

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

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 11 A.M., on Thursday, the 12th September, 1946.

PRESENT

The Hon'ble Mr. Debeswar Sarmah, Speaker, in the Chair, the seven Hon'ble Ministers and eighty Members.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(To which oral answers were given)

(Starred Questions Nos. 31-33 standing in the name of Maulavi Mokshed Ali were not put and answered as the hon. Questioner was absent.)

Cattle mortality in the Province

Maulavi MAKABBIR ALI MAZUMDAR asked :

*34. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The steps, if any, taken by the Department of Veterinary to stop cattle mortality in the Province ?
- (b) Whether Government have any scheme or propose to devise any scheme to improve cattle-breeding in the Province ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR replied :

34. (a)—Segregation, inoculation and treatment of sick-animals, disinfection of their sheds and vaccination of healthy animals are the steps taken to prevent cattle mortality in the Province.

(b)—Cattle-breeding operations at Khanapara, Sylhet, Upper-Shillong and Jorhat Farms, Rural Cattle-breeding Centres, Grazing Reserves and in the four stations under the Cattle-Rehabilitation Schemes are the schemes operated by Government to improve cattle-breeding in the Province.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : With regard to (a), may I know what is the percentage of mortality owing to Rinderpest and owing to Raniket.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR : That is a new question, Sir, and I want notice.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : That is not a new question, Sir, as we are discussing about cattle mortality.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR : Information may be supplied if notice is given.

Maulavi MD. ROUFIQUE: Are Government aware that thousands of cattle die every year from Rinderpest in the Province ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: Cattle die of Rinderpest, but whether thousands or hundreds die I cannot say without seeing the records.

Maulavi MD. ROUFIQUE: Is it contended by Government that thousands of cattle do die every year of Rinderpest ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: I have already answered that cattle die of Rinderpest.

†Sriju BELIRAM DAS: Is it not a fact that cattle mortality has decreased to a considerable extent from the last few years ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: How does this question of increase or decrease arise ?

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Is it not a fact that warble tumours are responsible for a high percentage of deaths ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: If the hon. Member reads the question he will find that the cause of mortality does not arise. The question was what steps have been taken by the Government to stop cattle mortality in the Province.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: My question relates to cattle mortality, Sir. I want to know what steps Government of Assam have taken to check warble tumours which are responsible for a high percentage of deaths.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: That is a new question, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: "Segregation, inoculation and treatment of sick-animals, etc.", these are the steps taken by Government.

Maulavi MD. ROUFIQUE: What steps have been taken by Government to prevent deaths from Rinderpest ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: Inoculation is the step taken by Government ; in some cases, when necessary, segregation is resorted to.

Maulavi ABDUL HAMID: What kind of inoculation is the Hon'ble Minister referring to ? There are various kinds of inoculation.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: Goat-tissue vaccine, serum vaccine, etc.

Maulavi ABDUL HAMID: Does the Hon'ble Minister mean serum simultaneous or serum alone ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: That is a technical question, and I will require the help of a Doctor to answer this.

†Speech not corrected.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will appreciate that this is not the forum to test the technical knowledge of a Hon'ble Minister by cross-questions.

Maulavi ABDUL HAMID : Sir, when the question of inoculation comes, one can necessarily ask what sort of inoculation is referred to by the Hon'ble Minister.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I am sorry to have to hold that this question does not arise.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : Is it a fact that the Government of India have given a direction to all Provincial Governments to promulgate a Contagious Diseases Act to stop contagious diseases, as unless that Act is promulgated no effective measures can be taken ? May I know what steps have the Government of Assam taken in that direction ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR : I do not remember to have received such a direction, and I cannot say anything without looking into the records.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Next question, please.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : I have got to ask some supplementaries on Question No.34 (b), Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Of course I am prepared to allow all relevant questions. But may I draw the attention of the hon. Members to the fact that since the beginning of this Session from the 9th, all unstarred questions are standing over, and an overwhelming majority of them will go without supplementaries if we take up all the time with Starred Questions ?

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : I want to ask only one question, Sir. By "cattle-breeding" does the Hon'ble Minister mean only "cow-breeding" or does he include buffaloes, goat and sheep ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR : Buffaloes are not included.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : What about goat and sheep ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR : Not even goat and sheep.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The question was "Whether Government have any scheme or propose to devise any scheme to improve cattle-breeding in the Province ?" May I know what did the hon. Questioner mean by the term "cattle" ?

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : May I know from the Hon'ble Minister whether cattle-breeding includes sheep and goats also ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR : Certainly, cattle-breeding does not include buffaloes, but as regards sheep and goats I do not think they are included in it.

Assistant to the Provincial Motor Transport Controller

Maulavi ABDUL KHALEQUE AHMED asked :

*35. (a) Is it a fact that Srijut Surendra Nath Sarma, a Lower Division Clerk attached to Assembly Office with a pay of Rs. 90 per month, has been appointed as Assistant to the Provincial Motor Transport Controller on an initial pay of Rs. 250 per month in place of Mr. K. Ahmed who has been reverted to his original post as Inspector of Boilers ?

(b) What were the special considerations on which the Government of Assam made this appointment ?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state whether the Assam Public Service Commission was consulted in the matter ?

(d) If not, why not ?

(e) Will Government be pleased to state whether the sanction of the Government of India was obtained in making this appointment ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE replied :

35. (a)—He has been appointed to a new temporary post of Assistant to the Director created in place of that vacated by Mr. Ahmed.

(b)—Because though Government had expected the Director of Assam Transport to be able to manage the whole work of the Controller in addition to his own duties for a time until they could re-organize the whole system of Motor Transport Control, it was found that even though the Controller's work is much diminished, it was too much for him without assistance.

(c) This Officer was the first choice of the Commission for a post of Regional Controller.

(d)—Does not arise, but the Commission was not specially consulted about this temporary post, because reference had to be made to the Government of India.

(e)—Yes.

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY : May I know the reason, Sir, why Mr. K. Ahmed was replaced ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Sir, there were two reasons for that. Firstly, the Boiler Department wanted the services of Mr. K. Ahmed very badly and secondly, because of the fact that work not only of the Assistant to the Controller but also of the Controller was greatly diminished.

Maulavi ABDUL KHALEQUE AHMED : Is it not a fact, Sir, that Mr. K. Ahmed officiated in the post of Assistant to the Provincial Motor Transport Controller from the very start of this Department ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : No, Sir, not as Assistant to the Provincial Motor Transport Controller.

Maulavi ABDUL HAI : Is it not a fact, Sir, that this Department was to be abolished by the 31st August, 1946 ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Not the whole Department, Sir. For the sake of economy the unnecessary and surplus hands were given notice. The administration of this Department was very top-heavy and the top posts were abolished.

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY: Is it not a fact, Sir, that 50 per cent. of the cost of this Department is borne by the Central Government ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: What does it matter, Sir, if the cost is borne by the Central Government or by the Provincial Government. It is the duty of every honest Government to save unnecessary waste of public money whatever might be the source of that money. I differ from my Friend's mentality.

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY: My question was, Sir, whether 50 per cent. of the money of this Department is subscribed by the Central Government or not ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Might be, Sir.

Maulavi MAYEENUD DIN AHMED CHOWDRY: Did the Hon'ble Minister take previous sanction of the Central Government for the replacement of that particular Officer in that Department, Sir ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, the administration of that Department is under the control of the Provincial Government and I can assure the House that whatever permission was necessary was obtained.

†**Maulavi ABDUL HAMID:** May I know, Sir, if Mr. Ahmed was appointed to this special post because of his technical qualification ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I cannot say that, Sir, because he was not taken in when I was in-charge of that Department. But so far as I can see technical qualification is not required for the post.

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY: May I know, Sir, what is the special qualification of the gentleman who has been appointed in place of Mr. K. Ahmed ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: He was a clerk, Sir, and he is still a glorified clerk.

Maulavi ABDUL HAI: Is it not a fact that this post was also abolished ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: This post was not abolished, Assistant Controller's post was abolished and the present post is Assistant to the Controller.

Maulavi ABDUL HAI: Is it not a new post, Sir ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Yes, Sir. In my reply I have already said that he has been appointed to a new temporary post of Assistant to the Controller.

Maulavi ABDUL KHALEQUE AHMED: Was there any other candidate for this post ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: For this post no advertisement was made because it has been made clear in reply to Question (c). Formerly it was the intention of Government to create nine posts of Regional Controllers with higher pay and greater responsibility and this gentleman, Mr. Sarma, got the first nomination of the Public Service Commission and therefore he was appointed to this new post with the sanction of the Central Government.

Maulavi ABDUL KHALEQUE AHMED: Is it not a fact that Mr. Sarma was a candidate for the post of a Regional Controller?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I have already said that, Sir. I pity the hon. Member.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: No further supplementaries will be allowed.

Sub-Inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors of Schools in Sylhet District

Maulavi ABDUL KHALEQUE AHMED asked :

*36. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) How many Sub-Inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors of Schools have been allotted to each Subdivision of the District of Sylhet?
- (b) Whether they are aware that the Sub-Inspectors and the Assistant Sub-Inspectors allotted in Sunamganj Subdivision can hardly complete the inspection of their respective branches of Schools partly owing to the vast area of the Subdivision and partly due to its bad communications?
- (c) Whether they are aware that every year a large number of Lower Primary schools and Night schools are left without inspection for want of adequate number of inspecting staff?
- (d) Whether Government propose to increase the inspecting staff of the Sunamganj Subdivision by one more Sub-Inspector and one more Assistant Sub-Inspector of Schools?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI replied :

36. (a)—

	Sub-Inspectors			Assistant Sub-Inspectors		
North Sylhet	...	4	...	...	...	3
Karimganj	...	4	...	...	...	2
South Sylhet	...	4	...	...	...	2
Habiganj	...	5	...	...	...	2
Sunamganj	...	4	...	...	...	2

(b)—Might be.

(c)—Government are not aware.

(d)—There are similar demands in other Districts and the case of Sunamganj will receive consideration along with other Subdivisions in other Districts.

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY: With regard to (c), Sir, the reply is 'Government are not aware' but may I know if the Hon'ble Minister made any enquiry after receiving the Questions as to whether it is a fact?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: Government are enquiring and are prepared to accept the truth of the Question of the hon. Questioner, knowing as they do the limitation of the inspecting staff, Government have at their disposal.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Is it not a fact, Sir, that the Inspector of Schools, Surma Valley, has been recommending for the last two years for increasing the number of Sub-Inspectors of Schools for Sunamganj by one.

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: I am not aware of that, Sir, but I may enquire into it.

(Starred Question No. 37 standing in the name of Mr. W. D. Rutherford was not put and answered as the hon. Questioner was absent.)

"San Beel" in Karimganj Subdivision

Moulana MUFAZZAL HUSSAIN asked:

*38. (a) Are Government aware of the untold sufferings of the people who happen to travel in the waters of the notorious 'San beel' in the Karimganj Subdivision during the monsoons?

(b) If the reply to the above question is in the negative, do Government propose to make an official enquiry and take adequate steps to instal lightposts between important places of Fakhugram Railway station to Kalibaribazar to provide facility to the boat-men during dark nights?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR replied:

38. (a)—No.

(b)—The responsibility lies with the Karimganj Local Board. Government would however draw the attention of the Board.

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY: Sir, in answer to Question (a) Government reply is 'No'. Will Government, after making an enquiry, take necessary steps to remove those difficulties?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: The answer is in reply (b).

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH: Sir, for the failure on the part of the Karimganj Local Board to do their primary duty in this case, will Government look into the seriousness of the problem? May I also request the Hon'ble Minister to take necessary steps to remove the untold difficulties of those people by their own initiative?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The Hon'ble Minister says in his reply that the matter has been forwarded to the notice of the Local Board. If the Board fails then it will be the duty of the Government to intervene.

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH : If the Local Board fail to do anything in this respect will Government take necessary steps ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR : If necessary, why not.

†**Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY :** If the Karimganj Local Board does not take any action on the ground of financial stringency, will the Hon'ble Minister consider giving a specific grant to the Board for this purpose ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR : Government will first ascertain whether the Board fails on such a ground and then Government will decide what necessary steps will have to be taken.

(Starred Question No.39 standing in the name of Maulavi Dewan Abdul Basith was not put by the hon. Questioner.)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Now let us first refer to page 9 of the list of Unstarred Questions and Answers laid on the Members tables on the 9th September. We may now take up from Question No.46.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(To which answers were laid on the table)

Roads under the Post-War Reconstruction Scheme

Dr. EMRAN HUSAIN CHAUDHURY asked :

46. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Which are the roads selected for improvement by the Provincial Government under the Post-War Reconstruction Scheme in the Sibsagar District under the following three categories of roads, viz.—
 - (i) Provincial Highways,
 - (ii) District Roads, and
 - (iii) Village Roads ?
- (b) What are the prospects immediate or remote of their execution ?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied :

46. (a) (i)—None.

†Speech not corrected.

(ii) and (iii)—Provisionally selected subject to the approval of Government of India as shown in the list below—

DISTRICT ROADS—(JORHAT SUBDIVISION)

1	Dhodar Ali from Dessoï to Jhanji River	...	...	18 miles.
2	Cinnamara-Titabar Road	...	...	8 "

(SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION)

1	Dhodar Ali from Jhanji River to Nazira	...	...	16 "
2	Dhodar Ali from Banpara Dillighat	...	...	16 "

(GOLAGHAT SUBDIVISION)

1	Bokakhat-Dhansirimukh ghat road	...	...	6 "
				<hr/> 64 miles.

VILLAGE ROADS—(SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION)

1	A road from 96th mile of Dhodar Ali to Ladoigor through Lelera and Hallagaon	...	...	3 miles.
2	A road from 83rd mile of Dhodar Ali near Teok Tea Estate bridge to Sapekhati Railway station through Ideobari Tea Estate	...	...	9 "
3	A road from Dhodar Ali 86th mile to Nahore Ali across Railway line through Hatapukhri and Langpatigaon	...	...	5.5 "
4	A road from 233rd mile Assam Trunk Road near Rajmai to Dhai Ali	...	...	7 "
5	Netai Ali from Demou-Dihing Road to Dehing Bund	...	...	7 "
6	A road from Netai Ali near Rejabaribam to Dhai Ali near Dhaibari	...	...	3 "
7	Dikhoulmukh Road from 216th mile Assam Trunk Road to Dikhoulmukh	...	...	7 "
8	A road from Taxi Ali to Desangmukh Road through Teparital Gohaigaon-Garakus and Panbesagaon	...	...	5 "
9	A road from Dhodar Ali (near Barbaraukhat Tea Estate to Nahorali crossing railway line at Surderpur railway station	...	...	4 "
10	Sepakati Feeder Road from Sepakati Railway Station to 90th mile Dhodar Ali	...	...	3 "
11	Kharikatia Ali from Assam Trunk Road near Jaysagar to Namtichar Ali	...	...	6 "
				<hr/> 59.5 miles.

