerk in the Executive Engineer's office at Dhubri? If so, who was appointed to the post? What is his name and home district?
- (d) How many candidates applied for the post?
- (e) Was there no local candidate having Public Works Department office experience? If so, why their cases were ignored?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

32. (a)—A statement showing the number, names, monthly pay and home districts of the ministerial officers (including the Drawing Branch Establishment), serving in the office of the Executive Engineer, Dhubri, and in the Public Works Department Subdivisional office, Dhubri, is given below.

Name		Designation	Number	Monthly pay	Home district
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER'S OFFICE, DHUBRI					
1. Babu	Girindra Chandra Dhar.	Accountant	1	Rs. 210	Sylhet.
2. „	Kamakhyia Nath Dhar.	Accounts Clerk.	1	100	Sylhet.
3. „	Nagendra Nath Chatterjee.	Head Clerk	1	130	Nadiya.
4. „	Promoda Chandra Biswas.	Upper Division clerk.	1	104	Sylhet.
5. „	Ramani Mohan Chaudhury.	Lower Division Clerk.	1	74	Sylhet.
6. „	Amar Chandra Biswas.	Ditto	...	1 56	Sylhet.
7. Srijut	Nalini Kanta Das ...	Ditto	...	1 35	Goalpara.
8. Maulavi	Mahiuddin Ahmed.	Ditto	...	1 35	Goalpara.
9. Babu Sanjib Chandra Roy	(on leave preparatory to retirement). Babu Dhirendra Nath Deb (native of Sylhet) off. on Rs.55 per mensem.	Lower Division Clerk.	1	90	Sylhet.
10. Babu	Jitendra Kumar Ghose	Computer	...	1 190	Dacca.
11. „	Sisir Chandra Datta	Draftsman	...	1 50	Sylhet.

SUBDIVISIONAL OFFICE, DHUBRI

12. Babu	Ganendra Chandra Sanyal.	Head Clerk...	1	104	Pabna.
13. Srijut	Harendra Narayan Barman	Clerk	...	1 42	Goalpara.
14. „	Utsahananda Das ...	Ditto	...	1 35	Goalpara.
15. Babu	Kumudini Kanta Nath	Tracer	...	1 68	Dacca.

(b)—Four.

(c)—Yes. Babu Dhirendra Nath Deb, who was appointed to the temporary post of cash clerk in the Executive Engineer's office at Dhubri is a native of Sylhet.

(d)—Thirty-four.

(e)—The appointment as made by the then Executive Engineer has not been accepted by the Chief Engineer, and the post is being re-advertised as vacant. All local candidates of under-represented communities who are qualified will be considered when the appointment is made.

SRIJUT JOGENDRA NARAYAN MANDAL: Will the Government account for the hasty action in the recent appointment of temporary cash clerk in the Executive Engineer's office at Dhubri and the cost of transfer allowance of about Rs.250 incurred for the new recruit?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: As the officer concerned has gone on leave preparatory to retirement, Government do not propose to realise the expenditure on travelling allowance of the clerk in question.

SRIJUT JOGENDRA NARAYAN MANDAL: May I know, Sir, from which place he was brought?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: From the Lushai Hills, Sir.

DR. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: Will the Government be pleased not to recruit any officer from other provinces in future?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Lushai Hills is within this province.

DR. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: But I find in the list in reply to 32(a) names of some officers recruited from Nadiya and Dacca.

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: That must have been long ago.

Newspaper article re the Dergaon Dispensary

SRIJUT RAJENDRA NATH BARUA asked:

33. Has the attention of Government been drawn to the article published in the *Dainik Batori* of 24th June 1937, regarding the deplorable condition of the Dergaon Dispensary of Golaghat?

34. Is it a fact that the medicines supplied to the dispensary are not sufficient to meet the demands of the patients?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied:

33.—Government have seen the article.

34.—The dispensary, which is a Local Board Dispensary, was inspected by the Hon'ble Minister in charge on the 25th of May last. A petition was also received by the Hon'ble Minister from the local public complaining about the state of the building. Information has since been received that the Chairman of the Golaghat Local Board has promised Rs.1,000 for the reconstruction of the building. So far as Government is aware the stock of medicines (with the exception of quinine) is ample. The Hon'ble Minister noted that the Director of Public Health could be asked by the local authorities to supply the extra quinine required.

KHAN BAHADUR MAULAVI KERAMAT ALI: Did the Hon'ble Minister receive any report from the local officers to the effect that the stock of medicines in the dispensary is ample?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: I myself inspected this dispensary and I think I asked the Assistant Surgeon whether the stock of medicines was sufficient, and he said it was.

MR. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Is the dispensary in need of a stock of quinine?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: I do not know the reason, but I have asked the Assistant Surgeon to get it if he is in need.

SRIJUT RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: Does the Government consider that quinine is the most important medicine for villages?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Government do consider that quinine is very necessary.

MR. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: May I know who is responsible for the supply of quinine?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: I do not think that the stock was so insufficient as to make it impossible for the Assistant Surgeon to give quinine to the dispensaries who were running out of stock. And if he wants more, he can get it.

Ghanashyam Road in Barpathar Mouza

SRIJUT RAJENDRA NATH BARUA asked:

35. (1) Is it a fact that there is a road called the Ghanashyam Barua Road in the Barpathar Mauza?

(2) If so, when was it first taken over by the Development Board and have any repairs been done to it since then?

36. Is it a fact that a contract was given to the proprietor, Rengma Tea Estate for about Rs.2,000 for its up-keep by the Development Officer on 31st March 1936 and subsequently cancelled by his letter, dated the 1st June 1936? If so, do Government propose to take up the repairs of the road immediately?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI replied:

35. (1)—Yes.

(2)—The question of this road being taken over by the Development Board was raised by the Commissioner in 1935, but the estimate was considered to be too high. The estimate was revised and approved by Government in 1936, but as there was no provision in the budget last year the work could not be taken up. Funds have been provided in the current year's budget.

36.—When administrative approval was given to the taking over of the road the Development Officer got the work started and Rs.24 had actually been spent on it when he received information that there was no provision in the Government budget for 1936-37. The work was accordingly stopped.

As stated above, funds have been provided this year, but as there is a lot of earthworks to be done the actual repairs will probably not be taken up until the cold weather.

Total Revenue of Assam

SRIJUT RAJENDRA NATH BARUA asked:

37. Will Government be pleased to state the total revenue from all sources, (a) of the Surma Valley, (b) of the Assam Valley, for the last three years?

38. Will Government be pleased to state the total expenditure of the Government (a) in the Surma Valley, (b) in the Assam Valley for the last three years?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

37 and 38.—The hon. member is referred to the reply given to question No.141 by Babu Gopendrolal Das Chaudhuri at the September session of the old Council in 1935, in which the revenue and expenditure of the Sylhet district alone was analysed for the years 1933-34 and 1934-35. It took nearly four months to compile those figures and special staff had to be engaged. Government therefore cannot contemplate undertaking the enormous amount of work which would be necessary to extract figures for all the plains districts of the Province as desired by the hon. member, and consider that the results would be incommensurate with the labour and expense of their extraction.

SRIJUT RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: The answer to this question gives information only as regards Sylhet. Does the Hon'ble Minister propose to give a complete answer to the questions 37 and 38 ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I can give the figures to the hon. member in the next session. For Sylhet alone it took a special officer 4 months to compile the figures. The figures required will necessitate a larger staff and a longer time.

SRIJUT RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: May I know, Sir, when the next session comes ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It may probably be in November.

Number of cases tried under the Assam Criminal Law Amendment Act

SRIJUT RAJENDRA NATH BARUA asked :

39. Will the Government be pleased to state whether any case was tried under the Assam Criminal Law Amendment Act since its inception and with what results ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

39.—Since the inception of the Assam Criminal Law Amendment Act, four cases, one of which was against an absconder in one of the other three cases, were tried by Commissioners appointed under sections 3 and 4 of the Assam Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1934. In the three main cases, all the accused were convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, but in the fourth and subsidiary case, the absconder was acquitted.

SRIJUT RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: Will Government be pleased to state whether there is any prisoner in jail still now ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If the question refers to Assam jails, no.

SRIJUT RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: Any in outside jails ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes.

SRIJUT BELI RAM DAS: May I know the names ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I replied in proper time in answer to another question.

SRIJUT PURNA CHANDRA SARMA: Were these two gentlemen convicted of political offences ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes.

Erosion of Dibrugarh Town by the Brahmaputra

SRIJUT RAJANI KANTA BOROOAH asked :

40. Will Government be pleased to lay on the table a statement of expenditure incurred in connection with the report submitted by Mr. Curry, Bengal Irrigation Chief Engineer, on the erosion of the Dibrugarh town by the Brahmaputra ?

41. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether the report was circulated for the information of the general public ?

(b) Whether Government studied the report and propose to adopt measures for the protection of the town according to the recommendations contained in the report ?

(c) If not, why not ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

40.—Rupees 2,136-4-0.

41. (a)—Government cannot circulate reports to the general public. Detailed abstracts of the report appeared in the local and Calcutta papers.

(b)—Yes. Government studied the report but do not propose to adopt the measures suggested in it.

(c)—Owing to the cost involved and due to Government policy of not spending large sums of the tax payers money for the protection of private property.

SRIJUT SARVESWAR BARUA : Why does Government find it impossible to circulate the report ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Government does not lay on the table or circulate to the public the reports of special officers.

MR. NABA KUMAR DATTA : Was it published in the *Assam Gazette* ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : No, Sir.

SRIJUT RAJANI KANTA BOROOAH : Will the Hon'ble Minister state whether there are municipal roads and lands that are being affected by the erosion ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : There may be. I am not aware.

SRIJUT SARVESWAR BARUA : Why does Government say that it is not the policy of Government to spend large sums of the tax-payers' money in protection of private property ? On what information is this statement based, namely that only private property has been washed away ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : So far as Government buildings are concerned, they have not been washed away. I myself was there four or five year ago and I know that a portion of private lands, named Jorhatia putty has been washed away.

MR. NABA KUMAR DATTA : Do Government mean to say that municipal lands are not Government property ?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Unless any municipal property, by operation of law, vests in Government, no municipal property belongs to Government.

MR. NABA KUMAR DATTA: Is not Government bound to take measures for the protection of the town? The question was whether Government is taking any action or not?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have said that Government could not take any action as I have already explained in answer to (c).

SRIJUT RAJANI KANTA BOROOAH: Has Government got no interest in the private property of individuals?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No.

SRIJUT SARVESWAR BARUA: Has Government no interest even when the property of many persons is concerned?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If Government could protect the property by spending a reasonable sum of money, then Government most probably would have come forward. But when a huge sum is required, it is very very difficult to spend the general taxpayers' money of the province in order to protect the property of rate-payers of Dibrugarh town.

Eradication of Water Hyacinth

BABU DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI asked:

42. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) What steps, if any, have Government taken to eradicate the pest of water hyacinth in the province, subdivision by subdivision?
- (b) Will Government enlighten the House as to the method followed and result obtained?
- (c) Do Government propose to make a more vigorous campaign for the said purpose?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied:

42. (a)—Under the Assam Water Hyacinth Act of 1926 the responsibility of initiating measures rests with local bodies.

(b) and (c)—Though the responsibility for dealing with the Water Hyacinth pest rests with local bodies Government have encouraged their officers to interest themselves in the matter and, with the co-operation of the public, a great deal was done last year in the Sylhet district particularly in the Habiganj subdivision towards the eradication of the pests. As regards the methods adopted an extract from the minutes of a conference held last year by the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, to discuss ways and means for a campaign to eradicate the pest is placed on the table. The results of the campaign are not, however, very encouraging as it was found almost impossible to make the bulk of the cultivators realize the benefit of the measures taken to the extent of continuing their efforts when direct supervision was withdrawn.

The question of amending the Act so as to give the initiative and powers to the district authorities instead of to local bodies who have proved entirely apathetic will be considered by Government.

Extract from the Minutes of a conference held on 15th February 1936 at Maulvibazar to discuss ways and means for a campaign to eradicate the water hyacinth evil in the district of Sylhet

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2. Mr. Khurshid first described what he had done last year. By going personally to Baniyachong and directing the Sarpanches to turn the people out he had collected some hundreds of workers and with the assistance of Sub-Deputy Collectors, Police officers and any one who could be impressed into service, he had gone into the water (in the month of July) and given the lead in the collection of the weed. At that time of the year he found the best method of dealing with it in the open was—in the absence of any dry land on which to stack it—to collect it all into small areas and pile it up high, so that the bottom layers got no air and the top got no water and the whole became a solid mass, which could either be fenced in roughly or more simply stacked through into the earth below by split bamboos to prevent it moving away. In about a week's time the whole mass would rot away. The process is the same if there is any dry land on which to build the stack. In *Khals* and waterways which bring down the weed it was found best to build a fence of bamboos with an opening for boats; across the opening a bamboo barrier which could hold up the water hyacinth but could be crossed by boats was placed. The accumulations at the fence would be periodically stacked. Along the bank of one stream near Baniyachong which bordered the *aman* fields the villagers erected a bamboo fence of over three miles long to keep the weed from encroaching on the paddy fields.

3. The above is illustrative not only of the methods adopted with success, but also of what can be done by co-operation and keenness, for not a penny was spent in these operations. It should be noted here that in some places the water hyacinth is used for cattle fodder, as it has supplanted the coarse grass that used to grow in the year before 1914 when the pest was first found here. Mr. Khurshid dealt with this objection by making the villagers fence off a small area into which they could cram as much water hyacinth as they liked, for use as fodder, conditional on the remainder being uprooted and completely cleared up at the end of the rains when natural fodder was available again. It should not be at all impossible if we can clear the district of water hyacinth, to encourage again the growth of coarse grass for cattle fodder: that however, is a matter for consideration much later. Water hyacinth can also be used for manuring purposes after it has rotted or been burnt: the Agricultural Department propose to carry out propaganda to acquaint villagers with the uses to which it can be put in this direction, but this will not affect the main campaign to collect and destroy it.

4. There are two different times when an intensive campaign can be undertaken; the first is in the latter part of the cold weather (for *aman* and *sail* growing areas) when the crop has been reaped and threshed and the time has not yet come to begin ploughing again. At this time of the year communication is easy for organizing a campaign, and cultivators have not much else to do. It is however, not so easy to collect the weed out of the dried mud where it is lying; without water it will not rot, and has to be kept stacked for a few weeks to be dry enough to burn. The second is after the first flood at the end of June or the beginning of July, before the plant

reaches full development ; it is then easy to collect out of the standig water, and can be more easily stacked for rotting : communications are not so good then, and in some areas cultivators are still busy planting and transplanting.

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A. G. PATTON,

Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet.

BABU DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURY : It has been stated in the reply that "the question of amending the Act so as to give the initiative and powers to the district authorities instead of to local bodies who have proved entirely apathetic will be considered by Government." May we know the data from which Government came to this conclusion ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : Because the local bodies are not taking the necessary interest.

BABU DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURY : May we know the approximate date when Government will take up legislation ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : We will do it as early as possible.

MAULAVI GYASUDDIN AHMED : Are Government aware that the Dhubri dispensary authorities have allowed water hyacinth to grow ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : No, Sir.

MAULAVI GYASUDDIN AHMED : Will the Hon'ble Minister make an inquiry into the matter ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : Yes, I can make an enquiry.

BABU HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTI : May I know whether local bodies can compel any person to remove the pest more than the mere issue of a request ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : According to the Act the local bodies have to take the initiative and there is some kind of compulsion that will have to be done under the Act.

MAULAVI ABDUR RAHMAN : Do Government admit that without any strict legislation the eradication of the water hyacinth from the country is possible ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : It is a well known fact that it is very difficult to eradicate water hyacinth even by legislation. However, steps have been taken by Government officials to eradicate it from some parts of the province.

SRIJUT KRISHNA NATH SARMA : Has Government allotted any money for this purpose ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : No money has been set apart for this, because the initiative has to be taken by the local bodies.

MAULAVI ABDUR RAHMAN : Is there any instruction by Government to the local bodies for this purpose ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : No further instruction is needed. According to the Act it is their duty to look after that work.

MAULAVI ABDUR RAHMAN : Has Government provided any money to the local bodies for this purpose ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : No.

MAULAVI ABDUR RAHMAN: Has any provision of grants for this purpose been made in the budget?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: No.

MAULAVI ABDUR RAHMAN: Do Government admit that local boards are sleeping over this matter for want of funds?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: If they are sleeping it is for the rate payers to throw them out.

MAULAVI ABDUR RAHMAN: Will Government provide more money for the purpose to the local bodies?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: No.

BABU KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Is Government prepared to grant any money to any local body on its mere asking for it?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: If any local body comes up for help from Government, Government will consider the case.

Affairs of the Sylhet Municipality

BABU KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked:

Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Local Self-Government please state—

43. If the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet or the Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Division, has reported the following facts regarding the affairs of the Sylhet Municipality—

In the general election now pending a large number of objections amounting to over three hundred, for inclusion of names in the preliminary rolls on the ground that the persons described could not either be traced or that the persons named had no connection with the holding which would legally entitle them to be so included, were made. The election Magistrate refused to entertain these objections on the ground that these names appeared in the Demand Register, although it was pointed out to him that they are not in the Assessment Register and that the interpolations in the Demand Register showed evidence of fraudulent interpolations. A petition to the same effect was presented to the Deputy Commissioner for enquiry on 14th May 1937. A subsequent petition was presented to the Deputy Commissioner on 12th June 1937. The Deputy Commissioner examined his own clerk Mr. Rob against whose holding No.379, Ward II, 4 names were inserted in the Demand Register. Mr. Rob denied all acquaintances with these persons. The Deputy Commissioner himself made several other enquiries which prove that many names on the Rolls on the strength of their appearance in Demand Register, in spite of the absence in Assessment Register, were fraudulent.

44. Has the Deputy Commissioner or the Commissioner reported to Government that the Rolls be declared invalid and that the election has failed from the stage of publication of the preliminary Rolls and be again taken up from that point?

45. Has the Deputy Commissioner or the Commissioner been able to fix the responsibility for the insertions of these names in the Demand Register?

46. Has the Deputy Commissioner or the Commissioner taken any legal proceedings to bring the offenders to justice?

47. If not, do Government propose to call for reports and records and order a thorough enquiry and bring the offenders to justice?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied :

43.—The Deputy Commissioner submitted a report to Government on the whole question of the alleged wrongful insertion of certain names in the Demand Register. This report was a *confidential* report and Government are not prepared to disclose its contents.

BABU KARUNA SINDHU ROY : Why did not Government call for a report from the Deputy Commissioner on this matter ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : Government called for a report and even asked the Deputy Commissioner to come up to Shillong with papers.

BABU RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : Why is the report treated as confidential ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : Because the Deputy Commissioner's report is confidential.

