

Proceedings of the Fourth Session of the First Assam Legislative
Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government
of India Act, 1935

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, on Saturday, the
26th February, 1938

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

(Starred question No.101 was called out, but no reply was given as the
questioner Srijut Mahi Chandra Bora was absent.)

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(to which answers were laid on the table)

Award of backward scholarships to the depressed class students

Babu BALARAM SIRCAR asked:

249 Will Government be pleased to state whether they propose to
award all the backward scholarships of Lower Primary, Middle Vernacular,
Middle English and High English schools, to the depressed class students ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI replied:

249.—The whole matter is engaging the attention of Government. The
scholarships hitherto classed as backward, however, have always covered
others besides the scheduled castes, e.g., the Tribal people of the plains, and
Government cannot accept the proposition suggested.

Number of judgment-debtors in Civil Jails in Assam

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA asked:

250. Will Government be pleased to state the number of judgment-
debtors in Civil Jails in Assam for the years 1936, 1937 and 1938 to the end
of January ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI replied:

250.—In 1936	...	...	...	78
" 1937	...	...	...	52
" 1938 upto end of January	...	...	...	1

Actions taken on resolutions passed at the meeting of the Scheduled and tribal members held at Shillong on 16th December 1937

Srijut RAMNATH DAS asked :

251. Will Government be pleased to state what actions are being taken over the resolutions passed in the meeting of the scheduled and tribal members which met on the 16th December last at Shillong ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI replied :

251.—The resolutions are under the consideration of Government.

Re indigenous Assamese system of Arithmetic and Mensuration

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR asked :

252. Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department aware that there is an indigenous Assamese system of Arithmetic and Mensuration generally known as *Khatheli Anka* which was in vogue in the Assam Valley before the advent of the British ?

253. Are Government aware that this system has been recognised by high Government officers of the Education Department to be highly interesting and as deserving serious research ?

254.(a) Do Government propose the desirability of preserving it from getting extinct ?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to take necessary steps for its preservation ?

255. Are Government aware that Srijut Dandi Ram Dutta, a Middle Vernacular School teacher of the Kamrup district, has done a good deal of research work in the subject and has published two books called "Kautuk" and "Kaitheli Anka" which deal on the above-mentioned system, and have elicited high opinions from several officers of the Education Department ?

256. Are Government aware that there still remains a large amount of research work to be done in this connection which necessitates ample time and leisure for a worker ?

257. Are Government aware that Srijut S. C. Goswami, Inspector of Schools, Assam Valley Division, was pleased to recommend in July last that a grant of Rs.500 should be sanctioned to enable the said Srijut Dandi Ram Dutta to devote exclusively for six months in carrying on research work on the subject ?

258. Do Government propose to sanction a decent grant to the said scholar and help him in completing the research work ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI replied :

252.—Yes, this system was brought to the notice of Government with the publication of the books called "Kautuk" and "Kaitheli Anka" compiled by Srijut Dandi Ram Dutta.

253.—Yes.

254.(a)—Yes.

(b)—Government have already taken steps to encourage its preservation by giving Srijut Dandi Ram Dutta, who has taken up research in this line, assistance in the following forms—

- (1) a lump grant of Rs.75 sanctioned by Hon'ble Minister, Education, from his discretionary allotment in 1931 ;
- (2) purchase of a number of copies of his works at a cost amounting to Rs. 34-6-0 for distribution to schools ;
- (3) approval of both his books as prize and library books.

The Assam Sahitya Sabha, Jorhat, also granted a sum of Rs.210 (*viz.*, Rs. 100 in 1929 and Rs. 110 in 1930).

255.—Yes.

256.—Government have no information except that Srijut Dandi Ram Dutta submitted a petition through the Inspector of Schools, Assam Valley Circle, for a grant for completion of his research work to the Director of Public Instruction.

257.—Yes, but for paucity of funds the question of financial assistance could not be considered by the Director of Public Instruction this year.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR : Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to sanction this sum of Rs.500 next year, to enable him to carry on the research work ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI : Yes, that matter will be sympathetically considered.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI replied :

258.—Government will see if they can do anything in the matter.

Re-establishment of school inspection circle at Kamalganj in South Sylhet

Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI asked :

259. (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to an allegation published in the weekly Bengali paper "Surma" in its issue of the 30th August 1937 to the effect that the school inspection circle at Kamalganj in the South Sylhet subdivision has been withdrawn ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to re-establish the said inspection circle in view of strong popular demand ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI replied :

259. (a)—Yes, if the hon. member is referring to the article published in the issue of the 13th *Baisak*, *i.e.*, 26th April 1937.

(b)—No.

Ali Amjad Middle English School in South Sylhet Subdivision

Maulavi Md. MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI asked :

260. Will Government please state—

(a) Whether Ali Amjad Middle English School in South Sylhet Subdivision is a recognised Middle English School ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to enquire whether the teachers of that school get their pay regularly every month ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI replied :

260.(a)—Yes.

(b)—Government have no reason to believe that the teachers do not get their pay regularly, and therefore see no reason to make an enquiry.

Grants made by Hon'ble Minister, Agriculture and Industries, from the discretionary allotment placed at his disposal for 1937-38

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY asked :

261. Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Agriculture and Industries be pleased to state—

- (a) The amount placed with him for discretionary grants and how it was utilised ?
 (b) The places which he visited during the last financial year and the measures he adopted for encouraging the improvement of agriculture and for the spread of industrial enterprises in those places ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI replied :

261. (a)—Rupees 2,500.

A list showing the amounts granted to individuals and institutions up to date, with purposes noted against each, is placed on the table.

List showing the names of the persons to whom or the institutions to which the Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture made grants from the discretionary allotment placed at his disposal during the year 1937-38

Serial No.	Name of grantee	Amount	Purpose
		Rs.	
1	Babu Nripendra Nath Dutt, a student of the Tokyo Higher Technological Institution, Japan.	100	For purchasing books and cloths.
2	Maulavi Abdul Hye, Muslim University, Aligarh.	100	In order to enable him to sit at the I. C. S. Examination.
3	Mukhtar Uddin Ahmed, a student of the Ripon College, Calcutta.	30	For paying his fees.
4	Gowainghat Junior Madrasa ...	100	For the maintenance of the Madrasa.
5	Maulavi Safir Ahmed Chaudhury, Assistant, Assam Secretariat.	35	For paying the fees of his nephew.
6	Nabakishore Dinanath Dutta Bayan Vidyalaya.	100	For purchasing a sewing machine for the Vidyalaya.
7	Karimganj Agricultural Farm Club,	25	For the maintenance of the Club.

Serial No.	Name of grantee	Amount	Purpose
		Rs.	
8	Srigauri High English School	25	For purchasing books for the school library.
9	Hifazat-i-Islam Society, Kulara, Sylhet.	50	For the maintenance of the Society.
10	Hailakandi Madrasa, Hailakandi.	50	For purchasing handlooms for the Madrasa.
11	Hailakandi Girls' Middle English School, Hailakandi.	50	For purchasing handlooms for the school.
12	Karimganj Town High Madrasa, Karimganj.	100	For the maintenance of the Madrasa.
13	Maulvi Bazar Aided Madrasa, Maulvi Bazar.	50	Ditto.
14	Kulara Madrasa, Sylhet ...	200	Ditto.
15	Md. Chaudhury Academy, Sylhet.	50	For the maintenance of Academy.
16	Khadim-UI-Islam Society, Hailakandi.	50	For the maintenance of the Society.
17	Sakti Ashram, Goalpara ...	50	For the maintenance of the Ashram.

(b)—Apparently the hon. member means the current financial year. The late Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture and Industries visited Sylhet, Silchar, Karimganj and Hailakandi. He visited various institutions in those places.

Junior Madrasa Classes of the Kakojan Middle English School

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI asked :

262. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether it is a fact that the house in which the Junior Madrasa classes of the Kakojan Middle English School used to sit was dismantled long ago ?
 (b) If so, what steps, if any, are being taken to rebuild the house ?
 (c) Whether the examination results of the school have been satisfactory ?
 (d) If so, why the Madrasa classes are still temporary ?
 (e) Whether the Inspector of Muhammadan Education inspected the school ?
 (f) If so, was he satisfied ?

263. (a) Is it a fact that these classes have not been made permanent in spite of repeated recommendations made by the Director of Public Instruction ?

(b) If so, what are the reasons ?

264. Do Government propose to make the classes permanent in the coming year ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI replied :

262. (a)—Yes.

(b)—This will engage consideration after the acquisition of land, which is in progress, is complete. Meanwhile the classes are being held in an empty portion of the hostel.

(c)—Yes.

(d)—The hon. member's attention is invited to the reply given to his question No.955 at the last budget session.

(e)—Yes.

(f)—The Assistant to the Director for Muhammadan Education reported that the Madrasa classes are fairly efficient.

263. (a)—The question has not been referred to Government since 1936.

(b)—Does not arise.

264.—The matter will be reconsidered when it is next referred to Government.

Number of officers of Assam Civil Service appointed to the listed posts

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked:

265. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The number of officers of the Assam Civil Service who either acted or were substantively appointed to the listed posts during the last ten years?

(b) The length of service after which each of them were so appointed?

(c) Whether they were selected by any special Board?

(d) If not, do Government propose to have any Committee to judge the past records of officers before they are so appointed?

266. Is it a fact that at present most of the selection are as a matter of fact determined by seniority?

267. Is it a fact that when an Assistant Commissioner acts in the listed posts, he gets Rs.1,000 whereas an Extra Assistant Commissioner officiating in such a post gets Rs.1,275 per month?

268. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The scale of the officers promoted to the listed posts?

(b) The percentage of senior officers of the Assam Civil Service who secured listed post as a matter of course during the last ten years?

(c) The minimum number of years, an Assistant Commissioner and an Extra Assistant Commissioner should put in before they secure listed posts?

269. (a) Are Government aware of the accelerated system of promotion in the Police Department?

(b) If so, what is the psychology behind such a move?

270. Do Government propose to introduce a similar method in other services?

271. Will Government please state what classes of Government servants get free quarters at present and on what considerations?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

265. (a) & (b)—A statement containing information in respect of officers substantively appointed to hold listed posts in the Indian Civil Service during the last ten years is placed on the Library table. As regards officiating incumbents, the information is not readily available but the quarterly Civil Lists of the last ten years may be referred to.

(c)—No.

(d)—No. Such a Committee is not considered necessary, since under the existing rules all substantive appointments to listed posts are made after consultation with the Federal Public Service Commission.

266.—No.

267.—The question is not understood. If, however, the expression "listed posts" means "superior posts in the Indian Civil Service", the hon. member may refer to rule 14(1) at page 13 and rule 16(2)(a) and (d) at pages 17 and 18 of the Manual of Appointments and Allowances of Gazetted and other officers in Assam (1936, reprint) a copy of which is laid on the Library table.

268. (a)—A reference may be made to the quarterly Civil Lists of the last ten years.

(b)—The question is not understood.

(c)—There is no prescribed minimum.

269. (a)—Yes.

(b)—The purpose underlying this system of promotion is to retain a reasonable standard of efficiency and mental and physical energy in Deputy Superintendents of Police promoted from the rank of Inspectors.

270.—This is already the case to some extent, as seniority is not the only consideration in making promotions.

271.—Columns 4 and 6 of the List of rent-free quarters or of quarters at reduced rent in Assam (Provincial Buildings), a copy of which is placed on the Library table, may be referred to. It has not been found possible within the short time available to gather information in respect of rent-free quarters constructed and maintained departmentally and of rent-free quarters in the occupation of petty and inferior Government servants.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Srijut MAHI CHANDRA BORA: Sir, I am sorry I was a bit late. May I request you to kindly allow me to have replies to my starred questions?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: When the starred questions standing in the name of the hon. member were called out the hon. member should have been present in his seat. As an exceptional case I shall allow these starred questions to be answered.

Boy Scouts and Girls Guide Movements

Srijut MAHI CHANDRA BORA asked:

*101. Will the Hon'ble Minister of Education please state—

(a) When the Boy Scouts and Girls' Guide movements were introduced as the side-activities of the Schools and Colleges in Assam?

(b) Whether Government has contributed any grants in furtherance of the movements?

(c) If so, the total amount granted up to March, 1937?

(d) The names of the principal functionaries of the movements in Assam?

*102. Is Government aware of the public feeling against the movements as they have been imbued with *pro-official* outlook and anti-nationalistic encies?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI replied :

101. (a)—The Boy Scouts movement was introduced in 1917 and the Girls Guides in 1922 or 1923.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—The following grants have been made to the Boys' Scout Association—

	Rs.
1932-33	500
1933-34	500
1934-35	750
1935-36	5,750
1936-37	5,000

A sum of Rs 500 has been given annually to the Girls' Guide Association since 1928-29.

(d)—The information is given below—

(1) Boys' Scout Movement—

(i) Chief-Scout—His Excellency the Governor.

(ii) Provincial Commissioner—Mr. G. A. Small.

(iii) Assistant Provincial Commissioners—Mr. S. C. Goswami.

„ S. C. Gupta.

„ A. Rahman.

„ S. C. Roy.

(iv) Honorary Secretary Mr. S. G. Nalle.

(v) Honorary Quarter Master—Mr. A. A. Lyngdoh.

(2) Girls' Guide Movement—

(i) Provincial Commissioner—Lady Reid.

(ii) Honorary Secretary—Miss Pennington.

102.—No. Government do not consider that there is any truth in the suggestion that these movements are *pro-official* or anti-nationalistic. The promise made by every Scout is to do his duty to his country. Efforts are now being made to amalgamate the Boy Scouts Association with the Seva Samiti and other Scout Associations, and an application for direct affiliation with the World Federation of Boy Scouts has been sent to the International Bureau.

Kumar AJIT NARAYAN DEV: Are Government aware that there is another movement called Bratachari which is growing rapidly?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI: Of that, I am not aware, Sir.

Srijut PURNA CHANDRA SARMA: Are Government aware of a similar organisation in the Congress in the Assam Valley?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI: What similar organisation?

Srijut PURNA CHANDRA SARMA: Similar Boys' Scout movement.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI: No.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Do the Boy Scouts take a vow to serve both the King and the country?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI: Yes, just as the hon. members of this House.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: If there is a conflict of interests between the King and the country, whom will they serve?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: That is a hypothetical question on the assumption of a contingency, about which we need not think now.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: Is allegiance to the Union Jack compulsory for the Boy Scouts?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI: No. Only allegiance to the King is compulsory as it is in the case of the hon. members of this House.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: What I want to know is whether the Boy Scouts have to pay allegiance to the Union Jack?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI: No, nothing of the kind.

Kumar AJIT NARAYAN DEV: Is it not a fact that they are to give a salute to the Union Jack?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI: Yes, they have to give a salute to the Union Jack as the Congress members have to give a salute to Tri-Coloured Flag.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: If such a complaint is brought before the Government, will the Government do away with the practice of paying allegiance to the Union Jack?

(No reply.)

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Is it compulsory for the students to join in this movement?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI: No.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Is there any bar to their saluting the National Flag?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI: No, nothing of the kind.

Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: Will Government issue instructions that the Boy Scouts should salute the Muslim League flag and the Congress flag?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI: No.

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: Is it a fact that the Boy Scouts are engaged in carrying luggages of high officials?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI: No.

Mr. W. FLEMING: Are the Government aware that at the recent visit of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to Assam the Boy Scouts turned out as a guard of honour?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI: No.