(JORHAT SUBDIVISION)

1	Improvement of Charigaon Road	...	...	4 miles
2	Improvement of Jogduar Ali	...	...	5 "
3	Road from Mudaijan bridge on Assam Trunk Road to Jhanjeemukh via Kumargaon	...	...	5 "
4	Road from Hahasara on Assam Trunk Road to Garpholiagaon	...	...	6 "
5	Road from Dakinpatghat to Bhaktiduar	...	...	13 "

(GOLAGHAT SUBDIVISION)

1	Athgaon Ali	...	...	...	...	9 miles
2	Nagra Ali	...	...	...	...	6 "
3	Kordoiguri Ali, connecting Golaghat-Barpathar Public Works Department road and Sarupathar Railway Station	...	...	...	...	4 "
4	Khumtai	...	...	...	...	4.5 "
5	Barpatra Ali	...	...	...	...	4.0 "
6	Ghiladhari Ali (connecting Woka Ali and Noali in Jorhat)	...	...	...	...	7.6 "
7	Mahura Ali from Assam Trunk Road to Gelabil	...	...	...	...	3.0 "
8	Sconi Ali from Assam Trunk Road at Rungaliting to Golaghat Shikarighat Road	...	...	...	...	3.0 "
9	Borbara Ali connecting Woka Public Works Department Road and Salikihat Ali	...	...	...	...	9.75 "
Total						143.35 miles

(b)—Work will be started this year and is proposed to be completed in six years' time.

Damages to crops by the river Khowai

Maulavi MD. ABDULLAH asked :

47. (a) Are Government aware that the river Khowai causes heavy damages to paddy crop every year by overflowing the banks in the neighbourhood of Noagaon, Lakuripara, Kutandar, Bandan, Kaitpara, etc. ?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to state what steps have been taken by them to prevent such overflow in future ?

(c) If not, do Government propose to take up the work of erecting a "bund" immediately to save the public from such a heavy loss ?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied :

47. (a)—It has been observed that the river Khowai is unable to carry its discharge and the country along its course is occasionally flooded.

(b) and (c)—Action will be taken after a detailed survey and collection of necessary data.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : Sir, may I know from the Hon'ble Minister whether Government of Assam has passed any order for making necessary survey about it ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR : Necessary steps will be taken by Government after collecting necessary data. In this connection survey will be made.

Maulavi ABDUL HAMID : The question is, Sir, that whether any order has been passed for making necessary survey.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR : Order has been passed for making necessary survey.

Grievances of the Ministerial Officers

Maulavi ABDUL HAI asked :

48. Will Government be pleased to state :—

- (a) Whether the Government lately received any memorial from the different Ministerial Associations of the Province stating the grievances of the ministerial officers and demanding increase of their pay ?
- (b) If so, whether any relief was granted to them by this time ?
- (c) If so, what is that ?
- (d) If not, why not ?

The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI replied :

48.—A reference is invited to the reply given to the Unstarred Questions No. 21 (a)—(f) put by Khan Bahadur Maulavi Abual Majid Ziaosh Shams, M.L.A., during the last July Session of the Assembly on the same subject.

Maulavi ABDUL HAI: Sir, during the last Session of the Assembly the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge replied that the matter was under the consideration of Government. May I know if any final decision has been arrived at ?

The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI: In some cases decisions have since been arrived at and in the remaining cases further considerations are required.

Maulavi ABDUL HAI: Has Government come to any decision about increasing the pay of all officers?

The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI: We are collecting information and are waiting for the result of the Pay Commission which has been started by the Central Government.

Maulavi ABDUL HAI: May I know, Sir, how long it will take to come to a decision ?

The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI: It will depend how long the Pay Commission appointed by the Central Government will take to give us the necessary direction about the matter.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Sir, the Question (b) is: 'If so, whether any relief was granted to them by this time?' From the answer from the Hon'ble Minister it appears that some sort of relief has been given. May we know from him what is the nature of this relief?

The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI: The first demand was to give them dearness allowance with retrospective effect, and that has been given to them. This has involved a sum of about 11 lakhs of rupees.

Maulavi ABDUL HAI: May I know from the Hon'ble Minister what sum out of this 11 lakhs has been spent for the ministerial officers?

The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI: For the Provincial Service Officers the amount is about Rs.1,28,000, for the Imperial Service Officers about Rs.53,000 and for the rest below Rs.250 will cost about 10 to 11 lakhs.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Sir, may I know from the Hon'ble Minister what will be the amount granted to the ministerial officers drawing below Rs.200.

The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI: I have said already that for persons drawing below Rs.250, it cost Government about 10 lakhs.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Is it not a fact that Government has received representation from the ministerial officers that the sum allotted to them would not exceed Rs.72,000 ?

The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI: Yes.

Salutikar-Gowainghat Road

Maulana IBRAHIM ALI asked :

49. (a) Is it a fact that the road running from Salutikar to Kanaighat *via* Gowainghat has been taken by Government in the Five Years Post-War Reconstruction Scheme ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to take up this work next year ?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied :

49. (a)—Improvement of the Salutikar-Gowainghat road is under consideration of the Government under Post-War Reconstruction Scheme.

(b)—It will not probably be possible to start the work next year but necessary survey and preparation of estimate will be taken up as early as possible.

Steamer Company on Narayanganj-Sylhet line

Babu JATINDRANATH BHADRA asked :

50. (a) Are Government aware that the Steamer Company on Narayanganj-Sylhet line are running only one worn-out small Steamer from Chhatak to Sylhet at the greatest disadvantage of and neglecting all requests from the public ?

(b) Are Government aware that the said Steamer Company had abandoned the two stations Patharia and Jaikailash in the Sunamganj Subdivision as a War time measure and continue the same practice even now in spite of great inconveniences of and protests from the public ?

(c) Are Government aware that the said Steamer Company are not responding to the public demand for a waiting room for the passengers in the most important station of Chhatak even ?

(d) Do Government propose to take necessary steps to remove these grievances of the public ?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied :

50. (a), (b) and (c)—Government have no information.

(d)—Government will bring these complaints to the notice of the Steamer authorities. This is all the Provincial Government can do now in the matter.

Babu JATINDRANATH BHADRA: Sir, as regards Question No. 50 (d), may I take it that this Government have no control over the Steamer services of this Province ?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Government has no control over this Company, but Government will bring the matter to the notice of the Steamer Company to take steps what they ought to do.

Babu JATINDRANATH BHADRA: Supposing the Company do not agree to take any steps then what action will Government take ?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Government will consider what action will have to be taken if such a thing arise.

Babu PURNENDU KISHORE SEN GUPTA: The Steamer services that run between Sunamganj and Sylhet and also Chhatak are dissatisfactory and inconvenient to the passengers. Will Government move the authorities to run a through service from Sylhet to Sunamganj all throughout the year with only one hour stoppage at Chhatak ? Will not Government take any step to do something ?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: The Government will bring this matter to the Steamer Company with a request to improve matters.

***Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY:** Sir, why Government has no control over this Company ? Is it not a fact that Government make grants for this Company ?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: I am not aware of that. I require notice of this Question.

***Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY:** This fact is, Sir, known to all.

Mr. W. R. FAULL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think that probably the best answer to the question would be to draw the attention of the hon. Questioner to the fact that as a result of discussions in this Assembly in another Session, the Steamer Company has constituted a Provincial Advisory Board and also District Advisory Boards. Actually the first meeting of the Provincial Advisory Board took place in Committee Room No.1 of the Assembly Building yesterday and these questions were included in the agenda. The report on the meeting will be presented to the Secretary of the Assembly and the Members of the Board.

Satgaon-Mirzapur-Shamsherganj Local Board Road

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRI asked :

51. (a) Are Government aware of the present condition of the Satgaon-Mirzapur-Shamsherganj Local Board Road in the Srimangal thana and that of the Kulaura-Rabirbazar-Alinagar Local Board Road of the Kulaura thana of the South Sylhet Subdivision ?

(b) Are Government aware that the Srimangal thana of the South-Sylhet Subdivision is most backward in respect of communication ?

(c) If so, do Government propose to take up the said road under the Post-War Reconstruction Scheme ?

*Speech not corrected.

52. (a) Are Government aware that due to the heavy Military traffic during war some of the Local Board and Municipal roads in the South Sylhet Subdivision have been badly damaged ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to make a contribution to the South Sylhet Local Board and Municipality for the repairs of these roads ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR replied :

51. (a)—No.

(b)—The area under reference is served by 2 Public Works Department roads and 14 Local Board roads and hence cannot be considered as most backward in respect of communication.

(c)—Satgaon-Mirzapur-Shamsherganj Road is included in the Post-War Reconstruction Scheme.

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY : As regards 51 (b) Sir, are we to take it that if a particular portion of a Subdivision is under a particular Public Works Department or Local Board, that portion cannot be considered as backward ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : That is an argumentative point, and it cannot be allowed. Any other Supplementary Questions ?

***Maulavi ABDUL HAMID** : May I know, Sir, the reason why the Hon'ble Minister says that the portion is not backward ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The reasons are there in the Answer.

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY : Is this the way how the Hon'ble Minister wants to avoid Answers to Questions, Sir ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : That is a question of opinion.

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY : Why does the Hon'ble Speaker shield the Hon'ble Minister concerned ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : This remark is unwarranted and unbecoming. Perhaps the hon. Questioner will do well to study the Questions and Answers.

***Maulavi ABDUL HAMID** : May we know, Sir, whether it is the idea of the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge to say that only areas backward in regard to communications should be provided with communication ?

***The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY** : What is that Question, Sir ?

***Maulavi ABDUL HAMID** : Question No. 51 (b).

***The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR** : The answer is there, Sir. It is "The area under reference is served by 2 Public Works Department roads and 14 Local Board roads and hence cannot be considered most backward in respect of communication."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. Member's Question was—"Are Government aware that the Srimangal thana of the South Sylhet Subdivision is most backward in respect of communication?"

***The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR :** That is a matter of opinion, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The Question is not allowed, because it involves a question of opinion. Secondly, the Answer is self-complete—the area is served by 2 Public Works Department roads and 14 Local Board roads and hence cannot be considered as most backward in respect of communication. Therefore the hon. Member, on further consideration, will find that his grievance is not genuine.

Now I pass on to Question No. 52.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR replied :
52. (a)—Portions of the Municipal roads were damaged.

(b)—Does not arise.

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY : In answer to Question No. 52 (a), Sir, the Hon'ble Minister says "Portions of the Municipal roads were damaged" and in answer to (b) he says "Does not arise". When the Hon'ble Minister has admitted that damages have been done to portions of Municipal roads, may we know whether Government is prepared to make a special grant to the Municipal Board, Maulvibazar, for repairs of those portions of the roads?

***The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR :** The roads have been damaged by the Military and in some cases we have seen that the damages have been compensated for by the Military and they are constructing new roads. Government will take necessary action in the matter, but as yet no decision has been arrived at.

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH : In reply to (a) Hon'ble Minister mentions that only damages have been done to the Municipal roads. But in the question it is particularly mentioned about the Maulvibazar Municipal Board. So the question is whether Government has given compensation to the Maulvibazar Municipal Board for improving the roads?

***The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR :** Sir, the question of all the Municipal Boards will be taken up together. So that Question does not arise.

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH : In reply to Question No. 52 (a) Hon'ble Minister says that portions of the Municipal roads were damaged. In the Question it is mentioned that due to heavy Military traffic during the war some of the Local Board and Municipal roads in the South Sylhet Subdivision have been damaged. He admits that portions of Municipal road in the Maulvibazar Subdivision have been damaged. What action Government do propose to take for the improvement of those portions of roads damaged by the Military?

***The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR :** So far as South Sylhet Local Board is concerned, no damage has been done, and the question

of Local Board compensation does not arise. As regards the Municipal roads which have been damaged, it is already answered. Government has not as yet taken up the question of South Sylhet Municipal Board separately.

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH : The Question was, due to heavy Military traffic during the war, Local Board and Municipal roads have been damaged, and in the reply the Hon'ble Minister says only Municipal roads were damaged. May I point out, from my personal experience, that all the Local Board roads have also been damaged? Will he take note of it?

***Maulavi ABDUL HAMID :** May we know, Sir, if the Hon'ble Minister means to say that there has not been any damage to Local Board roads due to Military traffic?

***The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR :** That is a Government information, Sir.

***Maulavi Saiyid MUHAMMAD SAADULLA :** The reply should be that no report has been received from Local Boards. The question is whether Government took steps after receipt of questions?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Perhaps the hon. Leader of the Opposition will realise that much has been made of the Question and the answer.

***Maulavi Saiyid MUHAMMAD SAADULLA :** Of the answer, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The position is this: as regards Local Boards, no report reached Government; as regards Municipal Boards, Government have information. But the question is whether the Municipal Board have approached Government for help towards repairing these damages, and if so, whether Government consider those positions. To my mind those are the two simple questions.

***Maulavi Saiyid MUHAMMAD SAADULLA :** Government answer is "Does not arise".

***The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR :** That is with regard to Local Board roads.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The Question is whether Government have received any application from the South Sylhet Municipal Board for help.

***The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR :** I have followed the Question, Sir. Government admit that portions of the Municipal roads were damaged.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The Question is "If so, do Government propose to make any contribution to the South Sylhet Municipal Board for the repair of those roads?"

***The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR :** No, Sir, the South Sylhet Municipal Board have not approached Government for help.

***Maulavi MAHAMMAD ROUFIQUE**: May I know, Sir, whether any other Municipal Board approached Government?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: That does not arise.

***Srijut DANDESWAR HAZARIKA**: Are Government aware that some of the Local Boards and the Municipal Boards submitted their estimate of cost for repair of the damages done to their roads by the military traffic during the last war but nothing has yet been paid by Government?

***The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR**: That is a new Question. Of course, some of the Municipal and Local Boards approached Government for help but I don't know how many are they.

***Maulavi ABDUL HAMID**: May I know which of the Municipal and Local Boards approached Government for help?

***The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR**: I cannot say off-hand.

Financial position of the South Sylhet Local Board

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY asked:

53. (a) Are Government aware of the very bad financial position of the South Sylhet Local Board?

(b) If so, do Government propose to make a special grant for the said Board?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR replied:

53. (a)—Yes.

(b)—No.

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY: Sir, the answer to Question (a) is 'Yes' and to (b) 'No'. When it has been admitted by Government that the financial condition of the South Sylhet Local Board is bad, may we know whether they propose to improve it by giving them sufficient grant?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The answer is there—"No".

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY: Is it not the duty of Government to see that the financial condition of the Local Boards is improved by special grants?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: The answer to that question is "No.". The reason is that there are other Local Boards who are also in a financially bad condition. So, Government do not propose to specialise the claim of any particular Local Board. The cases of all the Local Boards will be taken up together. That is the idea.