BABU RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : Are we not entitled to ask Government to supply us an official report ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : There is no necessity for that.

MR. BAIDYANATH MUKHARJI : May I know whether the allegation made by the people in their representation tallies with the report of the Deputy Commissioner ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : Not in all respects.

MAULAVI ASHRAF UDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY : Is it a fact that the representation was to the effect that the report of the Deputy Commissioner was not correct ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : We have not heard of any such thing.

MAULAVI ASHRAF UDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY : Will the Hon'ble Minister refresh his memory from record ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : There is nothing in the record to that effect.

44.—See reply to question 43.

45.—Certain names were included in the Demand Register by order of the Vice-Chairman as the result of a report by the Tax Sircar.

46.—No legal proceedings have been instituted.

BABU KARUNA SINDHU ROY : Why no legal proceedings have been instituted ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : Because nobody knows who are the offenders.

MAULAVI ASHRAF UDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY : Why an attempt was not made to find out the culprits ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : This question was referred to the Deputy Commissioner but it was possible to find out the offenders.

MAULAVI ASHRAF UDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY : Will Government make over the matter to the police to find out the offenders ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : That is not the duty of Government. It is for the people who are connected with the election to bring an election petition if there is any complaint.

BABU RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : Is it a fact that Government have no duty in the matter ?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : Government's duty is to see that the criminals are punished, but in this case it is very difficult to find out the offenders.

BABU RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Is it not a discredit on the part of Government that they were not able to find out the culprits?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I would reply on behalf of Government. The matter has been thoroughly gone into by the Deputy Commissioner but he could not fix the guilt on any body and therefore Government thought it unnecessary to institute any further enquiry.

BABU RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Was the matter referred to the police?

THE HON'BLE MAULAVI SAIYID SIR MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Government did not think it necessary to send it to the police because the matter was thoroughly investigated by the District Officer.

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied:

47.—Government have gone into the whole matter at great length and do not consider that any useful purpose would be served by a further enquiry.

BABU RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Does not Government consider it a useful purpose to prevent any abuse?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Government considers that it will be useful to prevent any abuse.

BABU RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: If it is an abuse does not Government think it necessary to take steps in the matter.

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Will the hon. member state what he means by abuse? Abuse of what?

BABU RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: It is in the answer that Government do not consider that any useful purpose would be served by a further enquiry. If there has been any abuse, does not Government think that prevention of such abuse is a useful purpose?

THE HON'BLE REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Government has considered the whole question and finds that it is no use making any enquiry now?

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE ABOLITION OF LINE SYSTEM

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: The first resolution stands in the name of Maulavi Munawwarali; but he has authorised Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri to move the resolution.

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: On a point of order, Sir; I think such authority can be made only in case when the member is absent from the House.

MR. BAIDYANATH MUKHARJI: If he is unfit, Sir?

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: The rule is: "if the member when called on is absent, the resolution standing in his name shall be considered to have been withdrawn; provided that with the consent of such absent member and with the permission of the Speaker any other member may move the resolution I think he should move it".

MR. BAIDYANATH MUKHARJI: On a point of information, Sir, if the hon. member is unfit to speak, Sir.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: I did not notice that the Hon'ble Maulavi Munawwar Ali is present in the House. As the rule stands, he should move the resolution by a short speech, if he is really unwell.

MAULAVI MUNAWWARALI: I shall absent myself now.

(The hon. member withdrew from the House then)

A Voice—Can he leave the House without your permission, Sir?

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: It has not been proper for the hon. member to leave the House when he was called upon to move. And he has not done it with decorum. When he sent a letter of authority, it was understood that he would be absent. And I thought he was absent. But when he was present I think it was not proper on his part to leave the House in this way.

DR. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: Will you consider the resolution withdrawn, Sir?

MR. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: On a point of order, Sir. May I say something, Sir?

✓ THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: Yes.

MR. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: The hon. member left the House under a misapprehension. When he was called upon by you to move the resolution, I think it will be fair if it is communicated to him that he was called upon to move the resolution and he may come in.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: If he left without meaning any disrespect to the chair and under a misapprehension, he may be communicated so that he may come to take his seat and move the resolution.

(At this stage Maulavi Munawwar Ali was called in.)

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: It was open to me to give the decision that the resolution lapsed; but having regard to the importance of the resolution, I have taken this procedure and have asked the hon. member to come and move the resolution. Therefore I call upon Maulavi Munawwar Ali to move the resolution.

MAULAVI MUNAWWAR ALI: Sir, I was not aware that I was called upon to move this resolution. I was under the impression that the Secretary was pointing out the pages of the Rules and that the matter was being considered by you. But I must confess, I have been taken by surprise, but nevertheless, I will move the resolution standing in my name which is this—

“This Assembly recommends to the Government of Assam that the ‘Line System’, which is being maintained in some districts of the Assam Valley in order to confine settlement of lands to immigrants in certain areas, be forthwith abolished”.

It must be admitted by all sections of the community all over India that we are on the threshold of an era of an all-India nationalism; India is also crying for independence. But, what is this line system? Is this line system in vogue in the province in order to exclude areas from foreigners? This system is a line arbitrarily drawn in the Brahmaputra Valley in order to prevent Indians from crossing this line—Indians of the neighbouring province, particularly of the province of Bengal. If my information is correct, even a Sylheti is not permitted to go beyond the line. Once I recollect, on the floor of this House I referred to the misfortune of Sylhetis. The misfortune is that a Sylheti is treated as a foreigner in his own province!

DR. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: On a point of information, Sir. Is the hon. member aware that a deputation arrived here from Nowgong against the abolition of line system. The deputation consisted of Sylheti settlers.

✓ MAULAVI MUNAWWAR ALI: Sir, I am aware of that. Some members of the deputation came to me. I fixed a time to meet them, but they did not turn up. I was told that the deputation was of some Sylheti people. But I do not know the genesis of that deputation, although I am anxious to know its pros and cons.

Sir, this line is invidious. It is against all principles of nation-making. You are aware, how the Indians are fighting tooth and nail for equal rights and privileges in a South African colony where the British Government has some connection merely as the sovereign power. Sir, even the foreigners—Indian who are looked upon as foreigners there—are trying to have a footing of equal status in the South African colony, and on what plea? The British nation is the sovereign power over both. The Indians are under the same Government. We are the kiths and kins of the same people. In order to build up a Indian nationhood it is not proper on the part of the Assamese people to prevent the immigrants from coming into Assam and settling there. Now I will tell the hon. members of this House through you, Sir, what the immigrants have done after their coming into Assam. They have killed tigers, they have killed rhinoceros, they have killed wild elephants and wild buffaloes. They turned the thickest forests into smiling paddy lands yielding all kinds of crops, bringing in prosperity, health and wealth into the province of Assam. I should remind you, Sir, of the great pest—*Kala-azar* which was depopulating the province and sweeping away thousands of the people. Now, this is a thing of the past. The immigrants by their arduous labour and strenuous fight against the jarring elements of nature have cleared the jungles and turned them into smiling paddy fields. Now does this province economically stand to lose or to gain? If the line system is not abolished economic loss to the indigenous population will be very great. Those who are called indigenous population are not so keen for lands and business. Now if a bigha of land is sold for Rs.10, in the non-immigrant area, it sells for Rs.80, in the immigrant area. Because competition in one area is practically nil, while in the other it is acute. Therefore, Sir, economic loss to the indigenous population is immense. They do not get the benefit of superior method of cultivation and active habits of the immigrants, who are of the same blood, and of the same traditions and who are so very hardy. This isolation has left the indigenous population where they were. They are said to be in need of protection. Why? Because they do not get the amenities which will lift them up. They cannot imbibe the sturdy nature because they shut themselves up from those who could make them better, I hope my hon. friend Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhury, in supporting me, will deal with the subject fully in other aspects of the question. I understand, he has studied the subject and will not be taken by surprise as I have been (*laughter*). If anything crops up during the discussion, I shall try to reply. Now I hope the Hon'ble Speaker will permit my hon. friend Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhury to speak on the subject, before he Hon'ble Minister speaks.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: The resolution moved is that this Assembly recommends to the Government of Assam that the 'Line System', which is being maintained in some districts of the Assam Valley in order to confine settlement of lands to the immigrants in certain areas, be forthwith abolished.

MAULAVI ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: Does the Hon'ble Minister want to speak?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: The previous convention of the House was that immediately after the speech of the Mover of the resolution, Government Member would speak.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: It is not always necessary. The Hon'ble Minister may select his own time, but after the facts and figures

are placed before the House, I think, it will be proper for the Hon'ble Minister in charge to reply. He will get 30 minutes for giving reply just as the mover of the resolution gets.

MAULAVI ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: I think, Sir, many hon. members of this House are not aware what line system actually means. I can confess, Sir, until recently I myself was unaware of its existence. To my great surprise and amazement, I found that there exists in this province a system of land settlement, according to which, people are segregated in well-defined areas, by reason of the race to which they belong, and they are not allowed to acquire land beyond the area to which they are confined. Sir, an unjust and arbitrary distinction is made between what is called the "indigenous Assamese" and the "immigrant Bengali" on the basis whether their ancestors came to this province a few centuries ago or during the course of the last 50 or 60 years. If, Sir, your ancestors came to Assam either with Mirzumla or Ahom king, if you came as invaders, despoiled the population, usurped, the land, and settled here you will be called an "indigenous Assamese", you will be treated as the pet child, you will be shown all the favour that benign Government can bestow. But, Sir, if your ancestors came as pioneers, if they developed the country, if they cleared the jungle and made prosperous villages and habitable tracts, if they contributed to the development of the Province, you will be called an "immigrant"; you will be treated as a Pariah in your land and you will be saddled with all the difficulties and all the disadvantages that human ingenuity can invent. Sir, a more unjust, a more illogical and a more absurd system it is difficult to conceive. It makes no difference, Sir, that you both are born and brought up as children of the same soil, that you pay the same tax—in fact you pay higher one including premium—that you owe common allegiance to His Majesty the King, and that you are the children of common motherland of India; that makes no difference. A sort of vested interest is created in favour of so-called indigenous population to the detriment of the interest of so-called immigrants. This is a system, Sir, according to which the "Haves" retain the right to possess all the land they do not need, and the "Have-nots" are compelled to pass a very miserable existence within their narrow boundary line. Sir, this is a system of racial prerogative, a system of economic exploitation for which you won't find a parallel anywhere in India. For nearest approach you will have to go to Kenya, where the Indians who had developed the country are treated as outsiders, are treated as mere interlopers.

Now, Sir, as I said before, the line system is the method according to which the Bengalees are precluded from acquiring land beyond the line, to which they are confined. Hon. members must not run away with the idea that it is only the Bengalees from outside the Province that suffer this humiliation. Bengalees from within the province—from the districts of Sylhet and Cachar—also share the same fate, when they come over to the Assam Valley as immigrants from Bengal. There are, Sir, thousands of immigrants from Sylhet and Cachar who have gone down to settle in Nowgong, Jamunamukh and other areas. They have left Sylhet district for good, they have settled down there as permanent residents of the Assam Valley. Yet, Sir, they and their children are not allowed to acquire any land beyond the line where they are confined. Let me give an example, Sir. Suppose, Sir, you the Speaker of this House, want to leave the Sylhet district and want to settle down in Nowgong among some of your Congress comrades, say, my friend Srijiut Haladhar Bhuyan, Government will

not allow you to do that, you will not be allowed to have a house within Assamese line. If, Sir, through ignorance or temerity, you build a house within Assamese line, your house will be burnt down, under a perfectly legal procedure and your Congress comrades will acquiesce in that atrocity and think that you, as an intruder, have been rightly served. No voice of protest will be raised, as if nothing abnormal has happened.

SRIJUT LAKHESWAR BOROOAH: I challenge that statement, Sir.
MAULAVI ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: You will get enough opportunity to challenge, when you rise to speak. I am speaking of Congress men. The Congress men in Assam must be aware that every year hundreds of the houses of poor landless immigrants are burnt down because they trespassed beyond the immigrant line and built houses as an alternative to taking shelter under trees. Has any Congressman ever raised a voice of protest against this barbarous method. I refer to Congressmen particularly because the Congress undoubtedly has a record of service to the destitute and distressed.

MAULAVI MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: On a point of information, Sir, We have heard houses are burnt—burnt by whom?

MAULAVI ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: Burnt by Government officers. Now, Sir, we have waited in vain for any sign of congress sympathy for these helpless people. Now, Sir, what is the effect of this policy of segregation? The inevitable effect is that it creates a gulf between the people living within the same Province. It prevents, Sir, natural intercourse between the people and it fosters a spirit of racial antipathy. It closes all avenue of approach and reconciliation between two major races inhabiting the Province. The political effect of this policy is disastrous.

If the political effect is bad the economic effect is equally baneful. As an immigrant living inside the immigration line cannot acquire property beyond that line, when he sells his land he does not get its full economic value. Then Sir, it is not middlemen, not the tillers of the soil, who makes profit out of the system. Out of the abundance of land inside the Assamese line the middleman takes settlement of a large tract, more than what he himself cultivates or gets cultivated by people within his line. He hires immigrant labour. That poor man works all day long, in another man's land, because the benign Government deny him the right to own any. He gets starvation wages, while the middleman makes the profit. The middleman makes the profit, because he belongs to that privileged community, the indigenous Assamese, and the poor man is deprived of the fruits of his labour, because he belongs to that neglected community—the immigrant. He is the victim of the absurd system of land settlement, that the Government of our beinighted province has involved.

Now, Sir, it leads to a very peculiar situation. Suppose a Bengali Muslim living within the immigrant line marries an Assamese girl, living in the Assamese line, the children of that Bengali Muhammadan by his Assamese wife cannot inherit the property of the mother, because the property lies in the Assamese line.

There is another aspect. The population in our province is vary unevenly distributed. Now I shall take the density of population; while in the district of Sylhet you have got a density of population of 438 per square mile, the density of population in the Assam Valley is 171. Even in the Assam Valley, in the immigrant area there are more population than the land can bear, while in the Assamese portion, there is more land than the people are able to cultivate. In Nowgong district the density of population is 144, while the density of population in some of the immigrant villages

is over six hundred. So in the interest of the economic development, it is essential that the population should be more evenly distributed, and that is one of the reasons that the line system must go.

I have said that it is objectionable on political grounds, and I have said that it is objectionable on economic grounds, and now I say that it is also objectionable on legal grounds. This system goes directly against Section 298 of the Government of India Act. I shall read the section "No subject of His Majesty domiciled in India shall on grounds only of religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them be ineligible for office under the Crown in India, or be prohibited on any such grounds from acquiring, holding or disposing of property or carrying on any occupation, trade business or profession in British India." According to this section no subject of His Majesty is ineligible for acquiring, holding or disposing of property in India either on grounds of religion, place of birth, decent or colour.....

RAI BAHADUR PROMODE CHANDRA DUTT: "On grounds *only* of religion, place of birth, descent, colour", there are other grounds also.

MAULAVI ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: The Bengalis by reason of their descent are precluded from acquiring land inside the Assamese line. This system going directly against the Parliamentary statute, has no legal validity.

It has bearing to the immigration policy of the Government. It is quite evident that we cannot stop immigration. Immigration is a central subject, dealing with inter-provincial matters. There is danger of Bengal retaliating, if a ban is imposed on immigrants from that province. Then there is another reason. The Tea Industry is dependent on immigrant labour. I do not want to raise communal or racial questions, but I cannot help thinking that the objection to this system is not based on economic grounds but on racial and communal prejudices. I will tell you, why. Immigration of tea garden coolies, and their settlement on land is not objected to, but objection is raised only to Bengali settlers, particularly these from Mymensingh, Pabna, Rangpur, Sylhet and Cachar. People from Madras, Central Provinces, Chota Nagpur, Ranchi and Ganjam are quite welcome to come and settle down here ; but objection is raised to settlers from Bengal who are predominantly Mussalmans. Common sense demands that for development of the province, settlement of land ought to be facilitated and unrestricted immigration encouraged as a deliberate and definite policy. But the policy of Government seems to be to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

One word more, Sir, and I have finished. I will place before the House the real issue. The real issue is whether artificially created vested interests should survive or whether the fundamental rights of citizenship should prevail ; the issue is whether racial discrimination and racial prerogative should be tolerated and encouraged or whether the immigrants should be given the right to live and expand ; and the issue finally is whether the vast tracts of land in the Assam Valley should be given to human beings to earn their livelihood or whether they should be left for wild beasts to roam upon ; and I leave it to the sense of the House to decide.

MAULAVI DEWAN MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURI BIDYA VINODE: Sir, much has been said for and against the line-system. I do not like to enter into details regarding the question of this system. I look upon the problem from a different angle of vision. It is not a problem of Sylhet, Mymensingh and Nowgong alone, it is an All-India, nay a world problem. To me it is a question of principle. It is based on a wrong foundation of provincial patriotism which is a curse and bar to the growth

of the United Indian Nation. Before the introduction of the English education in India we did not know what geographical nationalism was, but with the advent of European civilisation in India a section of our people has imbibed from their guru a wrong idea of false geographical nationalism. This nationalism has again been divided and sub-divided into many parts such as Indian nationalism, provincial nationalism, valley nationalism and district nationalism and so forth. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the *ex-President* of the Congress, called this geographical nationalism "crime of all crimes". Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore described it as ভৌগোলিক অপদেবতা. In the words of the "Star of Allahabad" it is a geographical idolatry. We are all "Adam Bani", i.e., sons of the same father, but this geographical patriotism has separated one brother from another. It is the caste system of our Indian politics. We again now hear a new sort of provincialism—Punjab for the Punjabis, Bengal for Bengalis, Assam for Assamese. Thus we have now become a foreigner in our own land. This idea of false patriotism has set up one province against the other.

After the Great War in 1914 Europe has realised the destructive character of this geographical nationalism. They are now trying to unite the whole human race under the banner of humanity and have established the League of Nations and other world organizations. They have done away with the old idea and are now thinking in terms of humanity and world problem. We, Sir, as Musalmans, cannot support this principle of geographical nationalism. We follow the principle which is founded on the basis of universal equality and fraternity. In the words of Dr. Md. Iqbal, China and Arabia are ours, India is ours, we are Muslims, and the whole world is our motherland.

Now, Sir, we come to the question of line system in Assam. It is against the principle of humanity. We know the people of Sylhet and Mymensingh are known as immigrants in the other side of our province. The resolution regarding the abolition of the line system will be an acid test for those who claim to have a monopoly of Indian Nationalism and will serve as an eye-opener to all. It is an uncharitable expression which cannot be applicable to them. We are ruled by the same Government, live in the same country and I do not know how they may be called as immigrants. The term is an insult to us. This line system has thrown a challenge to the whole of India and has waged a war against our neighbour, the people of Bengal.