Mr. W. FLEMING: Will the Government take my word for it?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI: Yes.

Mr. W. FLEMING: Thank you, Sir.

Inclusion of Assamese as a principal language in the M. A. Course of the University

Srijut MAHI CHANDRA BORA asked :

*103. Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Education be pleased to state—

(a) The result of his correspondence with the Calcutta University for inclusion of Assamese as a principal language in the M. A. Indian language Course of the University?

(b) Whether it is a fact that the authorities of the Calcutta University are agreeable for inclusion of Assamese as a principal language in the said course of the University if only a sum of Rs. 100 a month is contributed by Government?

(c) If so, whether Government propose to contribute the amount?

(d) If not, why not?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

103. (a)—No reply has yet been received as regards inclusion of Assamese as a principal language in the Indian Vernacular M. A. course of the University, but from a recent reference from the Government of Bengal it appears that they are willing to include Assamese as a principal subject for the B. A. examination like Bengalee.

(b)—No. This Government enquired of the University whether it would be possible to make arrangements for the appointment of a Lecturer in Assamese for teaching Assamese to the under-graduate Assamese students in Calcutta and, if so, on what pay, and whether the University would agree to bear half the cost of salary. In reply the University pleaded inability to bear any part of the cost and suggested payment to the Lecturer at the rate of Rs. 100 per mensem.

(c)—The hon. member will see from page 81 of the Budget Memorandum that provision has been proposed for the appointment of a Lecturer in Assamese—Government hope that the University will now agree to include Assamese as a principal language for the M. A. degree.

(d)—Does not arise.

Re Report of the Line Enquiry Committee

Srijut HALADHAR BHUYAN: সভাপতি ডাক্তারী এটা অভ্যন্তরীণ কৰিবী আৰু গৱেষণাকীৰ্ত্তন বিষয়ত আপোনাৰ সিদ্ধান্ত বহুবা হৈছে। সেইটো হৈছে এই যে কালি আমি Line System Committee ৰ report খন পাইছোঁ। একো একোখন কপি প্রত্যেক মেম্বাৰক দিয়া হৈছে কিন্তু সেই report incomplete, প্রথমেই Line Committee এ issue কৰা questionnaire ৰ বিলাক ৰ যি reply পোৱা গৈছিল সেই বিলাক নাই আৰু পাছত Line Committee ৰে যি বিলাক সাক্ষী—বাদী লৈছিল সেই বিলাকো নাই। সেই evidence আৰু public opinion বিলাক নোহোৱা কৈ কোনো opinion দিয়া এই House ৰ মেম্বাৰ সকলৰ পক্ষে সম্ভৱ নহব। ইয়াত ঠাইত লিখিছে—

In Chapter II—General. It is stated in the report—

'In the course of our tours we recorded a mass of evidence, and a great deal more has been given in the replies to the Questionnaire from the different parts of the province which are published as appendices to this report.'

ইয়াত কিন্তু সেই বিলাক publish কৰা নাই। গতিকে মই এই বিষয়ে এটা সিদ্ধান্ত বিচাৰিছোঁ। Line Committee এই House ৰ resolution মতে গঠন কৰা হৈছিল সেই নিমিত্তে এই House এ এই reply আৰু evidence পাবলৈ entitled। তাৰ বাহিৰে এই House এ কোনো সিদ্ধান্ত কৰিব নোৱাৰে। এই নিমিত্তে এই বিষয়ে আপোনাৰ দৃষ্টি আকৰ্ষণ কৰিছোঁ।

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: যি বিলাক কাগজৰ কথা তেখেতে কৈছে সেই বিলাক ছপা কৰিবলৈ পঠোৱা হৈছে আৰু ছপা হলে মেম্বাৰ সকলৰ ওচৰত পঠোৱা হব।

Srijut HALADHAR BHUYAN: যদি মুঠামুঠি সময়ত দিয়া হয় তেনে হলে মেম্বাৰ সকলে সেই Report পঢ়িবলৈ সময় নেপাব আৰু এই Report, Part I বুলি একো লিখা নাই আৰু বাকীখিনি দিব বুলিও একো লিখা নাই।

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: সেই সকলো বিলাক পাব—চিন্তা কৰিবৰ কোনো কাৰণ নাই।

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: This report was not presented before the House, but I understand the report was circulated to hon. members through the Assembly Department. I also understand that the report will be formally placed before the House and that a discussion will be invited on it. It is really necessary that other parts of the report that have not yet been supplied to hon. members should be supplied, so that they may come to them equipped for the discussion. I understand that the Hon'ble Minister has given an assurance that other parts will be duly sent to hon. members and I think, the hon. member will be satisfied with the assurance given.

Srijut HALADHAR BHUYAN: যি বিলাক আমাক দিব সেই বিলাক Report ৰ Second Part বুলি দিব লাগিব।

Enquiry re procedure for transacting business of the 26th February 1938

Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL: Sir, may I interrupt before the first amendment is moved. I should ask that you would be good enough to explain exactly what will be the procedure to-day. Do I understand that at 3-30 the Provincial Excise debate will automatically come to an end and the whole grant will be put and that at 4 o'clock debate on Stamps will conclude and that discussion on Navigation, etc., will conclude at 4-45 and at 5-15 discussion on the other grants will come to an end.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Hours have been allotted to different grants. Now we are taking this grant just now and the discussion will continue for 2½ hours. At the end of the debate if any cut motion be under discussion and I find that there has been sufficient discussion on it, I shall put that cut motion to vote and after the vote on that cut motion I shall put the main motion.

Hon. members will remember that there is another item which will come up to-day, viz., presentation of the supplementary demand. I want that the Chief Minister should be given half an hour for presenting the supplementary demand here to-day. He cannot present it on the 28th as that day is going to be a holiday.

Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL: My point was to clarify the position if at the conclusion of the allotted time the whole discussion of that item of the Budget comes to an end automatically.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: If we take 10 minutes from the time allotted to the next motion we shall get 10 minutes for it from the time of the motion that will come after that and so on we shall proceed. No cut motion which has not been sufficiently discussed shall be put to the vote. Rigorous application of the rule of the guillotine on days other than the last day of the voting on budget demands will not be made.

Demands for grants

GRANT No.2

(8.—Provincial Excise)

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.4,20,800 be granted to defray certain charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head '8.—Provincial Excise'.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved is that a sum not exceeding Rs.4,20,800 be granted to defray certain charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head '8.—Provincial Excise'.

There is a cut motion in the name of Srijut Rajendra Nath Barua.

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not like to move my motion*.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.24,094 under Grant No.2, Major head—8.—Provincial Excise, Minor head—A.—Superintendence, Sub-head—1.—Pay of officers—detailed head—Commissioner of Excise, at page 40 of the Budget be refused, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.4,20,800 do stand reduced by Rs.24,094.

Sir, the sum and substance of this cut motion is that the post of the Commissioner of Excise seems to me wholly unnecessary and as for the pecuniary condition of a province like Assam I hold that it is an unnecessary burden. Sir, so long the excise appeals used to be heard by the Commissioner of Excise but since the establishment of the Revenue Tribunal, I am told that the appeals are heard by the Member of the Revenue Tribunal and as such very little duties are left for the Commissioner of Excise. Then again, Sir, it is known to the House that the policy of the Government is not to give any more licences for the Excise Department and open any shop and this being the policy of the Government to try to discontinue any more expansion of this department, the Commissioner drawing such a high salary has got practically nothing to do. Apart from this the work that still remains to be functioned by the Commissioner of Excise can be easily done by the Deputy Commissioners and Sub-Divisional Officers. There are also Superintendents of Excise who can be very well utilised for functioning the duties that are being done by the Commissioner of Excise. Other extra works which require to be done can be very easily performed by the Hon'ble Minister in-charge of Excise. Sir, as I have said previously, the sum and substance of tabling this motion is to rid the country of an unnecessary burden of expenditure and with this view in mind I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved is that the provision of Rs. 24,094, under grant No. 2—major head—8—Provincial Excise, minor head.—A.—Superintendence sub-head—1.—pay of Officers, detailed head—Commissioner of Excise at page 40 of the budget be refused, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 4,20,800 do stand reduced by Rs. 24,094.

*That the provision of Rs.47,824 under Grant No.2, Major head—8.—Provincial Excise, Minor head A.—Superintendence (total) at page 40 of the budget, be refused *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.4,20,800 do stand reduced by Rs.47,284.

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: (The member began to speak in Assamese.)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: No, I now call upon the hon. member to speak in English.

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: Sir, yesterday I was allowed to speak in Assamese.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Of course the hon. member was allowed to speak in Assamese yesterday; but I can call upon any hon member to speak in English when I know him to be proficient in that language. (*Hear! hear!*)

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the motion moved by my hon. friend Maulavi Abdur Rahman has my full support. An identical motion stands in my name but this motion does not want to deduct the whole amount provided for the Excise Commissioner and his staff. This is a small motion and it relates only to the post of the Commissioner of Excise. Sir, at the outset, I must say that the policy that has been carried on by this Government so far as the liquor shops and country spirits are concerned is not at all satisfactory. We find from the figures of 1935-36 to 1938-39 that every year there is an increase of revenue by about two lakhs. This shows that the excise policy so far as the country spirit is concerned is to increase the revenue and to open out more shops in the tea-garden areas and also in the villages. This policy of opening out new excise shops is most derogatory as we find that many provinces of India at present, have adopted the policy of prohibition and that even most satisfactorily. So far as the post of the Commissioner of Excise is concerned, I must say that he has very little work to do. With the inauguration of the Revenue Tribunal, second appeals which used to be heard by the Commissioner of Excise can now be heard by the Revenue Tribunal as it has, we understand, very little work to do. The superintendence can be relegated to the Deputy Commissioner, Subdivisional Officers, Superintendents of Excise, Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors of Excise. So the post of the Excise Commissioner is a more luxury than a necessity. We must say that this post should soon be abolished and then there will be a saving of about Rs. 24,000, for the purpose of eradicating the opium habit from our down trodden Assamese people by introduction of Modinus treatment. We understand that this treatment cost only about Rs. 8 per head. So if this sum is saved, a lot of people who are addicted to this opium habit, will be saved from their untold misery. So, I say Sir, that this amount should be reduced and the post of the Commissioner of Excise should be abolished. With these few words I support the motion whole-heartedly.

Mr. W. FLEMING: Sir, the mover of this motion treated the matter entirely as one of retrenchment. The hon. member who has just now spoken has devoted himself first of all to principle and then to retrenchment. But Sir, the cut is definitely and specifically the emolument of the Excise Commissioner. The motion is, therefore, really one of retrenchment and I suggest that it should be referred to the Retrenchment Committee where the opposition and the cross benches are well represented, the opposition indeed ably represented. I should say that Government will quite certainly be ready to take the verdict of the Retrenchment Committee where the subject will be debated on its real merit. It is a question of retrenchment and economy as has been said by the mover and it is therefore, I submit, a question for the Retrenchment Committee to decide and not for decision here in a short debate.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Sir, this motion, I think, can form part of another motion—No. 26—which stands in the name of Srijut Mahi Chandra Bora, which intends to refuse the total provision. It will be more advantageous if this motion is allowed to form part of No. 26.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: My ruling is that the cut motions on the whole grant should be taken up last after the other cut motions which have been tabled on items of expenditure according to value have been discussed—the highest coming up first and then the next highest and so on.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Sir, this particular motion on the question of abolition of the post of the Excise Commissioner has come up before this House many times. I think many years ago this post was kept in abeyance and the duties of the Excise Commissioner were entrusted to the Commissioners of Divisions. So far as I understand this led to serious slackness, in the supervision over excise matters and the post of the Commissioner of Excise was revived—if I remember aright—in 1928. Since then the Commissioner of Excise has been functioning. Of course, as a measure of retrenchment and economy many things have to be considered and also whether this post can be abolished without impairing the efficiency of the department itself. Sir, it is a well known fact that with the programme of prohibition there must be more and more supervision and in that view of the matter I think it will not be advisable to abolish the post of the Excise Commissioner. It has been said by some hon. members that the work can be distributed among the District Officers and Subdivisional Officers. But I am afraid, the hands of the district officers are already full and also when the work of the Rural Development scheme, as of late, has been entrusted to them. So far as my district is concerned, I am aware that the District Officer has no time to devote to this extra work. So, this is a matter, Sir, which cannot be discussed within the limited space of time on the floor of this House. This matter has, I understand, been already taken up by the Retrenchment and Resource Committee. I think, therefore, that it will be better on our part to leave this matter to the Retrenchment Committee instead of disposing of it within a short time. In this view of the matter, I am opposed to this motion.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Sir, I rise to support the motion on another ground. My idea is that all the posts of the Heads of Departments should be eliminated. (*Laughter*). Because, now-a-days our Ministers are interfering with their duties even in minutest details and practically their scope of duties has been limited to the clerical work only. Even in matters of internal administration, we understand, the Hon'ble Ministers interfere for reasons known to themselves and they are not giving free hand to them in the execution of their work as they ought to have given to the Heads of Departments.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: Are the Heads responsible for the work of their subordinates?

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Sir, the Heads are not responsible for the work of their subordinates, but if the Hon'ble Ministers interfere in the work of the Heads of Department, it becomes impossible for them to discharge their duties consistently with their responsibilities. It is for this reason that I suggest that the post of the Excise Commissioner should be abolished. With these words I support the motion.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am in full sympathy with hon. friend Maulavi Abdur Rahman (*Hear! hear!*) but whether we are to abolish the post just now

or not that is to be decided (*Laughter*). The question of abolition of the Excise Department is not under discussion now. If the Department is abolished, I think we won't require any Excise Commissioner and we will do away with many of the officers of that Department. I do not say all officers of the Department, because we may at that time require the service of some officer to control smuggling. (*Hear! hear!*). If this Department is not abolished, then it is to be decided whether we require an officer to control the affairs of the Department. Sir, Mr. Fleming and Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman have referred to the Retrenchment Committee. I think the House has already committed to the policy of retrenchment and accordingly Government have appointed a Retrenchment Committee and the matter is being considered by that Committee. Until and unless the minutes of Retrenchment Committee are before us, it will not be wise on our part to accept this motion. As for the proposal of my hon. friend Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya to cut down all Heads of Departments, I am thankful to him that he has not proposed to cut down the Head of this Hon'ble House.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: Sir, some of the hon. members have said that this matter is being discussed in the Retrenchment Committee and the question of abolition of the post of the Excise Commissioner should be left to them. But, Sir, I beg to say that all the time since the last Puja Holidays the Resources and Retrenchment Committee have not been sitting and we do not know when that Committee is going to finish their work.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Where is the time to sit?