Maulavi ABDUL HAMID: The answer should have been made clear.

***Babu PURNENDU KISHORE SEN GUPTA**: Are Government aware that the last South Sylhet Local Board incurred a heavy loss and left the burden on the shoulders of the present Board?

(No answer.)

Re a Hall constructed out of the Rural Uplift Fund and the Muslim Grave-yard at Srimangal

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY asked :

54. (a) Are Government aware that the Hall constructed out of the Rural Uplift Fund at Srimangal is lying-unused ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to let it out to an individual for business purposes ?

55. (a) Are Government aware that there is no place left in the Muslim Grave-yard in the Srimangal town of the South Sylhet Sub-division for the burial of the dead bodies of the Muslims ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to acquire the adjoining lands for the purpose ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR replied :

54. (a)—Government have no information.

(b)—Does not arise.

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY : Will the Hon'ble Minister take it from me that a large amount of money of the Government as well as of the public was spent on the construction of that Hall ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR : May be, Sir.

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY : Why the Hon'ble Minister did not take any action in the matter, may I know ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR : That is not the duty of Government.

***Maulavi ABDUL HAI** : Did Government make an enquiry in the matter after the Question was received ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR : The question of an enquiry does not arise.

***Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN** : Who is the owner of the Hall ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR : Notice is necessary for that question.

***Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH** : The Rural Uplift Fund is Government money spent by the Subdivisional Officer who is a Government Agent. Is it not the duty of the Hon'ble Minister to see that the Government money is well spent and, when it is spent, it is looked after ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR : The question is whether the Hall is lying unused and the answer is—Government have no information. It does not arise whether Government money is spent or wasted.

***Maulavi ABDUL HAMID:** Will the Hon'ble Minister try to take information in the matter ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: That will be taken.

***Babu PURNENDU KISHORE SEN GUPTA:** Is not Srimangal a labour area and is it not for the benefit of the labourers ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: Enquiry will be made into that question.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR replied :

55. (a)—Government have no information.

(b)—Does not arise.

***Maulavi MUHAMMAD ABUL KASHEM:** The question is whether Government made any enquiry into the matter after receipt of the Question ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: Certainly information was taken.

***Maulavi MUHAMMAD ABUL KASHEM:** What was the result of the enquiry ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: No enquiry has yet been made ; but if it is wanted by the hon. Member, it will be done.

***Maulavi MUHAMMAD ABUL KASHEM:** Is it not the duty of Government to make an enquiry without notice ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: The Question does not require that. The Question is: "Are Government aware that there is no place left in the Muslim Grave-yard in the Srimangal town" and the answer is "Government have no information".

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY: I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister whether after receipt of my Question, which was sent four months back, he tried at all to enquire of the Subdivisional Officer about the matter ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: Government did not consider it necessary.

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY: Is it because the Hon'ble Minister is a member of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema that he did not consider it necessary to make an enquiry ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: Government did not think that the hon. Member would die soon. So, the question does not arise. (*Laughter*).

***Maulavi ABDUL HAMID:** I must bring to the notice of the Hon'ble Speaker that the sort of answer we are receiving is not at all desirable. We

wanted to know why an enquiry was not made and the answer that has been given does not show any courtesy to the hon. Members of the House.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR: The Questions and Answers are there.

***Maulavi MUHAMMAD ABUL KASHEM:** If the Hon'ble Minister only says "Yes" and "No", why does he occupy the Guddi ?

Construction of roads in the Mikir Hills

Srijut KHORSING TERANG asked :

56. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether they have received certain proposals for construction of roads in the Mikir Hills under the Post-War Development Scheme ?
- (b) If so, whether they have decided to take up any of those proposals ?
- (c) The time from which the construction work under the aforesaid scheme will commence ?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied :

56. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Two roads, namely,

(i)—Mohendijua-Diphu, and

(ii)—Doboka-Dimapur *via* Mohendijua have been recommended by Assam Road Communication Board for improvement under the Post-War Reconstruction Scheme.

(c)—The work is likely to be taken up in 1947-48.

Protection of crops in Sunamganj subdivision

Babu JATINDRANATH BHADRA asked :

57. (a) Are Government aware that Boro is the main crop of the major portion of the Sunamganj Subdivision ?

(b) Are Government aware that growing of the said crop is being hampered for want of drainage and bunds ?

(c) Are Government aware that the people living round the big Haors in the said Subdivision have been making earnest requests for erecting Bunds with sluice gates generally in the mouths of Khals coming in or going out from the Haors, which are likely to be the best protection to their crops under the circumstances ?

(d) Do Government propose to equip the Agricultural Department with its own Engineers, so that unlike present arrangements, projects costing a sum of over four thousand rupees may be taken up by the Department itself and unnecessary delay and difficulties are avoided ?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied :

57. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—Representation from five such areas have been received, four of which have already been enquired into.

(d)—Public Works Department has since placed an officer of the Assam Engineering Service at the disposal of the Agricultural Department.

Babu JATINDRANATH BHADRA : From the answer given to (d) may I conclude that henceforth the Agricultural Department itself can take up projects costing over four thousand rupees.

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : Yes.

Reclamation and drainage of Asrakapan and Karaya Haor areas

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH asked :

58. (a) Are Government aware that every year owing to the flood in the Manu river, Asrakapan and Karaya Haor areas in the Maulvibazar Subdivision are submerged under water and crops are washed away causing great loss to the cultivators ?

(b) Is it a fact that there was a proposal before the Government for diverting the Manu river for saving the vast paddy fields there ?

(c) What steps do Government propose to adopt in the matter.

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied :

58. (a)—Yes.

(b)—There is a proposal for reclamation and better drainage of the area.

(c)—Government have undertaken the necessary survey for the area, on completion of which Government will examine and take what measures are necessary.

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH : With regard to (c) may I know from the Hon'ble Minister what time is likely to be taken for consideration ?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : I cannot say about that. It all depends on conditions—weather conditions and possibility of the Survey Department to complete the survey. I cannot say how much time it will take.

Babu PURNENDU KISHORE SEN GUPTA : With regard to (b), what is the definite proposal ?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY : Reclamation for the sake of paddy cultivation—to make it fit for cultivation.

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH : We know the survey is complete ; perhaps the Hon'ble Minister is not in the know. What time it will take to consider the proposal and give effect to it.

The Hon'ble Rev. J.J.M. NICHOLS-ROY: I do not know that the survey is complete. The matter will be taken up as soon as possible.

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH: We have got an evasive reply, Sir.

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Let the hon. Member read the reply: Government have undertaken the necessary survey for the area, on completion of which Government will examine and take what measures are necessary. The survey has been made but not completed.

Subdivisional Head Clerks of Public Works Department

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH asked :

59. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether it is fact that a new scale of pay for the post of the Public Works Department Subdivisional Head Clerk has now been introduced ?
- (b) Whether Government have lately received any representation from the clerks concerned for the revision of their scale of pay and if so, whether Government propose to consider their cases sympathetically ?
- (c) Whether there is now any Muslim among the Public Works Department Divisional Head Clerks in any Divisional Office in the Province and whether there had been any one in the past ?
- (d) If not, whether Government propose to place any efficient and senior Muslim clerk to the post of Divisional Head Clerk in any Divisional Office in the Province as a special case ?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied :

59. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Yes ; when Government revise the scales of pay in general, which is expected in the not distant future, the case of the Subdivisional Head Clerks will also be considered.

(c)—None at present. There was one in the past who has retired in 1945.

(d)—Promotion to the post of Divisional Head Clerk is made from the existing clerks in each Division according to seniority and merit. Preferential treatment to a particular community in filling up such posts is against the existing orders of Government. Communal representation is observed when the first appointment is made.

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH: With regard to (c), is it not a fact that in every Department consideration is given at the time of promotion too ?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: I am not aware if any such thing is done. In matters of promotion no communal consideration is taken.

Roads under Rajnagar and Kamalganj Thanas

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH asked :

60. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether any Roads under Rajnagar and Kamalganj thanas have been included in the Post-War Plan ?
- (b) If so, what are the names of those roads and what priority has been assigned to each of them ?
- (c) If not, whether Government propose to consider the following Local Board Roads in their immediate Programme under the Post-War Plan—
 - (i) Kadamhatta-Panchgaon,
 - (ii) Maulvibazar-Shamshernagar,
 - (iii) Dewandigri-Tarapassa,
 - (iv) Munshi-Bazar-Kamalganj,
 - (v) Rajnagar-Indeswar, and
 - (vi) Kamalganj-Adampur ?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY replied :

60. (a)—The Assam Road Communication Board has recommended certain roads in these thanas to be taken up for improvement. These recommendations are under consideration of Government.

(b)—The roads recommended and the priorities suggested are—

Road	Priority
1. Fenchuganj-Rajnagar Road upto Maulvibazar-Kulaura Road.	2
2. Rajnagar-Indreswar Uttarbhag Road	2
3. Rajnagar-Panchgaon Road	2
4. Maulvibazar-Shamshernagar Road via Munshibazar ...	3
5. Dewandighi-Kotarkona Road	3

(c)—The roads mentioned not having been recommended by the Assam Roads Communication Board will not be considered for improvement at present.

Controllers and Assistant Controllers of Procurement of Paddy and Rice

Maulavi ABDUL HAI asked :

61. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether Government advertised for the posts of Controllers and Assistant Controllers of Procurement of Paddy and Rice ?
- (b) If not, why not ?
- (c) What are the names of persons who have been appointed as Controllers and Assistant Controllers of Procurement ?
- (d) What are their qualifications and place of birth ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE replied :

61. (a)—No, as it was necessary to fill up the posts of Controllers immediately in order to give a start to the scheme. There was no post of Assistant Controllers.

(b)—Does not arise.

(c)—1. Srijut Dwijendra Nath Das.

2. Srijut Jibeswar Goswami.

3. Lt. Sarveswar Das.

(d)—All the three hail from Assam Valley. No. 1 is a graduate and was in the employee of Messrs. Steel Brothers and Company for over two years. No. 2 is an undergraduate and a permanent Upper Division Assistant of the Secretariat having been in the Civil Movement Plan as a Camp Commandant for over two years and No. 3 is an undergraduate and is a released officer of King's Commission.

* **Maulavi ABDUL HAI** : May I know from the Government whether at the time of giving the appointment, communal representation was taken into consideration ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : The Public Service Commission selected these persons, so I cannot say whether they considered this question or not, but the standing instruction whatever that might be is there with the Public Service Commission.

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH : May I know from Government whether it is not their duty to see that communal representation is strictly adhered to by the Public Service Commission ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : I have already replied to that, Sir, that whatever may be the instruction for filling up the vacancies it was there with the Public Service Commission. In this particular case no special reference was made. The standing instruction is already there.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD ABUL KASHEM : The post was not advertised. How could the Public Service Commission recommend the persons ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : They advertised for similar posts in the past. They had a list of demobilised personnel and from that they selected the names.

* **Maulavi ABDUL HAI** : Are we to take it that these three are demobilised persons ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. Member has put a Supplementary Question without following the answer.

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Let me help my old Friend—by old I mean that I know him from a long time. I am not meaning his age.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I cannot allow time of the House to be wasted.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD ABUL KASHEM : As the appointments have been made on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission, made on different occasions, on this particular occasion they might have given due consideration to the communal representation.

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Communal consideration cannot be given on each and every occasion. These were not the only posts which were recommended by the Public Service Commission. The posts were of the Controller, the Deputy Director of Procurement, Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and the Store-keepers. All these posts were filled up. Naturally communal question was considered. I think that when all these posts are taken together, most probably it will be found that the community to which my hon. Friend belongs has been over-represented.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD ABUL KASHEM: Does the Hon'ble Minister mean that he has done injustice to his own community?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: In some cases we do. When the next vacancy arises this question of ratio is taken up.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order, the Unstarred Question No.61, it is desired, should stand over. So I pass on to the next item, that is, item No. 2. I find, there are several Motions† of the same nature. Items No. 2 (1) & (2) stand in the name of Maulavi Abdul Khaleque Ahmed. Item No. 2 (4) in the name of Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury, is really, more or less on the same subject. Therefore, I propose to call upon Maulavi Abdul Khaleque Ahmed to move his Motion and I expect all the hon. Members will take part in the same Motion so that separate Motions will not to be necessary be moved. Now, I call upon the hon. Member Maulavi Abdul Khaleque Ahmed to move his Motion.

Motion Re: Food Situation in the Province

Maulavi ABDUL KHALEQUE AHMED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly is of opinion that the present food situation of the Province and the policy of the Government with regard to supply and distribution of food-stuffs, cloth, yarn and other daily necessary commodities be taken into consideration.

Sir, at the very outset, let me express my thankfulness to the Hon'ble Minister, Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee for giving me this opportunity of initiating a debate in this hon. House on the food situation of the Province. This, Sir, is a matter of vital importance of the day. Sir, I would request every hon. Member of this House, to whatever group he belongs, to forget all party politics and join hands with me in his discussion with an earnest desire of co-operation so that we may arrive at a constructive as well as productive solution of this burning question of the day. Sir, in almost all the sessions of this Assembly a very lengthy debate takes place on the food situation of the Province and individual Members express individual angle of vision in this respect with a view to help the

† 2. (1) Maulavi Abdul Khaleque Ahmed to move:—

“This Assembly is of opinion that the present food situation of the Province and the policy of the Government with regard to supply and distribution of food-stuffs, cloth, yarn and other daily necessary commodities be taken into consideration”.

(2) Maulavi Abdul Khaleque Ahmed to move:—

“The Assam Legislative Assembly is of opinion that the present food situation in the Province and the Government policy to save her from the impending world-wide famine be taken into consideration”.

*

*

*

*

(4) Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury to move:—

“This Assembly is of opinion that the food situation in the Province and the policy of the Government regarding supply and distribution of food-stuffs and cloth be taken into consideration.”

Government in future to do away with any defect or mal-practice in the administration and also with the hope that the Government will take into consideration the different views of the hon. Members taking part in the debate and in future prepare a more constructive scheme to improve the condition of the Province as well as to combat all mischievous activities prevailing in this Province. Sir, a similar discussion was raised on the floor of this hon. House during the last session of the Assembly and as many as 30 Members took part in the debate. Sir, to-day, it will be our first duty to see how far our views expressed during the last session have been taken into consideration by the Minister-in-charge of Supply and how far he has been able to improve the food situation of the Province. Sir, during the last session, my Friend the Hon'ble Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee, Minister-in-charge of Supply, in reply to almost all the grievances raised by the hon. Members in course of the discussion scoured all the blames on the shoulder of the previous Cabinet of which he was fortunately a Member. He pleaded his inability to remedy the defects as the mischief was done by the previous Government, but at the same time he gave us promises of a brighter future, and of a brighter Assam. Now it is to be judged how far he has been able to fulfil his promises, how far he has been able to improve the gloomy food situation of the Province and how far he has been able to stamp out corruption, black marketing, bribery and jobbery. Sir, I think, it would be better if the Hon'ble the Supply Minister, after my speech, make a statement of his activities during the last few months so that the hon. Members may have the opportunity of being supplied with facts and figures as to the present situation of the Province and then consider and also come forward with constructive suggestions.