Our brothers of the advanced school of thought accuse us of communalism, call us the enemies of Indian freedom and nationalism. But this valley patriotism is worse than the communalism. Now the time has come when the whole world will test their sincerity of purpose and consistency of their words. If they are sincere in their hearts and true to their ideal, I appeal to them that they should lend their unanimous support to the abolition of this inhuman system. They cannot breathe hot and cold at the same time. This whole world has become too narrow for us. America, Canada, Australia, South Africa, have shut their doors against us. Even living in the same political boundaries of this very province, we do not find a place of shelter. We do not know where we shall go. If the anti-Asiatic laws of America is a crime, to me this inhuman and uneconomic line system is more than a crime. There must be a consistency in our principles and, the same principles must be applied in every part of the world. Therefore

Sir, I appeal to you in the name of humanity to abolish this line system at once and support the resolution moved by my hon. friend Maulavi Munawwarali.

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, I think I had better begin my speech by giving a short history of the circumstances which led to the adoption of the system which is known as the line system.

When the Mymensingh immigrants came to Assam in large numbers they did so because they had not sufficient area of land for cultivation in their own homes. People began to deceive them in various ways. The jungle land which was sometimes cultivated by the local indigenous people for "palm" cultivation were shown to these Mymensinghians as fit for magnificent rice cultivation. They were in great need of land. They heard that land was available for purchase in some districts of Assam and they came with money and when they found they could purchase them for much less than what they had to pay for in Bengal, they paid for it and thought that they got it. They were mostly ignorant people and they did not even know that they had got no title over the land. It must be admitted that many speculators including even the officers of the Land Record staff participated in that sort of illicit bargain. Then gradually it was found that as soon as the Mymensingh immigrants approached a certain plot, the owners of the plots in the neighbourhood became apprehensive and on that account party feuds in the villages grew up. Some Assamese, in order to feed fat their grudge against certain villagers, would sell the land to the Mymensingh immigrants and themselves lived elsewhere. It was for these reasons, and chiefly in order to protect both the immigrants as well as the local indigenous people, that this line system was introduced. The line system does not at all mean prohibition of settlement to the Mymensingh immigrants (*hear, hear*). It only brings about an arrangement, convenient to both parties. Since 1930, this system has been adopted by Government and as a result of this scheme whenever a large number of immigrants want land for occupation, and land for occupation is found, the Colonisation Officer recommends a certain area of land to be thrown out for settlement and when that recommendation is accepted the Colonisation Officer is asked to induce these immigrants to settle in that particular locality so that there may be no reason for friction between the immigrants and the indigenous people. The intention is also to see that some third designing parties cannot cheat these people and take money out of them.

So, Sir, I submit for the consideration of the House that this line system is really not a prohibition for settlement against the Mymensingh immigrants but is a measure which the Government of the time thought it prudent to adopt in order to prevent unnecessary unpleasantness and quarrel between the two different sections of the people.

Sir, as regards the immigrants from the Surma Valley, I can inform the House that there is no such restriction except that some attempts are also made to find lands for the Sylhet immigrants. As a matter of fact, blocks have been created in the district of Nowgong so as to permit them to have lands for their own cultivation and settlement.

MR. ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: On the question of the Sylhet immigrants, did I understand the Hon'ble Minister to say in reply to my question yesterday that the Sylhetis would be confined within the Sylhet block and they will not be given lands outside that?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Yes, Sir. So far as settlement with Sylhetis is concerned the Government policy is not to throw open another reserve until a particular reserve is fully occupied by the immigrants. That is the policy which is being now followed. There is no other restriction.

Now, Sir, there are two questions to be considered in this connection. We have already got a large number of Mymensingh immigrants who have settled here for years and their population is multiplying, on the other hand we have a demand in this House in the shape of a resolution from one of the hon. members that some land ought to be reserved for expansion of the indigenous people.

Then thirdly, Sir, I received a small deputation the other day from Sylhet who complained that, if the Line System was altogether abolished, their position in Nowgong district might be made very difficult. They are from Sylhet and they have settled in Nowgong. When a resolution like this was moved in the old Council by Khan Bahadur Maulavi Nuruddin Ahmed, he said plainly that, although he wanted the abolition of the system, known as the Line System, some control of settlement should be exercised by Government and that provision should be made for expansion of the indigenous people. Sir, I do not wish to further dilate on this point, because I find from my experience that in the last debate this question was practically voted on communal lines. And to-day I have heard that this Line System is being complained against on the ground that Government is trying to foster racial discrimination. Government has considered the whole question carefully. They are also reminded of the effect of the provision of section 298K of the Government of India Act. There is a general feeling that this Act does not go counter to the policy adopted by the Government hitherto. But this question is very difficult to decide. It all depends on what interpretation is to be put on this section by the Courts which will administer the cases under it. Therefore, Sir, in order to review the whole question carefully, in order to protect the indigenous people of this province and in order also to protect the interests of the permanent settlers who are known as the Mymensingh immigrants and also to find out the exact legal position on this question, the Government has decided that, if this resolution is withdrawn by the hon. mover, they will appoint a small representative committee in order to go into the whole question. This committee will move from district to district or at least visit the districts of Kamrup, Nowgong, Lakhimpur and Darrang, and they will call for all necessary papers and documents which will be placed before them by Government. They will also examine witnesses in the localities concerned. We shall ask that committee also to bear in mind the case put forward by the Mymensingh immigrants as well as by the indigenous people and particularly to remember the position of the tribal people who are generally very shy of the Mymensingh immigrants. Sir, after this committee has finished its deliberations and submitted their recommendations, we shall place those recommendations before this House for discussion and Government will act according to the opinion which is arrived at by this House. On this assurance I would ask the hon. mover to withdraw his resolution.

MAULAVI ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: On a point of information, Sir. The Hon'ble Minister has said, if the resolution is withdrawn, a committee will be appointed. If the resolution is not withdrawn, will the Government sit tight and do nothing in the matter?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: If this resolution is not withdrawn and if Government is not given an opportunity

of examining the question in all its bearings, Government will have no option but to oppose this resolution and maintain the *status quo*.

KHAN SAHIB MAULAVI MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: There was a distinct allegation against Government of burning down the houses of so many immigrants. May we have a reply from the Hon'ble Minister in regard to that?

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: The law under the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation authorises the Deputy Commissioner and the Subdivisional Officer to evict persons who are in unauthorised occupation of land. If any person trespasses into the reserve or into any area which is not settled with him, the District Officers have a right to evict him by any means which they can adopt. But I should inform the House that a good deal of time lapses between the actual passing of the order and the actual carrying out of the eviction and full opportunity is given to permit of a peaceful evacuation. Cases of actual burning of houses are however rare.

MAULAVI ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY: Does the word eviction mean burning the houses also?

At this stage the House was adjourned for lunch.

(After lunch)

HUNGER STRIKE RESORTED TO BY BABU BEPIN CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY RE THE LOCK OUT IN THE DHUBRI MATCH FACTORY

MAULAVI JAHANUDDIN AHMED: On a point of order, Sir. I wish the House would send a telegram to Babu Bipin Chandra Chakravarti requesting him to break his fast and giving him the information that the Government is considering the matter.

MR. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: I think the hon. mover of the motion can send that telegram.

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Any member of this House can send that information to Babu Bipin Chandra Chakravarti and I think it will look well if the hon. mover of the adjournment motion will kindly take that trouble.

MR. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: It is but proper that the telegram should go, if at all, from the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the affair. If the Minister in charge is in need of funds I may give it.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: That will be considered by the Hon'ble Minister.

RESOLUTION RE ABOLITION OF LINE SYSTEM (contd.)

SRIJUT RUPNATH BRAHMA: On a point of information, I should like to know whether the 'line system' is in force in the district of Goalpara.

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: It is not in force in the Goalpara district.

SRIJUT RUPNATH BRAHMA: So far as my information goes some 8 or 9 years ago when Mr. P. G. Mukherjee was the Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara, the 'line system' was introduced there.

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: No. I am not aware of that.

MAULAVI ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY: Sir, the same resolution stands in my name also. It seems that in a matter like this the rights and liberties of the people are concerned. Without going further into details I should like to point out that this province is open for people coming from Nepal, people coming from the district of Marwar and other places and it is only yesterday that so much feeling was shown in this House to the people who are coming here to work from Behar in the match factory. Now I should like to hear something from the Congress leader because we understand that he stands for the rights and liberties of the people. Probably it was a surprise to my hon. friend Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhury that he sees in the province even now the existence of a system called the 'line system'. This is something indeed strange in the advanced stage of civilization. So without going further on this I would like to hear what the hon. leader of the Congress Party has to say on the subject.

SRIJUT GOPINATH BARDOLOI: Sir, in reply to my hon. friend on the opposite I should like to say that there may not be any necessity for me to make a statement in view of the suggestion that was made by the Hon'ble Minister for Revenue, *viz.*, that if the resolution is withdrawn the Government is going to appoint some sort of committee. I therefore want to know whether the resolution is at all going to be withdrawn. There may be no purpose in my making a statement if the resolution is at all withdrawn. Therefore I would request the mover to let me know whether he is going to withdraw the resolution or whether he is pressing for it.

MAULAVI MUNAWWAR ALI: Sir, I have had a long consultation with my friends during the recess. They have requested me to ask the leader of the opposition to express the Congress view and also to see that the subject is debated upon from different quarters when we shall come to the conclusion regarding the request which was sent out from the Hon'ble Revenue Minister.

MR. NABA KUMAR DATTA: May I inquire from the hon. mover of the resolution whether he will press or withdraw his resolution after hearing the speech of the leader of the Congress Party?

SRIJUT GOPINATH BARDOLOI: I do not think I am on my trial. I do not like to add to what I have said.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: It is up to the mover to say whether he is going to press the resolution or withdraw it. The hon. leader of the opposition has made it clear that it would be without any purpose if he makes any statement now and ultimately the mover withdraws the resolution.

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: On a point of order. On the other hand any statement made by the hon. leader of the opposition may help the mover of the resolution to come to a conclusion.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: As I understood the hon. mover, perhaps he wants to make it a condition of withdrawal; but I do not think it is at all necessary for him to consider what the Congress view is. Government have stated their views and it is for the hon. mover to decide whether he is to act upon that view. I cannot compel another hon. member to make a statement.

MAULAVI MUNAWWAR ALI: Up to this time, I have not been able to make up my mind whether I should withdraw the resolution or not.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: Very well, the debate will proceed.

SRIJUT KHORSINGH TERANG: মাননীয় সভাপতি মহোদয়, মই পিচ পৰা জাতিৰ হৈ নগাওঁ আৰু শিৱসাগৰ জিলাৰ মিকিব হিল area ৰ representative হৈ আছিছোঁ। লাইন systemৰ বিষয়ে মই কব খোজোঁ যে যদি এই লাইন system উঠি যায়, তেনেহলে আমি মিকিব, কছাৰী, লালুং আদি যি বিলাক পিচপৰা জাতি পাহাৰৰ ওচৰত বা ওপৰত থাকোঁ, আমাৰ বৰ আশঙ্কা আছে। কাৰণ আমি জন্মগত থাকোঁক আমাৰ ওচৰত কোনো থানা বা Police Station নাই—আমাৰ আশ্রয় লবলৈ ভাগা নাই। সেই দেখি মই গবৰ্ণমেণ্টক বিশেষ অনুৰোধ কৰোঁ যে আগৈয়ে বেনেছাৰা লাইন system আছিল এতিয়াও সেই মতেই থাকক। এয়ে মোৰ বিশেষ অনুৰোধ।

✓ **MAULANA ABDUL HAMID KHAN:** মাননীয় স্পীকাৰ মহোদয়, এখানে লাইন system অৰ্থাৎ এই ভেদনীতিৰ দ্বাৰা যে অবস্থার সৃষ্টি হয়েছে তাহার ফলে আমার মনে হয় যে মানুষ মানুষের সঙ্গে সম্মিলিত ভাবে বাস করে যে প্রেম প্রীতি লাভ করিবার জন্য আজ সাড়া ছুনিয়ার লোক লালান্নিত তাহা সম্ভবপর হইবে কিনা জানিনা। এই বাদ্গালী immigrant বা ঔপনিবেশিক সম্বন্ধে আমার কথা হয়েছে যে তাহাদের ভিতর হাজার হাজার অনুন্নত হিন্দু সম্প্রদায় ও রয়েছে। মহাত্মা-গান্ধী যখন হরিজন আন্দোলন আরম্ভ করেন তখন তাহার সাড়া পাইয়া আসামের কংগ্রেস পার্টির দ্বারা মন্দিরের দ্বার খুলে দেওয়া হয়েছে। তখন আমার মনে হয়েছিল যে কেবল অনুন্নত বাদ্গালীদের জন্য মন্দিরের দ্বারই খুলে দেওয়া হইবেনা, লাইনের দ্বার ও খুলে তাহাদিগকে অসমীয়া ভাইদের সঙ্গে পাশাপাশি বসতি করিতে দেওয়া হইবে। কেবল মন্দিরের দ্বার খুলিলেই হইবেনা—মানুষের জন্য অন্ন এবং তাহাদের জন্য পরিধানের বস্ত্রও দরকার। এই কথাই মনেকরে ডাক্তার আবেদকার অনুন্নত সম্প্রদায় সম্বন্ধে বলেছিলেন “কেবল মন্দিরের দ্বার খুলিলেই হইবেনা; তাহাদের জন্য চাকরি চাই, পেটের ভাত চাই, পরনের কাপড় চাই”। এই যে হাজার হাজার বাদ্গালী অনুন্নত ঔপনিবেশিকগণ বর্গাজমি চাষ করে অনাহারে কাল কাটাইতেছে, তাহাদের প্রতিনিধি নাই বলে কি এই House এ তাহাদের দাবী রক্ষা হইবেনা? তাহাদের মধ্যে অধিকাংশই বর্গাদার—তাহাদের মধ্যে অধিকাংশই মজুরিকরে জীবন নির্বাহ করিতেছে।

আমি আশা করি যে ভারতের জাতিবর্গ নির্বিশেষের কংগ্রেস পার্টি—হিন্দুও কংগ্রেস, মুসলমানেরও কংগ্রেস অনুন্নত হিন্দুও কংগ্রেস, domiciled এরও কংগ্রেস হইবে। কারণ কংগ্রেস সর্বদাই প্রচার করে থাকেন যে তাহারা অনুন্নতদিগকে সর্বতঃ ভাবে সাহায্য করিবেন। আসামের প্রভিন্সিয়েল কংগ্রেস শুধু হিন্দু নাহইয়া বাদ্গালী হিন্দু মুসলমানের প্রতিও সহানুভূতি করিবেন। লাইন system এর দ্বারা ইহাই করা হইয়াছে না কি? যাহারা মহাজন ক্লাশ তাহাদিগকেই কেবল ইহার দ্বারা শ্রবিকা দেওয়া হইয়াছে। দুই এক থানা কচালা বাহা আমার নিকটেই আছে।

তাহা যদি কেউ পাঠ করেন তিনি বুঝিতে পারিবেন যে যেখানে লাইন আছে সেখানে জমির মূল্য বিধা প্রতি ১০৷ টাকা এবং যেখানে বাঙ্গালী হিন্দু মুসলমান অসমীয়া হিন্দু মুসলমানের এক সঙ্গে সমভাবে বাস করিতেছে সেখানে জমির মূল্য বিধা প্রতি ১১০৷ টাকা বা ১২৫৷ টাকা । অসমীয়া হিন্দু মহাজনদের কাছে ও মুসলমান মহাজনদের কাছে হাজার হাজার অসমীয়া দরিদ্র কৃষক টাকা ধার করেছে । আজ টাকার অভাবে সেই ধার পরিশোধ করিবার উপায় নাই—তাহাদের চাষের যে জমি আছে তাহার মধ্যে ৫ বিঘা বিক্রয় করিয়া অবশিষ্ট জমি রক্ষা করিবার উপায় নাই । তাই মহাজনগণ হাজার হাজার টাকার জমি নাম-মাওমূল্যে ক্রয় করিবার সুবিধা পেয়েছে । এই লাইন system কেবল আমাদের ধনী বণিকদের স্বার্থের জন্যই করা হয়েছে বলে মনে হয় । গত পাঁচ বৎসরের প্রতি যদি আপনারা দৃষ্টি করেন তাহা- হইলে বুঝিতে পারিবেন অসমীয়া কৃষকদের কত পরিমাণ জমি আসামী মহাজনদের কাছে গিয়েছে । এই পাঁচ বৎসরে অর্থিক ছরবন্ধার জন্য যে ভাবে হাজার হাজার অসমীয়া কৃষকের জমি অসমীয়া মহাজনদের হাতে পড়েছে । অবশ্য ১০ বৎসর যদি এভাবে চলে তাহা হইলে অসমীয়া কৃষকের হাতে নাম মাত্র জমিও থাকিবে কিনা সন্দেহ আছে । তারপর এই অসমীয়া লাঠিনের ভিতর এমন একটা অবস্থার সৃষ্টি হইবে যাহাতে revenue যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে loss হইবে । হাজার হাজার বাঙ্গালী কৃষক অসমীয়াদের লাঠিনের জমি বর্ণা করিতেছে এবং অসমীয়া প্রজাদের দেন খাজনা তাহারা আদায় করিতেছে । অসমীয়া প্রজাগণ খাজনা দেন কেবল বাঙ্গালী কৃষক বা বর্ণাদারগণের সাহায্যে । আজ যদি বাঙ্গালী প্রজারা শোনে যে তাহাদের জন্য লাইন system চির- কালের জন্য পাকা হয়ে গিয়েছে তাহা হইলে তাহারা হয়ত কাল হইতে বর্ণা লওয়া বর্জন করিবে । ইহার ফলে অসমীয়া প্রজাদের পক্ষে খাজনা দেওয়া সম্ভব হইবে কিনা তাহা আমি বুঝিতে পারিতেছি না । লাইন প্রথা মানবতার বিরুদ্ধ প্রথা—কারণ অসমীয়া কৃষকের জমি বাঙ্গালী কৃষক খরিদ করিতে পারিবেনা এই ব্যবস্থা বর্তমান থাকিলে আমাদের নানারকম বিঘেঘের ভাব সৃষ্টি করে এক অশান্তির সৃষ্টি হইবে । এই সুযোগে অনেকেই বলিবে—বাঙ্গালীগণের পক্ষে অসমীয়া উকিলকে বর্জন করা দরকার এবং অসমীয়াদের পক্ষে বাঙ্গালী উকিলকে বর্জন করা দরকার ; অসমীয়া রায়ভেরা বাঙ্গালীর দোকান হইতে কাপড় খরিদ করিতে পারিবেনা এবং বাঙ্গালী রায়ত অসমীয়া- দের ধান চাউল খরিদ করিতে পারিবেনা । অসমীয়া প্রজার জমি খরিদ করিতে হইলে অসমীয়া দিগকেই করিতে হইবে । অসমীয়াদিগকে বাঙ্গালীরা টাকা দিতে পারিবেনা এই ব্যবস্থা থাকিলে বাঙ্গালী কৃষকেরা যাহাতে অসমীয়া মহাজনদের কাছে টাকা ধার করিতে নাপারে—এ রকম ব্যবস্থাও করিতে হইবে । মাননীয় স্পীকার মহোদয়, এই House এর প্রত্যেক ব্যক্তিকেই এই জিনিষটার প্রতি দৃষ্টি রাখিতে হইবে । যদি সমস্ত কৃষকের ভিতর মিলন আশা সম্ভবপর নাহয় তাহা হইলে আমাদের পক্ষে