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: So, the sooner we decide the matter the better for all.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: The fault is not with the Government.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: Some of my hon. friends say that if we decide the matter here in this House, it will be a summary decision. May I ask, Sir, who will decide the matter in the Retrenchment Committee? Certainly it will be decided by a smaller number of members of this House. I think the post of the Excise Commissioner is nothing but a luxury and I fully support my hon. friend Srijut Rajendra Nath Barua when he said that the duties of the Excise Commissioner can very easily be done by the Deputy Commissioners and the Subdivisional Officers. So, Sir, I support this motion.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to speak a word on this question. As the question of retrenchment is going on in the Retrenchment Committee, and some hon. members have spoken that it should be considered by that Committee, let it be postponed for the time being and considered there. (*Hear! hear!*) There is only one thing I should like to say, and that is that the debate is quite welcome, and the opinions of the hon. members of this House, before they come to any decision, should be sent to the Retrenchment Committee for their final decision. As for my personal opinion I think that the matter should be decided by the Retrenchment Committee.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to say a few words on this motion for cutting down the Head of the Excise Department. The policy of decentralisation that has been urged is possible only in the Native States like that of the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Gaekwar of Baroda. (Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee: Big names!) You will hear bigger things still. It would be like leaving the Thanas in charge of

constables, leaving the entire province in charge of District Officers, and leaving the entire Excise Department in charge of certain subordinate officials. If there is a Department, there should be an Excise Commissioner also. Without the Head a department cannot exist. In this connection a reference has been made by some hon. members to the Retrenchment and Resources Committee. I for myself do not see any reason why this opportunity is taken for cutting down this sum of Rs. 24,094 and censuring the Government by abolishing the post of the Commissioner.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: This is not a censure motion; it is an economy cut.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: I stand corrected. The decision of that Committee will come before this House for a full dress debate and we shall then see whether this post can be at all curtailed.

With these few words I beg to oppose the motion.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to oppose this motion only on one ground. (*Hear! hear!*) I do not want to say that the Commissioner's post is absolutely necessary or is a luxury. I am informed that some members of the Retrenchment Committee are of opinion that this work can be performed by the Director of Land Records in addition to his own duties, but without the decision of the Retrenchment Committee I am not prepared to say.....

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Who told you?

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: I am not prepared to disclose any name. Unless we receive the report of the Retrenchment Committee I am not prepared to discuss or reject this demand.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, May I hear the Hon'ble Minister in charge?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member will hear him in time.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to oppose this motion. I oppose it because to cut down the post of Excise Commissioner will mean letting loose the Excise cattle without a cowherd. (*Hear! hear!*)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as the Retrenchment Committee has been referred to by almost all the speakers, I think it is my duty as President of that Committee to let the House know at what stage the consideration of this matter is. As my hon. friend Mr. Fleming has already pointed out all the different groups are well represented on that Committee. The group of my learned friends opposite is represented on the Committee by the learned leader and deputy leader and also by no less a personage than my friend Srijut Debeswar Sarmah. Unfortunately in our first session, on account of the illness of his daughters, the learned leader of the group could not attend; the party to which the hon. mover of the cut belongs, is represented by Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mahmud Ali, and the party on the front bench in my right hand corner is represented by Mr. Mookerjee. All these gentlemen will bear me out when I say that we brought up the Director of Land Records as a witness in order to enlighten us whether it would be possible for him to take on the duties of Excise Commissioner in addition to his own. We have his evidence, that most probably in his daily routine he would be able to find about 1½ or 2 hours, if that would satisfy the requirements of the Excise Department. We have yet to bring up the Excise Commissioner about the extent of his work. In this connection we must remember that the Commissioner of Excise does not function as Commissioner of Excise only, he

has other duties to perform also, for instance he is also Registrar of Joint Stock Companies. I would request the House that as the matter has already been engaging the attention of the Retrenchment Committee where the matter is being examined very thoroughly as my hon. friends will certify.....

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Quite so.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It is not proper to make an economy cut like this by a discussion which is limited to 5 minutes for ordinary members and 7 minutes for the mover and the Government reply. The proper forum for this purpose of economy is the Retrenchment Committee, as pointed out by several members of the House. It is not that the verdict or the decision of the Committee will be final, because its report will come up before the House for final decision, and in this matter both the Houses are represented on the Retrenchment Committee.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: In view of the assurance given by the Hon'ble Chief Minister that the matter will be duly considered in the Retrenchment Committee, and also that this question is already engaging their attention, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

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

Maulavi ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURI: On a point of information, Sir. I think two hours have been allowed for the discussion of the Excise demand?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Two and a half hours.

Maulavi ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURI: May I know from what time it begins?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: From 11-15 and it will be continued up to 2-45 p.m.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 24,094 under Grant No. 2, Major head—8.—Provincial Excise, Minor head—A—Superintendence, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total), at page 40 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 4,20,300 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, this motion has been tabled to criticise the Excise policy pursued by the Government. This is a subject which has been much discussed and thrashed out in the press and on the platform, as well as on the floor of this House.

So naturally one does not feel very much inclined to repeat the stale arguments. But all the same these weighty arguments may be permitted repetition. Briefly stated the policy of the Government in the past up-till now has been to squeeze out revenue out of the drug-addicts, to get as much money as it is possible by selling those poisonous drugs to the people. At the same time no effort seems to have been made to rescue these poor victims from the drug evil; nothing has been done to redeem them from their distressing condition and nothing has been done for their uplift from stagnation and degradation. Most of us have every day experience of the opium eaters of Assam and we all see that they are going poor and poorer every day. Many of them have to live upon begging. Even then if they get a couple of seers of rice by begging they sell the rice and with the major portion of the sale proceeds they go and purchase opium. Just for the matter of sweetening their taste if possible they buy one pice worth of *gur* or sugar. It can easily be gathered how this poison has made the addict

inhuman and hard-hearted from one small incident. Those of us who have experience of this cannot but fully appreciate the position. It may be a tiny affair but the experience I shall mention will indicate the brutality of the heart of the addicts. Sir, I said that he buys a pice worth of *gur* or sugar to sweeten his taste. But when his child comes near and hankers for a little of that sugar this addict although the child is his own is so hard-hearted that he would deprive that young creature of a bit of that sugar and he will himself lick a little of the opium and then lick a little of the *gur* for taste. Sir, his wife and children cannot have clothes or food but the opium victim will have opium all the same. When the Reverend Gentleman was in charge of the portfolio last year, we fondly hoped that his Christian Missionary zeal and eagerness would come to the rescue of these poor addicts and ameliorate their condition to a considerable extent. But unfortunately for the people of Assam, that zeal vanished within the wheel of the Government and they preferred the money and the power of the position to the virtue. This year the subject has been transferred to the hands of a learned Maulavi Sahib and let us hope for the rescue of the addicts from their deplorable and degrading condition in the hands of this pious Moslem.

Srijut BIDESHI PAN TANTI: (On rising to speak).

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order. The motion that has been moved is to criticise the policy of the Government of Assam in connection with Excise Department and its policy. There are identical motions standing in the name of other hon. members. As for instance there is the motion No. 5 to criticise the present Excise policy of Government.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: My motion is to criticise the Excise Department also.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then there is motion No. 7 which I think is the same. But there are also motions which have been tabled to discuss some points which really come under discussion in discussing the question of policy. And I do not know whether hon. members will find it convenient to discuss those points also when this motion is under consideration and without moving their own motions. In that case, I shall be glad to allow these Members to take part in this debate and to press their points because these are really points which come under consideration in this motion in which the policy is to be criticised. I may point out motion No. 6, that is also a point which may come in in a discussion of the question of policy. Then 7, then 9, 11, 12.....

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No. 8 also.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Yes, No. 8 is also identical. Then 13, then 19. These are really points which may very well be discussed in a discussion in which the policy is to be criticised.

Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: We have as a matter of fact, Sir, decided that so far as this Party is concerned the motion in the name of Srijut Debeswar Sarma will only be moved and the other members who have tabled the other motions will speak in support and answer points that may be raised in the course of discussions. There is only the motion of Mr. Mookerjee but it is for him to do what he likes.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: That is a different motion. It is an economic cut and is different.

Srijut BIDESHI PAN TANTI: সভাপতি মহাশয়, মেৰা বন্ধু দেবেশ্বৰ শৰ্মা মহাশয় যো প্ৰস্তাব কিয়ে হো উচবাত যো পূৰা সমৰ্থন কৰতা হোঁ। মহাশয়গণ ময় হাজাৰো চা বাগানমে কাম কৰণে ওয়ালা শ্ৰমিক লোগওকো প্ৰতিনিধি হো। ইনলিয়ে মেৰা কৰ্তব্য হের উন গৰিব ভাই লোগওকো দুখ য়াহা পেশ কৰ। বাগানমে কেনটিন দোকান খলকর মঞ্জুর ভাই লোগওকা বহত চা অনিষ্ট কিয়া গিয়া হো। যবছে বাগানমে কেনটিন খোলাগিয়া তবছে হরেক ভরফছে মেৰা গৰিব ভাই লোক মররহা হেম। কিউকি সরকারী চাৰাপ, হাড়িয়া চাৰাপসে বহত ছা নিশায়ুক্ত হয় আৰু দামভী বহত জাদা হয়। সরকারী সৰাব পিনেকে বজেছে মঞ্জুর লোক বেশী পাগলা হতেছে। মেৰা নিজ আকছে সরকারী সৰাব পি কৰ কৰ আদমী মরনেকো দেখা। লেকিন হাড়িয়া পিকর কৈকো মরণে নেহি দেখা হোঁ। মহাশয়, ময়নে এতনা নিবেদন কৰকে ইচ প্ৰস্তাব সমৰ্থন কৰতা হোঁ।

Srijut BENODE KUMAR J. SARWAN: I beg to support the views of my hon. friends Srijut Tanti and Debeswar Sarma. The policy which is universally held to be correct is the eradication of this vice and curse which our people are suffering from. Though it may be a good policy to have total abolition as our aim is, I have no doubt the time will come when our province will be able to get out entirely from this curse. As long as this curse exists amidst us we will not progress in our society and we are not progressing in our economic conditions. My idea frankly is this and I would like to tell the Members of the House here about it. My idea is that our aim as regards total prohibition can be achieved by gradual steps (*Hear! hear!*). So I suggest that we must keep a programme for three years within which to bring about our aim. In the first year you can have half the shops, in the second year one-fourth and in the third year you may have complete abolition and that way we can have our idea fulfilled. That is the way by which my aim for total abolition is to be realised. Though I cannot support my hon. friend in every way, yet I think they and I would be willing to adopt this policy which would serve our purpose, that is to say, to wipe out this bad habit. (*Hear! hear!*)

Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL: Mr. Speaker, Sir. I think perhaps it would be just as well that we should be candid and honest with ourselves and clarify the ground we are now discussing.

If we say that we are anxious to induce temperance in this Province, not only with regard to opium and *ganja*, but also respecting alcohol, I think we are all of one mind. (*Hear! hear!*) Surely no society which claims to be civilized can look upon excesses with equanimity. What we want to do is to face the situation that a large number of the people of the Province are addicts to opium and *ganja*, and also by heredity or habit, the use of alcohol. It is no use to blink the fact that temperance and prohibition are not the same thing.

Who, for instance, would believe that any one, say, in a tea garden wants to encourage the consumption of alcohol in excess? What does it mean? Excess of alcohol means less ability to work, loss of time, and quarrels of a domestic or public character, all of which go to make for inefficiency in the work, whatever it is, whether in tea or any other employment. What employer would for one moment consider an increase in the consumption of alcohol with these results? What we are not facing is the

fact that these habits are with us, and that merely closing the opium shops and the places where alcohol is consumed does not provide the remedy we would like.

Take the question of opium. We would all like to see the opium habit wiped out. We all believe that this is a major evil, which should be eradicated. The mover of this Motion in his opening remarks admits that addicts of opium will go to any length in order to procure it. Can he believe, therefore, that while smuggled opium is available we are going to eliminate this habit? Let us recognise that so far as the older addicts are concerned, we can regulate their ration and allow them to consume it until they die. When that generation has passed, we can hope the habit will pass with it.

Let us go back to the alcohol question. Ten or eleven years ago it was my privilege to preside over a Local Board Committee set up by the Dibrugarh Local Board to investigate the question of opening new liquor shops in that area. The report is now somewhere in the dusty archives of Government. We arrived at the conclusion that owing to the distance that these shops were from the consumers of alcohol, they had to travel 5, 7 and sometimes 10 miles to procure their liquor, which meant making a day of it. A man who goes 10 miles to obtain his liquor is not content to have a drink and come away. He has several drinks and procures liquor also to take home with him. In a word, he makes a complete job of his weakness.

On the other hand, we have found that where Tea Garden canteens have been opened, in spite of the criticism of our friends on the other side—and they may take it from me—this is a real temperance movement. (*Laughter from Congress benches.*) My hon. friends are laughing, but that is our experience, and I am talking of temperance and not of prohibition. We find that these canteens make for less drunkenness and we are the best judges. The reason is not far to seek. If a man wants a drop of toddy, he goes to the canteen, gets it and goes back home. The hours are regulated and the consumption is limited. No one wants drunkenness on a Garden, yet where there are no canteens and people have to go to a distance to the liquor shops, we know that on the Monday following monthly pay, where there are no canteens, we may as well have a holiday.

So, Sir, we would like to separate the question of temperance from total prohibition, for they do not stand on the same footing. We, more than any one else, are advocating real temperance.

Now I come for a moment to this question of prohibition. As a platform subject it affords fine opportunities for speeches. But face the facts. Make prohibition operative in any area you like and how are you going to make it effectual? How are you going to stop private brewing and distillation? These things are with us and are easily and regularly carried on. If you introduce prohibition, you are faced with the necessity for enforcing it, and it will prove costly even if it is at all possible, which we doubt. I can assure you, Sir, if you are anxious to succeed in this movement, you must start at the other end. You must begin with the children in the schools. You must harness public opinion, and in my view, in that way and that way only can you hope to succeed.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. members who have tabled motions may discuss the particular points they want to discuss.

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: Sir, I have got three motions which, though not identical, all aim at criticism of the Government policy in one way or the other.

Sir, I beg to refer to the remarks of the Hon'ble Chief Minister which he made in his budget speech and which I will read for the convenience of the House. It is stated as follows:—

“From April next the Ministry proposes to cancel the passes of consumers below the age of 50 in the plains district. So far as the partially excluded areas are concerned the Ministry propose to achieve the same end in five years' time, and from the next financial year a reduction of 25 per cent. of the original rations of the consumer will be made”.

Sir, this statement of the Hon'ble Chief Minister gives rise to some suspicion in our minds. Whereas we find in the plains areas that the passes of the consumers who happen to be below the age of 50 will be cancelled but, Sir, in the hills areas the same policy is not adopted. And he wants to say that the object will be achieved there within five years by reduction of 25 per cent. of the ration annually. Sir, from my experience of the Mikir Hills areas I find that there are a lot of addicts of tender age and if the same policy of cancelling passes in the plains areas be followed in the hills areas also, a great lot of people who are below the age of 50 years will have no passes. So we find that this idea.....

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Does the hon. member mean to say that in the Mikir Hills the same policy of 10 per cent. cut is followed as in the plains district?

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: We are confined to the proposition which has been made by the Hon'ble Chief Minister that in the hills areas there will be a 25 per cent. reduction of opium. Of course that 10 per cent. is prevalent in all places as we understand.

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: I thought the hon. member said that the rations of consumers in the Mikir Hills were reduced subject to the cut of 10 per cent. Is that what he said?

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: What I said is that the same policy should be adopted both in the plains as well as hills areas. As our experience goes the evil of opium habit in the hills areas is confined to a large number of people of tender age and therefore the policy of cancelling passes of those under 50 years of age should be adhered to in those areas also. The statement of the Hon'ble Chief Minister gives us the suspicion that this is only a method of keeping the same level of increased revenue. So, I say, that this differential treatment should not be adopted and the same policy should be adopted in all areas whether plains or hills.