Now, Sir, there are two aspects of food—food that is produced in our Province and food that is imported from outside for our consumption. Food that are produced in our Province are mainly rice, mustard, potato, etc., and the food that are imported from outside our Province are Atta, maida, Dal, sugar, salt, etc. Now I shall take up the food produced in our province, that is, rice, mustard and potato. Sir, our Province is known as surplus province as regards paddy and rice. Though I am not satisfied with any statistics as to call our Province a surplus one, still I understand, our cultivators produce abundant paddy to feed our people as well as to feed many of outside. This I say when there is normal production of paddy in the Province, when there is no calamity whatsoever. Now, from a statement of the Premier made in the Upper House during the last Budget Session, I understand, owing to scarcity of food the previous Government entered into an agreement with the Government of India to export 1,52,000 tons of rice to the deficit provinces of Madras, Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar and Bengal, out of which 13,000 tons of *aus* rice and 40,000 tons of *boro* rice from the Surma Valley and the balance that is 99,000 tons in *Sali* from the Assam Valley. But seeing the bad prospect of *aus* and *boro* paddy on account of want of rain the Government of Assam subsequently informed the Government of India that if *aus* and *boro* paddy are not available owing to insufficiency of production they might not be keeping to the commitment. Then the Premier stated that on subsequent examination the Government found that the committed surplus of *sali* paddy in the Assam Valley was available. Now, Sir, I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Supply—not only I but all the hon. Members of the House also—the quantity of rice and paddy exported to other provinces from the Assam Valley and the Surma Valley separately up to July. Did the Government stick to what they subsequently informed the Government of India with regard to the export of *boro* paddy? Did they withhold export of paddy from the Surma Valley as well as the Assam Valley till the fate of the *boro* crop was ascertained? I know, Sir, the Government of Assam exported paddy to outside province up to July last knowing fully

well the dangerous food crisis especially in the Surma Valley. Now, Sir, in the food debate of the last Session it was pointed out by many hon. Members that *amon* cultivation yielded a very thin harvest and the prospect of the *boro* crop was gloomy owing to drought. It was also discussed that the *boro* crop in the Sunamganj subdivision, which is considered to be the granary of the deficit areas, had been totally destroyed by tornado and hailstorm. Then, Sir, leaving aside tornado and hailstorm-affected areas, the *boro* crop of the entire *boro*-growing areas in the Surma Valley was very badly damaged by untimely inundation during harvest time, *i.e.*, *Baisakh*. As a result, the cultivators of the *boro*-growing area could not reap half of the crop. On an average I can confidently say, that ten annas of the *boro* crop was lost this year. I submit all these facts to the hon. Members to consider if there was any surplus *boro* paddy for export to other provinces.

Sir, very recently I visited some 44 villages in the *boro*-growing area of the Sunamganj subdivision, and out of curiosity I examined and found to my utter dismay that almost all the granaries were left vacant. On asking people I came to learn that those who could produce some quantity of surplus paddy, had sold the same in black-market for fear of Government seizing their paddy and making payment at the controlled rate, *i.e.*, at the rate of Rs. 4-8 per maund. I found many half-starved and many going without food for days together. Sir, the situation in the affected area is the worst of all. *Boro* being the only crop and that being totally destroyed by tornado and hailstorms, the people of the affected area must get their food, *i.e.*, rice, from elsewhere from *Baisakh* last up to *Baisakh* next. The poorer classes of people, both male and female, are eager to be engaged as labourers, but there are few in the villages to engage them. The middle-class cultivators have almost completed sale of their immovable property, and a bit richer class have begun sale of cattle for purchase of their food. There is land for sale, but nobody comes forward to purchase. The situation is alarming. Government have, I have heard, sanctioned one lakh of rupees—20 thousand for gratuitous relief and 80 thousand for loan in the affected area—and the amount has already been distributed. But the people of many villages in the affected area have not received anything whatsoever from Government. Government have practically failed to give proper relief to the affected area. I understand Babu Purnendu Kishore Sen Gupta, M.L.A. of South Sylhet, has been placed in charge of relief of the affected area. But I cannot understand the effect of his activities, especially in the Dharampassa Police Station. He did not meet the local four Muslim M.L.As., nor did he inform them to meet at a meeting. Similar grievances I heard from the two Hindu M.L.As. also, *viz.*, Babu Akshay Kumar Das and Babu Jatindra Nath Bhadra. I do not know why the Muslim M.L.As., who are the representatives of a major political party, are not taken into confidence and consulted in the matter of giving relief to the affected people. Can there be any difference of opinion in matters like relief? Is it the instruction from the Congress High Command? Is it the instruction from the Congress Ministry in Assam? Sir, weaving, handicraft and paddy husking schemes for the affected areas are but a dream; no useful purpose will be served by these schemes except profiteering by some interested persons. Without the co-operation of the local leaders it is impossible for Mr. Sen, an outsider, or any other gentleman to meet the situation of the affected area. The people are in need of food and it is the duty of Government to arrange food for them by whatever means they think proper. This is the situation of the *boro*-growing area of the Surma Valley, Sir. Then, Sir, the recent flood has almost destroyed the *amon* crop of the Cachar district and the Karimganj subdivision of the Sylhet district; the situation is very acute and gloomy; scarcity of food is felt there and it is apprehended that there will be a famine in almost all the provinces. The food situation has created a havoc both to the Government

and the governed, prices of rice and paddy are rising higher and higher day by day. Now, we must all try to save our people from the apprehended famine. While the food situation of the Surma Valley was going from bad to worse our popular Government, with a view to drive away the Muslim immigrants from Assam, destroyed all grown-up crop of several thousand acres of land in the Assam Valley. This is how Government will serve the people! Now, Sir, I shall take up the procurement policy of the Government. The previous Government used to make procurement in the Surma Valley directly by Government and in the Assam Valley by Steel Brothers. But the present Government have cancelled the agency of the said Steel Brothers and have taken the procurement of both valleys in their hands. Sir, may I know what quantity of rice and paddy have been procured and stocked during the last few months and against that quantity what is the total expenditure? What is the monthly expenditure for maintaining the whole staff for this Department? Sir, I venture to say that money spent for maintaining this Department did not serve any useful purpose for the benefit of the public. In my opinion the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of procurement is criminally liable for spending the money from the public exchequer by way of maintaining so big a staff. I may say, Sir, that Hon'ble Mr. Mookerjee is fully responsible for the failure of this Department.

Sir, there was a demand for fixing the minimum prices of paddy and rice and Hon'ble Mr. Mookerjee also said during the last session of the Assembly that it would be the first duty of the Government to fix the minimum prices of paddy and rice considering the cost of production as well as prices of other commodities and necessities of life. Accordingly in May last he notified, fixing the minimum prices of *Buro* paddy at Rs. 4-8 per maund and *Amon* at Rs. 6-4 per maund. Sir, I fail to understand on what basis and on what calculation Hon'ble Mr. Mookerjee fixed the minimum price of *Buro* paddy at Rs. 4-8 per maund.

Sir, this fixation of the minimum price was responsible for the failure of the Procurement Department. The prices fixed by the Ministry were not enough to meet the cost of cultivation. In our locality about 40 per cent. of the population have no land for cultivation, another 30 per cent. cultivate barely enough to maintain themselves and the remaining 30 per cent. grow surplus paddy for consumption in the Province as well as for export to other provinces.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order, I think at this stage I should invite the attention of the hon. Mover as well as of other hon. Members to the rule in respect of time limit in making speeches. It runs as follows:—

“ Except with the permission of the Speaker no speech upon any Motion or Resolution shall exceed 15 minutes in duration provided that the mover of a Motion or Resolution, when moving the same, and the Minister-in-charge, when speaking for the first time may speak for 30 minutes”.

The hon. Mover has already taken 22 minutes and he has got another 8 minutes more.

Maulavi ABDUL KHALEQUE AHMED: Sir, if this 30 per cent. who grow surplus paddy become loser by cultivation then certainly they will give up producing surplus paddy in future and the result will be a permanent famine throughout the Province. Hon'ble Mr. Mookerjee has invited such a famine by fixing the minimum price of *buro* paddy at Rs. 4-8 per maund. I am surprised, Sir, that the Hon'ble Minister did not think it necessary to revise this rate even when the Procurement Department was unable to procure any paddy at that rate. Sir, the present rate of *buro* paddy in our locality, before I left for Shillong, was Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 and in the sister province of Bengal it was Rs. 10 to Rs. 13. So, Sir, it will be impossible for any organisation to maintain the rate at Rs. 4-8 under these circumstances. As a result of this, smuggling is going on and the controlling staff is failing to check it. Bribery and corruption have abnormally increased and I think, Sir, if these state of things are allowed to continue any longer the matter will go out of control in future. Therefore, Sir, in order to save our people from the apprehended famine and food crisis I would suggest that (1) an Advisory Board with 15 Members of this Hon'ble House be constituted to look after the critical food situation in the Province, (2) the minimum prices of paddy and rice be increased in consideration of the prices prevalent in the neighbouring province of Bengal and also in consideration of the prices of other commodities of food-stuff, (3) the Procurement and the Supply Department be placed in charge of the Hon'ble Premier, (Shouts of 'Why' from the Government Benches) (4) paddy up to a limit of 5 lakh maunds be procured by Government and stocked at different deficit and affected areas for sale at controlled rate, (5) all export of paddy be withheld until situation is brought under control, (6) arrangements for supply of *buro* paddy seeds be immediately made at the cost of Government, (7) an adequate sum of Rs. 10 lakhs be sanctioned for agricultural loans to be given in the deficit and affected *buro*-growing areas, (8) another sum of Rs. 4 lakhs be sanctioned for gratuitous relief to be given in the affected areas in Sunamganj subdivision with a view to maintain the people up to *Chailtra* next and lastly arrangement for strict supervision be made to check all smuggling of paddy and rice.

Sir, the scarcity of mustard oil is felt everywhere. Attempts should be made to make use of the mustard seeds produced in our Province. The ban on potatoes have been re-imposed but the price of potatoes is increasing day by day. The price during the last week in Bengal was Rs. 40 to Rs. 45 per maund. A minimum price may be fixed so that we may get potatoes at a fixed rate. The ban on potatoes may be withdrawn.

Sir, now I would take up the question of supply of cloth, and food-stuffs that are imported from outside the Province for our consumption. Sir, in spite of our repeated demands the cloth problem could not be solved by Government. It is understood that a new arrangement for supply of cloth has been made and for this purpose as many as 5 new syndicates have been created—3 in the Assam Valley and 2 in the Surma Valley. The very names of the syndicates have created a terror in the minds of the people of Assam, especially of the Surma valley. Sir, the people of Assam expected drastic changes in all Departments of Government under the present Congress Government, who claim to be very popular. But the policy adopted by the present Government in administering the Province has by this time entirely disappointed the people. In some respects, Sir, the action of this Government is worse than that of the previous Government. (*Voices: In some respects.*) May I know why the previous arrangements of supply of cloth through co-operative societies have been discontinued and why 5 new syndicates have been created overnight? May I know, Sir, who are the proprietors of these agencies and who are connected with

them ? Is it a fact that some hon. Members of this House including some Hon'ble Minister of the present Cabinet are interested in these agencies ? (One voice from Government Bench : No) (Another voice from Opposition : Surely) Is it not a fact that many of these agents were never in this business line nor ever dealt in cloth ? I request the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Supply Department to make a statement on the floor of this House about these matters.

The people of some localities in Sunamganj, Sir, have not yet got their quota of cloth of last July and I think it is due to the negligence of the distributing agents. The defects in distribution of cloth is that under the present arrangements people have to get their cloth from license holders' place. Now, in many places the distance from the dealer to the customers' place is very long. In this respect let me point out the difficulties of the people of Dharampasa Police station under Sunamganj Subdivision. The people of Circle Nos. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, and 22 have to bring their cloth from the dealers at Modhyanagar Bazar which is at a distance varying from 8-16 miles from these circles. Sir, this system of distribution be discontinued and licenses be given to persons of each circle for distribution of cloth.

Sugar is not available even for children. Dal is not found in the market. Kerosene quota could not be increased. Thus the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the Supply Department has totally failed to keep the promises he gave during the last session of the Assembly. Profiteering and black-marketing, bribery and jobbery and also smuggling of paddy have doubly increased. I urge upon the popular Government to make their best efforts to bring the situation under control.

Sir, the ban on salt has been withdrawn in the sister Province of Bengal. This may be followed in our Province as well.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Motion moved :

"This Assembly is of opinion that the present food situation of the Province and the policy of the Government with regard to supply and distribution of food-stuffs, cloth, yarn and other daily necessary commodities be taken into consideration".

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I request the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the Supply Department through you to take the earliest opportunity to give his preliminary reply ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : What does the Hon'ble Minister propose to do ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Sir, I would like to hear at least one or two more hon. Members on the subject. May I get the opinion of the hon. Leader of the Opposition in this respect ?

***Maulavi ABDUL KHALEQUE AHMED :** Sir, during the last session the Hon'ble Minister wanted to speak after hearing two or three hon. Members, but he actually spoke when all the hon. Members had spoken (*Laughter*).

Maulavi Saiyid MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : The attitude of the Hon'ble Minister of Supply is quite correct. As there are two or three Motions in this subject, let him speak after hearing two or three hon. Members and

after that he should give his preliminary reply. Moreover after learning the facts when the Hon'ble Minister will give his reply many hon. Members from all quarters of the House will resist from speaking at random.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I have to follow the rules, but as the matter constituting this Motion is of vital importance to all parties and to people of the Province, I propose to give the maximum latitude to the hon. Members for this debate. Of course, it will be proper if the hon. Members avoid repetition of statements or arguments. Now may I have an idea from the Leaders of the Opposition, of the European Group and of the Congress Party how many hon. Members from their parties would like to speak on this subject ?

Mr. W. R. FAULL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, only one Member from our Party will speak.

Maulavi Saiyid MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : About 11 or 12 Members would like to speak from our party.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Probably the Hon'ble Minister will require about an hour to deliver his concluding speech and about three-fourth of an hour for his preliminary speech.

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Yes, Sir, I may take about three-fourth of an hour for my preliminary speech.

Maulavi ABUAL MAJID ZIAOSH-SHAMS : Sir, will it be possible to continue it till tomorrow if it is not finished to day ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : It all depends. If the hon. Members speak on the relevant points only and do not indulge in repetition the debates may be expected to be finished this afternoon at 4 p. m.

Maulavi MAHAMMAD ROUFIQUE : Mr. Speaker Sir, it will be no exaggeration to say that the whole Supply Department is reeking with corruption, nepotism and favouritism. The guiding principle of the Department does not seem to be welfare of the poor and relief to their distress. But the Government's approach to the solution of the cloth and food problems appears to be influenced by interests of business men at the expense of the poor people of Assam.