স্বরাজ লাভ করা ক্রমশঃ হইবে। গত ১৯২০ বৎসর যাবত কংগ্রেস সমস্ত কৃষক ও মজুরদের মুক্তির জন্য উঠিয়া পড়িয়া লাগিয়াছেন। আজ জমিদারের ও মহাজনদের কংগ্রেস নাই। কৃষকের দাবী নিয়ে কংগ্রেস লড়াই করিবেন—ইহা শুনিয়া সকলেই কংগ্রেসের দিকে আগ্রহ হইতেছে। কিন্তু যদি আজ আসাম কংগ্রেস বাঙ্গালী হিন্দু এবং বাঙ্গালী মুসলমান দরিদ্র কৃষকের প্রতি অবজ্ঞা প্রদর্শন করেন তাহা হইলে কংগ্রেসের পক্ষে অভ্যন্তরীণ খারাপ কাজ হইবে এবং ইহাতে বোঝা যাইবে যে কংগ্রেসও শক্তির ভর এবং নরমের ঘন। বাঙ্গালী হিন্দু মুসলমান কৃষকের যদি বাংলাদেশে জমি থাকিত, টাকা থাকিত—তাহাদের দেশে থাকিবার কোন প্রকার সংস্থান থাকিত তাহা হইলে তাহারা দেশ ছেড়ে কখনও আসামের জঙ্গলে আসিতনা। তাহারা বাংলার মাতৃভূমিকে পরিত্যাগ করে এসেছে আশা করে স্বাধীনতা বসতি করিবার জন্য। লাইনের মধ্যে বহু মাটি জঙ্গল পড়িয়া রহিয়াছে। তাই আসামের হিন্দু মুসলমান ভাইদের নিকট ব্রাতৃ-ভাবে বাস করিবার অনুরোধ ভিক্ষা চাহিতেছে। তাহারা আজ অসমীয়া ভাইদের কাছে কর জোরে প্রার্থনা করিতে ছ—“আমরা বাংলাদেশ বর্জন করিয়া আসিয়াছি—তোমরাই আমাদের ভাই—তোমরা আমাদের পক্ষে এক্ষণে থাকিবার উপায় নাই।” আমি অনুরোধ করি দয়া জিনিষটা বিতরণ করিতে হইলে বাঙ্গালী অসমীয়া প্রদত্ত ভূমি গিয়া তাহারা দরিদ্র কিনা—তাহারা জমি বিহীন কৃষক কিনা—তাহাই দেখা কর্তব্য। যে সমস্ত কৃষকের জমি নাই তাহা দিগকে যদি জমি দেওয়া হইত—তাহা হইলে তাহারা আসামের অবস্থা আরও ভাল করিতে পারিত।

গভর্নমেন্ট agriculture বিভাগে লক্ষ লক্ষ টাকা খরচ করিয়া কৃষির উন্নতির জন্য বাহা করিতে পারে নাই বাঙ্গালী কৃষক তাহা করিয়াছে। বাঙ্গালী কৃষকগণের জমি আসামের agriculture farm বলিতে হইবে। আজ যদি জমি পাইয়া তাহারা স্বাধীনভাবে চাষ করিতে পারিত—জমি যদি তাহাদের নিজের হইত, তাহা হইলে আসামের university এবং হাইকোর্টের জঙ্গল টাকার কোন অভাব হইত না; তাহারা আসাম গভর্নমেন্টকে যথেষ্ট টাকা supply করিতে পারিত। আসামের অভাব পূরণ করিতে পারিবে বাঙ্গালী হিন্দু ও মুসলমান কৃষকেরাই। তাহাদিগকে নানাভাবে দাবাইয়া রাখা হয়েছে, মুখ করে রাখা হয়েছে এবং লাইন প্রধার দ্বারা তাহাদের মধ্যে বিবাদ সৃষ্টি করিয়া দেওয়া হইয়াছে। গভর্নমেন্ট যদি চূর্বনের জন্য সৃষ্টি করে থাকে তাহা হইলে গরীব কৃষকগণকে রক্ষা করিবার জন্য লাইন টেনাইয়া দেওয়া কর্তব্য। আজ গভর্নমেন্টকে পরীক্ষা করিবার একটা মন্তব্য সুযোগ উপস্থিত হয়েছে। দেশবাণী বুঝিতে পারিবে ইহা অতিজ্ঞাতত্ত্ব গভর্নমেন্ট না দাবাঘ বুলক গভর্নমেন্ট। আমরা আজ গভর্নমেন্ট ও কংগ্রেসকে ভাগভাবে চিনিবার জন্য লালিয়াই। গভর্নমেন্টের যদি সত্যিকার দরিদ্রের প্রতি কোন ও সহানুভূতি থাকে তাহা

হইলে এই বাঙ্গালী দরিদ্র কৃষকদিগকে — যাহারা গবর্ণমেন্টকে revenue দিতে কোনও প্রকার ক্রটি করে না, তাহাদিগকে লাইন উঠাইয়া দিয়া জমি দেওয়া কর্তব্য। কিন্তু হুঃখের ও পরিতাপের বিষয় এই যে গবর্ণমেন্টের স্বরূপ যাহা প্রকাশ পেয়েছে তাহাতে এই দেশের গবর্ণমেন্টকে দরিদ্রের গবর্ণমেন্ট বলা যায় না। বিদেশী শাসক ও শোষকগণ দেশীয় ধনিক বনিকগণকে এজেন্ট নিযুক্ত করিয়া তাহাদেরই প্রতি বিশেষ দৃষ্টি দিতেছেন। আজ হাজার হাজার বাঙ্গালী কৃষকদের জমি না থাকায় তাহারা অসমীয়া হিন্দুর বর্গাদার হয়ে বা জমি থাকা মুসলমানের বাড়ীতে আশ্রয় নিয়ে মজুরী করিতেছে। যে সমস্ত কৃষক অসমীয়া প্রজাদের নিকট জমি খরিদ করিয়াছে এখন তাহাদিগকে বলা হইতেছে—‘লাইন ব্যবস্থা থাকায় তোমরা জমি পাইবে না, এবং যে টাকা দিয়াছ তাহাও পাইবে না’। এমতাবস্থায় তাহাদের অবস্থা কি দাড়াইবে? বিচার প্রার্থনা করিলে রেভিনিউ বোর্ড বা অন্যান্য আদালত উত্তর দেন—‘জমিকিনিবার অধিকার বাঙ্গালীদের নাই। তাহা স্বয়ংও তোমরা কিনিয়াছ—এসম্বন্ধে আমরা কোন বিবেচনা করিতে পারিব না।’ আর একটা মন্ত বড় ব্যাপার হয়েছে এই যে অসমীয়া লাইনের ভিত্তর অধিকাংশ স্থলেই অসমীয়া প্রজার কোন বসত বাড়ী নাই। বাঙ্গালী চাষীরা গিয়ে সেখানে farm বা পাম করে। অসমীয়াদের নামে পাট্টা হইবে; কিন্তু চাষ করিবে বাঙ্গালী বর্গাদারেরা। খাজানাও বর্গাদারকেই দিতে হয়। বর্গাদারেরা যখন ঐ সমস্ত জমি খরিদ করিয়া বসত স্থাপন করে, তখন তাহাদিগকে গবর্ণমেন্ট বলপূর্ব্বক উঠাইয়া দিয়া থাকেন। হাজার হাজার লোক এরকম ভাবে সর্ব্বস্বান্ত হইতেছে। বর্গাদারেরা যদি অসমীয়াদের লাইনের জমি চাষ করা ছেড়ে দেয় তাহা হইলে বৃষ্টিমের অসমীয়া লোকের পক্ষে ঐ সব বন্ধ লক্ষ বিষয় জমি চাষ করা কিছুতেই সম্ভবপর হইবে না। একটা কথা বলা হইতেছে বেশিলেটের কতিপয় মুসলমান ও হিন্দু লাইন উঠাইয়া দেওয়া সম্বন্ধে অনেক প্রতিবাদ করেছে। ইহা চাল বাগী মাত্র। ‘আমরা লাইন system চাই না’ এই বলে হাজার হাজার অসমীয়া প্রজার দস্তখত যুক্ত দরখাস্ত আমরাও দিতে পারিব। এই দস্তখতের ও deputation এর ভিত্তর অনেক কিছু থাকিতে পারে। যাহা হউক এই লাইন জিনিষটি উঠাইয়া দেওয়া জাতি ধর্ম্ম নির্বিশেষে সকল হিন্দু মুসলমানের কর্তব্য। অসমীয়ারা ভাল লোক। তবে কেন মন্দ লোক ভাল হইবার অধিকার হইতে বঞ্চিত থাকিবে? মানুষ মানুষের সঙ্গ লাভ করিবার অধিকার হইতে কেন বঞ্চিত থাকিবে? ভাল মানুষের কাছে থেকে চরিত্র সংশোধন করিবার অধিকার কি আমাদের নাই? আপনাদের মহৎ আদর্শ এবং সঙ্গ লাভ করে যাহাতে আমরা পুণ্যবান হইতে পারি—চরিত্র বান হইতে পারি তাহার জন্যই আপনাদের সহায়ত্ব প্রার্থনা করিতেছি।

MR. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: On a point of information, Sir. If it comes to voting, on which side the hon. member will vote?

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: This is an ironical question.

SRIJUT RABI CHANDRA KACHARI: Sir, I rise to oppose the resolution. There should be line system to protect the weak and the backward people. Without a line of demarcation, it is not possible to look

to the interests of the poor people who require special protection. So I appeal to the hon. members of this House that they will safeguard the interests of the helpless and the backward people of Assam. These poor people are in great minority, and if this line system is abolished, crores and crores of immigrants will come in and the original ruling people of Assam will have to leave the place and go away to jungles and hills and this invasion will be more serious than the invasion of Burmese. Under the circumstances the hon. members will, I hope, consider to help these poor people, who are the original people of Assam. If the hon. members like to drive them away to hills, the condition of these backward and poor people will be very miserable, and I think, it will not be fair for this House. Therefore, this line system must be kept as it is absolutely necessary to protect the interests of the weak and poor people. With these few words, Sir, I oppose this resolution very strongly.

KHAN BAHADUR DEWAN EKLIMUR ROZA CHAUDHURI: মাননীয় সভাপতি মহোদয়, ইউরোপীয়দেরা বখন সাউথ আফ্রিকা settle করেন তখন তাহারা ভারত বাসীদের জন্য সেখানে লাইন প্রথা করে দিয়েছিল যে তোমরা এইটুকুর ভিতর প্রবেশ করিতে পারিবে না। এজন্য কংগ্রেস সর্বদায় fight করে এসেছে। বাহাতে এই লাইন প্রথা নষ্ট হয়ে যায় ইহাই চিরদিন কংগ্রেসের নীতি এবং তাহারা তাহাই follow করে আসছেন। শেতাজের লাইন প্রথা প্রবর্তন করিণে কংগ্রেস তাহার বিরুদ্ধতা করেন। এখন ভারতবাসীদের মধ্যে লাইন প্রথা করে তাহারা কি মুখে শেতাজ দিগকে বলিবেন যে তোমরা লাইন প্রথা করোনা। তাহা আমি বুঝতে পারি না। এটাকেই বলে “যে মুখে রাম নাম সে মুখে টেটে” অতএব অনুগ্রহ করে লাইন প্রথা বাহাতে না হয় তাহার চেষ্টা করুন।

MAULAVI MATIOR RAHMAN MIA: মাননীয় সভাপতি মহোদয়, এই লাইন প্রথা প্রচলিত হয়েছে আমাদের অগ্র যাহারা বাংলা দেশ হইতে আসিয়া এদেশে বসতি স্থাপন করেছি। এখানের আর্থ্য নামে পরিচিত হিন্দু মুসলমান নামে পরিচিত যাহারা তাহারাও ভারতবর্ষের অগ্র কোন দেশ হইতে আসিয়া এদেশে বসতি স্থাপন করেছেন। তাহারা হয়ত কিছুদিন পূর্বে আসিয়াছেন এবং আমরা হয়ত কিছুদিন পরে আসিয়াছি। তাই বলিয়া লাইন system করিয়া এভাবে পৃথক করিয়া রাখার নিয়ম কোন সভ্য গবর্ণমেন্টের আছে কিনা জানি না। আমরা বাংলা দেশে যে গবর্ণমেন্টের অধীনে প্রজা ছিলাম এখানেও সেই গবর্ণমেন্টের অধীনে—সেই রাজার অধীনে আছি। বাংলা দেশে গতিভ জমি নাই। এখানে আসামে পতিভ জমি আছে। ব্রহ্মপুত্র ভেলীর বাঁধ ভঙ্গুক পূর্ণ জল নিজেৰ শক্তি দিয়ে ও অসংখ্য টাকা ব্যয়ে পরিষ্কার করে, লক্ষ লক্ষ একর জমি আবাদ করে গবর্ণমেন্টের রাজস্ব আমরা দশ গুণ বাড়াইয়া দিয়েছি এবং দোকান-পাট আকিস আদালত সমস্তই আমরা স্থাপন করেছি। আর আজ আমাদেরকে স্থগা করে, তুচ্ছ করে, হের তাবে প্রাচীরের দ্বারা আবদ্ধ করে রাখা হতেছে। আমরা সভাপতি মহোদয়কে অনুরোধ করিতেছি—আমরাও মানুষ—আমাদেরও মানুষ্য আছে—আমাদের ভেতর যদি

ব্যক্তিগত দোষ থাকে তাহার প্রতিকার করা হউক । কিন্তু জাতির বিরুদ্ধে, সমাজের বিরুদ্ধে বাঙ্গালী মুসলমানের বিরুদ্ধে যে একটা ভেদ থাকা প্রচলন করিয়া আইনের দ্বারা আমাদেরকে দূরে সরাইয়া রাখিয়া, আমাদের অধিকার হইতে বঞ্চিত রাখিয়া আমাদের উপর অত্যাচার করা হয়েছে ও হইতেছে এটা কোন ব্যবস্থা, কোন নিয়ম ? মাননীয় সভাপতি মহোদয় এবং এই House-এর মেম্বর মহোদয়গণ, আমাদের ব্যক্তিগত যদি কিছু দোষ থাকে তাহা হইলে বিচার আছে—স্বাধীনতা আছে—তাহার বিচার হউক এবং তাহাতে জেইল হয়—দণ্ড হয়—হউক । কিন্তু আমাদের জাতি হিসাবে, মানুষ হিসাবে—প্রজাতি হিসাবে—আইনের দ্বারা দূরে রাখিবে কেন ? আমরাও তা মানুষ । তাহারা তাহাদের গুরু মহিষ চরাইবার জন্য হাজার হাজার বিবাজমি পতিত রাখিতে পারেন । আর আমাদের নিপীড়িত, ক্ষুধিত অত্যাচারিত দুর্বলপূর্ণ, নিরস্ত্র প্রজাতি প্রায় ৭০৮০ হাজার গৃহ বস্তু হীন হইয়া দ্বারে দ্বারে তিক্ষা করিতেছে । তাহারা দূরেও কোন জায়গায় যদি কেউ বসতি স্থাপন করে তাহা হইলে তাহাদের ঘরে আগুন ধরাইয়া জ্বলাইয়া, অত্যাচার করিয়া পুলিশ দ্বারা অত্যাচার উৎপীড়ন করিয়া ব্যতিবস্ত করা হয়েছে ও হইতেছে । আমরা কি মানুষ নই ? আমাদের কি মনুষ্যত্ব নাই ? বাঙ্গালী হইয়া কি আমরা এতই হয়ে হইলাম ? যদি আমাদের দোষ থাকে আমাদের বিচার হউক । কিন্তু লাইনের দ্বারা কেন যে আমাদের উপর অত্যাচার করা হয়—উৎপীড়ন করা হয় তাহা বুঝিতে পারিতেছি না । আমরা বাংলা দেশ থেকে আসামে এসে স্থায়ী ভাবে বাস করিতেছি । আমাদেরও আসামের উপর অধিকার আছে যেমন অসমীয়াদের আসামের উপর অধিকার আছে । তাহাদের রক্ষার দাবী যেমন আছে আমাদেরও তেমন রক্ষার দাবী আছে । আমরা চাই—তাহাদের এবং আমাদের মাঝখানে যে প্রাচীর আছে তাহা উঠাইয়া দেওয়া হউক এবং আমাদের বাঙ্গালী মুসলমান দিককে মানুষ হিসাবে সমান অধিকার দেওয়া হউক । আমরা তাহাদের উপর অত্যাচার করিতে, ডাকাতি করিতে বা লুণ্ঠন করিতে আসি নাই । আমরা এসেছি প্রজাতি হিসাবে, মানুষ হিসাবে তাই হিসাবে স্থায়ী ভাবে বাস করিতে । এদেশের ভাল মন্দ লাভ লোকসানের সহিত আমরা জড়িত আছি । আমি গোয়ালপাড়া জেলা হইতে আসিয়াছি কিন্তু গোয়ালপাড়া জেলায় কোন লাইন system নাই । সেখানে হিন্দু মুসলমান সম ভাবে বসবাস করিতেছে । এই লাইন system কেবল কামরূপ ও upper আসামে আছে । এখন মেচপাড়াতে লাইন system প্রবর্তন করার চেষ্টা আরম্ভ করা হয়েছে । এই যে আন্দোলন হয়েছে সে আন্দোলন কি মূর্খ কৃষকের দ্বারা হয়েছে ? না—কখনও না । এই দেশের শিকা প্রাপ্ত ভদ্র বাহারা চাকরি করিতেছেন তাহাদের প্ররোচনা ও তাহাদের কার্যের কলেই আজ আমাদের এই দুর্বলতা হয়েছে । তাহা করেছে কে ? দালালেরা । বাঙ্গালী মুসলমানের দেশের ভিটা মাটি বিক্রি করিয়া হাজার হাজার টাকা নিয়ে আসিলে, দালালেরা, বলেছে—এখানে জমি জায়গা আছে, তোমরা এস । যে জমির দাম একটাকাও ছিলনা, সেই জমির দাম ৫০ টাকা হইতে ১৫০ টাকা পর্যন্ত হয়েছে । দালালেরা জমি কিনে