Next coming to the question of bribery and corruption in the Excise Department, we find from our experience that the Excise Department staff in most of the cases are as a matter of fact apt to these corruptions. A resolution from the Congress Bench was tabled for the formation of a committee to enquire into bribery and corruption in the Government Departments, but unfortunately that resolution was not allowed. Sir, even a peon of the Excise Department whose regular income is about Rs. 15 or Rs. 20 a month has an income of about Rs. 100. This corruption even goes to the excise peon not to speak of high officials. We find that the whole department as a matter of fact is corrupted from top to bottom. Of course there might be some good people, but generally speaking, the whole department is full of corruption and if some sort of committee or some detectives are appointed we are confident that these corruptions will be brought to light.

Regarding other matters my predecessors have fully dealt with them and I need not repeat them again. But I could not possibly see eye to eye with Mr. Hockenhull that the canteen shop opened in the tea garden is a check to the drinking habit of the labourers.

Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL: Check to excessiveness.

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: These canteen shops have been opened in the tea gardens only to keep the labour forces in the garden.

Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL: That is nonsense.

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: You may call it 'nonsense' or anything you like, but it is a fact.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: What about your garden?

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: What about Doloujan?

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: These canteen shops have been opened in the gardens for the improvement of the tea plantations with the object of checking the labourers from going outside the garden.

Sir, there are various defects in the department as I have stated in my budget speech. Now I will urge upon the Government that the present departmental enquiry should be replaced by judicial enquiry in all places, because we find that in the departmental cases no evidence is allowed to be given as of right by those persons who are brought to book and further these departmental enquiries are a sort of *jabardast* enquiries without taking into consideration the evidence and without taking the broad view of the thing. So we think that the departmental enquiry should be replaced by judicial enquiry as early as possible.

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: May I know what the hon. member spoke about judicial enquiry?

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: I mean trials in criminal court.

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: In regard to what?

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: In regard to short weight, illegal dilution of liquor and so forth.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think the hon. member will finish.

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: I have almost finished. Before I resume my seat I would like to hear about the policy of the Hon'ble Chief Minister which he has referred in his budget speech. If I am wrong in my contention, I am subject to correction.

Srijut SIDDHINATH SARMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a liquor shop at Tihu and the Raiyat Shabha has been passing resolutions for the last three years for the abolition of the liquor shop. The whole locality is against that shop. The policy of the Government, instead of decreasing the liquor shops has been to increase them. They have increased two shops—one at Daranga and another at Loharghat; in the Gauhati Subdivision. They have also increased one at Sarupeta in Barpeta Subdivision. The people of the locality and the Raiyat Sabha have been submitting applications one after another and are crying hoarse for their abolition. They are willing to vote for the abolition of the shops. In spite of their repeated representations the Government is not abolishing the shops. There is another shop at Dhantola—one and a half mile away from Nalbari.

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: That is not a new shop.

Srijut SIDDHI NATH SARMA: Dhantola. Yes, it is removed from Dhamdhar. Dhantola people do not want it. They are submitting petitions one after, another, for the abolition of the shop. The Raiyat Shabha passed resolution to the effect also. But in spite of that the Government are merrily going on with the shop. People there are against that shop. I challenge

the Government, if they take votes of the people under the Temperance Act, the majority will vote for the abolition. I do not think Government will get a single person in their favour for the retention of the shop. I challenge. There is another liquor shop at Buralixon in Golaghat Subdivision. People there do not want that shop. That shop should be abolished at once. Therefore, my submission is Government should abolish these shops. If the Government want to ascertain the verdict of the people let them act under the Temperance Act and get the verdict of the people. If the intention of the Government is to reduce the number of shops according to the wishes of the people, let the Government come forward and take measures under the Temperance Act, in order to ascertain the verdict of the people.

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: I have also got a motion in my name. It is No. 25, which seeks to criticise Government for not initiating prohibition of opium even in one district or in areas where consumption of opium is at a minimum. I think this can be conveniently discussed under this motion.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: We shall have to speak, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: He wants to criticise the same point. So I have given him an opportunity to speak. The hon. member will get his turn.

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, ten years ago the Government of Assam stood committed to the principle of eradicating the opium evil from Assam within 10 years. With this end in view the rations of persons of fifty years and under were reduced gradually and in order not to trouble persons over the age of fifty, they decided not to reduce their rations. That policy was introduced after due deliberation and after full investigation and it may be safely said with the general consensus of opinion of consumers. Ten long years have rolled by, but yet Government did not very seriously carry out this policy to a successful issue. Thousands and thousands of passes were issued to opium consumers who contracted the habit after the introduction of the pass system and therefore the policy has not achieved that amount of success as we expected. The large volume of opinion in collection by the Opium Enquiry Committee go to show that this policy stood in the way of the success that it promised.

Sir, Government admits that there are two enemies of the policy of reduction carried by them. One is the mahaldar and another is the smuggler. I beg to ask what stood in the way of Government to stop selling of opium through mahaldars who sell opium in pill form through Government agencies. The Congress and non-congress parties have been insisting on Government to sell opium in pills but that had not the attention that it deserved. So, Sir, as I say, if the Government had been serious they could have by now seen an end of this evil from the Province of Assam. There is no use lamenting over the past. The portfolio has changed to an experienced Hon'ble who by his religion and the principles enunciated for pretty long time will spare no pains to effect the complete eradication of this evil.

My suggestion is that over and above the policy that is proposed to be taken of reducing opium consumption the Hon'ble Minister should close those shops in the province of Assam which are being maintained for 40 or 50 persons. If he follows this policy, he will be successful in bringing about the eradication of the evil much earlier. I quite see that the addicts will suffer for a time but medical relief may be given for the period of suffering. A doctor assisted by a compounder working for 3 weeks at a cost of Rs. 100 may serve in removing the craze of

opium. I hope the Finance Minister will not grudge this small amount if he can spare even 40 men from jaws of opium drugs. He may be sure that the money so spent will be more than paid. The jungles that we find in and about the village of an opium eaters will smile with beautiful crop bringing in resultant revenues to coffers of the state. I am a confirmed believer of the theory that opening of new liquor shops does not tend to temperance at-all. I joined issue with Hon'ble Minister for Excise, last year I joined issue with Mr. Hockenhull. I have moved with the people and I have found that canteens do not tend to temperance for the simple reason that percentage of alcoholic element is much higher in the liquors sold in canteens than in the liquor called হাৰিষ্কাৰ বৰাপ। My hon. friends Srijut Bideshi Pan Tanti supports my view. I told the then Commissioner of Excise Mr. Thomas that if he would decrease the strength of alcohol in liquor sold in canteens, then I would have no objection to start canteen shops in the tea garden areas but this unfortunately has not been done.

Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL: We agree with you.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member has finished.

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROAH: Yes, Sir, with these few words, I beg to support the motion of my hon. friend Srijut Debeswar Sarmah.

Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL: The hon. member has only spoken about Mahaldari system. He has not said anything about smuggling. His points about smuggling we shall hear with very great attention.

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROAH: I maintain that if my scheme is given effect to and the system of selling opium by Mahaldars be stopped the excise detective staff will have time and opportunity to combat smuggling. He will devote his whole attention to check smuggling.

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have also got one motion to criticise the opening of more canteens and similar shops in the tea garden areas. I also want to say one or two other points in course of my speech. Sir, it has been said by Mr. Hockenhull that opening of canteens and lessee managers shops go to reduce the consumption of liquor.

Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL: No I did not say that.

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: Sir, he has put forward a very astounding proposition that better purpose of temperance will be served by opening out more canteen shops and liquor shops in the province. That was the statement of Mr. Hockenhull.

Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL: No Sir, I did not tell that. The hon. member is mis-interpreting what I said. I said in plain English that there is an increase of temperance since the opening of canteen shops in tea gardens.

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: He said Sir, that if more canteen shops are opened the purpose of temperance will be better served. I think it is all the same.

Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL: No it is not same at all.

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: Sir, we have found that objection has been taken even by the Planters to the opening of more liquor shops in tea garden areas. When this move was sought to be made in my Subdivision, Managers after Managers of Tea gardens protested against the opening of such shops in the tea garden areas.

Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL: We will not deny that.

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: Sir, even last year when one lessee-manager shop was established in the Lakhimpur district objection was taken by the Manager of that particular garden. At page 2 of the report on the administration of the Excise Department for the year 1936-37, we find that 'at the suggestion of Managers of two tea gardens in Sylhet and Lakhimpur, one combined country spirit and garja shop and one country

spirit shop were shifted to sites selected by them, while another lessee-manager shop in Lakhimpur was closed at the request of the Manager of the garden'. This shows, Sir, that what Mr. Hockenhull advocates here has not the real support of his own people even.

Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL: The hon. member quotes only one example. (*loud laughter*).

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: Now, Sir, if the aim is to reduce the excessiveness of the drinking habit of the labourer in the tea garden areas the opening of canteens and lessee-manager shops in the tea garden areas will not serve the purpose. Though it may, check excessive drinking to some extent in individual cases—it will surely extend and spread the habit among the labourers by bringing the temptation held out by the canteens and shops to the very door of the labourers.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: On a point of information Sir.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member will not yield.

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: The more liquor shops are started the more people may become addicted to the drinking habit.

Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: The outsiders cannot have liquor from the canteens.

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: The number of addicts will go on increasing with the opening of new shops and canteens as these will bring the temptation to the very doors of the labourers and will spread the habit among the juvenile labourers especially.

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: May I ask something for the sake of information Sir?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member is not giving way.

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: Sir, from the last year's report we find that there is an increase in the amount of revenue derived from liquor by about one lakh. It has risen from four lakhs twenty five thousand to five lakhs three thousand. Increase in my district is simply appalling. Increase in Lakhimpur district alone is Rs. 59,016. This is to a great extent, as has been admitted in the report itself due to opening of lessee-manager shops in the tea garden areas. The report says "the co-operation of tea garden managers in the matter of checking illicit distillation in tea garden areas by opening lessee-manager shops to meet the demand of genuine consumers, the improved economic condition of the people in general and also the activities of the excise staff to control the evil of illicit distillation and excessive manufacture of *pachwai* and to check malpractices resorted to by vendors were the main causes for the increases." This, Sir, goes to show how these people are rather encouraged by the department. In last year's report we find that 14 lessee-manager shops and two canteen shops were opened. Of course, we have not got the figure of this year. We think, this year also, Government is following the same policy and adding to the list of these shops.

As regards the proposition that if we stop the opium shops, then in that case smugglers will have a better opportunity for their trade, that I think is also an erroneous statement. The only way to stop smuggling effectively is to stop all opium shops in the province (*hear! hear!*). If opium shops are stopped and if opium cannot be obtained from private sources, as for instance, from Mahaldars, but can be obtained only through the salesmen appointed by Government and if it is supplied in certain forms as has just now been suggested by my hon. friend Srijut Lakshesvar Boroah, in that case the excise staff will be in a better position

to stop smuggling. Any body in possession of opium in any other form than in the official form (*i.e.*, in the form of pills supplied from the Excise Department) will be pounced upon by the Excise detection staff and asked to point out the illicit source of supply. In this way the Excise Inspectors and the other detective staff can easily trace the source of illicit supply and check it. Therefore, we all advocate the stopping of opium shops in their present form. Opium must be supplied in pill forms by Government and in that case the control of smugglers will be easy and effective. With these words I support the motion.

Srijut KAMESWAR DAS: I have got three motions in my name.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member may deal with them one after another.

Srijut KAMESWAR DAS: Sir, first I will deal with the one regarding the drink evil. It is difficult to believe why Government should not have a similar policy with regard to the drink evil just as in the case of opium. Every one will agree with me that drink is a great evil especially in the case of the poor and the illiterate. So, Sir, it will be advisable on the part of the Government that they should come forward with a definite policy to reduce the sources of supply of the drink evil, that is, they should come forward with a definite policy to reduce the number of liquor shops. It may be said, Sir, that by reducing the sources of supply of drink, illicit distillation will increase, but no body will grudge if the Government adopt a special measure to put down illicit distillation also. I, for myself, would agree to support the Government to have a special staff for the purpose. The present practice of Government, however, seems to be not to follow the policy of reduction of the sources of supply. Only the other day in reply to a question put by one of the hon. members of this House Government said that they are considering the matter whether they will increase the number of new shops in future. In fact, it seems that instead of discouraging the drink evil, Government are rather encouraging it. They take the help of a few people who are induced to apply for a liquor shop amidst them and Government officers join hands with them and make a capital out of the situation inspite of vehement protest from the public and open new shops there. At Sarupeta, as has been mentioned by my hon. friend Srijut Siddhinath Sarma, a liquor shop has been opened recently inspite of vehement protests from the public there. It is a small railway station and the number of foreigners is also very small there. On the contrary the people in the neighbouring places consists of caste Hindus and Muhammadans who are averse to the practice of drinking. These people raised strong protests, but inspite of that the shop has been started, of course, it has been said as an experimental measure.

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: May I know in what year it was started? Is it in 1936?

Srijut KAMESWAR DAS: I think it is over a year old. I cannot say definitely the year but it is very recent. I would urge the Government that instead of encouraging this drink habit they should adopt a policy of discouraging it and they should try to reduce the number of liquor shops gradually with a view to do away with it altogether within a definite number of years.

My next point is with regard to grant of rewards to Government servants and outsiders in excise and opium cases. Sir, I don't understand the reason why rewards are granted to Government servants and outsiders in such cases. It may be said that these rewards give an incentive to

Government servants to work honestly. But these rewards, it seems to me, give an incentive in a greater measure in the contrary way. By these rewards the Government servants are made to think that besides making some extra gain they will also earn a name in their service and in that view they induce, it is often heard, other people to help them in the detection of crimes—not real but fabricated. So, I think, Government should consider this point also and discontinue granting rewards to Government servants. Rewards to outsiders are also objectionable for the same reason, because in the hope of getting rewards from Government they very often give wrong information to the Excise Officers and the result is that innocent persons suffer. With these observations, Sir, I support the motion of my hon. friend.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as regards cut motion No.5 I think the motion is quite reasonable. The hon. mover wishes to criticise the Government for not initiating the policy of prohibition even in one district, I think the Government should make some proper programme for prohibition as Mr. Sarwan said, in a place like the Garo Hills where there are no Garo opium-estates and where there is no opium or ganja shop, but where there is fear of contagion spreading from the neighbouring district. Garo Hills is a promising place to start with prohibition and I think it will be quite possible there. There are only a few Gurkhalis there who are addicted to this habit and at present they are getting their supply from Mankachar, which is a place quite near the Garo Hills in the district of Goalpara. I would suggest that this prohibition question should go by a particular area, and not as a whole in the whole province because if we want to introduce its provision in the whole province it will be very difficult and not at all possible. So we should take up this question in the most promising area and thus gradually show that there are possibilities for prohibition in Assam also. As regards this point I quite agree, but regarding the other points I think I agree with many of the hon. members that we should wait for the result of the enquiry of the Retrenchment Committee. We know that this enquiry Committee is very expensive and we have undertaken to bear the cost of this Committee and the Committee is doing its best as we have heard from the Hon'ble Chief Minister. After the explanation of the Hon'ble Chief Minister I think it will be some sort of injustice or interference on our part that the work which the Retrenchment and Resources Committee is doing should be done by us.

With these words I oppose this motion. (*Laughter.*)

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: May I know what bearing the question of policy has with the work of the Retrenchment Committee?