This Government came into power with a lot of trumpeting and self-advertisement and was responsible for raising hopes in the minds of the people that everything would be all right once they assumed the reins of administration and all the ills they suffered from during the days of the previous Government would be banished. But they have failed and miserably failed to tackle the problem with the result that the food and cloth situation has deteriorated to an extent beyond the competence of this incompetent Government (*Voices : Hear, hear.*) The gentlemen occupying the Treasury Benches now, were perhaps the loudest in condemning the corruption prevailing during the previous Government and were out to root it out lock, stock and barrel. Can you now claim honestly that you have succeeded in this respect ? If there was corruption before it is hundred times more rampant now. (*Voices : Hear, hear.*) If there was scarcity of cloth before, it is much more now. Food has become rarer than before. The high prices of commodities have become a source of constant irritation and hardship to the poorer section of the people.

People are crying still, crying hoarse for cloth, but they are not getting unless they can afford to go and buy in the black-market. The Muslims are the greatest sufferers in this respect. Even during the last Id festival they were unable to get what was their due. The Liaison and Vigilance Committees were ushered into existence as a panacea for all the ills, but within this short time these Committees have proved themselves to be mere counterparts of the Supply Department in the headquarters and have become a breeding ground for favouritism and corruption. The Government have miserably failed in its primary-duty to supply to the people essential food-stuffs and cloth and in this respect the Muslims are the greatest sufferers. The Muslims being backward in trade and commerce the bulk of the trade—the wholesale and retail shops of controlled commodities—is concentrated into the hands of the Non-Muslims. There is always some pretext found to deny to the few existing Muslim traders license for a wholesaler or retailership. There is always a taunt for a Muslim customer in a Hindu shop. Instead of welcoming him as a customer he is taunted to go to the Muslim League for his supply, (Voices from the Opposition: Shame, shame) (Voices from the Government Benches: Downright falsehood) because Muslims are Muslim Leaguers and fortune has placed the Government in the hands of the Hindus. The Government being absolutely divorced from Muslim opinion there is no wonder that there is discrimination against the Muslims and this discrimination indeed has gone very far and it must stop, otherwise it will only aggravate the existing strained feelings between Hindus and Muslims.

The people were led to believe that once the Congress came into power the trade and commerce of the Province would come into Assamese hands. Food and cloth will reach the poorest of the poor in the villages. I remember to have read one of the speeches of the Hon'ble Premier sometime ago condemning the then Government and charging the then Ministry with utter incompetence to meet the demand of the people. He complained, and bitterly complained that in villages sugar was not available even for an ailing man. Has the position improved in any way while you are now in the Government? Go and ask any villager he will say, — no — rather whisper, because he dares not speak openly; he will whisper that whatever little sugar was available during the previous Government has disappeared, thanks to our own Government. The same is the case with the distribution of cloth. People are not getting the minimum requirement for their consumption.

In spite of the maintenance of highly paid staff, it is an open secret that cloth meant for consumption by the people of the Province, finds their way out of the Province to Burma and other places for the benefit of others because the cloth business has been placed in the hands of a class of people among whom are people who have always thrived by suckling the blood of the poor, under whose economic bondage the people of Assam are groaning. The opportunity that came to the Assamese people of Assam to take to trade and revive their commercial habit had been totally denied to them. The distribution of trade facilities in controlled commodities will show that Assam exists not for Assamese but for a set of outsiders whose influence can easily suppress all patriotic instincts in the Power that be. Ask any Assamese, any man in the street—what his reaction to this. The reply is invariably that Assam for Assamese is well-said, that the Government is also Assamese is nicely proclaimed, but in fact the envelope is Assamese, but the contents are Marwaris and outsiders. There is a feeling in the country that since Hon'ble Mr. Mookerjee came to assume charge of the Supply portfolio, Assamese elements in the Department are being gradually

eliminated, and that accounts for the presence in the Department of Datta, Dam, Gupta, etc., occupying the key position in the Department. (*Laughter.*) This is the Government of Assam run for the benefit of Assamese. I am tempted to use the phrase used by the Hon'ble Premier the other day and I say to my Assamese Friends sitting opposite 'What a fall my countrymen'! (*Laughter.*)

(Maulavi M. Idris Ali rose to read his manuscript speech.)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: May I point out one thing? It was our practice to discourage manuscript speeches, previously, (Voices from the Government Benches: Yes, yes), and that was sought to be followed during the last session. It detracts from the standard of a high level of debate if manuscript speeches are resorted to. So, I hope hon. Members will not resort to written speeches as far as possible.

The Hon'ble Mr. BASANTA KUMAR DAS: Speeches should always be delivered *extempore* as far as possible, and even if written speeches are resorted to they should be so delivered, that as to appear that they are actually delivered *ex ore*.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: It is very difficult for many hon. Members to make *extempore* speeches in English, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member may continue.

Maulavi M. IDRIS ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I seek your indulgence to speak a few words on the supply policy of the Government of Assam. We are passing through a deplorable state of affairs. Since we met in March last the condition has further worsened. As a matter of fact black marketing and profiteering is thriving under the so-called popular Congress Raj in Assam. The public morale has suffered the most. Sense of honour, sense of good government are becoming things of the past.

The Hon'ble Supply Minister who made such big noise during the last session of the Assembly is too busy in distributing the contracts to his supporters and to the supporters of his supporters. He is too busy in creating new syndicates all over Assam, so that he may sit tight on the *Gaddi*. He has scarcely any time to think of the poor people of Assam and easily they do not count anything to him. In such circumstances, it is no wonder, Sir, that the supply and distribution in the Province shall suffer.

Sir, during the year under review, destiny has not been kind to the people of Assam. Earlier in the year, greater portion of the *Buro* area in the Sunamganj Subdivision was swept away by a terrible tornado, and the prospect of a bumper *Buro* crop was ruined. Just before we assembled here in July, a devastating flood inundated large portions in both the valleys. This had a serious adverse effect on the crop production in the Province. Moreover owing to the indulgence and slack supervision of the Government the stocks in the surplus areas have been drained away to Bengal. The result has been that the cultivators are finding it difficult to procure two square meals per day.

The big difference between our statutory Government prices and the much higher prices prevailing in the Bengal markets was a direct inducement for smuggling on wider scale. The Government ought to have revised periodically such prices in the light of circumstances. But this is something they did not do.

Sir, in the rural areas great scarcity of Dal is keenly being felt. We know that the Government of India curtailed our quota. But this is no

justification why it should entirely vanish from the market. The mustard oil that is being supplied through the Government agency is quite unfit for human consumption. It is suspected to be highly adulterated and as such it is affecting the people at large.

The cloth position in the Province is most deplorable. In spite of the big words uttered by the Hon'ble Minister during the Budget Session of the Assembly, we remain where we were. Even now the people in the villages are going half naked. Even now we are finding it extremely difficult to procure our *Kafan* cloth for our dead bodies. But thanks to the Government. Approach the black market and you find every thing there. This is the position we are living in.

The Hon'ble Minister considers that by ordering the formation of the Liaison and Vigilance Committees, he has done all he could. But does he care to know how these Committees were constituted and how they are functioning? In most of the places, these Committees were made on party lines by Government officers with majority of Congress and Jamiat members. Perhaps it will be news to some members that where there were no Jamiat some people were made Jamiat over-night to become members of these Committees. What is worse, many black marketeers and profiteers have found place in these Committees. Thus these Committees are foredoomed to failure.

In the subdivisions the Liaison Committees sit once in every month. But the recommendations of the members of these Committees are hardly acted upon. I would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge to the policy of the Bihar Government which has been published in the newspaper—a cutting of which will be available from my colleague Mr. Sen. Without any consultation with the Vigilance Committees and local members, the Ration Cards have been handed over to the dealers to enabling them to utilise the unclaimed cards of dead persons and who left the place long before. This ought to have been made over to the Vigilance Committee for proper distribution. In spite of our repeated demands we have not been able to ensure the supply of cloth to the people of a circle by a retailer of that particular circle in order to enable us to get our allotted quota with in easy reach. Even now a poor villager has to run a long distance to get a yard of cloth allotted to him. Complaints are pouring in that even ration cards are being blackmarketed and this is being done with the help of the officers. The other day the Hon'ble Minister stated on the floor of this House that C. I. sheets have disappeared from the market. May I ask the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge who is responsible for such disappearance? What steps is he going to take to stop this? Is it not a fact that the Subdivisional authorities have combined with the black marketeers in this matter?

Finally, I appeal to the Hon'ble Minister to be true to his profession and take a determined step to stamp out corruptions from the Province.

With these words, Sir, I resume my seat.

Maulavi Dewan TAIMUR RAZA CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to speak a few words in connection with the food situation of our Province and specially with regard to the North Sylhet subdivision.

Cloth.—It was definitely expected that after the cessation of hostilities, the cloth situation would improve and people would not feel so much difficulties in the matter of cloth. Though the present Ministry is in office for more than six months, they could not bring any relief to the public regarding the acute scarcity of cloth. I should submit, Sir, that the position has worsened due to the faulty

policy pursued by the present Government. This Government superseding the genuine claims of the *bona fide* businessmen, have given contracts to their party supporters, who have no experience in business line, and thus created additional difficulties in procurement of cloth, sugar, flour, mustard oil, etc.

Sir, the Textile Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors and their office staff are working in their old fashion of taking illegal gratification and they are changing the licenses very frequently and putting the public in great hardship, and thus creating new fields of exaction.

The control over the procurement and distribution of textile goods has always been found to be slack and inefficient. So corruption, profiteering and blackmarketing have thrived under official patronage. There are persons who are allowed to make fortune out of the misfortune of others. During the last *Id* ceremony no *Id* special quota was allotted for the Muslims in rural areas.

Sir, during the last Budget Session of the Assembly the Hon'ble Supply Minister uttered very high sounding words and promised on the floor of the House that the present Government would be guided by the public through the Liaison Committees and Vigilance Committees. But in this connection, Sir, I must have a deep sigh and say alas ! that in the North Sylhet Subdivision though the Additional Deputy Commissioner invited some public representatives to form the Liaison Committees, up till now not a single meeting of such Committees has been convened by the Additional Deputy Commissioner. If the promises of the present Ministry are going to be carried out in such a defiant manner by their subordinates, I do not know, Sir, what more miseries and agonies are in store for the poor public in future.

Kerosene.—Though the quota of Kerosene has been increased by 50 per cent. still the present supply cannot meet the minimum demand of the public. I most fervently urge upon the Government at least to double the present quantity.

Sugar.—The supply of sugar is less than the war-time supply. Even the sick and the babies are not getting necessary sugar. During the last month of *Ramadhan*, the rural Muslims did not get any sugar which was very necessary for them. I draw pointed attention of the Government to increase the supply of sugar and flour specially for the rural areas.

The Mustard oil that is being supplied to the Province through the Government Agency is unfit for human consumption. The experts are of opinion that it is highly adulterated and greatly injurious to the health of the people. We do not know, Sir, why we should be compelled to purchase disease with our own money at the instance of the Government. We regret that the Government of the day has taken no step to improve our supply in quality as well as in quantity. They are at liberty to patronise their own camp followers, but they cannot be allowed to play with the health of the people of the Province.

Sir, before I take my seat, I would reiterate and urge upon the Government to remove the miseries of the rural public in respect of the supply of cloth, kerosene, sugar, flour, mustard oil, etc. With these words, Sir, I resume my seat.

Adjournment

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

After lunch

(The hon. the Deputy Speaker occupied the Chair.)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : Is there any hon. Member who wants to speak on the subject ? (*After some pause*). The Hon'ble Minister-in-charge may then begin his speech.

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Madam, at the very outset, I must thank my hon. Friend, the mover of the Motion and also other hon. Members who have taken part so far in the debate. There is no denying the fact, Madam, that the food problem and the cloth problem are really the problems of the day—not only for this Province but for the whole of India and rather they are world problems. Now, Madam, while thanking the hon. Members, I am sorry to say that they have not done full justice either to the Minister in-charge or to the Government. At the same time, I venture to say that this was due to the colossal ignorance of the hon. Members of the actual situation. Madam, I think, it is my duty to place before the hon. Members the actual facts which are in possession of the Government and then I hope those who will take part afterwards will certainly give me concrete suggestions which will be welcomed by one and all. I can assure the hon. Members that though I have been blamed that in spite of assurances, I did not do anything, Madam, I am not taking them seriously as they said all these for some particular motive or other and they had used those words for the sake of gallery play. I am repeating the assurance that all the constructive suggestions will be considered and those that are not constructive will also be heard. Madam, I won't enter into the question of Valleyism which has already been preached by one hon. Member that this Department—I mean the Supply Department—is full of Surma Valley Officers.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : He did not say that. He said outsiders.

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : I speak subject to correction. The hon. Member is protesting and it might be that I could not exactly follow the hon. Member. If I am wrong the hon. Member whom I am meaning will contradict me and correct me. (*Voices : You are wrong.*)

Another hon. Member, Madam, you noticed, raised the vexed question of communalism. I shall not enter into that question also. Communal bickerings and rancours should not take any place in this debate at least. If really we are sincere, if we are here to help our people and serve our people—I mean not only Government benches but also the Oppositions—we have got the common duty and I believe that duty persuaded the hon. Members to take part in this debate.

Now, Madam, I shall try to meet the points raised by the hon. Members one by one, and moreover, I shall say something on those points which have not been raised specifically, just to assist the hon. Members who will take part afterwards. I shall take the question of rice and paddy first. Madam, accurate datas for the production and consumption of rice in the Province are not available. I do not feel ashamed to declare this. It is really deplorable that we have not got any such machinery by which we can get accurate datas with regard to the production as well as for the consumption in the Province. In this connection, it will not be out of place if I mention that Government are taking steps so that in the near future some approximate data may be available. To make it perfect certainly it will take time but we shall take all necessary steps to have it completed as early as possible.

As regards the policy of the Government so far as rice and paddy are concerned, Madam, it is firstly to ensure maximum safety to the people of the Province, secondly to ensure reasonable price to the cultivators and thirdly to export the surplus quantity not only on humanitarian ground which should come first to the hon. Members but also on the economic ground ; unless we export, the surplus stocks will rot here and there will be no one to purchase and the poor cultivators for whom we always cry for their benefit will really suffer. Madam, it is well known to hon. Members that this Government—I mean the Assam Government,

not the present Ministry but its predecessor—committed to export our surplus to the extent of 1 52,000 tons from this Province to those Provinces which are really deficit and where people really need them to save them from starvation and death.

Madam, we were advised that we should look to the interests of the people of the Province. Now, Madam, I have placed before you all sides of the picture. The necessity for export is there at the same time I have explained that we are proceeding very cautiously and we are programming our export month by month.