দিয়েছে যে সমস্ত লোক এসেছে তাহারা মূর্থ, নিরক্ষর, তাহারা অজ্ঞান অন্ধকারে পড়ে থাকার জন্য দালালেরা সমস্ত লোকের বহু টাকা জমির নামে আত্মসাৎ করেছে। ঐ জমি যখন দখল নিবার জন্য যায় তখন তাহাদিগকে মোকদ্দমা এবং এমনকি পুলিশের সাহায্যে জমি হইতে উঠাইয়া দেওয়া হয়। মণ্ডল-কাননগুরা বা রিপোর্ট দেয় সেই রিপোর্টের উপর নির্ভর করে লাইন প্রথার দ্বারা আমাদিগকে দূরে সরাইয়া রাখা হয়েছে। আসামে লক্ষ লক্ষ একড় জমি পতিত আছে এসমস্ত জমির স্বত্বাধীনা এদেশীয় লোক দেয়না। তাহারাও বাংলা দেশ থেকে এসেছে, আমরাও বাংলা দেশ থেকে এসেছি। তাহাদের যেমন অধিকার আছে, আমাদেরও তেমন অধিকার আছে। সেই অধিকার হইতে কেন আমাদিগকে বঞ্চিত করে রাখা হয়েছে। এদেশের উন্নতি সম্বন্ধে আমরা ত্রায়তঃ যে কোন প্রকার কার্য্য করিতে রাজি আছি। আমাদের যদি কোন খারাপ ভাব থাকে তাহাদের সংস্পর্শে এসে খারাপ ভাব দূর করে যাহাতে ভাল হতে পারি এবং অসমীয়া নামে পরিচিত হইয়া এদেশে বসবাস করিতে পারি তাহার ব্যবস্থা করুন। আজ আসামের কংগ্রেছে একজনও মুসলমান নাই সমস্তই হিন্দু। আমরা গুনিয়াছিলাম যে কংগ্রেস সভা শুধু হিন্দুর নয়—কংগ্রেস সভা কেবল ব্যক্তিগত স্বার্থের জন্তই চেষ্টা করিবেন না—তাহারা জাতির জন্ত, সমাজের জন্ত এবং দেশের উন্নতির জন্ত দেখিবেন এবং অভাব অভিযোগের প্রতিকার করিবেন। বড়ই দুঃখের সহিত প্রকাশ করিতে হইতেছে যে, আজ সেই কংগ্রেস ত্রায়তঃ দ্বন্দ্বতঃ আমাদের প্রতি কোন প্রকার সহানুভূতি দেখান নাই। আমাদের দুঃখবস্থা আজ তাহারা নিজ চক্ষে দেখিয়াও চক্ষু বুজিয়া আছেন। ইহাই কি কংগ্রেসের কর্তব্য? কংগ্রেসের অবস্থা দেখে আজ আমাদের চক্ষুর জলে বুক ভেসে যায়। সেই কংগ্রেস কি রকম ভাবে স্বরাজ স্থাপন করিবে বা স্বরাজ স্থাপন করে লোককে কি ভাবে দেখিবেন? আমরাও কংগ্রেসে বাইতে চেয়েছিলাম কিন্তু যখন আমরা কংগ্রেসের অবস্থা দেখিলাম তখন বাধ্য হইয়া আমাদের বাইরে থাকিতে হইল। আমি কংগ্রেসকে অনুরোধ করিতেছি যে এই লাইন-ব্যবস্থা উঠাইয়া দেওয়া হউক—বঙ্গদেশের লোকদিগকে কংগ্রেসের সাথে মিশ্রিত হইবার সুযোগ দিন। আজ ৬ লক্ষ বাঙালী অনুরোধ করিতেছে—আমাদের প্রতি যে অন্ত্রায়, অত্যাচার, অবিচার করা হয়েছে তাহার প্রতিবিধান করা হউক। এষাবত আমরা আমাদের দুঃখ প্রকাশ করিবার সুযোগ সুবিধা পাই নাই। আমরা উচ্চ শিক্ষিত নই—আমাদের পল্লীবাসী মূর্থ লোক আমাদিগকে ভোট দিয়া পাঠাইয়াছে আমাদের উপর অত্যাচারের কাহিনী আপনাদের কাছে প্রকাশ করিবার জন্ত—জন্মের দ্বার খুলে প্রকাশ করিয়া দেখাইবার জন্তই এখানে এসেছি। মানুষ হিসাবে আমরা এদেশে স্থায়ী ভাবে বসবাস করিতেছি—আমাদের সমান অধিকার দেওয়া হউক। যদি সমান অধিকার দেওয়া না হয় এবং যদি আমাদের উপর অবিচার, অত্যাচার করা হয় তাহা হইলে এই যে চৌক্যার করেছি সেই চৌক্যার আরও বেশী ভাবে আরম্ভ করা হইবে। তারপর যদি আবশ্যক হয় আমাদের জীবন রক্ষার জন্ত—আমাদের অধিকার রক্ষার জন্ত মিলিত ভাবে খোদার নিকট প্রার্থনা করিতেও

কুণ্ঠিত হইব না—আমরা সব বরকম চেষ্টাই করিব। আমাদের প্রার্থনা যে মানুষ হিসাবে যেন আমাদেরকে অবজ্ঞা করা না হয় এবং গবর্ণমেন্ট যেন আমাদের প্রতি স্নানজর রাখেন এবং শাসনের কেলঙ্কারী যেন না হয়। প্রজাদিগকে সমভাবে সমচক্ষে দেখিয়া যেন সকলকে সমান অধিকার দেন—ইহাই আমার অনুরোধ।

SRIJUT RUPNATH BRAHMA: Sir, I apprehend that the resolution if carried will directly effect the backward tribal people of the plains. I therefore as a representative of the Plains Tribal people do strongly oppose the resolution. The hon. mover has said that the line system if retained will prevent others from coming to Assam. Well, Sir, should we not first look to the interests of the children of the soil by disallowing others to come and oust them from their land? Certainly we should.

Sir, much has been said against the resolution. Srijut Rabi Chandra Kachari, who is the representative of these people, has said that if the system is retained it is sure that within a few years these people will be driven away from their villages. Sir, I asked on a point of information whether the line system was in force in the district of Goalpara, but the reply was that it was not. I again said that so far as my information goes the system was introduced some 8 or 9 years ago when Mr. P. G. Mukherji was the Deputy Commissioner. If it is not introduced already I should like that the system should be introduced in Goalpara to protect the backward tribes there also. I think it is known to all hon. members of this House that many tribal people in Goalpara have been compelled to leave their homes and settle elsewhere. Therefore for the protection of the poor backward Tribal people I again protest against this resolution with all the vehemence at my command.

MR. NABAKUMAR DUTTA: Sir, I want to speak a few words on this resolution.

Sir, it is a great pity that so much enthusiasm should be shown for the abolition of the line system, which is considered vitally essential by the indigenous people of Assam Valley districts for their very existence. Sir, when the fertile soil of Assam drew thousands of immigrants from the over-populated district of Mymensingh, when the peace-loving Assamese had to leave their villages to avoid constant friction with these people so alien to their habits and customs, the Government consoled themselves by saying that the flow of the immigrants could not be stopped as the flow of the Brahmaputra. The indigenous people including backward classes like the Kacharies and Lalungs, were rapidly ousted by these immigrants who came from their homes with money in their hands and thus had the economic advantage on their side.

The situation was saved to a great extent by the Line System which controls the settlement of lands among the immigrants and saved the homesteads of the Assamese. But for this system, it would not have been long before the Assamese became extinct even in the Sibsagar district where Mr. Mullan thinks that the Assamese may survive and which at present happens to be closed to the immigrants. Sir, we bear no ill feelings towards the immigrants, but we cannot afford to allow our race to be wiped out, in as much as an Englishman cannot sit tight and see the English labourers ousted by cheaper French or Polish labourers, with the hope that the wealth of England may increase and the French or the Polish labourers will be assimilated during half a century and become full-fledged Englishmen.

Sir, when a similar resolution was brought and lost a couple of years ago in the Assam Legislative Council, the Hon'ble Mr. W. L. Scott pointed out that if the control exercised under the line system was relaxed or withdrawn immigrants will flow in not only from the district of Mymensingh where the population is greater than that of the Assam Valley but also from the over-populated districts of Pabna, Bogra and Rangpur. The result would be that all lands would be taken up by the immigrants. Sir, the demand for the abolition of the line system is nothing but a demand for ousting with *Government help and protection* the Assamese from their lands and for driving away the Kacharies and the Lalungs to the hills.

Sir, the Government ought to have controlled the flow of immigrants when it began, instead of turning deaf ears to the cry of the Assamese masses, and remaining satisfied by comparing this flow to the flow of the Brahmaputra. This continuous migration ought to have been made illegal, but as it has not been done so, the settlement of lands with the immigrants must be controlled.

Sir, it is ridiculous to talk of increasing revenue of the Province at the cost of the national existence of the Assamese. If the rulers stand by and see the indigenous people swept away by thousands of immigrants, they will not be able to claim to have been neutrals, but will definitely be a party to this extirpation. Sir, it is greatly wounding my feelings that this resolution has been brought forward in teeth of bitter opposition from the Assamese masses and in utter disregard of their sentiments and feelings. By throwing out this resolution, I hope this House will prove that it is not blind to the interests of the Assamese masses.

✓ MAULAVI MUHAMMAD AMIRUDDIN: Sir, first of all I would like to bring to the notice of the House the necessity that led to the introduction of the line system. It was introduced first of all in the district of Nowgong during the time of Mr. Higgins some 15 or 16 years ago in order to avoid possible clash of interests between the immigrants and the indigenous Assamese people. Of course I do admit that at the time there was a very rapid influx of immigrants from the different districts of Eastern Bengal, and that necessitated the introduction of this line system. Even before this I should like to admit that there was a more rapid influx of immigrants in the districts of Goalpara and Kamrup, and gradually when the lands there had been taken up and almost exhausted, naturally the landless people from the different districts of Eastern Bengal felt inclined to march towards the districts of Darrang and Nowgong, and last of all towards North Lakhimpur.

As regards the fact of averting the possible clash between the interests of the indigenous people and those of the immigrants, I do admit that it was a real necessity at the time. By virtue of that, the concerning revenue authorities expected to keep a controlling hand over these land-hungry immigrants. But by and by when they had taken up lands here and there and became permanently settled in the closest neighbourhood of the Assamese brethren, though of course, with a line of demarcation having been fixed up between them, the prejudices and the dislikes with which the indigenous people looked upon the immigrants gradually began to disappear. In replying to certain remarks of the opposition from this House from different corners, I should like to let the House know that till now from the very time of the inrush of immigrants in this province, particularly in the Assam Valley districts, there have been of course, 1

do admit, frictions between Assamese and immigrants. But they were very few and far between. I should like to say without the least hesitation that no particular instance of such friction has ever been brought to the notice of the Government seriously. Of course there might have been small petty frictions and if there were at all any, they were only so many vocal frictions and some of them even airy frictions in the form of verbal complaints without any documentary basis or foundation. There are different kinds of laws which can bring the offenders to justice and the rioters to their good sense. But I do not see any justification why these verbal complaints and verbal objections regarding some frictions between the indigenous people and the immigrants, should be at all paid any heed to. As an humble representative from amongst the Moslems, particularly of the immigrants from the district of Nowgong and also as a practical resident of the district for the last 15 to 20 years, I have had the fullest opportunity to study the different phases and episodes of peasant life particularly the life of the immigrants on the one hand and the life of the Assamese people on the other and I have seen what friction they have ever had and how it has been dealt with by the Government. I confidently hope that not a single member, not a single representative from amongst the indigenous people, can give any particular instance of friction wherein the immigrants took a most aggressive part and roughly handled or demolished the house of Assamese people or did any thing which can in any way impress any particular member as having been wrongful. Of course I do admit that in the natural course of human events and under natural circumstances, friction, fault or foible are quite natural and in such cases no amount of legislation, exhortation or restriction can keep a permanent control on these.

Now, Sir, after the system had been introduced what has been its effect? I should like to place before the House the effects of the line system on three or four different aspects. First of all let us survey the effects it had on the immigrants. A line has been drawn forbidding Assamese people from coming and encroaching upon the immigrant area and the immigrants from encroaching upon the Assamese zone. It had no salutary effect for sometime in averting possible clash but with the passing of time it has happened in certain instances that under the greed for money felt by certain Assamese people they could not contain themselves any longer and felt it a painful necessity on their part to sell away certain areas to the immigrants. In the district of Nowgong there are hundreds of similar instances in which the principles underlying the line system have been most unhappily departed from by the revenue authorities. From time to time, the Deputy Commissioners, the Settlement Officers and other responsible revenue officers in course of their local inspection and by perusing the situation both from the side of the Assamese people and from the side of the immigrants, were subsequently convinced that the line system has become an *outliving necessity*, *outliving necessity* in the sense that if the Assamese people in contravention of the rules and regulations governing the line system sold away their lands under the greed of money to the immigrants that are always land-hungry, it is no fault on the part of the latter and when the revenue authorities found that the sale deeds had been executed *bonafide* and the required possession of the land so sold had been made over to the purchasing party by the Assamese *pattadar*, the necessity arose to convert the Assamese line into a mixed line or to abolish the line altogether.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: The hon. member has only two minutes more.

MAULAVI MUHAMMAD AMIRUDDIN: I can cite, Sir, lots of instances in which Assamese villages have been converted into mixed villages, and in some Assamese villages irrespective of the Line System and in total disregard of the principles underlying it and without even converting them into what are called mixed villages, the Deputy Commissioners and Settlement Officers have under the aforesaid and other varying circumstances issued *pattas* in the exercise of their discretionary power to immigrants who settled in the Assamese villages either by seeking lands from the Assamese or by purchasing lands from their people. And within my knowledge I have every experience to place before the House, and that within the Assam Lines or within the mixed villages or in the Assamese villages where exists no line, there are lots of Bengali people either carrying on business or cultivating land on *Adhi* terms or on terms of revenue being paid for the land by the immigrants held under the Assamese *pattadars*. And, Sir, if some of you will look into the situation prevailing in the villages you will find that the actual cultivators holding *pattas* near about the line do very hardly want the existence of the line system. Because within the line all the cultivators are not equally wealthy though some of them are found to be very wealthy. As many Assamese villagers have voluntarily sold away their lands to immigrants by purposely infringing the rules and regulations underlying the system and as the Revenue Authorities have from time to time departed from the principles particularly in the district of Nowgong, to my mind, it appears to be an outliving necessity.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: The hon. member's time is up.

MAULAVI MUHAMMAD AMIRUDDIN: I want five minutes more, Sir.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: I cannot allow that.

MAULAVI MUHAMMAD AMIRUDDIN: Such are the circumstances prevailing in the villages. Now, Sir, as my time is over I should like to appeal to the House that, though there are different parties and different groups, they will not treat this as a party or group question but will give it their full support and sympathy from the point of view of human justice, fairness and equity.

MAULAVI MUNAWWARALI: I beg to state, Sir, that meanwhile I have reason to say that I will not withdraw this resolution.

MR. JOBANG D. MARAK: I think, Sir, the principle of this line system has been going on from generation to generation and even now we find that this system is in existence throughout the world. In America during the years 1905, 1906, 1907 and 1908 there were lecturers in the Universities and colleges inviting settlers to certain parts of America. But soon after that there was restriction on further immigration. As a matter of fact this line system is in force in every country as far as land and water areas are concerned. This question of course does not concern much about selfishness or unkindness, but it mostly concerns the preferential right of the indigenous population as against foreigners. I hope, with all the eloquent speeches and tasteful lectures delivered in this House by hon. members, the House will come to the conclusion that this line system must exist. I therefore beg to support the Line System and oppose the resolution.

MR. C. GOLDSMITH: Sir, much has been said for and against the Line System. Hon. members have challenged the Congress to give their view and they have challenged them on this issue, whether they would discriminate between one race and another. One hon. gentleman has said that

racial discrimination is the issue. I entirely disagree. The issue is not that. The indigenous people of Assam have never said that the Bengalis can never stay in Assam. They have allowed the Nepalis, the Marwaris and even Englishmen to settle and live peaceably in Assam. But the real issue is that the Line System has been established for other reasons. I am in favour of making no racial discrimination. I am in favour of universal brotherhood. This Assembly is already a cosmopolitan assembly. Many a man would grudge that so many communities should be represented in this Assembly. But if we go to a higher level, we will find that this assemblage of a cosmopolitan body is the beauty of Assam. It is a beauty to see people from different races and hills and dales coming together and sitting together and trying to govern Assam. It is a privilege under the benign British Government. Therefore, Sir, I do not want to make any discrimination between race and race. I believe this question does not arise on the racial point at all. I repeat that Assamese people have never said that the Mymensinghia people or other foreigners should not come and settle here. If the reports be consulted it will be found that the 'line system' was established for the purpose of preventing breach of peace and undue encroachment on the possession of the indigenous people of Assam. The very presence of this 'line system' shows that the Government must have felt that there had been encroachment and breach of peace which did not bring prosperity to the country. One hon. member has already admitted that there has been friction and that friction may still continue. Since the establishment of the 'line system' these frictions may have been minimised, but still it must be proved by facts and figures whether in those areas cases of breach of peace and undue encroachment have lessened or increased. Sir, it is the duty of every civilised Government to maintain peace and order in every country and Government have therefore felt when they established the 'line system' that breach of peace and undue encroachment might take place in the future and so this 'line system' had been adopted.

Sir, I know that some immigrants have lived in some parts of Assam for more than half a century. They have been living around Assamese villages and during this half a century no cases of murder have been heard except one during the last year. If these immigrants can live without breach of peace and undue encroachment on the rights of the indigenous people, then how can the immigrants in question live peaceably? If they cannot live peaceably then it is incumbent on the Government to protect the indigenous people of Assam. Therefore I say, Sir, it is a disease and the disease is like cancer and Government cannot allow the cancer to spread. Unless the cancer is cured the line system must remain. But I believe the cancer can be cured in course of time.

MR. F. W. HOCKENHULL: I think, as a rule, the appointment of a Committee when Government itself should assume responsibility, is not likely to find favour with this group. Nevertheless this is one of the occasions when the proposal will receive our support.

I feel sure that this will be welcomed by any others besides our own group who require more enlightenment on a difficult issue like this, which would help us to form our own judgment on what is undoubtedly a very wide and obscure question. I therefore rise to support the suggestion of the Hon'ble Minister that a Committee might be appointed. The worst that may happen is only a delay of one or two months. The Committee, if appointed, will be very useful because it will furnish more information in the light of which Government and ourselves will be able to come to a right decision. I hope the hon. mover will see the wisdom of acceding to the request made by the Hon'ble Minister.