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: We have already heard from the Hon'ble Chief Minister that the question is engaging their attention. (*laughter.*) We have heard his explanation and we must be satisfied with it.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: May I know what bearing the question of policy has on the question of the Retrenchment Committee?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Loss of revenue.

Srijut BELIRAM DAS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support this motion. I would like to say that this drink and drug revenue is a form of most extremely degrading taxation. It makes one pay for his own corruption. It falls upon those addicts like a dead weight which they ill-afford to bear it. A taxation to be healthy must render ten-fold to the tax payers in the shape of useful services. This Excise revenue does not at all render any useful service to these addicts. The best course that should have been adopted by the Government to eradicate this habit would have been to spend this sum raised from Excise in giving education to the children of these communities which are largely addicted to this vice. As regards eradicating this vice the Government want to say that they cannot fight this habit because of smuggling and in reply to that I should like to say that the Excise Officers, in collusion with the mahaldars, really smuggle and make out false cases in order to justify the retention of this Department. Very often it is found that the poor Rabhas and Kacharis are harassed by the Excise officials and mahaldars by setting up some paid men whose duty it is to encourage these innocent people to prepare liquor and afterwards having them caught. I have heard about three years ago when I went to Mangaldai that there was an Excise official there who paid by way of insurance premium more than what he got as his pay every month. This is every where prevalent. On enquiry I find that that gentleman has been transferred from that subdivision. I would suggest that an enquiry should be made into all these allegations against these men, and if an enquiry is made I am sure it will be found that they are correct.

I would suggest that instead of selling opium and liquor through mahaldars it should be sold by Government servants if the Government do not like to do away with the sale of opium and liquor altogether immediately. If this is done, it will be found that this drink and drug habit will slowly go out of the country. What is generally seen it is the literate Excise Mahaldars who are harassed by Excise officials and the reason is not very far to seek.

Srijut MAHADEB SARMA: সভাপতি ডাঃ বীয়া, মই আমাৰ গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে আবকাৰী বিভাগত বি নীতি অনুসৰণ কৰিছে সেই নীতিৰ নিন্দা কৰিবৰ কাৰণে বি প্ৰস্তাব ইয়াত উত্থাৰ কৰিছ সেই প্ৰস্তাব সমৰ্থন কৰোঁ। এই বিভাগ সম্পৰ্কত country spirit আৰু ganja ৰ বহুল বিক্ৰি আৰু প্ৰচলনৰ কাৰণে গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টক নিন্দা হচক এটা প্ৰস্তাব নোটচ মনো দিছিলোঁ। সেই বাবে এই ছেগতে মোৰো কব লগীয়া কথা কেইটা ক'ম। ১৯৩৬-৩৭ চনৰ আবকাৰী বিভাগৰ বি বছেবে কীয়া বিপোর্ট গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে প্ৰকাশ কৰিছে তাৰ পোন প্ৰথম sentence টো হৈছে এই:—

“The consumption of country spirit and ganja in 1936-37 shows an increase of 10.5 and 9.9 per cent. respectively as compared with the preceding year.”

এই কথাৰেই আমাৰ প্ৰদেশৰ আবকাৰী বিভাগৰ যোৱা বছৰৰ বছেবেকীয়া বিপোর্ট আমাৰ আগত দাঙি ধৰিছে। অৰ্থাৎ আমাৰ দেশত তাৰ আগৰ বছৰতকৈ মদ আৰু গাঞ্জাৰ প্ৰচলন ক্ৰমে শতকৰা ১০.৫ শতাংশ আৰু ৯.৯ শতাংশ বাঢ়িছে। এই কথাৰ ভিতৰত আমাৰ আঁহৰ ভবিষ্যৎ কি হ'ব? ইয়াৰ পৰা গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ ফালেৰ পৰা কি মনোভাব

লুকাই থা যেন দেখা যায়? আবকাৰী বিভাগৰ বিষয়ত আমাৰ প্ৰদেশত কিয় গোটেই ভাবতবৰ্ষতে প্ৰজাৰ্থাধাৰণৰ মনোভাব কি গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে জানি থাক মোৰ বিশ্বাস ৰাজহুৱা মত এই বিষয়ত অতি প্ৰবল কাৰনেই গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে বাধ্য হৈ আমাৰ দেশৰ কানি প্ৰচলন সম্পৰ্কে দৃষ্টি ৰাখি তাক কমাবলৈ বাধ্য হৈছে। সেই ফালৰ পৰা গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ যি লোকচান হব তাৰ কিছু পৰিমাণে ক্ষতিপূৰণ স্বৰূপ যদি মদ আৰু গাঞ্জাৰ প্ৰচলন বঢ়াবলৈ পাকে প্ৰস্তাবে চেষ্টা কৰা দেখা যায় তেন্তে তাত নিন্দা নকৰি কিবা উপায় আছেনে?

এইটো সকলোৰে জনাজাত কথা যে যি কোনো প্ৰদেশৰ গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে সিবিলাকৰ প্ৰদেশৰ ভিতৰৰ সৰ্কসাদাৰণ লোক সমূহৰ সাধাৰণ ভাবে কেনেকৈ উন্নত হব পাৰে তাৰ বাবে চেষ্টা কৰা আৰু ব্যৱস্থা কৰাই সৰ্কপথম কৰ্তব্য। কিন্তু তাৰ পৰিবৰ্তে যদি কেতিয়াবা কোনো গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টক দেখা যায় যে সিবিলাকে মাথোন অनावশ্যক বহুল বিভিন্ন বিভাগ সমন্বিতে তেওঁ-বিলাকৰ চৰ্কাৰ চলিবলৈ কেনেকৈ আয় বঢ়াব পাৰি তেনে চেষ্টাত অৰ্থাৎ প্ৰজাৰ পৰা মাথোন কৰ-কাটল আদায় কৰা যন্ত্ৰ বিশেষতঃ মাথোন পৰিগত হয় তেতিয়া গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টক নিন্দা নকৰি প্ৰশংসা কৰিব পাৰিনে? এই আবকাৰী বিভাগ সম্বন্ধে আমাৰ গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ মূল মনোভাব কি সেইটো সিবিলাকৰ reportৰ প্ৰথম বক্তব্যতেই লুকাই আছে। সিবিলাকৰ আস্থাতিক চেষ্টা কেনেকৈ আবকাৰী বিভাগৰ পৰা আয় বৃদ্ধি হয়। সেই চেষ্টাৰ উমান আমি সিবিলাকৰ বৰ্তমান কাৰ্য প্ৰণালীৰ পৰাই দেখা পাওঁ। এইটো জলজল-পটপট কথা যে আবকাৰী বিভাগ আমাৰ মানুহৰ দুৰ্ভাগ্যতাৰ নিমিত্তেই আছে আৰু আমাৰ গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ চেষ্টা সেই দুৰ্ভাগ্যতা কেনেকৈ বাঢ়ে। কানি, ভাং, মদ মানুহৰ আৱশ্যকীয় বস্তু নহয়—তাক নেখালেও মানুহ জীয়াই থাকিব পাৰে। কিন্তু তথাপি মানুহে বাগীয়াল বস্তু খায়? কিয় খায়? সেইটোৰেই তাৰ দুৰ্ভাগ্যতা। এই দুৰ্ভাগ্যতা যাতে কমে তাৰ চেষ্টাহে গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে কৰা প্ৰয়োজন। কিন্তু তাকে নকৰি যদি গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে কেবল টকাৰ ফালেহে চকু দিয়ে—কেনেকৈ আয় বাঢ়ে তালৈহে চায় তেন্তে গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টক নিন্দা নকৰি উপায় নাই।

গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে এই বিষয়ে আমাক এটা কথা জানিবলৈ দিয়ে আৰু দেখা গৈছে সিবিলাকৰ সেই মত সিবিলাকৰ সমৰ্থনকাৰী দুই এক বন্ধুয়েও সমৰ্থন কৰে যে মদ আৰু গাঞ্জাৰ দোকান বঢ়াই দিলে তাত চোৰাং বস্তুৰ প্ৰচলন কমে আৰু গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টেও সিবিলাকৰ ন্যায্য প্ৰাপ্য পায়। চাহ বাগিচাৰ কুলিৰ মাজত Canteen systemৰ বা Lessee manageri systemৰ বোলে গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে তাত কুলিবিলাকক বেয়া বকমৰ মতলীয়া নহবলৈহে প্ৰচলন কৰিছে। এনে আৱশ্যিত যুক্তিৰ মন্ত্ৰ আমি বুজি নেপাওঁ। বেচি পৰিমাণে আৰু মহাজে যতে ততে বাগিয়াল বস্তু পোৱা কৰি গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে মানুহক temperate হবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰাটো নিশ্চয় অভিনব পন্থা। আমি হলে জানো যে মানুহ যেতিয়া তাৰ দুৰ্ভাগ্যতাৰ গৰাহত থাকে সি সুবিধা পালে বেচি বেয়াহে হব। আমাৰ সাধাৰণ মানুহৰ দুৰ্ভাগ্যতা বঢ়াৰ উপায় কৰাত আমাৰ উপকাৰ হোৱা নাই বৰং তাৰ পৰা অপকাৰহে হৈছে।

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member is repeating the arguments.

Srijut MAHADEB SARMAH: সভাপতি উদ্ভবীয়া, হওঁতে সময়ত কোৱা কথাই হুনাই কব লগায়া হৈছে এই কাৰণে য গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ নিন্দনীয় অ বকাৰী নোতিব বিকল্প আমাৰ মনোভাব অতিশয় ক্ষুন্ন হোৱাত বাধা হৈ দোহাৰি কব লগাত পৰে। যি হওক গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ ১৯৩৬-৩৭ চনৰ আৰকাৰী বিভাগৰ বেছেবেকীয়া ৰিপোৰ্টৰ দ্বিতীয় পৃষ্ঠাত আছে "The Director of Public Instruction, Assam, reports that nothing further on the subject (Temperance teaching) has been done during the year." অৰ্থাৎ গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে temperance সম্পৰ্কে কোনো শিক্ষামূলক বিধান যোৱা বহুত কৰা নই। বৰং দেখা যায় ৰিপোৰ্টৰ পৰা যে বহুত ঠাইত মদ শাক গাজাৰ দোকান বঢ়াই দিয়াহে গৈছে। ইয়াৰ দ্বাৰা গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ আশ্ব বৃদ্ধি হব। মাহুহে temperance শিকিলে গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ বছৰি আয় কমিব কিন্তু গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টক টকা যেতিয়া ওপৰ গধুৰ শাসন চপাবলৈ লাগে তাক যেনে তেনে উলিয়াবই লাগিব।

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member is exceeding his time.

Srijut MAHADEB SARMAH: আপোনাৰ অনুমতি ক্ৰমে মুঠেই এটি কথা কৈছে মোৰ কথা মানবনি ম'বম। কোনো এঠাইত কোনো সময়ত মই এজন গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ দাৰ্শনিকপূৰ্ণ উচ্চ বন্দুচাৰীৰা লগ ধৰি গুৰিছিলে!—আপোনালোকে মদৰ দোকান সম্পৰ্কীয় বিলাক সাধাৰণ নিয়ম বান্ধি দিছে সেই বিলাক নিয়ম ঠিক মতে পালন কৰিবলৈ আপোনালোকে মহলদাৰ বিলাকক কিয় বাধা নকৰে? আজিকালি দেখোন দিনে বাতিয়ে দোকান খোলা থাকে? উত্তৰত তেপেতে কলে—“নিয়মৰ পালন বিষয়ে বেছি টান হলে স্বাভাবিকতে বিক্ৰী কমিব। Income কমিলে আমি ওপৰআলাৰ ওচৰত তাৰ বাবে কৈফিয়ৎ দিব লগাত পৰে। সেই কাৰণে আমি জানি নজনাৰ ভাও ধৰি থাকিব লগাত পৰে। ইয়াৰ পৰাই বুজা যায় য গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে কিছুমান নিয়ম এখনিয়াৰ হিচাবে কৰি থৈছে তাক পালন কৰিবলৈ নহয়। গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ এনে কাৰ্য্যত আমি আপত্তি নকৰি কিন্তু নিন্দা নকৰি নোৱাৰোঁ।”

Adjournment

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

After adjournment

The Assembly re-assembled after lunch at 2 p.m.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: Sir, as I rise to speak on this motion I quite feel that I am in the land of opium-eaters. In the small province of Assam there are we find 90,000 addicts to the opium habit. But, Sir, the motion that has been tabled by my hon. friend Mr. Barua

is against the present Government. I think there is nothing to blame the present Government for and I hope the House will not feel inclined to censure them for the sins of the old Government. (*A voice.*—Which old Government?) I mean, Sir, the Government which was over us before. It is practically a new policy that we are going to have I have got to refer to the memorable budget speech of the Hon'ble Chief Minister regarding the opium question. In this year the policy that has been adumbrated by the new Ministry with regard to opium is as follows:—“The present Ministry is determined to wipe out the opium habit from the people of the province. Consumption of opium has been brought down to about 200 maunds from over a thousand maunds ten years ago.” So, Sir, there has been a great deal of prohibition in this respect. “This has naturally meant a loss of over 30 lakhs in opium revenue.” But as I find, Sir, neither the Government nor the people have grudged this colossal loss so long as they are satisfied that this diminishing revenue really represents a diminishing consumption. So, Sir, we find that the Ministry is at one with this House and they agree also in their policy that the opium habit of the people should go.

But, Sir, total prohibition all at once is not possible. If I am correctly informed, Sir, this experiment has been tried in some of the provinces where the Congress has taken up the Government, but with no success. But this Government here, Sir, is trying to eradicate the habit by a gradual process. Only the other day, Sir, this Government has tried to see to the eradication of this evil by appointing a Committee, which has finished its labours only recently. The Excise Committee's report will very soon come before the House and we shall have an opportunity of discussing it in full. I believe, Sir, that this Government will take *in toto* the policy that has been laid down by the Excise Committee. The Committee unanimously recommended that the Government should continue the existing policy of 10 per cent. reduction in the rations of registered consumers and that consumers under the age of 50 whose rations will go down below 4 annas on the 31st March 1938 will get no passes except on medical grounds. Those consumers under 50 years of age whose rations on the 31st March 1938 will be 4 annas and above will be subjected to 10 per cent. cut, but after 31st March 1939 all passes of consumers below the age of 50 will be cancelled and no more opium will be issued to consumers. That shows, Sir, that this Ministry is trying to do away with the opium habit gradually from the masses of the people. “The Committee by a majority recommend that consumers of 50 years of age and above should be allowed to continue to get their rations as long as they require.” In other cases they have made restrictions. Among other recommendation made by the committee is one, namely “that Dr. Modino's system of detoxication treatment be given a trial in the hospitals at Shillong, Dibrugarh and Jorhat as an experimental measure.” So, Sir, the habit of opium-smoking is going down on a sliding scale and we shall find in the course of a few years that the opium habit of our people will disappear.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member has exceeded his time. He has already spoken for 7 minutes.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: I shall be obliged if you can give me two more minutes. With a view to control liquor I suppose this House will be in a position to accept the recommendation of the committee on the question of not having a distillery in the province at present. The lessee-manager system has met with a good deal of success. On this point Mr. Hockenhull has also referred and I think the House will be disposed to benefit by his experience.

So, Sir, it is up to us, as the Committee has also recommended that there ought to be a certain amount of propaganda, that we should do something in that direction to see that the temperance habit in our people is propagated, not by legislation alone. With these words, Sir, I feel, I should oppose this motion.