Up to July our total export was to the neighbourhood of 86,000 tons. After that when the floods—simultaneous floods—in both the valleys appeared we stopped export altogether. After that when the flood subsided, we visited the affected areas and we consulted the local people. We gathered information so far as the Assam Valley was concerned. There was no apprehension of any shortage, on the other hand I was requested to save the cultivators because there was still such a huge quantity of surplus paddy and rice that unless they were purchased from poor cultivators they would lose very heavily. Now, Madam, after getting all these informations we have again programmed for an export of 7,500 tons for the month of September. I think, it is also known to the hon. Members that unless we programme at least 3 weeks or a month ahead, we cannot make arrangement for the transport. So, only yesterday I passed orders that another programme should be prepared for another 7,500 tons to be exported outside the Province beginning from the 11th of October and ending in 10th of November 1946. Madam, the case of the Surma Valley was quite different and we are supplying the Subdivisions and the District headquarters of that valley with rice and paddy as requisitioned by the Subdivisional or the District Officers, from the Assam Valley. Even yesterday, I was told by the Director of Supplies that we should consider very seriously whether we should send any more rice or paddy to some particular Subdivisions. The reason for this warning was this that people had stocks in their hands but taking advantage of the flood situation they had hidden the stocks but as soon as the Government supply went there, all these hidden stocks began to come out and sale from the Government stocks was far low than what was expected. Now, Madam, as it is the duty of the Government to consider that there should not be any one in the Province who should go without food, it is equally important for this Government to consider that when other provinces are in great need of rice and paddy we should not waste anything. That was the idea of the previous Government also and that is why the previous Government made the commitment of such huge quantity of rice. Now, Madam, I hope it is quite clear to my hon. Friends that it is essentially necessary not only for our cultivators but also for our brethren in other parts of the country who really need them that we should export our surplus rice and paddy. Nothing is going out of the Surma Valley at present. It is quite evident also by our action that we are exporting to Surma Valley from the Assam Valley. The question of export from the Surma Valley therefore does not arise. In summing up this particular point I may again assure the hon. Members of the House that all possible care to see that we do not exceed the limit of our exportable surplus is being taken and we shall always be very careful before we export that we have got sufficient stock in our hand. Unless Nature completely fails us, there is no chance of any apprehension of shortage so far as this staple food, I mean, rice and paddy, is concerned. Now, in this connection, I think, it would be better if I mention another point which I missed, namely, that we have kept reserve stock in various areas to meet any emergency in any part of the Province. Now, as regards the minimum price of paddy, I have been blamed that under what calculation and on which basis I have fixed the minimum price. My hon. Friends blamed me. I do not mind. They have got their tongue and they can blame me especially when they are sitting in the Opposition. But the fact is this, Madam, that the maximum price has been fixed by the Central

Government and we cannot go beyond that. Now, the minimum price has been fixed by my humble self keeping in view the maximum price. When the minimum price was not in existence I heard the clamour and it was a truth also that the poor cultivators were compelled to sell paddy even at the rate of rupees two or even at one rupee eight annas per maund. The fault of this Government is that they have fixed the minimum price which means that no one can offer sale or purchase at a rate lower than Rs. 5-12-0 for the *aman* paddy and Rs. 4-8-0 for the *aus* and *boro* paddy. We tried, and we are still trying and we shall be going on trying to persuade the Central Government to raise the maximum price. Unless we can raise the maximum price there is a limit where the minimum price should be fixed. While fixing the minimum price we have taken into consideration the transshipment cost also. But with the present maximum price the minimum price cannot be raised any more.....

***Maulavi ABUAL MAJID ZIAOSH SHAMS:** May I know, Madam, what is the maximum price of paddy ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: As a matter of fact, Madam, the maximum price is Rs. 6-14-0 at present, but our information is also that the mill-owners are purchasing even at the rate of Rs. 7 per maund. For the exported paddy we cannot charge more than that.

***Maulavi ABUAL MAJID ZIAOSH SHAMS:** What has the Central Government fixed, Sir ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Rupees 6-14-0 at present. It was formerly also. But we are trying to raise this. During the last conference which was held at Delhi last month on the 9th and 10th of August which I attended and in which I rather went out of my way in criticising the Central Government and without, I must admit, the permission of any body I had to say that so far as other foodstuffs were concerned, if Assam did not get her proper share, in that case Assam would be compelled to stop export of rice. But, Madam, people who were intelligent enough, understood that that was meaningless in the sense that we cannot stop export if we want to save our people. We have no other alternative but to export. What shall we do with our surplus ? If it is the desire of the hon. Members that just to punish other people or the Central Government, rice and paddy should be purchased by Government and allowed to get rotten, that is a different thing. But I do not think that any sensible person will advocate such a proposition. Therefore we have got no other alternative than to export—we may call it on humanitarian grounds, we may call it on the ground of saving our cultivators, whatever we may call it, we have got to export our surplus.

***Maulavi ABUAL MAJID ZIAOSH SHAMS:** What the is maximum price fixed for rice?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: So far as I remember it is Rs. 11-9 in case of *Aman* and Rs. 9-4 in case of *Buro* and *Aus*. The prices have been published in the Gazette and I can give accurate figures afterwards.

Now, Madam, formerly so far as Assam Valley is concerned rice and paddy were procured through an Agency, I mean the Steel Brothers. From all sections of the House there was a demand that they should go, and I am glad to say that from first of July they are not working as our Agents; Government have instead taken up direct procurement. So far as direct procurement is concerned, I should say that it is not yet up to our expectation. The difficulties were of

two kinds; first, when we stopped the export we could not purchase beyond the capacity of our godowns. Secondly, if we really want to help the poor cultivators we require sufficient number of purchasing centres which we have not been able to set up as yet. But we are quite alive to this fact and are trying to open new centres. Madam, this will take some time; we must see that while helping the cultivators we do not spend the money of those cultivators as well as of others by wasting rice and paddy stocks of our godowns. There must therefore be some outlet. As I have already explained, Madam, as we stopped export we had to stop our purchase also for some time, but that was not for long.

Now, Madam, I shall take up the question of wheat. Due to our unremitting pressure the Central Government was made to realise our difficulty so far as wheat and wheat products are concerned. We were not getting our full share, and even now we are not getting it. But after continued demands for several months the Central Government have now fixed our monthly quota at 2,000 tons, in addition and for the last three months we are getting 500 tons extra; that is, we are getting a total of 2,500 tons, the extra 500 tons being Australian flour, but I don't know how long this will continue. Now, there was a demand that some portion of flour and atta should go to the rural areas. I am glad to inform this Hon. House that we have taken steps to immediately double the quantity which used to be supplied in the rural areas before; I think effect will be given to this from the 1st of October next. We have abolished the system of State trading and agents have been selected for different areas. Now, there is no chance of losing any money from the Government exchequer. The time has come when one can coolly think whether it should remain any more with Government or should be left to the normal trade channel. We thought that time was quite ripe and there was no more necessity for State trading, because in the past it was found that Government had to incur heavy losses due to wastage, etc. The greatest difficulty which we experience in getting whole wheat here is that there is practically no milling facility in the Province. Therefore we are to depend on Calcutta for milling.

Now, Madam, as regards salt, the prices have been reduced by two pies per seer, and the question of lifting the control is under the serious consideration of Government. Government had a huge stock at their disposal, and as it was public money it is the duty of Government to see that the stock is distributed and consumed in time so that Government may not lose heavily on this account. That is why we are taking some time. There is another factor also. So long as the Bengal Government, from whose indent we get a portion of our salt, did not lift the control, we did not consider that it would be wise on our part to decontrol salt.

With regard to sugar, our annual requirement of sugar is 10,92,396 maunds on a population basis of 1,20,00,000. Now, what is our quota? It is 4,45,000 maunds at present. Some of my hon. Friends are under the impression that it is only due to the negligence of this Government that sugar is not imported into this Province in huge quantities. This is far from truth, Madam. The quota has been fixed by the Central Government; we tried to increase the quota last year and in all fairness I should say that the quota was increased last year, though by a small quantity.

It so happened that due to failure of sugarcane crop there was a cut of 13 per cent and consequently the increase which we got last year was practically of no avail. But one feature about which I should like to make mention is that ultimately our quota for last year was not reduced due to the increase about which I have already mentioned. We tried to supply sugar to the people of the Province at a uniform rate and in this connection I should like to inform the House that we are going to increase the quota of wheat products for the rural areas and that the sugar quota for the rural areas has already been

increased. Directions for these have been sent and effect will be given from the 1st October, 1946.

Next comes *gur*. A quota of 10,000 tons was allotted to this Province, and while the permits were about to be issued we got an intimation from the Central Government to the effect that no quota would be allotted to us. But as a result of our hard fight—which we had to carry on for *gur*—the Central Government had to grant us 5,000 tons. On receipt of this intimation from the Government of India we were about to issue permits again when a wire came from the Central Government increasing our quota up to 8,000 tons. After that what happened will be really amazing to the hon. Members to know of it. When we had issued permits and our permit-holders sent their men to the different places for importing *gur*, the exporting Provinces sent us telegrams changing the regions. Now, Madam, you will realise the difficulties of the Government and the poor traders of this Province who were placed entirely at the mercy of the exporting Provinces. Once the Central Government give us one quota and a few days after they change their mind and say that we would not get anything. This was the situation, Madam, in which this Government was placed. After a great deal of strenuous fight and correspondence with them the matter was settled and we were allowed to import 8,000 tons of *gur*. Originally the price of the *gur* was fixed at Rs. 7-8-0 but by the time we issued permits and our permit holders sent their men to different places for purchasing *gur*, the price rose from Rs. 7-8-0 to Rs. 11-8-0 and we had to tolerate all these. Now, Madam, I would request the hon. Members to say where was the fault of this Government.

Next comes the question of pulses. Last year we were allotted a quota of more than 35,000 tons, but due to the vagaries of the exporting Provinces it was not possible to import more than 15,000 tons. This year the benign Central Government have allotted a quota of about 13,000 tons for this Province. From a quota of more than 35,000 tons the quota was reduced to 13,000 tons. Our Officers were sent to Delhi; I went to Delhi personally and saw the Hon'ble Member-in-charge, went to the Officers from one room to another and explained our pitiable condition. I was told by them that the quantity would be increased, but up till now nothing has happened. Then, Madam, a Conference was held at Delhi about which I have already mentioned and in which I was also present. In that Conference I explained the pitiable condition of Assam and I was assured that they would consider our case sympathetically and I am glad to say that the Central Government has kept their promise and we have been allotted another quota of 2,500 tons. Sympathetic indeed! *(at this stage there were some interruptions and laughter from the Opposition Benches).*

Madam, I fail to understand what makes my Friends laugh. I will try to satisfy all the hon. Members to the best of my ability. Madam, you can take it from me that I am very serious and sincere when I take my stand here, because these are questions about which the hon. Members should very carefully think over and give their suggestions to Government. The Oppositionists may call me by names, may desire to hang me either inside or outside the Chamber, call me inefficient or anything as they please, but that will not solve the problems. Please ask them to try to follow me and if I am not expressive in any points, please enquire of me and I assure you that I shall try my best to satisfy them all to the best of my ability.

(A voice from the Opposition—It is simply a bluff.)

Of course so to a bluffer, Madam, if I am to bluff then what is the good of asking me to seriously consider this point or that point? Because I am in an advantageous position, so I shall give bluff, certainly not. I am not of that mettle. Let my friends in the opposite monopolise it. Madam, I should not take any advantage of the office I hold and mislead the House. That spirit is not in me.

Formerly we used to get our supply from Bihar, Orissa, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces. Not only our quota has been reduced but we have been asked to bring our quota from the far distant places than the places from where we used to get our previous quota, namely, Gwalior State, Bahawalpur State, Rajputana, Punjab, Nava, Faridkote, Central Provinces, etc. There are very few traders in the Province who had any previous connection with those States and places. Now the question is why the people should go to Rajputana if he can get their commodities at Orissa and Bihar for Assam. This adds to our difficulties. These facts are not known to my hon. Friends. So I am giving them these facts to show why it is taking so much time to bring the commodities into the Province. We issued permits to some of our traders to purchase Dal and they went to the United Provinces from where a quota was allotted. But the traders did not dare to purchase as the quality of the Dal there was not suitable. When this fact was brought to our notice we sent an officer to the United Provinces to help the traders. A question was raised there why their traders should not export the Dals to Assam. This meant that they wanted to give us no opportunity to check or select the quality of Dal meant for Assam. So whatever they suggested we were asked to accept, but we could not agree to this proposal. We cannot allow our traders to import Dal from the United Provinces without inspecting the stuffs before purchasing the same.

***Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY:** Madam, the Hon'ble Minister has already taken 45 minutes.

***Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR:** Madam, I think the Hon'ble Minister should take more time on this subject for the benefit of all concerned.

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Madam, I would like to hear the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition as to what his opinion is. Unless I am given opportunity how can I explain the situation?

***Maulavi Saiyid MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:** Madam, according to rule the Government gets 30 minutes, but when it was asked by the Hon'ble Speaker how long the Hon'ble Minister would take he replied that he would take 45 minutes only, as the subject was very important and as we all looked to him to get more details on this important matter. But if he would not take it amiss I may say that he has now taken very much time in replying to interruptions which, if he did not listen to, he could have finished his statement by this time.

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I am thankful to the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition. I shall try not to pay any heed to the unnecessary interruptions of the Opposition Members, but I would earnestly request the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition to control his party members.

Due to the postal strike and the threatened railway strikes as well as the communal riot at different places the movement of our food-stuffs, cloth and other articles has been greatly hindered. At the time when railwaymen threatened a strike the railways stopped booking for sometime. Then when that was over the postal strike began as a result of which documents in this connection could not be sent. People generally expected that the situation would come to normal in a short time, but ultimately the strike lasted for a long time. This strike considerably delayed matters. When that difficulty had been over the riots in Calcutta, Bombay and Ahmedabad began as a result of which the stocks that were available even in

Calcutta could not be moved so speedily as it could have been in the normal time, because the labourers were not available. These difficulties could not be removed by us though we are trying to expedite movement of the necessary commodities.

As regards gram, Madam, I may explain that only 1,000 tons were allotted to us this year. But up till now only 528 tons have been allowed from a particular place and we have already issued permits for the import. We do not know what will happen to the balance quota. Last year we got a quota of 2,000 tons, but this year it has been reduced to 1,000 tons. So we are in correspondence with the Central Government to make a further allotment to us and also to let us know what would happen to the rest of the quota region for which we have not been intimated as yet.

Now, Madam, I would like to come to the question of mustard oil. Last year the quota was 1,50,000 maunds, but this has been increased to 2,70,000 maunds, that is, 7,000 tons from the United Provinces and 3,000 tons from Rajputana.