RAI BAHADUR PROMODE CHANDRA DUTT : I am really sorry that the hon. mover of the resolution is going to press his resolution in spite of the very reasonable offer made by the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Revenue. It may be, Sir, that that the immigrants have their grievances. At the same time it must not be forgotten that the indigenous people are also making complaints. The Government has come to a decision about this and introduced the 'line system'. But up to now no committee appointed by this House has gone into the matter. The proposed committee, I am sure, will consist of the members of this House. Whether all the members will be confined to this House or not, I am not certain. But I am certain that at least some members of this House will be on that committee. They will go into the question thoroughly and make recommendations, and Government has promised to come to a decision on those recommendations. The Government has some past experience in the matter, but it would be expedient to have more light, as Mr. Hockenhull has said, on the subject and until we can get that we cannot support the resolution.

BABU KEDARMAL BRAHMIN :—Sir, we the settlers came to Assam and we were fortunate enough to get some place where we could live and carry on our life here. Like a good hospitable man they allowed us to live here peacefully with them. We should therefore live with the indigenous people of the province in a friendly way. We cannot force them to allow us to break their houses and live there. Sir, it will be going against our host if we quarrel with them. We should live here in such a way that the Assamese people themselves will be bound to remove the 'line system' which has now become the subject of so much criticism amongst our immigrant friends. Sir, if we can prove that we are friendly to them, that we are here permanently and that we are living in peaceful terms with the indigenous people, then they cannot but remove all these difficulties from our way. There might be some reasons which force the Government to establish this system at that time, but a time may arrive when this 'line system' will be removed on the initiative of the indigenous people themselves. Therefore it is for us the settlers to show them by our deeds that we are living here for a pretty long time and that we shall live here till we die.

MAULAVI ASHRAF UDDIN MD. CHAUDHURI : On a point of information, Sir. Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge give the number of criminal cases that took place during the last 10 years between Assamese and immigrants. In the district of Nowgong how many Criminal Courts are there to try such cases. This is one piece of information that I want. The other piece is : has any protection been given to the poor people of Assam to protect their interests as against the richer Marwari class of people ?

SRIJUT KAMESWAR DAS : Sir, a personal appeal has been made in this House in the name of humanity, in the name of Indian Nationalism, in the name of hardship, in the name of territory, in the name of Congress, in the name of community and in the name of various other things. I have of course neither the intention nor the capacity to make an appeal to this House ; I want simply to put in some facts as I know them prevailing in our own subdivision. The hon. members of this House will know that there is the line system in vogue in the subdivision of Barpeta. This is however, not to be found in every village ; there are lines only in particular localities for particular classes of the people where they are considered necessary. These lines restrict, as the Hon'ble Revenue Minister already said, not only the immigrants but also the indigenous population. These

lines were introduced not only for the benefit of the indigenous people but for the benefit of the immigrants also. It has been admitted by no less an authority than our Deputy Speaker that the introduction was a necessity in the past. What he says is that the causes requiring maintenance of the line system have disappeared and therefore the system should be abolished. Now this is a measure not to restrict particular communities. We have heard the Revenue Minister say that there are particular blocks in Nowgong for Sylhet people also. If my hon. friend Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri has said that there has been a restriction put upon the immigrants to particular areas, it is in the colonisation areas against which he has probably no objection. If there is however any restriction it applies equally to the indigenous people, to the immigrants as well as to the Sylheties.

Now, Sir, what are the issues? The issues are, as my hon. friend Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri has said, not the fundamental rights of citizenship nor the racial prerogative. I think, neither of these are real issues underlying this resolution. We have heard the word "immigrant" uttered times without number. But what this word immigrant means, has not been clearly explained by any of the hon. members. Are we to understand by the word "immigrants" those who are already settlers here, or are we also to include future immigrants from other provinces of India. If we are to make accommodation for future immigrants from other provinces of India, then I think the instinct of self-preservation should stand in our way, and the instinct of self-preservation does not I hope, go counter to the spirit of nationalism. This being so, I appeal to Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri, Maulavi Munawwarali and their supporters to consider this fact. Population here in Assam has already rapidly increased to a very big figure. There has been overcrowding in many places. I shall cite certain figures. The population in this province in 1891 was about 55 lakhs; it has increased in 1931 to about 92½ lakhs. And in the Assam Valley, where lines system is in vogue, the population has increased to 48½ lakhs in 1931 from 26 lakhs in 1891. So far as my subdivision is concerned, this increase is simply appalling. It was one lakh eighty-one thousand in 1921 and the census figures of 1931 give us that the population there in 1931 was 3 lakhs 15 thousand.

MAULAVI MUNAWWARALI: Sir, is that by immigrants merely or by natural law.

SRIJUT KAMESWAR DAS: The figures include both. Natural expansion we cannot probably prevent. So, Sir, we must dispassionately look to the question, with a view to prevent all possible obstacles having come in the way of future comfort of our Assamese people. If we allow Mymensingh people and Mymensingh alone contains as much people as the Assam Valley (*a vice*—no). I am sorry, Mymensingh has about 45 lakhs whereas the Assam Valley about 48½ lakhs. So can we provide all the landless people from Mymensingh sufficient lands here? I think, we are to see to this question very carefully. By the maintenance of the line system, the present immigrant population who are settlers here will lose nothing, because so far as we know most of the immigrants are in possession of lands, some exceeding 500 *bighas*. In our subdivision, so far as my information goes there is at least one gentleman who is in possession of as much as one thousand *bighas*. So the present immigrant population will not suffer by the maintenance of the line system. Doing away with this line system, will only give greater facilities to the future immigrants from other districts of Bengal and from other provinces of India to swell in. And if this is to be so, then do my hon. friends who represent this idea of doing away with the line

still support the idea that they should be prepared to make provision for future immigrants from other provinces before they are able to make any provision of lands for the people who are already within the province.

The help of section 219, sub-section (1) has been invoked by my hon. friend Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhury to show that immigration cannot be stopped and the lines should therefore go away, and the Hon'ble the Revenue Member has replied to his objection in this connection. My hon. friend Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhury has however refrained from reading out sub-section (3) of that section. In any case I think there is sufficient scope. For maintaining the line system which does not want to stop immigration, we do not want that immigration should be stopped. We want that sufficient lands should be reserved first for our own expansion and the lines, so far as I understand, only help us in this matter. Now it has been said that Assamese people in thousand have sold big areas to the immigrants in the Barpeta Subdivision for considerable sums of money. I am sorry I have not the figures and cannot say how far they can be challenged. Supposing that there has been infringement under this rule and there has been sale of lands in the prohibited areas by a number of the Assamese, then are we to make it a ground for our doing away with the lines? Sir, wherever there have been infringements, they have been made with the full knowledge of the existence of the lines and the limitations, if any, they want to put on the people effected thereby. There are both sellers and buyers. If the Assamese sell, the immigrants purchase the lands. Now are we to grant concessions to either of these people? Are we to allow them to reap the benefit of their own infringements? I would rather like that both these classes of people should be penalised. The Assamese people do not know how to express themselves. But in this particular matter they have fully expressed their mind. From Dhubri to Dibrugarh public opinion is unanimous for the maintenance of lines. The lines have been introduced not for putting restrictions but to better regulate the disposal of waste lands and the expansion of the existing villages, to avoid as far as possible clashes between the local people and the immigrants and to afford protection to particular sections of the people, particularly the backward and the tribal, wherever such protection was considered expedient and necessary. Of course, there are some caste Hindus also effected by the line system but all the caste Hindus are not of the same type. There are grades amongst them. At present there is a sense of superiority in the minds of the immigrants and a sense of apprehension in the minds of the Assamese that they cannot possibly resist any aggressions on the part of the immigrants effectively. The abolition of the line system will therefore be neither expedient nor be viewed with a sense of satisfaction by the whole Assamese population of the Valley. The lines are to continue for those who are weak and who need special protection.

KHAN SAHIB MAULAVI MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: May I know from hon. member who is speaking whether he supports the formation of a Committee of Enquiry?

SRIJUT KAMESWAR DAS: Sir, there is one difficulty to agree to the formation of the Committee. There have been encroachments in many line areas. The immigrant people are fast increasing in those encroached areas. There is a general feeling amongst them that the lines will be abolished and unless they go in first they will get no lands in the line areas. They are therefore trying to get in as quickly as possible. Special difficulties will therefore arise by going into the formation of a Committee of Enquiry.

I cite one instance. There is a prohibited area called Nalipithadi in the local Barpeta Subdivision. There are trespassers in that prohibited area. The Revenue authority issued notices on them to quit. They were even fined for non-compliance of the order of the Revenue Officer. They appealed to the Commissioner and ultimately came up to the Government. It was finally decided however that they should be evicted. Armed Police went into the subdivisional headquarters.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER : Is the hon. member agreeable to the formation of a Committee of Enquiry ?

SRIJUT KAMESWAR DAS : I have already replied, Sir, that I am unable to agree to the formation of a Committee of Enquiry for the particular reasons which I am stating before the House.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER : The hon. member's time is up.

SRIJUT KAMESWAR DAS : I will finish it soon. When everything was ready for evicting the trespassers some of them approached the Commissioner and wanted only fifteen days' time in writing in order to enable them to go away. The Commissioner agreed and fifteen days' time was given and now it is more than a year and they are still there and their number is said to have increased to 500 families or so. Recently the Deputy Commissioner of the district went to Barpeta and, on the part of the immigrants, he was told that there would be great hardship on them if they are now to be evicted. The Deputy Commissioner has asked the Subdivisional Officer therefore to make an enquiry whether it would be possible to evict so many people and whether in the case of eviction Assamese people will come in there and will be able to stay. Now the Subdivisional Officer is said to have sent the matter to the Sub-Deputy Collector for enquiry and report, and it is not known how the matter turns up finally. If the trespassers are evicted, Government will have to provide some land for them and new difficulties will come in if we are to agree to the formation of the Enquiry Committee before being able to devise some means to preserve the "status quo" as it exists to-day.

✓ **MAULAVI MUNAWWAR ALI :** On a point of information, Sir. May I know whether the hon. member is speaking on behalf of the party to which he belongs or as an individual man ?

SRIJUT KAMESWAR DAS : I have spoken as an individual man.

MISS MAVIS DUNN : Sir, since the hon. member has decided not to withdraw his resolution, I wish to speak a few words not on the resolution itself but on an important point which, it seems to me, has arisen from the resolution ; and that is this—Is the line system legal or not. Section 298 of the Government of India Act has been quoted by one of the hon. members and I should like an elucidation on this section, for it seems to me, that on the interpretation of this section hangs the whole question. Since time does not permit, I support the motion of the Hon'ble Minister in charge to appoint a Committee of Enquiry to go into this question.

KHAN BAHADUR MAULAVI MUFIZUR RAHMAN : Sir, this question requires a very serious consideration. I have the local knowledge of every place in the Assam Valley, where I was for nearly 18 years, having connection with land records in various capacities. About five years ago, I was moving in the interior of Kamrup district. I noticed that several hundreds of people were clearing up jungles in a grazing reserve. Big plots of land have been kept for the Assamese cultivators but they do not cultivate all the land in the same year. They cultivate only 5 or 10 *bighas* in a year and at the time of relinquishment they sell the land to immigrants who grow 3 to 4 crops in the land within a year. They allow immigrants to cultivate their

land on *adhi* term and by mortgage within Assamese line. Government put in this line for the safety of the indigenous population. It is the indigenous population who are encouraging this encroachment. Line or no line—you find, go to the interior, hundreds are in the line of Assamese people. I do not know whether the Assamese, I mean the people of Brahmaputra Valley—encouraged them and allowed them to settle. Similarly the transfer of lands to middlemen could not be checked. If you were a cultivator you could sell your land to another cultivator but not to a middleman—but this clause in the periodic *patta* could not check selling to big middlemen. In Kaziranga I found the whole village was going to some big merchants. Similarly in Tinsukia and wherever I went I found land was passing only to big shopkeepers and money-lenders. The clause could not save the *rayats*. So, I say that this is a very serious and vexed question for our most careful consideration as to what can be done to save our Assamese cultivators.

✓ MAULAVI SYED ABDUR ROUF: Sir, the line system is the system of keeping vast areas of land, villages after villages, reserved for the indigenous population of the Province and closed to the immigrants. The immigrants of my subdivision feel it so keenly that I feel myself obliged to speak a word or two in support of the resolution moved by my hon. friend Maulavi Munawwar Ali. At the very outset, Sir, allow me to say that I belong to, and represent a section of the people who, though they do not belong to the depressed class, belong to the most oppressed class in this Province; I mean the immigrant section of the population. Sir, on the one hand we find them oppressed by the Government and on the other hand by the politically minded gentlemen of the Assam Valley. How, Sir? I will go to discuss shortly how and why this line system was at all introduced. Sir, during the last resettlement operation of the Province the Settlement Officer had been sending proposals after proposals for establishing the line and for keeping villages after villages closed to the immigrants and the Local Authorities had been accepting these proposals without making any enquiry whatsoever into the desirability or otherwise of establishing these lines. Sir, it is very peculiar that no Assamese gentleman, no Assamese cultivator had ever applied for a line or ever approached the Government for a line. It is the Government who did it; and why did they do so? Sir, the reason is not far to seek. Sir, it is known to every hon. member of this House that during that time the country had been fighting for freedom and Government had been trying to tame the Bengal tigers of Assam. Therefore they had to throw some bait to the people of the Province and what did they do? They established the lines without consulting anybody without giving the immigrants a chance even to raise objection and everything was done at the back of the Assamese as well as of the immigrants. It was the interest of Government then to create this line and Government did it and doing so they created a difference between the immigrants and the Assamese and in that way won over a section of the Assamese people over to their side. Then, Sir, the position became this—the immigrants and the Assamese could not join their hands and they could not give a hand-to-hand fight with the Government and the position of the Government became secure. Sir, having had a line once established and having had the villages closed to the immigrants the intelligent section of the Assamese population without reclaiming an inch of land within the lines with the help of their 99 per cent. of Mondals and cent. per cent. of Kanungoes managed somehow or other to secure the annual *patta* for those jungles and induced the immigrants, who were simple enough to believe these gentlemen, to purchase the jungle and they paid very large sum for these jungles.

They spent thousands of rupees and enormous labour for clearing the land. Government did not raise any objection to that and the leading section of the Assamese population did not raise their little finger to stop this unjust and unjustifiable transfers and why ? Because it was the interests of the Government then to remain silent and it was the interests of the politically-minded Assamese to remain silent. Why, Sir ? Because they knew that if these things could be allowed to run for some time in the long run they will be benefited. Of course, Sir, it may be said, and my hon. friend Srijut Kameswar Das said, that knowing fully well that we are not entitled to purchase land beyond the lines why did we do so ? Sir, what did Government do when Government saw we had purchased some plots of land beyond the line ? Government took the initiative either to modify the lines or cancel the lines in some places because Government wanted that this system should be carried on and carried on very rapidly and the Assamese section of the people thought that it was wise on their part not to raise objection at that time. The immigrants had no leader amongst them, they were illiterate people and they had absolutely nobody to sound the note of danger. The result was that the immigrants had to believe this leading section of the Assamese population and with their advices they purchased the plots of land beyond the line and within the closed areas. In the Barpeta subdivision there are some 1,200 villages of which 612 villages are closed to the immigrants. Sir, within those 612 villages it is only natural that the immigrants should buy some plots of land in some places. When the immigrants found that Government had not been taking any action, rather cancelling the line and modifying the line they were emboldened certainly to purchase and the Assamese cultivators were also emboldened to sell lands. And in some places it must be admitted that the immigrants had cultivated friendship with the Assamese cultivators and there was a mutual understanding between these two sections, and the Assamese cultivators, of their own free will, handed over their possessions to the immigrants. Sir, these immigrants had paid a very large amount of money just before the time of depression and the Assamese gentlemen and the Assamese cultivators made good use of that capital and therefore they are what they are today—richer and more prosperous. But what about these immigrants who had paid so much money ? Why did the Government remain silent ? It is because Government wanted to make some bargain out of the situation. Government under Rule 18 (2) of the Settlement Rules issued notices by thousands on these people ; they submitted petitions before the Magistrate and said “we have bought the land from the Assamese”, the result was however that no notice was taken by the Government. Notices under section 18 (5) were issued by thousands on the people, who showed cause to the Magistrates but the Subdivisional Magistrates without giving them any chance of proving their contentions fined them from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 each and Government made a very good bargain out of it. And why this section of the intelligentsia remained silent ? Because they knew that these cleared lands, these homesteads with trees, with clusters of bamboos and with other necessities of life, would automatically be settled with the Assamese people. The result was that the Assamese were doubly benefited ; the Government was also benefited, but as for the immigrants they suffered and suffered. Now the situation is this that after these people had been fined cases under section 188, Indian Penal Code, and cases under section 447, Indian Penal Code, have been filed against them and many of them are going to be sent to jail. Under these circumstances I

appeal to the good sense of the House, I appeal to the heart and head of the House, to consider our situation a bit favourably, and I on my behalf, of myself and on behalf of my community, want to give you an assurance that we have neither the intention nor the means to go back. We mean to live here permanently, and if we are allowed to live here we will live in Assam, live for Assam, and if need be, die for Assam.

MR. W. FLEMING: Sir, I rise to add a few words to those of my leader spoke on this subject. We have listened to a great deal of eloquence on it and it is quite clear that this is a subject on which it is difficult to come to a straight issue here. The resolution as it stands is for abolition forthwith. The sense of the House; if I correctly interpret it, may well be that this system cannot go on exactly as it is to-day. The good sense of the House may equally be that a modification is advisable. The Hon'ble Minister has offered to appoint a committee of enquiry. It seems to me that in the face of that offer of a Committee of this House it is not either very good sense, of perhaps very politic or expedient, for the hon. mover of the resolution and his hon. friends to persist in pressing it to a division (*hear! hear!*) and I suggest to the hon. mover of this resolution the expediency and good sense of accepting the offer of the Hon'ble Minister. In doing so, I may add, that he would have the support of those for whom I speak (*applause*).