Col. A. B. BEDDOW: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to oppose the various motions that are at present under discussion.

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: On a point of order, Sir. Are there many motions now before the House?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Only one motion is before the House. There have been various points urged and the hon. member refers to the various points under discussion.

Col. A. B. BEDDOW: I apologise, Sir. I was under the impression that the hon. members who had tabled motions under the same head were permitted to take their cases one after another. If I am wrong, I apologise. I oppose the motion under discussion.

The debate commenced with an attack upon Government for doing nothing in regard to the opium evil. Now, Sir, I do not propose to defend Government in this respect. I am perfectly sure that Government is far more capable than I am in dealing with it. But I would like to cast my mind back over a few years as a man who has been in this country for some considerable time and remind myself of what I have seen. I remember tea garden labour under the "Arkati" system where opium smokers were numerous. I remember when I went to the garden where I am now, there were 24 labourers who had passed till their old age. To-day there is not a single soul in that garden who has a pass. If it is not an improvement, I do not know what it is. But that is a fact.

From that motion, Sir, the debate, through many ramifications, has developed more or less into an attack on the canteen and Lessee Manager system in Tea gardens. Practically nothing has been said in regard to the excise administration as affecting the other 90 per cent. of the consumers in the Province, from which I take it that this House is satisfied with the administration in regard to that 90 per cent. of the inhabitants of Assam.

One hon. member referred to the case of one liquor shop to which he stated that the surrounding people took exception, and stated, moreover, that were these people afforded an opportunity to vote, they would vote for its removal. Now, Sir, I am an ordinary business man and I have found that where a shop-keeper is unpopular, that shop-keeper soon becomes bankrupt. I have no more to say in that respect.

As regards the burning question of the Canteen and Lessee Manager systems on Tea gardens, I would point out that we Planters have two great evils to fight and these two evils are—drunkenness and illicit distillation, which go hand in hand. I think the House will realise that I am being no more than logical in pointing out that it is indispensable to us for our Labour forces to be healthy, well behaved and capable of doing a good day's work in order to keep our gardens in good order, and it is only for these reasons that as an experiment these systems were introduced. We have now gone beyond the experimental stage and we have found that the Canteen system has proved of great benefit to a very large number of gardens. I do not know whether it is one hundred per cent. but so far as my personal experience goes it has proved one hundred per cent. with the gardens that I know.

The alternative is a Labour force prone to drunkenness, with constant trouble in the Lines, absenteeism and constant reference to the Police to prevent illicit distillation. I have been driven to the conclusion by the

statements made in the House to-day that many members would prefer to see drunkenness with illicit distillation rather than decent sobriety under the canteen system.

It has been indicated that Government have a definite propaganda in this matter, but I would point out that managers are entirely free to accept or reject the system as they desire.

As regards the disgraceful suggestion made by one of the hon. members of the House that Planters are now introducing canteen system in order to retain their Labour forces, I can only say that such a suggestion is not worthy of the great party to which he belongs.

With these words I beg to oppose the motion.

Babu LALIT MOHAN KAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir. The ever condemned revenue on excise has been estimated to be higher than it was in the previous year's budget. The Government, while following a policy of gradual extermination of opium habit at a snail's pace, appears, as if with a view to compensate the loss caused thereby, to be inaugurating a policy of gradual promotion of the habit of using country spirits, hems and other drugs. If you want to discourage opium, well and good but at the same time encourage other intoxicating drugs to keep the excise revenue steady or going higher up—such seems to be the policy knowingly being followed by the Government. Government's anxiety is more for the money than for the good and welfare of the people, which is not only undesirable but unfair as well.

With these few words I support the motion.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: In rising to oppose this motion, I do not want to uphold the present policy of the Government. The present policy has been defective in its working in many respects; but all that I want to impress upon the House is that the criticism of the excise policy has been a hardy annual. The criticism that has been made from time to time from the opposition Benches has failed to produce any result whatsoever, simply because that criticism has been always destructive and is divorced from practical politics. They have been advocating prohibition; but it is well known to the members of the House that total prohibition is impossible. It is impracticable under the present circumstances. They have been also advocating the eradication of the evil habit of taking opium by legislation. I beg to submit that this habit of opium eating can never be removed by legislation unless there be intensive temperance propaganda in the country side by side. The opposition has not put forward any constructive suggestions as to how the province can be made dry or the people purged of the evil habit of taking opium. It is the absence of any constructive programme from them that has led to such inactivity and inaction on the part of Government.

Now, it has been said by one hon. member that the increase in the number of lessee-manager shops and canteens has been responsible for the increase in consumption. I have yet to know whether this is a fact. We all know the object with which these lessee-manager shops and canteens were installed. We also know that there are restrictions placed on these shops as regards the rations to be supplied to each consumer and as to the hours of sale. The objects were very noble, namely to prevent the illicit supply and with a view to bring licit supply within their easy reach. Whether this system has really increased drunkenness is yet to be known. My hon. friend Mr. Naba Kumar Dutta is a tea planter himself; probably he himself is concerned with a canteen shop. I shall be glad to learn from him if drunkenness as a whole has increased in his garden on account of the installation

of the shop. (Mr. Naba Kumar Dutta—No.) I have got the Annual Report on the working of the Tea Districts Emigrant Labour Act for the year ending the 30th September 1936 which has just come to me by post. I refer to one paragraph of this report: "The majority of the tea garden labourers drink by habit. The Assam Excise Department estimated that the tea garden population is responsible for about two-thirds of the total consumption of country spirit in Assam. The consumption of country spirit in Assam shows an increase of 56·39 per cent. during 1935-36 as against a decrease of 7·6 per cent. in the previous year. The number of persons arrested under the Excise and Opium Acts rose from 2,502 in 1934-35 to 2,587 in 1935-36. The Excise Report mentioned that the increase in consumption of country spirit is due to the decrease in its price from Re.1-5-0 and Re.0-12-0 to Re.1-1-0 and Re.0-9-0 per quart bottle of 30 U. P. to 60 U. P. respectively in ordinary shops from 1st April 1935. The Excise Department adopted measures which discouraged the practice of illicit distillation and the old consumers reverted to licit sources of supply because they found that the gain from the illicit sources was not now high enough for the risk involved." So this shows that the system has been successful in keeping down drunkenness.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member is exceeding his time limit.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: I am just finishing.

There was another suggestion from another hon. member, *viz.*, to close all the opium shops and watch the result. I doubt very much how far this step of preventing illicit supply will bring in the desired result of eradicating the evil habit. If the licit supply of opium to the *bona fide* consumers is stopped will it not increase the illicit supply? So these suggestions although they have been made with the best of motives, I do not think, will carry us any farther as regards prohibition. The main thing that is wanted is, I think, an intensive temperance propaganda side by side (*applause*) by the representatives of the public irrespective of what Government does in the matter.

With these words I oppose the motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think the Hon'ble Minister should reply now. Quite a number of points have been urged. I shall give him 15 minutes' time for replying to the points, so that I may close the debate just in time.

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Sir, I am not speaking on behalf of Government. I am speaking as an individual member.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: If the Hon'ble Minister is not speaking on behalf of Government I can only allow him five minutes only. The Hon'ble Minister in charge should get sufficient time to reply to all the points raised.

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: It has been stated several times that this Government has no programme. We definitely have a programme for opium and this has been already stated. An hon. member of the House has read a resolution that was passed by the Excise Committee that was called by Government. In this Committee there were 16 members of this House who were present and the policy is definitely laid down, that is, during this year, 1938, by April next, the passes of all the consumers below the age of 50 whose rations have gone down below 4 annas on 31st March 1938 will be cancelled, next March—that is to say the passes will be cancelled of those consumers below 50 years who took passes in the year 1928; and the passes of all consumers below the age of 50 whose

rations will be 4 annas and above, *i.e.*, those who took their passes after 1928 will be cancelled in the year 1939.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Sir, we have not seen that report.

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Sir, that report will be given to hon. members in time if they want. The resolution of the Excise Committee has been read by one of the hon. members. So, I do not want to repeat that. It is also the policy of Government that no new opium passes should be issued unless there is a special recommendation on medical grounds for the sickness or health of the person. Now this is a definite policy or programme. So to say that we have no policy and no programme is speaking without thinking. Now, Sir, one of the hon. members said that we are not very jealous to abolish the opium habit in Assam. (Babu Rabintra Nath Aditya: On a point of information, Sir.) I have no time to give him any information. It has been suggested by one of the hon. members that Government are not anxious to abolish the opium habit from Assam. It is a very surprising statement to fall from the mouth of responsible legislators of this hon. House. Everybody knows what policy we have about opium. This habit was in existence before the advent of British Government in Assam. When they came they found that the people were addicted to opium habit (*A voice:—extremely low quantity.*)

In 1927 when I was a Minister previously, the consumption of opium in Assam, was over about 69,900 seers but now it has been reduced to only 9,000 seers, and the revenue of the Government has gone down by about 30 lakhs (*laughter*).

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order.

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: The Government of Assam from the time when the Montford Reform was introduced, has been to a great extent very anxious to abolish this opium habit; and since we took charge of this Government we have made it a definite plan that the opium evil should be abolished.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: Why did not the Hon'ble Minister in that case retain that portfolio?

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: My hon. friends on the other side who have criticised the Government on this point will no doubt realise in their cool moments (*loud laughter*) that surely the policy which this Government has adopted is a very good policy.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: The Hon'ble Minister is now in excise mood (*laughter*).

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: The hon. members are now making unreasonable statements in the House for the sake of influencing votes to defeat the Government by any means (*laughter*).

Then there is another point as regards the lessee-manager shops. This question was also discussed by the Excise Committee. Of course it is a very big question but I say that I am second to none in regard to the question of prohibition of liquor.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: In theory or in practice? (*Laughter.*)

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: I say Sir, that I am second to none in practice. (*Laughter.*)

Sir, there is a difference between the lessee-manager shops and the canteens. Many people do not understand what is meant by lessee-manager shops. It is controlled by the manager of a garden but the lessee is

to be appointed by the Deputy Commissioner at the nomination of the Manager of the garden. There was illicit distillation going on inside the gardens. The Excise Officers sometimes made raids inside the gardens but such raids are very risky because the labour force would not easily allow them to enter into their houses and would fight. In a certain garden when a raid was made by the Excise Officers some people were wounded with very undesirable consequences. Now Government has introduced this system for the sake of controlling drunkenness and to prevent illicit distillation. By this method a labourer can buy only one quart bottle of liquor per day and he will be habituated to drink less liquor and if the quantity be further decreased he will get used to a lesser quantity and will thus be ready, when prohibition will be introduced, without much difficulty, to give up the habit.

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

The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Very well, Sir, I have finished. The opposition does not want to see light.

Srijut MAHI CHANDRA BORA: Does the Hon'ble Minister mean to say that there is light in the increased consumption of *ganja*?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I may state on the floor of this House that I am not a bit less behind any hon. member in my anxiety to see that intoxication disappears from this province of ours. My views are well known and they need no reiteration. I can only assure hon. members that I as Minister-in-charge of Excise will leave no single stone unturned to see that something definite and something tangible is done (*Hear! Hear!*). I congratulate many of my hon. friends sitting opposite for the various constructive suggestions that they have thrown out before me for my examination (*Hear! Hear!*). I shall examine each and every one of them with the utmost sympathy that I can command. From the speeches of my hon. friends, three points which emerge are *opium*, *lessee-manager* and *canteen* shops. As regards eradication of opium habit from this province various speakers from this side of the House and also from the side opposite have given their opinion. The policy of this Government has been definite and well-laid and it needs no repetition. Sir, I will try my best to see that the policy that was laid down in 1927 is worked out in fact.

As regards the lessee-manager shops, whether this is a proposition which leads to the control of drunkenness will be thoroughly examined by me. Our hon. friend Mr. Hockenull and other members from the Planting groups have said that this system is just to the good and benefit of the public as well as to the workers. As regards the canteen system I can only repeat what I have just now stated. I cannot say anything without a more thorough examination whether this system is a good one or not. If it is found that this system is to the benefit of the public and to the workers then this canteen system will be continued but if, however, it is found that it is not to the benefit of the public and workers then I shall certainly abandon this system. Sir, in a debate like this I can attempt only at a general reply. Various propositions that have been mooted require more thorough examination in detail and I am not going to rush through them at once. Personally I do not support the canteen system or, lessee-manager system nor do I oppose them. There is a report of the Excise Advisory Committee and I have gone through it from line to line, from word to word with greatest attention and care. I am impressed by one desire—the central desire of the Committee—which is this that they are all so very anxious to see that

the opium habit—the pernicious habit in this accursed province of ours—is eradicated as soon as possible. Some of the hon. members seem to have gone—if I may be permitted to say—a little bit out of their way. They have said that all these are tactics merely to fetch revenue. I should say—no. So far as I have been able to see through the policy of my predecessor—Government were not imbued with such motive, but their desire seems to have been genuine and they were anxious to see opium habit eradicated gradually but definitely. They did not like to rush through these problems all at once but wanted to follow the policy in a business-like manner. Sir, as regards the vast subject of drunkenness and opium habit, one cannot do better than to pursue a policy to mitigate the evils or a well-deferred plan which could ensure a real mitigation. We are in a province, unfortunate as we are, on the border of which are China, Burma and Bengal. Our geographical situation is at once a source of anxieties and dangers to us. There is no restriction in the border regions. Here we have been imposing restrictions. As no restriction is pursued in the neighbouring provinces, our difficulties are all the more great and, therefore, the magnitude of our task is also all the more great. I hope every hon. member will realise the difficulties of this Government and accord to us the sympathy that we deserve under the peculiar circumstances in which we are.

The hon. mover of the motion made an appeal to me as a Moslem. Of course, as a Moslem I have got my own scruple and my own compunction. I like as a Moslem that opium habit and all sorts of intoxication are vanished just now. But, Sir, there is a practical side of this question. We have to face the problem of such a huge magnitude not as a mere theorist but like a practical man. I hope with all the assurances that I have given, my hon. friend—the mover—might see his way not to press his motion.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: I don't press the motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I want to know whether the hon. member wants to put the motion to vote.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI: I should have said that that hon. member might see his way to withdraw the motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: That is the question whether the hon. member is going to withdraw the motion or not.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: No, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is that the provision of Rs. 24,094 under Grant No. 2, Major head—8.—Provincial Excise, Minor head—A.—Superintendence, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total), at page 40 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 4,20,800 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

The motion was lost.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is that a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,20,800 be granted to defray certain charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head "8.—Provincial Excise."

The motion was agreed to.

GRANT No. 3

(9.—STAMPS)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 19,200 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head "9.—Stamps".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved is that a sum not exceeding Rs.19,200 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head "9.—Stamps".

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.260 under Grant No 3, Major head—9.—Stamps, Minor head—C.—Superintendence, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment (total), at page 44 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.19,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, it is within the remembrance of all the members of this House that a similar motion was passed in the last Budget session, the effect of which was to censure the Government for not annulling the enhanced rate of Court-fees to the level of 1936. Sir, I do not know in what spirit the debate was taken by the Hon'ble Chief Minister. He explained away his eleven defeats the other day and I do not remember how he explained away this defeat also. My hon. friends may remember that the hero of Milton's Paradise Lost when he was hurled down from heaven explained his fall to his followers, "well, we are not still defeated, we will have yet courage and energy left". Perhaps, in this way the Hon'ble Chief Minister explained away his defeat to his followers. The function of the executive is to carry out the mandate of the legislature. Now, when that verdict was passed by the House, it was certainly the duty of the Ministers to reduce the Court-fees. By not doing that they have insulted the House and betrayed the sacred trust that was imposed on them.