Now, while dealing on this subject I shall bring before the House the treatment we received from the exporting Provinces. At the time of allotment of the oil, the price was Rs. 32 per maund but suddenly the price was raised to Rs. 36 per maund (*ex-mill* price). Though the United Provinces and the Punjab raised their price of this article they in return did not issue any permit to our traders for exporting.

There was a conference and the Central Government had to accept the price that was dictated by the United Provinces Government and the Punjab Government and the price has now been raised to Rs. 45-12-0 per maund. We found that we have no other alternative but to agree to this price. Our traders are now getting their supplies and in some places oil has already arrived and we expect that the rest will arrive gradually in other places soon. In this connection I may mention that 4 or 5 days back it was brought to my notice that there was a scarcity of mustard oil in Shillong. The arrangement that has been made at present is this—we shall bring up from Gauhati some quantity to meet emergencies here. Eighty tins arrived day before yesterday and we expect 170 tins more within a day or two.

Shillong was the only place where people were suffering for want of this essential foodstuff, but we have removed that difficulty. One of my Friends have suggested that we should try to procure the seeds which are available in our Province. Last Government took steps in the matter and it was found that the mill owners did not care to purchase from the Government stocks. Of course they have to purchase something when they experienced real difficulties, but some quantity became rotten, and Government had to suffer loss; the reason was that at that time they could get mustard seed from outside; the Mill Owners opined that imported mustard seeds yielded more oil than the indigenous seeds. Of course if they allege like this, I cannot vouchsafe for it. The previous Government tried this but they were not successful and they had to incur loss. If it is the desire of the hon. Members that in any case Government should purchase mustard seeds and it does not matter whether the mill owners use them or not or if anything is wasted, we should not care for them, certainly that is a different point which of course we cannot accept.

As regards adulteration, there is no denying the fact that mustard oil which we are getting at present is not pure mustard oil. Other Provinces instead of helping us has rather done definite mischief, specially one Province, *viz.*, Madras. A quota of 5,000 tons of ground nut oil was allotted for this Province. We sent three telegrams to let us know from which place we could procure the said ground nut oil. We were not given any answer. After a month we were told that their traders have already exported ground-nut oil, just to help black-marketeers here who are mixing this ground-nut oil for adulteration of mustard oil. We are trying to find out the importers and as soon as information is available, I will take

necessary steps. I informed the Deputy Commissioners concerned to seize the ground-nut oil so imported when it was brought to my notice that it was not a controlled commodity. An extraordinary gazette was published on that very day controlling the said commodity. In spite of this we have not been able to gather full facts as yet ; but I am pursuing it and a day will come when I shall be in a position to tell the hon. Friends how and why Madras Government sent it without giving us any information through their own traders to some of the traders in this Province without having any approval from us.

Now, as regards kerosene oil, I was sorry to hear from one of my hon. Friends that there has not been any improvement with regard to kerosene oil. This is far from truth, because so far as the rural population is concerned the quota has been increased by 50 per cent. Some of my hon. Friends said that 50 per cent. increase is not sufficient, but it should be made double. Government is seriously thinking whether we should keep this commodity under control any more and we should lift the ban. But as there is a danger to it, we are delaying ; I think we have come to such a position when we can really consider to lift the ban but unless we do it cautiously, the black-marketeers, profiteers and hoarders may take advantage of the situation and there might be again scarcity of this essential commodity ; we are not unmindful of this fact. But when we think of the past and also of the present how some of the traders are trying to cut the throats of their own kith and kin, we hesitate and ponder. We look thrice before we leap.

As regards corrugated iron sheets, the Central Government decontrolled this commodity. Some of my hon. Friends were very happy at that time ; they said that the right thing had been done and they would get according to their requirements. But it so happened that the Calcutta traders did not give anything to us. They hoarded them and those who could afford to give black-market prices were in a position to get them. This fact was brought to the notice of the Central Government and I am glad to say that the Central Government has agreed to give us a quota similar to the previous arrangement. They have fixed a quota for us which will come into this Province as a controlled commodity and they will be distributed on permit system.

So far as the permit question is concerned, only yesterday I have given certain direction. My suggestion is this that the Deputy Commissioners and the Subdivisional Officers will issue for individuals up to 5 bundles and for institutions, such as, schools and colleges, temples and mosques, 10 bundles, in consultation with the Liaison Committees where they exist and in other areas where the Liaison Committees do not exist they can issue by themselves. But if the requirement is in excess of 5 bundles and 10 bundles in cases of individuals and institutions respectively, in that case they should send their recommendation to the Government and Government will issue permit directly in such cases.

Now, I shall take up the question of cloth and yarn. These are two important things which I could not touch as yet. The present monthly quota is about 5,000 bales. From the 1st of June, the Central Government has reduced our quota by 10 per cent. and after that deduction the present quota is about 5,000 bales and each bale contains 1,500 yards.

Maulavi ABDUL HAMID : Reduced from when, Sir ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : From the first of June last.

It is an all-India question. This has happened because the mill owners wanted to have the maximum profit. Therefore they have taken recourse to manufacture some such kind of cloth which will give them more profit. For this reason the production has been reduced, but we are trying to increase our quota. I do not think, however, that there is any chance to get our quota increased

in the near future. On the other hand, it may so happen that the threatened strike in the mills may make our position worse. A change in the system of distribution in Bombay is unnecessarily delaying our procurement. The previous system has been changed. There was a body which used to allot cloth to different Provinces, but now the Central Textile Commissioner, is dealing with all these things in his office ; and as it is well known that when a new office starts—it might be due to the inefficiency of some of the new officers—difficulty arises and we are really feeling great difficulty in the procurement of our cloth. This fact has been brought to the notice of the Central Government and we have been promised that they would look into the matter very soon. Besides, if possible, I shall try to depute specially an officer from this Province who will go to Bombay for a short time to look into this matter. Of course, we have got an officer there who is giving us all information and trying his best to help our agents there.

Now, the quota which has already been purchased during the last few months could not be despatched due to transport difficulty. Moreover due to the postal strike documents, cheques, etc., could not be sent in time. The present riot in Bombay is hindering the despatch and I am afraid that unless the problem at Bombay is solved, we shall be in a very difficult situation over which of course we have got no control. Here also, at Calcutta we have got more than 1,600 bales. We could have easily brought them up in course of 4 or 5 days and arrangement was also made for this, but the same difficulty arose, I mean the labour difficulty. Of course, our procuring agents are trying their level best, and I hope, the bales which are lying at Calcutta will certainly reach the Province in course of 10 days or so, i.e., before the Pujas.

Madam, I was really sorry to note one thing, that is when one of my hon. Friends said that during the Id, people could not get cloth. But our direction was that just like the previous year the people should be given not only cloth but also other controlled commodities. Besides, there was another special direction this time, against stocking of cloth in large quantities. So far as sugar, *atta*, *maida* are concerned, a man can consume more *atta*, *maida* and sugar in a day, but he cannot consume more cloth in course of a day. So, there was no necessity for keeping excess stock of cloth by not issuing cloth at the time of religious festivals. From our experience we can say that huge stock was kept to meet emergency during the war period but most of the stock went bad due to bad storage and negligence on the part of the officers who were responsible for storage. In spite of all this, if any specific case is brought to my notice that there was cloth and it was not distributed to my Muhammadan brethren at the time of the Id and less quota was given than in the previous year, I can assure the hon. Members that I shall make an enquiry in the matter and shall take proper measures and I feel it my duty to make a personal enquiry in such cases.

Now, some of my hon. Friends have mentioned that we have changed the procurement policy. So far as cloth is concerned, it has been done with some motive. They may say so and they can say anything they like. But the real thing is this that we tried to give facilities to the traders of the Province as far as possible keeping in view the efficiency. That was the only motive and we have not turned out those who were previously in the field, but did not allot to them the full quota as their past records were not satisfactory and for one party the present Leader of the Opposition—the then Hon'ble Premier—had to hear many things from the public as he was let down. So, we have allotted to five different companies—three for the Assam Valley and two for the Surma Valley. Another point was raised.....

Maulavi ABDUL HAMID: Will the Hon'ble Minister mention the names of the companies ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Madam, in reply to a question, the names of these companies have been given. But if the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is really keen about them, I shall tell him when I speak next time and in the meantime I shall send for them.

From January to June standard cloth of 17,54,464 yards have been imported and non-standard cloth of 20,000 bales—each bale containing 1,500 yards.

Now, Madam, we find a perceptible improvement in the cloth situation, but as I have already stated, there has been a set back due to causes which I have already mentioned, *viz.*, postal strike, threatened railway strike and riot in Calcutta, Ahmedabad and Bombay. However, I can assure my hon. Friends that all that is possible will be done by this Government.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: The Hon'ble Minister has taken 1 hour 10 minutes.

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANNTH MOOKERJEE: The present position is that 1,500 bales are in transit from Calcutta and 1,622 bales are awaiting despatch from Calcutta.

Now, as regards cloth. On this question I will not take any more time of the hon. Members. I shall take up the last point, namely, the yarn. The present quota is 1,390 bales. Recently we have been given another quota of 50 bales, so it comes to 1,440 bales—each bale weighing 400 pounds. On the whole the position is satisfactory—so far as procurement is concerned. But so far as requirement is concerned it is not in the least satisfactory. As I have already mentioned, that I have got 50 bales of yarn extra which may be used for manufacturing cloth, and 105 bales of yarn extra for fishing net. I hope this increase will give a little relief to the fishermen community. Here also we are trying our best to increase the quota, but we have not been very much successful. They have given us something which is very much less in comparison to our requirement.

Now, there is another point on which I wish hon. Members will give me suggestions. The last allotment—the eighth allotment—of standard cloth will be over very soon. Whether we should consider to have more yarn in lieu of standard cloth for the entire quantity or for a portion of it we should get non-standard cloth—a time has come when we should seriously consider about this. When I have got the presence of the hon. Friends here, I shall be delighted to have their view points. The report is that many weavers from Bengal have come from the neighbouring subdivisions of the Province with improved type of looms and they have been manufacturing cloth and black-marketing it and sending it to Bengal. The report is that even yarn is being sent to Bengal where the price is 3 or 4 times more than in Assam. There is no denying the fact that black-marketing is going on and unless we get full co-operation from the people, especially from those who are morally responsible for the well-being of the people of the Province it is very difficult for any Government to make any improvement.

We have been blamed about the Liaison Committees. I will not take any more time. I shall deal with this when I give my final reply. Now, just to stop smuggling, Government have in some cases introduced a system, *viz.*, before one could get next allotment of yarn he must produce the manufactured cloth

from the previous allotment of the yarn. In some cases we have arranged that even the produce will be purchased by the Government. But if there is any other suggestion in this direction I will welcome it.

Madam, I must thank you, the Leader of the Opposition and my hon. Friends of the Opposition that they have given me an opportunity of touching most of the points that I had in mind so far as the general position is concerned. So far as the distribution question and some allegations are concerned I shall deal when I get an opportunity of giving my final reply. Now with this hope that I shall get constructive suggestions from my hon. Friends, I resume my seat. I shall meet all the charges made against us at the final stage.

***Maulavi ABDUL HAMID :** Madam, if I followed the Hon'ble Minister rightly, he said that he would deal with certain points in his final reply. I may point out to the Hon'ble Minister that final reply is meant for giving reply to the points that will arise in course of the debate. So he must finish now.

The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : I shall make it relevant. I shall put it in such a way that I will be relevant. If I am given another hour I can meet all the points even now.

Maulavi ABUAL MAJID ZIAOSH SHAMS : Madam, I have heard with attention—I must say with a good deal of patience, what the Hon'ble Minister has just now said. I must say, we have heard him with profit too. Now, Madam, things which have been urged here to-day, most important of them are food and textile products. So I must concern myself with those matters only.

Now, the question of food and textile products is a question which is bound up with the question of growing or producing them here or procuring them from outside. Then there are other factors, *viz.*, distribution and then efficient staff, and a desire for combating corruption and authorities are to be free from favouritism, that is to say, bias of party politics and the sordid instinct avarice in the matter of distribution; that is, they must not take any illegal gratification in any shape and so on and so forth and that there should be no cliquism in the matter of procurement or in the matter of appointing persons to procure these. These are some of the factors, Madam, which should guide us. If these are properly tackled, then I think the production of food and procurement thereof and of textile products and the distribution thereof could be very easily done. Now, Assam is a surplus Province so far as rice and paddy are concerned; but in spite of that, I think it is not due to any fault of Government that there was very great scarcity of rice in the Dhubri town, although there is rationing, during the first week of this month so much so that one Assistant Surgeon himself told me that one patient who lives in the paying ward of the Dhubri Hospital could not get one Poa of rice and that not a single rationing shop could give him rice because it was non-existent. This is due to the inefficiency of the administration. There must be some fault somewhere. If an enquiry is made it will be found that in spite of controlled price, the price of rice in the Dhubri town then went up to Rs.20 per maund. I think Goalpara district is a surplus district (*voices: no, Sir.*) Yes, Goalpara and Kamrup are surplus districts. Rice was selling there in black-markets at the rate of Rs.20 per maund.

*Speech not corrected.

I did not myself purchase at that rate but I heard it from my clerk, Shafuddin Ahmed. So the thing had come to such a pass. But later on the matter was brought to the notice of the Deputy Commissioner in the Liaison Committee which sat perhaps on the 6th. I was not myself present but others brought to the notice of the Deputy Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner after that had improved the situation to a great extent. On the 8th September last the rice had come to almost all the rationing shops of the town and now is selling at Rs. 13-2-0 for *Atap Bosi* rice. I myself purchased it. Now as I was saying, there must be something unsound. I do not blame the Government But Government should keep an eye over this thing.

It has been told that we must give constructive suggestions. Coming to the constructive suggestion I visualize before me the entire picture of India. Assam is administratively and politically bound up with the rest of India. It cannot pursue a policy of isolationism. Her self-interest as well as spirit of reciprocity in the matter of Dal, sugar and wheat products for which she depends on other Provinces, necessitates that she has got to give something from Assam. Also from humanitarian point of view Assam has to produce more rice and give something to other Provinces in India and even outside India. Now, the Hon'ble Minister also said something in that strain also. If that be a fact, it is for consideration whether Assam has utilized her opportunities to grow more food. It has not. It has failed to do that. Otherwise, how can we account for the vast tracts of waste lands and cultivable lands which are still lying uncultivated? I am reading from the figures taken from the Administrative Reports of the Government of Assam. Excluding the account of Goalpara and taking only Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar and North Lakhimpur I can say taking the figures of 1944-45, both of lands which are settled and of the lands which were cultivated, it gives the figure of about 14,44,000 and odd acres of land which although settled were not cultivated at all. Besides several lakhs of acres of land still remain unsettled and uncultivated, although cultivable. Then there are the grazing reserves which have been unnecessarily created only in paper just to oust the immigrants and to keep them away. If Assam has to take her role in the most humanitarian work of growing more food and giving help to the rest of India and keeping them contented, then she must throw open these lands and settle them with persons who can cultivate them. Assam is very backward in the matter of cultivation of pulses. But if any hon. Member goes to Dhubri, he will see that the immigrants there are growing almost all the pulses. So give them the opportunities here in Assam and you will get the much-needed pulses from them. But then we are following a policy of 'dog in the manger'. We are calling ourselves humanitarian but we are shutting the door cruelly against the people who are human beings from the neighbouring Province. We are crying *Jai Hind* for *Akhand Hindustan* but we do not allow our Muslim immigrants to come in Assam and grow these things here in Assam. So it is really a policy which is barren, which is unproductive, which is parochial and above all which is communal. So if you accept this constructive suggestion, then throw open your land. If any person after taking settlement of land is unable to cultivate it for 2 years then take away the land from him because he has no right to sleep over the land. (voices: Pakistan). Well, Pakistan, or no Pakistan, we are getting the foretaste of what *Akhand Hindustan* will be. *Akhand Hindustan* will be a place where you will try to crush the Muslims, where you will crush immigrants, where you will do away with the culture of the Muslims and where you will have everything to yourself. We cry in paper, we cry in platform, we send press note that we are part and parcel of India, but we follow a policy which is a negation of all these. We follow a policy which deprives the Muslims of other Provinces from getting any land here, a fact which is worse than the Pegging Act

of South Africa. So this is a constructive suggestion. I ask the Ministry to accept it.