SRIJUT KRISHNA NATH SARMA: Sir, I rise to speak a few words on this resolution. I would first like to point out that there has been a misunderstanding regarding this resolution. The people from Bengal who have already emigrated to Assam have been living here for a pretty long time, and have now in most cases established friendly relations with the Assamese. If at this time the line system is abolished it will open out the country to people from all parts of India. I do not know whether the hon. mover of the resolution wants that Assam should become overcrowded by people from the whole of India. But if that be so, it would be highly prejudicial to the interests of the immigrants themselves, because now after having settled here for about twenty years they have become more or less permanent members of this province, and if the line system is now abolished and the land is made available for other people, thousands of people from all parts of India will flow to this country and the trouble will go on for all time to come. So let us have patience and see if we can become better friends; after say another twenty years our friends will become domiciled and we will form one nation. It is no good trying to pick quarrels among ourselves now and create divisions by saying that the immigrants are oppressed and are not given their fundamental rights. It is for the safety of both the immigrants and the indigenous people of Assam that this line system is necessary, as both are expanding and we want some land to be reserved for future generations. If now by one stroke of the pen we make it possible for the people of other parts of India to come and take up all our lands where will our children go? So for the safety of the indigenous people as well as the immigrants it is highly essential that the line system should continue for some time.

That is my suggestion. At least it is not possible at this stage to do away with the line system.

SRIJUT MAHI CHANDRA BORA: Sir, I have given the resolution my most careful consideration and I have also heard with rapt attention the very learned dissertations of the hon. mover and supporters of the resolution. Sir, I must say that the subject matter of this resolution is a question of life and death to the indigenous Assamese people and especially

as Nowgong is likely to be very much affected if the line system is abolished forthwith. I as a representative of that district stand here to oppose the resolution as emphatically as I can.

Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has given a lucid exposition as regards the necessity for introduction of the line system in the districts of the Assam Valley, but the hon. member Mr. Hockenhull has asked for more light in the matter, so that the question can be appreciated in its true and right perspective. Sir, it is necessary on my part to add a little to the history of this line system. My hon. friend Mr. Rupnath Brahma has spoken about the Burmese invasion. I had better go a little further and refer to an extract from the admirable report of Mr. Mullan in this connection. Sir, he says "Probably the most important event in the Province during the last 25 years, an event, moreover, which seems likely to alter permanently the whole future of Assam and to destroy more surely than did the Burmese invaders of 1820, the whole structure of the Assamese culture and civilisation — has been the invasion of a vast hordes of land hungry Bengali immigrants, mostly Muslims, from the districts of Eastern Bengal and in particular from Mymensingh. The invasion began sometime before 1911.*** In 1921 the first crops of the invaders had conquered Goalpara. The second army crops which followed them in the years 1921-31 has consolidated their position in that district and has also completed the conquest of Nowgong. The Barpeta subdivision of Kamrup has also fallen to their attack and Darrang is being invaded. Sibsagar has so far escaped completely but the few thousand Mymensingias in North Lakhimpur are an outpost which may, during the next decade prove to be a valuable basis of major operations.

KHAN SAHIB MAULAVI MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: I want to know, Sir, whether the gentleman who wrote that is a Government Officer and whether he is still in service?

SRJUT MAHI CHANDRA BORA: This is from the Census Report of 1931 written by Mr. Mullan.

MAULAVI MUNAWWARALI: I was just going to give notice of motion for expunging those remarks.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: That is another matter.

SRJUT MAHI CHANDRA BORA: The hon. member is quite at liberty to do that. Sir, we have no enmity with the immigrants and we sympathise with them. When they first came we helped them and the feeling of uneasiness which is quite natural at the advent of a new-comer has been gradually changing into one of accommodation. But, Sir, we also want that they should live in peace and harmony with the children of the soil. In every constitution, the interests of the children of the soil are held to be paramount and it is for them to decide what interests they want to retain for themselves. But the irony of fate is that we the children of the soil have been dictated upon by somebody else. Sir, reference has been made in the statement of the mover and the supporters of the resolution about the hardship to which the immigrant population has been put. This line system is for their own protection as well as for the protection of the indigenous people. Sir, what will be the fate of the people of minority communities — the Lalungs and Cacharies — in the immigrant area who do not know even how to weep if this system is abolished forthwith. Already some of the Lalungs and Cacharies have been driven from their villages and they have now taken shelter in the forests. I hope it is not the desire of the House that these people should be driven out to the sands of the Brahmaputra or the caves of the hills. They also want to live.

Sir, reference has been also made to the Sylheti block in the district of Nowgong. It was only on the suggestion of the Sylheti settlers then that this block system was introduced because they were greatly afraid of these immigrant population coming from Mymensingh. There had been petitions after petitions and an enquiry was held and the Sylhet block was introduced. Now if the line system is abolished, what would be the fate of the Sylhet settlers? There is still land available in that block and the Mymensingh immigrants will go to that block and occupy every inch of land available there. They have been loud in their protest against the abolition of the line system and the reason is obvious. Sir, in the district of Nowgong there are 40 mauzas and out of these in 21 there are Assamese with a sprinkling of immigrants here and there and the rest have been greatly affected by intrusion by immigrants. Now by this line system, a system of control over settlement of lands, the Assamese people have not gained as much as they deserve. We have been moving the authorities for reservation of sufficient lands for our — as well as for permanent settlers' future expansion and growth but to no effect. All available arable land have been thrown open for the immigrants inspite of our protest. What will be the fate of the Assamese people who have been victims year after year of unrestricted influx of immigrants if no land is reserved for them. In Nowgong no land is available excepting patches here and patches there and the people, who are the victims of the recurring floods in the Kapili valley have been forced to move the authorities of Darrang to give them lands. Their reply is not encouraging. This is surely a very pitiable condition.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER : The hon. member's time is up.

SRIJUT MAHI CHANDRA BORA : One word more, Sir. We want to live as a race and do not want to be effaced from the earth to hide our face in shame. It is the duty of the Government and the duty of the House to protect us the weak and the docile population from further invasion, which is of far-reaching consequence than the invasion of the Burmese. With these words, Sir, I oppose the resolution and I hope the House will register the same fate meted out to this self-same resolution during the last September session of the old Council.

MAULAVI MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI : The hon. member has said that, if the Line System is abolished, every inch of land in the Sylhetti block will be occupied by the Mymensingh settlers. I do not know if the Government will cease to function at that time. I want that the hon. member will explain how the Mymensingh people will occupy every inch of land in the Sylhetti block while there is law in the land to control such actions.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER : Does the hon. member like to answer the question?

SRIJUT MAHI CHANDRA BORA : Only the available waste land will be occupied by the Mymensingh immigrants, and this the Sylhette settlers resent.

SRIJUT HALADHAR BHUYAN : সভাপতি মহাশয়, মই বি সমষ্টিৰ পৰা নিৰ্বাচিত হৈছোঁ। সেই সমষ্টিতেই প্ৰথমতেই এই লাইন system (খোখা) প্ৰৱৰ্তিত হয়। এই লাইন system বে হঠাৎ এনেদৰে হৈছে এনে নহয়। ১৯১৫।১৯১৬ চনৰ পৰা এই immigrants পন্থৱা সকলে আগামলৈ আহিবলৈ ধৰে। ইয়াৰ ভিতৰত ক্ৰমান্বয়ে অগৰীয়া

গাৰ্ভৰ পৰা আভ্যন্তৰীণ বিলাক মাটি আছিল গবৰ্ণমেণ্টে চাই চাই তাত মানুহ বহুৱাবৰ নিমিত্তে লাইন system (প্ৰথা) দৰ্শক্য নহৈছিল। তেতিয়া সত্ত্বৰ্ণৰ কোনো কাৰণে উপস্থিত নহৈছিল। কিন্তু যেতিয়া দলে দলে পূৰ্ব বঙ্গৰ পৰা immigrants (পন্থা) বিলাক আহিবলৈ ধৰিলে আৰু ক্ৰমে আহি আহি যেতিয়া অসমীয়া গাৰ্ভৰ ওচৰ চাপিলহি তেতিয়া সত্ত্বৰ্ণৰ কাৰণ উপস্থিত হয় আৰু গবৰ্ণমেণ্টে নিজৰ কৰ্তব্য বুজি দেশত শান্তি আৰু শৃঙ্খলা বৰ্দ্ধা কৰিবৰ নিমিত্তে প্ৰথমে Mr. Thomas চাহাবে ১৯২৪ চনত নগাঁৱত এই লাইন system (প্ৰথা) প্ৰচলন কৰে। মৈমনসিংহিয়া বিলাকে যদি পট্টাৰ মাটি অনাৱলৈ বহে তেওঁ লব পাৰে,—লাইন system (প্ৰথা) ত তাৰ কোনো বাধা নাই। আমাৰ যি সকল অনাৱলৈ যোৱাৰে এই লাইন system (প্ৰথা) উঠাবৰ নিমিত্তে প্ৰয়াস দিছে, তেখেত সকলে আপাগোৱাই ভুল ভ্ৰান্তি কেই টক গৈছে। অনাৱলৈ বহু আবহুল মতীন চৌধুৰীয়ে এটি উদাহৰণ দি কৈছে যে মিঠাৰ স্পীকাৰে মিঠাৰ ভূঞাৰ ওচৰত বন সাজিব নোৱাৰে। এইটো এই House কে mislead কৰিবৰ অৰ্থাৎ বিপথে চলাবৰ নিমিত্তে কোৱা হৈছে। মই চৌধুৰী গাৰ্ভাৱাক কব খোজো যে তেখেতে মাটিলৈ গৈ ওচৰত বহিব পাৰে, আৰু হাজাৰ হাজাৰ মানুহে তেনেকৈ বহি আছেহি, তাত কোনো বাধা নাই। যেতিয়া লাইন system (প্ৰথা) প্ৰথমে হয়, ইমিগ্ৰেচন গ্ৰুপ এচেম্বেলি বিপটত দেখা যায় যে লাইন প্ৰথা নহলে অসমীয়া মানুহক বৰ্দ্ধা কৰিব নোৱাৰা হল, তেতিয়াহে কিছুমান মাটি একচনা কৰি ৰখা হয়। মৈমনসিংহিয়া বিলাক আগৰে পৰা পৰিশ্ৰমী জাতি আৰু অসমীয়া মানুহ বিলাকে তেওঁলোকৰ দৰে পৰিশ্ৰম কৰিব নোৱাৰে। বিশেষকৈ অসমীয়া মানুহক গবৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ কানি নীতিয়ে নিৰ্দ্ধাৰণ কৰি ফুলিছিল আৰু সেই কাৰণে এলেকাধাৰ মতাব গ্ৰস্ত হৈছিল। পিচত যেতিয়া অসমীয়া কানীয়া মানুহ বিলাকে বেচি টকা পাই নিজৰ মাটি বিক্ৰি কৰিদি ওচৰ চুবুৰীয়াৰ অস্থিবিধা কৰিবলৈ আৰম্ভ কৰে তেতিয়া special একচনা পট্টা কৰিবৰ নিমিত্তে গবৰ্ণমেণ্ট বাধ্য হল। সেই সময়ত ১,১১,২১৬ বিঘা মাটিৰ তিতবত ৫৫,২৫১ বিঘা মাটিহে special পট্টা কৰি ৰাখে। মৈমনসিংহিয়া বিলাকে বেদহচনীয়া পট্টাৰ মাটি কিনিব নোৱাৰে ই সম্পূৰ্ণ মিছাকথা। খাটোৱান মৌজাত পন্থা সকলে এই দহ চনীয়া মাটি কিনি কিনি একেবাৰে অসমীয়া গাৰ্ভৰ মাজে মাজে কলঙ্গৰ পাৰলৈকে হৈছেহি, এই লাইন তাত থকা স্বত্তেও আহিব পাৰিছে। একচনা মাটি কিনিবলৈ বিক্ৰি সাব্যস্ত নহয়। ইয়াৰ কাৰণ এই যে অসমীয়া মানুহ নিৰীহ, অসমীয়া মানুহ পৰিশ্ৰমত অভ্যস্ত নহয়, এই policy ৰ পৰা যে অসমীয়া মানুহৰ ভাল হৈছে এনে নহয়। ভৱৰ কাৰণে যে এনে কৰা হৈছে, কিয়নো গবৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ এটা নীতি আছে যে দেশত শান্তি আৰু শৃঙ্খলা ৰখা উচিত। উদাহৰণ স্বৰূপে কওঁ গবৰ্ণমেণ্টে লাইন উঠাই দিব পাৰেনে নোৱাৰে তাক পৰীক্ষা কৰিবলৈ যিখিনি মানুহে সহায়তা কৰে, প্ৰীতিৰ ভাবে বাৰ কৰি আছে সিহঁতক mixed লাইনত থাকিবলৈ দিছে। গবৰ্ণমেণ্টে অলপতে আলোচনা কৰি জুৰিয়া নোজাৰ লাংগাণ্ড কিচামতত লাইন system উঠাই দিছে আৰু সেই গাৰ্ভক

mixed লাইন কৰি দিছে। মাজে মাজে গবৰ্ণমেণ্টে লাইন system উঠাই দিব পাৰিলে নোৱাৰি তাৰ পৰীক্ষা কৰি আছে। জুব্বা মোকাত উক্ত ঠাইত মিশ্ৰ লাইন কৰাৰ কলত অলপ দিনৰ আগতে কছাৰী গাৱঁৰ মানুহ আৰু ময়মনসিংহিয়াৰ মাজত যুদ্ধ হয় আৰু তাৰ কলত এজন মৈমনসিংহিয়াৰ মৃত্যু হয়। এতিয়া সেই মোকদ্দমা pending চলি আছে। বোধকৰোঁ দেশত এনেকুৱা অশান্তি আৰু বিশৃঙ্খলা কৰিবৰ নিমিত্তে আপোনালোকৰ সমষ্টিয়ে কেতিয়াও আপোনালোকক ইয়াতৈ পঠিওৱা নাই। আপোনালোকে তাৰ প্ৰবল হৈ কেতিয়াও এই কথাটো নোচাব। মই আশা কৰোঁ বাইজৰ সজাতি সকলে যেন কেতিয়াও তাৰ প্ৰবণতাত উঠি নাহায়। এই আইন system ৰ দ্বাৰা মৈমনসিংহিয়াৰ কোনো অস্ত্ৰায় কৰা হোৱা নাই। অনাৰেবোল সুভাৰে কৈছিল যে এই লাইন system ৰ দ্বাৰা বাকালী বিলাকৰ ওপৰত অত্যাচাৰ কৰা হৈছে আৰু এজন অনাৰেবোল দেখাৰে কৈছে যে এই লাইন system আমেৰিকা প্ৰভৃতি ঠাইতো আছে। বামাৱনৰ উদাহৰণ দি কওঁ এই লাইন system নতুন নহয়। বনত থকা কালত একেধৰণে সীতাৰ এটা লাইন দি তাৰ পৰা বাহৰলৈ যাবলৈ হাক দিছিল। এইটো এটা line of honour হৈ মাথোন আছিল। মৈমনসিংহিয়া আৰু অসমীয়াৰ মাজত যি ফেন আছে সিও line of honour হৈ মাথোন। হিংসা কৰি লাইন প্ৰথ কৰা নাই। মই আশা কৰোঁ আপোনালোকে কেতিয়াও তাৰ প্ৰবণতাৰ দ্বাৰা বিভলিত হৈ ছায়া পক্ষৰ বয়া কৰিব। এই প্ৰস্তাবৰ সমৰ্থক সকলে যেন যেন কংগ্ৰেছলৈ আদালতলৈ কংগ্ৰেছ পাৰ্টিৰ কথা কৈছিল। কংগ্ৰেছ পাৰ্টিয়ে কেনিয়া আৰু আফ্ৰিকাৰ কথা কৈছে হয় কিন্তু কোনাৰ position (অবস্থ) আৰু আসামৰ position (অবস্থ) বেলেগ। কেনিয়াৰ আদিবাসী বণিকৰ লগত ভাৰতবাসীৰ সম্বন্ধ হোৱা নাই। দৰিদ্ৰ যজ্ঞ : ৩৩ চাৰাৰে edit সম্পাদন কৰা "মহাত্মা গান্ধী এট ৱাৰ্ক" নামৰ কতাপ খনত কৈছে যে ভাৰতবাসী আৰু কেনিয়াৰ আদিবাসী বিলাকৰ মাজত সম্বন্ধ নাই। ইউকপীয়ান যি বিলাক ইমিগ্ৰেণ্ট হাত আছে সেই ইউকপীয়ান ইমিগ্ৰেণ্ট আৰু ভাৰতবাসী ইমিগ্ৰেণ্টৰ মাজত সম্বন্ধ হৈছে, অৰ্থাৎ ইমিগ্ৰেণ্টে ইমিগ্ৰেণ্টেহে কাজি কৰিছে। কবীজ বৰাজনাথে এটা উদাহৰণ দিছিল যে ভাৰতবাসী এটা গোলাপ ফুলৰ দৰে। আমি গোটেই ভাৰতীয় জাত হিচাবে উঠিবলৈ হ'ল, আসাম, বঙ্গল, বিহাৰ, মাদ্ৰাচ আদি প্ৰত্যেকখন প্ৰদেশ এটি এটি গোলাপৰ পূৰ্ণাঙ্গ পাহত পৰিণত হ'লেহে ভাৰতবাসী সম্পূৰ্ণ এটা ধুনীয়া গোলাপত পৰণত হ'ব। অসমীয়া, পাৰ্ছী, সিদ্ধি, বাকালী আদি প্ৰত্যেক nation এ যদি একোটা স্বগতিত জাতিত পৰিণত হৈ গোলাপ পাতৰ দৰে পৰিস্ফুট নহয় তেনেহলে কেতিয়াও Indian nationality (ভাৰতীয় জাতীয়তা) গঠন কৰিব নোৱাৰে। আৰু এটা কথা আবহু মতান চাধুৰী চাহাবে কৈ গৈছে যে বছৰি পাঁচ বছৰ মানুহক জুই লগাই পুৰি উঠাই দিয়া হৈছে। কিন্তু সেইটো নহয়। চাধুৰী শাহীৰ ভাণে সিদ্ধিনা বৰ চাহাবে মাকলিত মিয়া মানুহ বিলাকক উঠাই দিয়াৰ বাবে মদা আৰু

চৰকাৰক লৈ খবৰ কাগজত কিমান আলোচনা আন্দোলন হৈ গৈছে। নগাঁওত অসমীয়া মানুহকেই বৰ অলাই উঠাই দিয়া হৈছে। সিং এচ, এন, দত্ত চেটেলেফেণ্ট অফিচৰ থাকোতে মায় মৌজাৰ কুকুৰাৰী বোলা এডোখৰ ঠাইত বহুত অসমীয়া মানুহৰ মাক, সৰিয়হ, পকা ধান জাৰিবলৈ নিছি সিহঁতক খেদি দিয়া হৈছে। হয় নে নহয় বৰ চাহাবলৈ লিখি ৰিপোর্ট আনি চালেই বুজিব পাৰিব। আগোনালোকে চুবৈত থাকি যে মৈমনসিংহীয়াৰ ওপৰত বৰ গত্যাচাৰ কৰা হৈছে বুজি কয়, সেইটো ভুল। তেখেত আবদুল মতীন চৌধুৰী ডাঙৰীয়া আসামৰ পৰা Central Assemblyৰ মেম্বাৰ আছিল— তেখেতে এই বিষয়ে Central গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টক move নকৰিলে কিয়? বহুবি এই শ'শ' ঘৰ মানুহৰ ওপৰত গত্যাচাৰ কৰাৰ নিমিত্তে এছেম্বলিৰ মেম্বাৰ হৈ আঠন পৰিৱৰ্তন কৰিবৰ নিমিত্তে তেখেতে চট্টা নকৰিলে কিয়? এতিয়া তেখেতে এই Houseৰ sentiment exploit (পাৰিষদৰ মন্তঃকৰণ জয়) কৰিবৰ নিমিত্তে এই কথা উল্লেখ কৰিছে। তেখেতৰ প্ৰতি মোৰ বিশেষ শ্ৰদ্ধা আছে। ১৯২১ চনত আমি একেলগে জেলত আছিলো। তেখেত যে এই পৰিষদত এটা অসম্ভৱ কথা কৈ Houseৰ sentiment exploit কৰিব খুজিছে—ট বাস্তৱিকতে আচৰিত কথা।

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: The time of the hon. member is nearly up.