Sir, I would appeal to the members of the House to keep up their prestige and dignity and unless they have hypothecated their conscience to the Government they should take up the challenge and give a proper reply for not executing their verdict.

Sir, let me come to the business aspect of the question. We find from the actuals for 1936-37 the revenue was Rs.18,29,000, that is the actuals for 1936-37. Then in the budget estimates for 1937-38 it was Rs.20,50,000 but in the revised estimate they had to come down and it has been fixed at 19 lakhs and perhaps in the actuals it came down. In this year's budget they have estimated Rs.19,57,000. Of course this is only an estimate and we should not discuss it; we are mainly concerned with the actuals of 1936-37 and the revised estimate of 1937-38. From these we find that there is only a difference of Rs.61,000. As again that we find the cost of purchase of stamps has increased by Rs 5,000. That means the figure is only Rs.56,000. So that if there is any net gain it is not more than Rs.56,000. I am doubtful that there would even be a gain of Rs.56,000, and for a gain of Rs.56,000 only I do not think the Government is justified to ignore the verdict of the House. And what is the effect of this enhancement? I think it is clearly shown that litigation and other transactions have come down as a result of this increase. It is a well-known business axiom "the lower the price the higher the profit, the higher the price the lower the profit", and that it is actually so has been illustrated by the result.

Maulavi ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY: On a point of information, Sir. Does the hon member want more litigation than what is in the country?

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: I did not hear what the hon. member asked. The Government cannot blink at the economic conditions that are prevailing in the country, and under such economic conditions what can be the justification of the Government for imposing a direct taxation which the people can ill afford to pay.

In this enhancement Act we find that the court-fee has been increased at a much higher rate than previously when another attempt was made to raise the court-fee and the stamp fee. We find that during the previous enhancement, the court-fee for a petition was raised from 8 annas to 10 annas, and now it has been raised from 8 annas to 12 annas. So this enhancement in the face of trade depression and economic distress has been most unwise on the part of the Government. To sell justice at such an exorbitant price is to deny justice to the poor and I want an answer from the Government on this question.

With these few words I place my motion before the House for its acceptance.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: On a point of information, Sir. What is the percentage of the litigant people in the province?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: From whom?

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: From the Hon'ble Minister.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Minister may reply.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I saw Srijut Krishna Nath Sarma getting up, and also Srijut Kameswar Das has got a similar motion?

Srijut KAMESWAR DAS: I am not going to speak.

Srijut KRISHNA NATH SARMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have got a few words to say on this motion. My point is that in the last Budget session a censure motion was carried against the Government.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: That has been said by Mr. Aditya.

Srijut KRISHNA NATH SARMA: Yes Sir, and this is a source of revenue which generally comes from the poor people, and an increase in the stamp duty means an exploitation of the people. Sir, litigation is but an evil. Litigation has ruined hundreds of families. So as a matter of fact when the Assembly has given its verdict regarding the reduction of the stamp and court-fee duty it is the bounden duty of the Government to give effect to that verdict of the House. Sir, the Hon'ble Chief Minister the other day said that he was waiting for orders from the high command in London. So that whatever the Assembly does the Ministry is not bound to obey its verdict and must wait for orders of the high command in London. If this is the state of things always in all matters, Assembly's proceeding is nothing but a farce and our cries for popular measures are mere cries in the wilderness. I therefore ask the Government in all humility to give effect to this wish of the Assembly even at the risk of financial difficulty. As to this financial difficulty I must say that whenever we table some resolution involving some expenditure, for instance for primary education, etc., the Government always puts forward the plea of financial difficulty, whenever there is any proposal for any constructive measure the Government always put forward the plea of financial difficulty, but when it comes to the creation of some high post this difficulty at once disappears. So, my submission is as regards giving relief to the poor people that the Government should reduce the cost of litigation, i.e., stamp and court-fees.

With these few words I support the motion.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am obliged to my hon. friend who have just preceded me in conceding certain facts which I myself was placing before the House. The hon. mover of this cut motion has bewailed that on account of the action of the Government litigation has come down—in other words, according to him it is a dire consequence of the enhancement that litigation has

come down. I am surprised that so astute a gentleman as my hon. friend could advance such an argument. On the other hand I find his supporter, the hon. Srijut Krishna Nath Sarma, urging that litigation has ruined hundreds of families—in other words, he welcomes a reduction in litigation. (*Hear! hear!*) I therefore do not find any justification from the same quarters urging one thing through one member and urging the reverse through another member.

Another statement of fact which has been given to me by my hon. friend the mover is that Government cannot blink their eyes to the economic condition of the people. It is this aspect of the case, *i.e.*, the economic condition of the people of Assam that led me to choose the affording of the greatest benefit to the greatest number of people rather than give a smaller benefit to a smaller number of people. In other words when I was faced with the selection of relief to the people,—there were two relief sought—granting land revenue remission and remit the outstanding agricultural loans of the agriculturists or reduce the rate of court-fees and stamps which affected only about two per cent. of the people, I had no hesitation in choosing the former that is granting land revenue remission and also remission of agricultural loans. This motion to criticise Government comes very ill from the party opposite. For, unless there be some secret understanding as regards the Congress policy in one province and another, I see no reason why we should be censured or even criticised for a measure which the Premiers in the Congress administered provinces are encouraging and adopting. It may be news to hon. members in this House that in Bihar where the Congress Government function, and I hope it will be functioning, court-fees were enhanced only a few weeks ago. I have the authority of no less a person than the great Premier, Congress Premier of Madras who said the other day that litigation is a luxury and he will have no compunction whatever to see it decreases if necessary even by increasing the court-fees to a prohibitive level (*Hear! hear! a d applause.*)

Sir, in the policy which I had to adopt, I have only followed the reasonings which were advanced by these high personages. My hon. friend, who, it appears is well acquainted with the hero of Milton's Paradise Lost (*laughter*), has quoted his conversation with his followers for the edification of the House. And he also gave me certain facts which only nullify his own arguments. According to him and from the figures supplied by him the net gain to the province by these Acts which remain in the Statute Book is only half a lakh which he thinks is an over-estimate. If that be so, it is clear that this Bill, if at all, is not acting harshly on any one, it is acting upon a very minute fraction of the total population. Then why try to help litigation or introduce the well-known principle of supply and demand in litigation and ask the House to drop the Acts and censure the Government for not bringing in a Bill to remove them from the Statute Book?

I mentioned, Sir, last year on the same occasion that the Bills were passed for a limited period, that its operation started for a period of three years from the 1st April 1937. One year is past, the second year is coming and at the end of the third year it will vanish. I can assure this House that if the provincial finances improve, and if we find that these Acts are not bringing in results which they were anticipated to, I will not come forward with a Bill to continue it. Therefore, at this time when the budget is in a deficit, when the economic condition of our poor agriculturists requires that they should be helped by way of remission, I would request the hon. members of this House to reason well within themselves and think deep and see whether the attitude which the Government has taken in

order to minimise the deficit is not a proper one. I again beseech the hon. members to see that these Acts which are not for the benefit of the rural agriculturists and which, according to the arguments advanced by the hon. member who moved it are tending to reduce litigation, are a necessary measure for which the Government should not be centured.

Then the motion of Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya that the provision of Rs.260 under grant No.3, Major head—9.—Stamps, Minor head—C.—Superintendence, Sub-head—1.—pay of establishment (total), at page 44 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.19,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100 was put and lost.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The next motion* will not be moved by Srijut Kameswar Das. Is the hon. member moving his next motion which is No. 3?

Srijut KAMESWAR DAS: I beg to move, Sir, that the total provision of Rs.19,200 under grant No.3, Major head—9.—Stamps, at page 43 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.2.

In moving this motion I wish to urge upon Government for appointing stamp vendors at reasonable distances in the mufassil areas and for issuing stamps on credit system. At present, Sir, vendors in the mufassil area are only available at long distances. As such, the public have got to go long distances to make their purchase of stamps and stamp requirements. I suggest that the vendors should be appointed at reasonable small areas and I make a definite suggestion that there should be one vendor for each area with no more than 3 to 4 miles radius to cover. This will give facilities to make purchases with the least of inconvenience and minimum of expenditure. I submit, Sir, that this will not cost Government any extra amount, because at present Government pay vendors only commission. By increasing the number of vendors Government will suffer in no way financially.

As to the second point, Sir, if my first suggestion is accepted, that will necessarily decrease the amount of profit that is likely to accrue to each individual vendor. In that case, Sir, it will fail to attract the big people, so that the poor people will have to work as vendors. There are reliable and honest people among the poor also, and it will not be difficult for Government to select poor vendors. In that case one difficulty would be that these poor vendors may not be able to pay the Government any advance price for the stamps as at present. I, therefore, suggest that the practice of issuing stamps on the credit system should be accepted.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion before the House is—That the total provision of Rs.19,200 under Grant No.3, Major head—9.—Stamps, at page 43 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.2, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.19,200 do stand reduced by Rs.2.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the suggestions that have been thrown out by my hon. friend Mr. Kameswar Das require consideration. But I can assure him that his first point I can accept without any hesitation. I will consider whether stamp vendors can be provided in rural areas. The difficulty that comes in is as regards his second suggestion *viz.*, that these stamp vendors in the mofussil should be allowed stamps on the credit system. It is difficult to

*That the total provision of Rs.19,200 under Grant No.3, Major head—9.—Stamps, at page 43 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.2, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.19,200 do stand reduced by Rs.2.

(To urge upon Government to reduce stamp duties.)

say off hand that I agree with him. It may be that some formula may be evolved which will satisfy both the security of Government revenues and which will also act leniently on prospective stamp vendors. As I have promised to consider both these suggestions, I think my hon. friend will see his way to withdraw his motion.

Srijut KAMESWAR DAS: On the assurance of the Hon'ble Minister, Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I now put the original motion. The question before the House is "that a sum not exceeding Rs.19,200 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head "9.—Stamps."

The motion was agreed to.

GRANT No.8

(18B.—NAVIGATION, etc.)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.47,500 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head "18B.—Navigation, Embankments and Drainage Works."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved is that a sum not exceeding Rs.47,500 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head "18B.—Navigation, Embankments and Drainage Works."

Srijut MAHADEV SARMA: I beg to move, Sir, that the provision of Rs.5,800 under Grant No.8, Major head—18B.—Navigation, Embankments and Drainage Works, Minor head—4.—Grants-in-aid, at page 55 of the budget, be reduced by Rs.5,000, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 47,500 do stand reduced by Rs.5,000.

সভাপতি ডাক্তারীয়া, মই এই পস্তাবৰ দ্বাৰা ৫,০০০ টকা অগ্রাহ কৰিবৰ কাৰণে উপস্থিত হৈছে। এই ৫,০০০ grant-in-aid স্বৰূপে River Steam Navigation Company ক গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে বছৰি গ্ৰাণ্ট দিয়ে। Memorandum on Budget Estimatesৰ পৰা সেই সম্পৰ্কে পাওঁ যে এই টকা: Improvement of Navigable channelsৰ নিমিত্তে এই কোম্পানীক দিয়া হয়। মই সেইটো ভালকৈ বুজিব নোৱাৰি Finance Department ৰ Secretary মহোদয়ৰ কাষ চাপোঁ আৰু সেই বিষয়ে তেখেতৰ পৰা যি

টোকা পাইছোঁ সেইটো টোকা এনে বুলি পাইছোঁ :—

Thirty to 50 miles below Dibru, there are shallow portions in the river and the Steamer Company have to land those every year so as to get a channel deep enough to get their Steamers up. They also have to do that in certain other rivers and the company spend about Rs. 3,500 a year themselves. We used to give Rs. 10,000. They also do snag-clearing operations in minor rivers.

এই টোকাৰ পৰাও আমাৰ নো প্ৰকৃত পক্ষে কি উপকাৰত অহা বাবে এই Grant দিয়া হৈছে সেইটো মই বুজা নাই। Other rivers ৰ কথা নো কাকত উল্লেখ কৰিছে। কিন্তু আমাৰ প্ৰদেশৰ কোন other riverত,—নদীত সেই operation কৰি Steamer যাব পৰা কৰা হৈছে সেইটো বুজা নোৱাৰ। আৰু কোন কোন minor rivers ত নো snag-clearing operation কৰিব লগাত পৰিছে আৰু সেই operation নকৰিলে আমাৰ প্ৰদেশৰ কি অপকাৰ হব সেইটো জানিব পৰা নাই। সেই নিমিত্তেই মই এই প্ৰস্তাব আনিছোঁ। মই এইটো জানিব খোজোঁ যে ইমান ডাক্তৰ কোম্পানীক, যি কোম্পানীয়ে ইমান দিন আমাৰ দেশত লাভৰ ব্যৱসায় চলাইছে তাক কোন নাতি অহুসৰণ কৰি আমাৰ গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে বছৰি এই গ্ৰাণ্ট দিয়ে সেইটো বুজিব নোৱাৰোঁ। মই এইয়ে প্ৰস্তাব উত্থাপন কৰিছোঁ এইটো কোনো grudge কৰি বা খিয়াল কৰি কিম্বা আন কোনো উদ্দেশ্যত কৰা নাই। আমাৰ ঘাট পৰা প্ৰদেশৰ পৰা গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে কিয় এই গ্ৰাণ্ট দিব লগাত পৰিছে? ব্ৰহ্মপুত্ৰত জাহাজ চলাচল কৰিব পৰা হবৰ নিমিত্তে এই টকা দিয়া হয় কিন্তু সেইটো Companyৰ স্বাৰ্থহে, গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ নহয়। চলাচলৰ সুযোগ আমাৰ দেশত যথেষ্ট হৈছে সেই নিমিত্তে মোৰ এই আপত্তি গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ আগলৈ উত্থাপন কৰিছোঁ। ইমান ডাক্তৰ Companyক গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে অনর্থক এই টকা কিয় দি থাকে? আমি জানো যে বহুত সময়ত আমাৰ দেশত Drainage আৰু Embankment বিষয়লৈ গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ দৃষ্টি আকৰ্ষণ কৰি কোনো কাৰ্য্যৰ বাবে টানি ধৰিলে কিম্বা কোনো কোনো ঠাইত যদি মথাউৰিৰ প্ৰয়োজন হয় বা নদী ভাল কৰি দিয়াৰ প্ৰয়োজন হয় তেনেহলে গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ টকাৰ অভাৱ বুলি আশংকা কৰ। দেশত বান-পানীৰ উৎপাত যথেষ্ট, মথাউৰি নোহোৱাত অনিষ্ট বহুত; এনে অবস্থাত ঘাট পৰা প্ৰদেশৰ পৰা ইমান ডাক্তৰ কোম্পানীক—যি কোম্পানীয়ে ইমান দিন ইয়াত কাৰ্য্য কৰি যথেষ্ট লাভ কৰিছে—সেই কোম্পানীক কোন নীতি অহুসৰণ কৰি গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে এই টকা দিছে সেইটো আমি বুজিব নোৱাৰোঁ। এই টকা অশ্ৰয় ভাবে দিয়া হৈছে বুলি ভাবি মই এই প্ৰস্তাব উত্থাপন কৰিছোঁ। মোৰ কথা হৈছে যদি সচা সচি টক আমাৰ প্ৰদেশৰ কোনো administrative purposeত এই টকাটো দিয়া হোৱা নাই তেনেহলে এই টকা নামঞ্জুৰ কৰিব লাগে।

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved is that the provision of Rs.5,800 under Grant No.8, Major head—18B.—Navigation, Embankment and Drainage works, Minor head—4.—Grants-in-aid, at page 55 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 5,000, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.47,500 do stand reduced by Rs.5,000.