Now, coming to the question of textile products which is very important, the Hon'ble Minister was just now saying that we issued instruction that before the Id people should have the same cloth as they got in the previous Id. Why the same cloth? War has ceased, they should get more and better. But they cannot get for the simple reason that the quota for the Dhubri subdivision has been fixed at 350 bales of which 30 bales for Dhubri town, 13 for Gauripur town, some go to Tailor Association and only 225 bales are distributed in the rural areas the population whereof is about 6 lakhs (*A voice*: but who looks to all these?). The Liaison Committee and the Deputy Commissioner as the Chairman under your instruction supervise all these. It is your creature. Now, in the Liaison Committee meeting which took place, say, about 15 days before the last Id, I was one of the members. Calculation was made that per head for every village per month was only $\frac{1}{2}$ yard of cloth available. This $\frac{1}{2}$ yard does not mean either Dhoti or Sari, it included everything, *i.e.*, Dhoti, Sari, shirting, all sorts of things taken together. So it comes to this that one person throughout the whole year gets 6 yards. It comes to this. Not even one Dhoti or a Sari throughout the year—it includes everything; that means not even one full Saree or one Dhoti is the lot of one person. If this is the position how can one be satisfied? A resolution was adopted in that meeting and that resolution must have been sent to the authorities here by this time and that was to increase the quota. So, things must be mended so far as textile products are concerned. I do not blame this Government so much because the quota is fixed by the Central Government, but the question is what attempts did this Government make since it took office in February last to increase our quota? If they have not done anything they must do so with as much energy, intelligence and earnestness as possible. I would like to make one suggestion in this connection. Of course the Government of Assam envisage the establishment of textile mills in Assam. How long should Assam remain dependent on Bombay, Ahmedabad and other parts of India, Madam? Therefore Government should encourage private people, by bounty or any other help, to establish mills in Assam. Then, Madam, there are lots of looms in the Province which are lying idle for want of yarn and people cannot bring more looms for the same reason. If all the looms are allowed to function properly our cloth problem can be relieved to some extent. But for that yarn is necessary and Government must explore all opportunities for procurement of yarn. If necessary, yarn can be procured from other countries, *viz.*, America, through the Central Government. America is the friend of British Government and after the war we do not get any supplies from Japan and England. So, America should be approached (*A voice*: Why not Russia?). Russia was our Ally, and there are some Members, who now sit in the *gaddi* of the Central Government, who looked for Russia's friendship. There is a socialistic group inside the Congress also.

Then, Madam, I should like to make another suggestion about the Vigilance Committees which are entrusted with the distribution of cloth among the villages. These Vigilance Committees are not working properly at least in some places. Instead of allowing these Vigilance Committees to elect their own Presidents and Secretaries, the Presidents and Secretaries are foisted on them. For smooth working of these committees it is meet and proper that Government should issue instructions to all Deputy Commissioners so that these Vigilance Committees elect their own Presidents and Secretaries; otherwise there cannot be smooth working. I know of a particular case where there is a deadlock because the President is not liked by the members, but still the Deputy Commissioner would not remove him.

With these few words, Madam, I resume my seat.

Mr. HARENDRA NATH SARMA: Madam, I take this opportunity to speak a few words on a matter which is of relevance to the discussion we are having to-day. At the outset, however, I would make it amply clear to all concerned that the idea that will underly my speech is not to censure the Government, nor to find fault with the Indian Tea Association in any way; at the same time my speech should not be taken as an indication of my support to my hon. Friend who has moved this Motion. The idea with which I would speak is to draw the attention of the Government to a very important matter which concerns very directly the interest of the tea estates which I have the honour to represent in this Hon'ble House.

Madam, sometime in 1943, if I remember correctly, the Assam Government entered into an arrangement with Messrs. Shaw Wallace and Company of Calcutta for the supply of foodstuffs to the Tea Industry in Assam. Under that arrangement, if my information be correct, a certain quota was allotted to Messrs. Shaw Wallace and Company for distribution to the Assam tea gardens including the tea estates which I represent. Under that scheme Messrs. Shaw Wallace and Company arranged for the distribution of the imported food-stuffs through certain channels and the persons who are being employed as their agents under the scheme are generally the European Managers of European owned gardens. They are called "Economic Correspondents". Generally speaking, these Economic Correspondents have been doing their duties quite efficiently to the satisfaction of the Industry; they would not make any differentiation between an Indian-owned and an English-owned garden. But there is one among them to my knowledge who deliberately makes that differentiation and certain of his recent activities have made us recollect the time-old and about-to-be-forgotten treatment meted out by the then European Managers to the Indian public.

Now, Madam, an incident has occurred very recently of which I have direct knowledge; one Mr. Thompson, the Economic Correspondent of the Margherita Area, has been entrusted with the supply of imported foodstuffs to the gardens situated within the Margherita Circle of the Assam Branch Indian Tea Association. But I have every reason to believe, Madam, that sometimes towards the end of the year 1945 he collected and purchased on his own account some Masur Dal, and got the same stocked at the godown of his garden *Kayah*. But towards the early part of 1946 the price of Masur Dal was reduced and he got frightened because he thought he would not be able to make any profit rather he would incur a loss on his personal account. Accordingly the Economic Correspondent insisted upon the Garden Manager of an estate under his circle to accept an unwanted quantity of Masur Dal even in excess of the garden requirement. The Manager nevertheless had to accept it because it was already sent to him and thereafter, a week later, he sent his bill calculated at a rate which was much higher than the market price prevailing on the date of its supply. The Manager in all fairness and with a view not to infringe the law prohibiting black-market practice wrote a letter to Mr. Thompson pointing out that there might have been a mistake in charging at the rate he did. At this Mr. Thompson got very much annoyed and replied to the Garden Manager to the effect that he noted the objection as to the price and also informed him that the name of his estate had been struck off from the list; or in other words, Mr. Thompson, although he did not do so in so many words, practically said:—"Look here, you, Indian Manager, since you dared to write me a letter challenging my price your name is struck off from the list and you will get no further supply of foodstuffs through me". The matter was referred to Messrs. Shaw Wallace and Company who at the first instance took a very sympathetic view and seemed to find fault with the Economic Correspondent, but subsequently sided with the Economic Correspondent and said

that although they did very much regret and sympathise with the hardship sustained by the garden concerned they could not, however, do anything in the matter to renew supply as they had no control over the actions of the Economic Correspondent.

Now, Madam, I would request the Government to make a thorough enquiry into the matter because the Indian Planters consider it very much insulting that only for questioning the price charged in the bill the European Manager should have treated the Indian Manager in the way he did and also to instruct Messrs. Shaw Wallace and Company that in future they should appoint such persons as their Economic Correspondents who would tolerate the Indian Manager's talking to them, writing to them and making other relevant enquiries.

With these words, Madam, I resume my seat.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD ABUL KASHEM: Madam, at the outset I would thank the Hon'ble Minister of Supply for the assurance which he has given that he will not bluff us as is usual with him.

Madam, to-day I have taken my stand only to discuss some matters specially dealing with some local grievances. I am also sorry that some of my hon. Friends criticised the Hon'ble Supply Minister for his incompetence, but I must certainly say that he is not incompetent but very competent in respect of excluding or driving out Muslim traders from the business. He has succeeded quite well in this task, because all the Muslim dealers have been removed from the list. I sent a telegram to him on the 5th May 1946 in order to get some redress from him and he verbally told me that he would enquire and see to it. But to my utter surprise I find that nothing has been done at all till this day. Madam, in the district where 51 per cent. of the population are Muslims, the Muslim dealers have been deliberately excluded from business on the plea that the Muslims are not basic dealers and in the face of all these they are not hesitating to issue new permits to the Hindus. This is the attitude of the present Supply Minister and he does not care for this.

Madam, as regards the formation of the Liaison Committee, I want to bring to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister of Supply the fact that the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, never gives me any opportunity to attend meetings of the Liaison Committee. The Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, sends me notice of the meeting generally on the day of holding the meeting and you can realise, Madam, that it is impossible for me to go to Dhubri from Mankachar — a distance of nearly 45 miles having no good communication — on the same day in order to attend the meeting. Again, a meeting of the Liaison Committee was held and I got the information only at 5 P. M. on the previous day of the meeting and it was not practicable to attend it. The Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara has been deliberately avoiding me in the meeting and I do not know the reason of his doing so.

Then, Madam, as for the formation of the Vigilance Committee I find that the Supply Secretary has issued a circular to the effect that there will be Liaison Committees and Vigilance Committees for distribution of controlled commodities and cloths and yarn. But to my utter surprise and in spite of my repeated protests and requests to the Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara the Vigilance Committee has not yet been formed. On the contrary he is insisting upon the formation of some kinds of Area Committees, members and office bearers of which have been appointed deliberately by him disregarding public opinion.

Madam, I come from a locality where 95 per cent. of the population are Muslims; I have come to the Assembly on the Muslim League Ticket securing

nearly 90 per cent. of the total vote cast in the election and still the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, does not like to have any suggestion from me. He acts only according to the dictates of the Congress people. If the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, is so much favourably disposed towards the Congress people, then how can the Muslims expect justice from him? Madam, inspite of our protests, we find that the Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara is showing all favour to the Congress people and practically he is carrying on an anti-League campaign in the matter of distributing controlled commodities, cloths and yarn. It is very difficult for us to understand whether the Congress people are the Deputy Commissioner or Mr. G. P. Jarman. If this be the attitude of the Deputy Commissioner then it is impossible on the part of any man of responsibility and self-respect to represent the Liaison Committee in order to help in the distribution of controlled commodities and cloths. Moreover, Madam, I represent all the Muslims in the Garo Hills as well as two thanas of the Dhubri subdivision.

The Hon'ble Minister did not like to include me as member of the Liaison Committee to look into the interest of the Muslims there although I represented it to the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Supply. The population of the Muslims there were 10,000 in the last census report. The figure comes now to about 15,000. All these Muslim people have not got their Id quota of cloth on proper basis, excepting in few localities. So I say this policy of Government is detrimental to the interests of the Muslim community.

As regards paddy, Madam, I want to bring to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister that it is not sold at the controlled rate in the Dhubri Subdivision. I think this fact has been stated by Maulavi Abual Majid Ziaosh Shams that there rice is selling at Rs. 20 per md. At a meeting of the public under the South Salmara thana a resolution was passed to the effect that the area was a deficit one and as such paddy was to be imported there for sale to the public at controlled rate and copies of the resolution were sent to the Hon'ble the Premier and the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge Supply to see that necessary action be taken to make available rice and paddy at the controlled rate. But there was no response from either of them. They did not take any step to direct their officers concerned to look to the grievances of the public.

In South Salmara, Damumara, Madarerchar, Katdanga, Manirchar, Hazirhat, Barabalu and some other villages have been eroded by the recent flood and the standing crop has been greatly damaged. People on those areas have been rendered homeless. Still, Madam, Government has not paid any heed to this. Not to speak of giving free clothes and food as a relief measure they have not been given the opportunity to buy their daily necessities of life at the controlled rates. The Hon'ble Minister of course wanted some suggestions from us so that he could improve the situation. But to speak frankly, a person of such a high communal feeling can in no way improve the position of supply matters. I, therefore, suggest that the Hon'ble Premier will kindly see that the interests of all communities are properly looked into and the Muslims are not neglected. With these few words, Madam, I conclude my speech.

Mr. E. W. B. KENNY: Madam, may I on behalf of the Tea Industry ask for more equitable distribution of cloth for labourers employed by them? I will admit that I do not have a signed and sealed affidavit to speak for my Indian associates but I feel certain that they will agree with all I say. I know only too well that the shortage of cloth is an all Indian shortage and not confined to Assam alone and I also know that those in the Province not employed in the Industry of Tea also have to go short but, we of the Tea Industry, who receive our quotas on the estate basis and are thus responsible for distributing them, suspect that we do not receive the yardage per head of population that is made available in towns.

Figures of yardage per head received and sold in 1945 in Tea districts in the Assam Valley vary from 1.24 in Golaghat to 10.82 in North Lakhimpur and averaging for all Circles in the Assam Bengal Indian Tea Association, 4 yards per head. A Sari or Dhoti of standard length measures 10 yards, so it is obvious from the figures already given that the expectation of each man or woman receiving a new body covering is not less than 2½ years. The Estates situated in the Dibrugarh Subdivision where Tea represents 42% of the population appear to have been through a very lean period recently as for the six months ending 30th June they only received .69 yards of cloth per head of population. I do not know the exact area in square yards of the fig leaf. But it would appear to me that these people are becoming Adam and Eveish in their existence.

A point of interest is, while there is so little cloth for distribution, the Transport Companies in the Province have had to put a restriction on the movements of cloth bales in some areas because Government Agents are slow in taking delivery and godowns are jammed with bales of cloth for which there is a known demand.

I conclude by saying that although the hon. Mover of this debate appears aggrieved that his constituents have to walk 10 to 16 miles to procure cloth, I can assure him that my labour forces would willingly perform the journey of 10 to 16 miles, if they knew they had the slightest chance of getting cloth at the end of it.

I am extremely sorry to hear from Mr. Sarma that an Indian Planter had been unfairly treated by one of my countrymen. The matter will be looked into. In the meantime I can assure him that this is an isolated case; the Economic Correspondent in the Borsola Circle of the Assam Bengal Indian Tea Association is an Indian and a very efficient officer too.

Mr. HARENDRA NATH SARMA: I am really thankful to my hon. Friend, Mr. Kenny, that he will make an enquiry in the matter and will set things right.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 2 P. M., on Friday the 13th September, 1946.

SHILLONG

The 9th November 1946.

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