SRIJUT HALADHAR BHUYAN: সভাপতি মহাশয়, এইটো জীৱন মৰণ সমস্যা কথা। মই সেই নিমিত্তে আপোনাক অনুৰোধ কৰোঁ যে ই এটা জীৱন জীৱন মৰণ সমস্যা যেতিয়া তাত ৫ মিনিট মিনিট সময়ৰ কোনো কথা উঠা উচিত নহয়। মহাশয়ৰ সময়ত যোঁতা ফ্ৰান্সৰ ভাৰ্ছনত বুদ্ধ হয়, তেতিয়া সৈন্ত বিলাকে ১৪ দিনপৰ্য্যন্ত দিনে ৰাতিয়ে পাতত লুকাই থাকি বুদ্ধ কৰিছিল। গতিকে এই জীৱন মৰণৰ সমস্যাত, মই আশা কৰোঁ, সভাপতি মহোদয়, দুই চাৰিমিনিট সময় ৰচিকৈ মোক দিব। সভাপতি মহাশয়, অবশ্য ইয়াৰ ভিতৰত economyৰ কথাও কৈ গৈছে। দেশত মৈমনসিংহীয়া অকাৰ নিমিত্তে economy হৈছে। কিন্তু mover আৰু সমৰ্থক সকলে যি কথা কৈছে তাত facts আৰু figures দি কোনো কথা কোৱা নাই। সেই বিলাক চাকি তেওঁ বিলাকে কেৱল sense of the House ৰাতি সেইফালে দোঁখায় তাকে বিচাৰিছ। তাৰ ইকনমিৰ আন গুৰুত্ব facts and figures জাৰি নোখোঁজে। সময় পোৱা হলে মই facts and figures জনাব পাৰিলোঁ। তেঁতেন। সময়ৰ নাটনিৰ নিমিত্তে মই কথা কব নাব'বিলোঁ। তেখেত সকলৰ প্ৰতি মোৰ এয়ে অনুৰোধ যেন তেখেতে সকল sentiment বা তাৰ প্ৰয়োজ্য দাবা exploited বা লুণ্ঠিত নহয়। এই কইটা কথা কৈ মই এই প্ৰস্তাৱৰ বিৰুদ্ধাচৰণ কৰোঁ।

DR. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: Sir, I rise to oppose the resolution. I think I should not say much on it as much has already been said against the resolution for abolition of the "line system" by many hon. members very clearly and very emphatically. I think the House is by this time

fully convinced of the serious troubles that are likely to occur if this line system is abolished, and which are being experienced even inspite of the existence of the present "line system". In this connection allow me to touch a few points which have not yet been touched. Here I beg leave to quote a few lines from the report of Mr. Mukherjee the then Deputy Commissioner. He reported thus:—"Boundary lines had to be fixed restraining the immigrants from occupying lands near Assamese villages by trespass or purchase, but even these steps were often found to be inadequate to protect the Assamese villagers. Many immigrants had to be punished with fines and ejections, sometime, with the assistance of the Police."

Sir, these are the reasons which led the Government to introduce the "line system" whereby lands were demarcated for immigrants and the local people. Subsequently this system actually proved salutary to both the communities. Last Census Report also corroborates this. When one hon. member was speaking on the subject I once took my stand to know on a point of information what the hon. mover of the resolution meant by immigrants. Am I to understand that he means by immigrants the Mymensinghia people alone? So far my information goes there are 6½ lakhs of ex-tea garden coolies in Assam, 1,52,000 Nepalese and lakhs of Nuniyas and other foreigners now living in Assam. Do they not come under the category of "immigrants"? If they do come, should we not take into consideration their case also while thinking of the interests of the Mymensinghia settlers? Sir, many of us are aware that inspite of the existence of the present "line system" there have been constant frictions arising from undue encroachments and oppression by the immigrants on the local people living in the villages covered by the "line system", as a result of which many Assamese villagers had to abandon their villages and go to settle in some parts of Mangaldai Subdivision and other places in a more secured position.

Now let me come to present demands of the indigenous people for land. I think hon. members are aware of a resolution that is going to be moved, if time permits, at this session, recommending the formation of an enquiry committee to find out the root cause of repeated occurrence of the Kapili floods and to adopt measures against it. In their apprehension of facing repeated calamities arising from the Kapili floods the people of this vast area by the side of the Kapili river are now seeking lands elsewhere.

Now turning to the problem of unemployment in Assam, I beg to say that it has become a burning question which requires prompt attention of the Government. Sir at Nowgong, I know there is one Association started under the name of Unemployed Youths' Association. Anybody who wants to be a member of this Association has to pay Rs.5, and in spite of having to pay Rs.5 in these days of hardship, there are lots of applications applying for lands through this association. The Association recommends to the Deputy Commissioner the cases of some of these enlisted members for lands. A colony has already been started about three miles from Nowgong and 50 plots of lands have been settled with 50 youths with some qualifications. But this has not met with the demands of the unemployed educated youths, many of whom are still pressing for such land. There are other agricultural schemes going to be moved to solve the problem of unemployment for which purpose sufficient land will be required.

I may inform the House that there are some people amongst the immigrants who have settled here permanently for many years and who do not like the idea of the abolition of the line system at present. They say that the line system has prevented the new immigrants from occupying all available waste lands of the province, thereby keeping in reserve some lands

for future expansion of the present population, both Assamese and the immigrants. They also say that they will gradually be absorbed into the Assamese fold and in time the line system will naturally go.

Recently I had to make a move on behalf of the depressed classes before the Commissioner, Assam Valley Division, when he paid a visit to Nowgong. I had to lead a deputation whose prayer was to give them some lands. The most difficult problem is with that of the Kaibarta community. Now, Sir, their very profession has been taken away. Formerly they could earn their livelihood by catching fish alone, but that is not the case with them now. Now on account of hard competition with the fishermen coming from Jessore and other places and of the fact that the fisheries have been captured by other caste people, they have practically lost their old profession. They can no longer maintain themselves with the little income from fishing. So now they have no other means than to take to cultivation. Formerly as they could manage themselves somehow with this profession they did not care for lands. And that is why they are in such pitiable condition to-day. So it is incumbent on Government to provide them with lands.

With these words, Sir, I oppose the resolution.

SRIJUT OMEO KUMAR DAS: Sir, I am standing to oppose this resolution, I have to say at the outset that I am a Congress man. I have been working in the Congress, which aims at communal unity. I have no feeling of antipathy for the immigrants. I have no communal bias against any race or against any class. While working in the Congress, I cannot ignore the necessity of the protection to the minorities and Congress claims to look for the protection of the minorities. This line system is not a restrictive measure. It is rather a protective measure for the Lalungs and Kacharis. The line system, as I have heard from my hon. friend Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri was introduced in 1924 by Mr. Thomas as a protective measure. It was for the benefit of the immigrants as well as for the Assamese. While considering this resolution moved by my friend Maulavi Munawwarali we cannot ignore several facts. We have got to consider what is the acreage of land still lying within the immigrant area. I learn from the Land Revenue Administration Reports that in Mangaldai out of a total area of 80,940 bighas of land thrown open to immigrants, the immigrants have taken up land of about 40 thousand bighas. This can be seen from the following figures they took 409 bighas of land in 1931-32. In 1932-33 they took 841 bighas of land. In 1933-34 they took 10,861 bighas. In 1934-35 they took 10,615 bighas. Altogether they took 40 thousand bighas of land in Mangaldai. In Nowgong, leaving aside the areas previously thrown open, in 1931-32, the total area thrown open to immigrants was 1,10,498 bighas, 52,266 bighas were settled up to 1936. The Commissioner of the Assam Valley in his report for 1932 writes why more lands could not be settled with immigrants. He remarks that the inability to pay the premium and their unwillingness to leave the river side, stand in the way of their expansion. We should consider this fact. Owing to the fall in the price of jute and trade depression they could not pay their premium and we understand from Land Revenue Administration Reports that the premium rate of Rs.25 which was to be paid in three instalments—Rs.2 on the allotment of land, Rs.3 on settlement and Rs.20 of annual *patta* on the settlement of the periodic *patta*, was reduced. The second *kist* of Rs.3 which was due at that time was reduced to Re.1-8. But owing to trade depression the immigrants could not pay even this premium rate, and it was reduced to annas eight. The immigrants had under the colonisation schemes no difficulty in having lands, and lands were still lying vacant in immigrants areas. Moreover

we have got to consider another economic factor:—Firstly, density of population in Assam and secondly the fragmentation of holdings in many parts. I have got to quote from the report of Mr. Rhodes who was the Settlement Officer in the district of Sibsagar during the last settlement operation. Making an economic survey of the whole district he remarks on the fragmentation of holdings, "The tendency towards disintegration is ripe in many parts of the district especially where land is not available for extension of cultivation. An Assamese clings tenaciously to his paternal home and shrinks from immigrating to another Mauza or Subdivision. Population has increased and at the same time individuality demands more scope, the result being to separate from the joint family and to make partition. In the oldest and most densely populated villages, for instance, the Muhammadan villages of the central Golaghat, the resulting situation is seen at its worst, since holdings have become so small as to be below economic level. The remedy lies in ready emigration of the younger ones to other parts."

Now the fragmentation of holdings has increased and it constitutes the real economic problem. We have now got to consider this economic problem. Many of my hon. friends have brought to the notice of the House that population has increased. There is density of population in many parts. For example in Uparbag Mauza in the district of Kamrup the density is over a thousand; in Bahjani it is more than 800 and in many other Mauzas. We have now got to reserve our land for the future growth of the population and as such I think my hon. friend Maulavi Munawwarali and his supporter Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri do not want that all lands should be settled with the immigrants without reserving lands for the future growth of population. He has made a charge against the Congress that Congress was looking on while the burning of houses of the immigrants were going on; but I should ask my friend Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri what he was doing when the burning of houses were going on in the immigrant areas. He was then in the Central Assembly and what he was doing there.

✓ MAULAVI ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Law and order is a provincial subject.

SRIJUT OMEMO KUMAR DAS: I am told that law and order is a provincial subject and as such he could not do anything. Here I beg to remind the House that while at Biswanath in Darrang district some immigrants villages were burnt down, my friend Sriji Mahadev Sarma brought several questions in the Council and I hope the hon. members will please look up for the proceedings of the Assam Legislative Council. It was probably in 1925. (*A voice*—many thanks.) The houses of the immigrants as well as the houses of the Assamese people were burnt down. In Nowgong and Tezpur many Assamese villages lent and inhuman, methods since 1930 Congress has been protested against these violences. They were busy in the civil disobedience movement. They were busy in fighting for the independence of India. Congress was at that time not in the legislature to protest against this inhuman method. Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri was in the Legislative Assembly and we were not in the House any longer and I don't think any useful purpose would be served by instituting a Committee of Enquiry. The Committee of Enquiry will only ascertain how many plots of land have been reserved and how many

have been taken by the immigrants. The immigrants do not want to penetrate into the interior. That is the difficulty with them. Every one would like to have richer alluvial soil but how every one of them can be provided with richer soil on the banks of the river). Sir, with these few words, I beg to oppose this resolution and I hope my hon. friends in this House will also cast their votes against it.

MAULAVI DEWAN MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: My hon. friend Mr. Omco Kumar Das says that he is supporting the cause of the minority communities in Assam. The Muhammadans are in minority. So I beg to ask why he as a Congress member does not support the cause of Muhammadans.

MR. F. W. HOCKENHULL: There are two issues before the House—whether to support the Committee of enquiry or the resolution. I think, if an assurance is given that a Committee of enquiry would be formed, then the mover of the resolution can withdraw his resolution.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: As assurance has been given by the Hon'ble Revenue Minister that he will inquire into the matter; may I know if he withdraws his resolution.

SRIJUT DEBESWAR SARMA: May I know whether it is going to be an official committee or un-official committee or a mixed one?

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: There will be both official and non-official members. The question is that if the Hon'ble Revenue Minister informs the House about the nature of the Committee then will the Congress party consider that?

SRIJUT GOPI NATH BARDOLOI: The resolution has not been withdrawn. The mover should make a statement that the resolution will be withdrawn.

SRIJUT DEBESWAR SARMA: On a point of personal explanation, Sir. A Committee of enquiry will not simply do. The question that has been raised on the floor of the House is a very important one and it goes into the vitality of the whole nation. We may be talking of Indian freedom and Indian unity and we have yet to go far to reach that big All-India Drawing Room. But we must also put our own house in order and see that our cottage is not swept away. A bankrupt Government which has no plan for the development of the nation cannot hold on long without positive detriment to the governed. It must see that the race or races of which it takes charge develop and thrive and for that the Government must lay down well thought out plan. All these are considerations which will prove too much for a Committee as indicated by the Hon'ble Minister. So now we say that the proposal for a Committee for enquiry is not formally before this House and we shall give due consideration if and when this comes up.

KHAN BAHADUR MAULAVI KERAMAT ALI: Sir, the question of appointing a Committee may be discussed after the decision whether the resolution would be withdrawn or not.

MR. F. W. HOCKENHULL: Sir, it seems to us that prolonging the debate is mere waste of time. We are not arriving at any conclusion in regard to the plain issues. There are two plain issues before the House.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: The hon. member should decide now the course of action he is going to take whether he is going to withdraw the resolution or put it to the vote. Now, as Mr. Hockenhull has pointed out, the prolonging of the debate, would throw no new light. I have listened carefully to all the hon. members who have spoken and I feel many of the speeches have been more or less repetitions of the same arguments. If the

debate cannot be turned into any new line, and if the same arguments are to be repeated, I think the debate should be closed. The hon. member should come to a decision now.

KHAN SAHIB MAULAVI MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI: He has said already he is not going to withdraw the resolution.

MR. NABA KUMAR DATTA: We want to hear that from the hon. mover himself.

MAULAVI MUNAWWARALI: Sir, I feel bound to make a statement about this.

THE HON'BLE SRIJUT ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, before he comes to a decision may I just say a word about the nature of the Committee—that may help my hon. friend to come to a conclusion. I can tell the House that most of the members will be non-officials. There will be only one official, who will act as Secretary to the Committee as well as a member. All the other members will be members of the House.

MAULAVI MUNAWWARALI: Sir, my difficulty in coming to a decision was this. I had a party mandate to press this resolution to a division; but in the light of appeals that had been made to me repeatedly I was thinking if it would not be better to continue the debate to the next available day so that I could in the meantime place the matter to the party and have a discussion with the Hon'ble Revenue Minister and come to a decision.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: I am afraid for the purpose of allowing the hon. member to come to a decision as to whether he should withdraw the resolution or to put it to the vote. I cannot adjourn the debate. If the hon. member can give me an assurance that new facts arguments will be put forward, I shall consider; otherwise I am ready to sit up till 5-30 p.m., to close the debate.

MAULAVI ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, I beg leave of the House to express my views as regards the problem that is rolling before the House now. Sir, this is a very unhappy day because to us the 5th of the month is a unhappy one. The problem before the House is so controversial that we had to spend four hours or more for it.

Sir, we have been directed by the Hon'ble Speaker that unless we can put forward certain new facts it is no use to proceed with the debate. Sir, the only thing to which I want to invite the attention of the Hon'ble House is the past history of the country, I mean India. This country was the abode of invasion of many tribes and many classes of people of the world, not only from East Asia but also from Europe and Continent.

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: This we heard from the second speech on the debate.

MAULAVI MUNAWWARALI: Sir, I can assure you that very important new facts will be brought forward for consideration of the House if the debate is adjourned to-day.

MAULAVI ASHRAF UDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY: It is going to be late.

MAULAVI ABDUR RAHMAN: Let me finish, Sir.

[Then there were interruptions from different sides of the House and the hon. member resumed his seat and stood up again.]

THE HON'BLE THE SPEAKER: The hon. member should finish his speech without paying any heed to interruptions. I shall wait till he finishes.

MAULAVI ABDUR RAHMAN : I was speaking, Sir, that if we turned back to the past history of the country we would find that most of the people were not originally inhabitants of this country ; they came here and they made this country their permanent residence. This history is being repeated in Assam. These immigrants, though they are not originally the people of Assam, have come from the neighbouring province of Bengal not very far from this province. But should we make any geographical demarcation ? We should look into the matter with a broader outlook, from the Indian point of view. We should not look upon immigrant as people of another part of the world. Only it is the geographical demarcation that has kept them apart and these Bengalis have come to be known as immigrants—a class separate from the Assamese. This does not seem to be very reasonable at this advanced stage of political life of the country. Sir, another thing that strikes me is that if the line system is allowed to remain and further flow of immigration is stopped then these people who are already here will be prohibited from allowing their generations to enter Assam. We have heard from the hon. members, who have spoken on behalf of the immigrants that their population is increasing. I find, Sir, that in places where the immigrants have already settled and if this line-system remains, with the future increase of population there will be much difficulty. They will be put to various sorts of difficulties for want of land.

Sir, much criticism has been made by my friend Mr. Abdur Rouf that the policy of the Government in this connection was not good. The policy that was adopted by Government about this line-system was in my opinion a step-motherly policy. They said that they wanted to safeguard the interests of the minority communities. But first the immigrants I do not think came in very large numbers, and they were actually in a minority, so where was the necessity of the Government to introduce this inequitable line-system. It has been said that this was necessary in view of the remarks in Mr. Mullan's (the Census Officer) Report. But I do not think Mr. Mullan gauged the situation accurately.

The Assembly was adjourned to 2 p.m. on Friday, the 6th August 1937.

Shillong,

4th September 1937.

A. K. BARUA.

Secretary, Assam Legislative Assembly.