Mr. W. R. FAULL: Mr. Speaker, Sir. I don't pretend to have understood more than half of what the hon. member said (*laughter*), but in asking the hon. mover to consider the advisability of pressing this motion, I beg leave to remind the House of a few facts and to give some information.

The Steamer Companies, as common carriers, serve all sections of the public, and their prosperity or otherwise, reflects, and is reflected in conditions generally in the public.

Although their chief competitors are often State subsidised or assisted the Steamer Companies have always set and maintained the lower level in freight charges, and this been, to a degree, only possible because of the help afforded by small grants such as the one in question. As an instance it might be noted that last year as much as Rs.1,29,000 was paid by Assam towards the working of the Tangla-Rangapara Railway Short Extension, while this year no less a figure than Rs.77,000 has been earmarked for this purpose.

The grant of Rs.5,000 which used to be considerably larger, is but a small contribution towards the total expenditure involved in the endeavour to maintain good navigable channels, free from snags and other obstructions, not only for the Steamer Companies' use but for use by all craft on the river, and in public interests as a whole.

In the very near future it is hoped to have much improved mechanical means of maintaining good channels and this at considerable cost.

Hon. members, particularly those from the areas served by the rivers, will agree with me when I say—"the better the channels, the better the service; the better the service, the greater the transport facilities offered, and the greater the possibility of offering these facilities, the more the tendency for freights to remain at a low level to the general public good."

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the learned mover of this motion has very rightly said that he has tabled his motion more for want of information than for censure. The history of this grant to the Steamer Companies dates not only to this century but to the century before. I find that as early as 1890, the river Brahmaputra near about Dibrugarh was developing shoals and the whole river was getting unnavigable, and Government was compelled to come to the aid of the Steamer Companies and make them a suitable grant for dredging operation. I find that from 1902 to 1906 a sum of Rs.11,000 used to be spent for this purpose, of which a sum of Rs.3,000 was contributed by the Government or very nearly one-fourth. I find since then till the year 1911 the contribution continued at the rate of Rs.3,000 per year. Then later on it was reduced to Rs.1,500 but finally increased in 1928-29 to Rs.10,000 and again it has been reduced and at present a sum of Rs.5,000 is being granted.

My hon. friend perhaps knows what is bandelling operation and what benefit the general tax-payers of the province are getting from these operations. In a nutshell the bandelling operation is a means of keeping the river navigable throughout the year. That benefits the tax-payers in various ways. All those people who use their country craft—they get a channel in which to ply their boats. Therefore as Mr. Faull, the representative of the Steamer Companies has just now told us, people get the advantage of water-borne traffic which is always cheaper than the railway-borne traffic. When the Government in order to provide facilities for transport, have to give guarantee to the Railways—I can cite one instance which the hon. member himself knows, that for the extension of the Tangla-Belsiri or Rangapara line as it is called, the Eastern-Bengal State Railway demanded an annual guarantee to the extent of Rs.1,75,000 in

order to extend railway transport in that undeveloped area. Government gave that guarantee although on account of recoupment by the Railway from the traffic, the guarantee has come down. Even then we are, as noted in the budget, to pay this Eastern-Bengal State Railway a sum of Rs.77,000 for the next year. The average for the past few years has been a contribution of very nearly 1 lakh per year. Similarly when the Chaparmukh-Silghat Railway was being opened, Government had to give a guarantee for a limited period of, if I remember a right, $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest on the capital outlay. In this way Government have, for the benefit of the general tax-payers, for providing facilities to the passengers as well as good traffic and for affording the cultivators an outlet for their agricultural produce to go outside the country, have to contribute to the carrying companies a certain amount. When with the vote of this House, we have been paying a much bigger sum to the railway administration, why should we cavil at this small amount of Rs.5,000?

The next point is why bandelling operations are undertaken? Whenever there is an obstruction in the river—if the snags or trees that come from the up stream get stuck in the river bed, shoals are formed, the result is that the bed of the river becomes higher and the country becomes more favourable for flooding in the year. Bandelling operations remove the apprehension of floods to a certain extent. This is a great benefit to the tax-payers. Although it may not be so very appropriate in case of big rivers like the Brahmaputra, small rivers like the Kalang and Dikhu, as we are aware, remained blocked with snags and become impassable for country rafts and country boats even. I remember that these tributaries, Dikhu and Kalang used to be cleared by the Steamer Companies and the same is done in the rivers in the Surma Valley.

Srijut PURNA CHANDRA SARMA: Is the mouth of Kalang cleared when it is closed by snags?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, when necessary. In this connection I may point out that according to the reports which the Steamer Companies send to the Government they spend on average a sum of Rs.39,000 annually for this purpose. In 1935-36 they spent Rs.39,407 and in 1936-37 Rs.39,676. In other words we now contribute about one-eighth whereas earlier, the proportion used to be one-fourth.

In view of the explanation I have given, I hope my hon. friend will see the necessity of this contribution of Rs.5,000 to the Steamer Companies for keeping our great rivers and tributaries free and provide a navigable channel throughout the year.

Srijut MAHADEV SARMA: In view of what I have heard from the Hon'ble Chief Minister, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I hope, the hon. member has got leave of the House to withdraw the motion.

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

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: I beg, Sir, to move that the provision of Rs.6,000 under Grant No. 8, Major head—18B.—Navigation Embankments and Drainage Works, Minor head—2—Extensions and improvements, at page 55 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.47,500 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, the object of my motion is to criticise the Government for not taking action for drainage, etc., and for not acting upon the recommendation of the Flood Enquiry Committee of 1929.

Sir, I am almost tired of repeating the arguments about the urgency of the problem but we find that the caravan passes on merrily and we on the wayside raise our voice of protest for nothing. The Flood Enquiry Committee have recommended the formation of waterways division and the appointment of experienced Irrigation Engineer. The Committee were also of opinion that our embankments do aggravate the effects of floods and obstruct the water passage so that this problem ought to have been carefully investigated by Government by establishing a separate Department for that. No Irrigation Officer has been appointed up till now and the whole question has been deferred for want of funds. They recommended additional opening in public roads Railways I think none of these recommendations have been given effect to by Government and the report of the Flood Enquiry Committee has been shelved in this way. The question of Flood and Irrigation is the most vital problem concerning us and it is most disgraceful that Government has put off this project. Several provincial Governments contracted loan to meet the expenditure on irrigation schemes. Our Chief Minister is aware of Sukkur Barrage Scheme in Sindh. He knows that the Central Government have spent huge sums of money on Irrigation purpose there because they are productive expenditure. He also knows that in Bengal also they have already formed their Irrigation schemes.

So I expect that Government would take urgent measure to deal with this question. With these words I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved is that the provision of Rs. 6,000 under Grant No. 8, Major head—18B.—Navigation, Embankments and Drainage Works, Minor head—2—Extensions and improvements, at page 55 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 47,500 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

Srijut MAHI CHANDRA BORA: Sir, I want to speak on this motion. Almost an identical motion stands in my name.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved has particular reference to the Flood Enquiry Committee of 1929. That Enquiry Committee generally dealt with the question of flood relating to particular areas. Very well the hon. member may speak.

Srijut MAHI CHANDRA BORA: Sir, it has pained me to observe that though the flood has become almost an annual event in some parts of the province, no systematic attempts have, I believe, been made by Government to solve this perennial problem. When flood comes with all its horrors people in agony cry for help and some relief committees by the public are formed to remove their distress and miseries and in cases of emergency Government also come forward reluctantly to issue gratuitous relief in a limited measure and grant agricultural loans to be realised afterwards with all the vengeance. With the subsidence of flood the miserable masses of humanity are left to themselves and this problem remains a problem for ever. But the economic condition of the people can never be improved unless men and their cattle are protected from recurring floods and in this respect I should request the Government that they should translate at least some of the recommendations of their experts into action. This will not entail a heavy expenditure on Government.

Maulavi ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have not got much faith for the Irrigation Department or the scheme that is likely to cost Government Rs. 2 lakhs. Such big department, if established, may appropriate the entire amount only to run their own institution. I have little to say on this but I should like to say that enthusiasm must be brought and stimulus must be infused to our lethargic and

indifferent people. That can be done if our public officers are inspired with a spirit of service to humanity. Without going into the embankment and drainage schemes of the province as a whole I wish only to confine myself to selected drainages that are now scattered all over the district of Sylhet. Not long ago I think the Government wanted to convince us of their experience in Nowgong. I am not going to be convinced by the result of such experiment. The situation in Nowgong is not the same as that in Sylhet. I shall only draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister that so far as the situation of Brahmanbaria is concerned the Irrigation scheme came to the benefit of the people. The first and foremost concern of Government is to protect the lives of the cultivators in proper time. It is no good to be charitable after floods have overtaken them and then Government should spend large sums of money in the way of gratuitous relief and agricultural loans only to be realised with all the rigour by the officers of Government later on. I wish only to say that if our popular officers liberally take up the service in a spirit of sacrifice then I think much can be done. I am sure, so far as the district of Sylhet is concerned, Government need not spend lakhs and lakhs. I hope Government will take up little drainage works scattered all over the district and I think, we cannot censure Government. We for ourselves have been to some extent responsible in this matter. Our people, I should say, are also a bit indifferent to their condition. This is due probably to illiteracy and they themselves are not very much conscious of their own difficulties and differences and these problems should be taken up in right earnest.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member has exceeded his time. There are only five minutes and the Hon'ble Chief Minister has to reply.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: Can I get one minute, Sir?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: No; because the Hon'ble Chief Minister is to reply.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: I will only take 60 seconds, Sir, and not more. (Laughter.)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member has already taken 10 seconds. (Laughter.)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have got the greatest regard for the hon. mover of this motion and I want to profit by his acute knowledge of industry and finance, but this particular cut motion has made me rather dubious whether I should not withdraw my admiration. The report of the Flood Enquiry Committee of 1929 was published in 1930 and since then the previous Government had been doing whatever possible to carry out its recommendation into action. We have come only the other day. We have not yet completed one full year. So I do not see any reason why the hon. members should criticise and censure us for the lapses if any of the last seven years. This motion is nothing but flogging a dead horse. I hope my hon. friends will see the logic of my argument in this matter. I would be really at one with him if he could point out that by having an Irrigation Department, we would be able to bring in water where necessary and drain it away where it is not necessary and thereby we would be able to increase the revenue of the province and the fertility of the soil. In that case we would go up for a loan and start an Irrigation Branch but the example of Sukkur Barrage which he has quoted is not germane to the subject which we are dealing. His keen observation has most probably lost sight of what appeared only two days ago in the papers about the Punjab Irrigation Department where they spent twelve crores of rupees in one project and have irrigated two

lacs of acres in an area, which has produced crop valued at six crores. If we had a problem like that I would be the first person to agree with my hon. friend and start an Irrigation Branch and take up the irrigation work. But our problem is not like that. My hon. friend perhaps knows about the topographical situation of the district of Sylhet. In the previous Council I have many times said that the contour of the district of Sylhet is just like a cup—hollow in the centre and high walls on all sides. I should only mention that the North Cachar Hills is on one side and the Tippera hills on the other not to speak of the famous Khasi and Jaintia Hills which have got the highest rainfall in the world. Therefore, there is no wonder that Sylhet suffers from floods very often. After the last big flood of 1929, a Committee of Inquiry was instituted and their recommendation barring the main one of starting an Irrigation Department has been carried out. It is not accurate for my hon. friend to say that the complaints about the bridges and water-ways on the railways have not been remedied.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: All have not yet been done.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I find, Sir, that in the Surma Valley as many as eight bridges and openings were widened and water logging in the neighbourhood has been removed. These are, Sir, the recommendations of the Inquiry Committee consisting of experts.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: All of them have not been widened.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We had a scheme showing that if we can get two lakhs of rupees we can start an Irrigation Department. Since then our Chief Engineer has further gone into the matter and has advised that a small beginning in the direction can be made if we can get half a lakh of rupees for non-recurring and about Rs. 70,000 for recurring but this staff will not be able to carry out any project of a big nature and what is more, an expert shall have to be called or appointed who will swallow up much of the amount. In that case I suppose my hon. friend will say that whatever money has been budgeted is going to be spent after the officer. With these words, I request my hon. friend to withdraw this censure motion because it is an action of the past eight years over which we had no control.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: The Hon'ble Chief Minister was also in the Cabinet at that time. Are we to understand that we are left to our fate?

Maulavi ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY: Does the motion relate only to past Flood Enquiry Committee?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: No. That point has also been answered. What does the hon. mover want to do about his motion?

(There was no reply.)

The question is that the provision of Rs. 6,000 under grant No. 8, Major head—18B.—Navigation, Embankments and Drainage Works, Minor head—2.—Extensions and improvements at page 55 of the budget be reduced by Rs. 100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 47,500 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

The motion was lost.

The question is that a sum not exceeding Rs. 47,500 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March, 1939 for the administration of the Head 18B.—Navigation, Embankments and Drainage Works,

The motion was agreed to.

Nine grants are to be dealt with in half an hour's time. There are no cut motions to two of the grants. So for the remaining seven grants I shall allot four minutes to each grant. (Laughter.)

GRANT NO. 6

(12.—CHARGES ON ACCOUNT OF MOTOR VEHICLES TAXATION ACT.)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,32,500 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March, 1939 for the administration of the head 'charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act.'

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved is that a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,32,500 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March, 1939 for the administration of the head 'charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act.'

There is a motion standing in the name of Srijut Lakshesvar Boroah. Is he going to move it?

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROAH: I beg, Sir, to move that the provision of Rs. 6,171 under Grant No. 6, Major head—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, Minor head—B.—Inspection of Motor Vehicles (total), at page 52 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 51, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 2,32,500 do stand reduced by Rs. 51.

Sir, the Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation Act and the rules made thereunder are of recent introduction in the province. Since these rules came into force we have been hearing complaints from the drivers and owners of motor vehicles that they are very stringent and the strict operation of these rules hampers the carrying on of their business. Sir, when the harassment brought upon the taxi owners and bus owners by the operation of the rules on drivers at Dibrugarh became unbearable they went on a strike recently in December last and I had the opportunity of enquiring into their grievances. Their main grievance is that drivers are prosecuted for over-loading cases whereas the owners who are interested in over-loading should be held responsible for it. Their second grievance is the pitch enhancement of the rate of taxation. From buses allowed to carry 20 passengers to buses allowed to 25 is abnormally high. The tax of the former is Rs. 75 and the latter Rs 150. Their third grievance is that police who are entrusted with the control of business over do their part. These stringent rules and the strict and random application of them have made the business of the taxi owners and bus drivers a losing concern. Therefore, I appeal to the Hon'ble Premier to see that these grievances of the bus owners and taxi drivers are removed by modifying the rules.

Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL: We also like the revision of these rules.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved is that the provision of Rs. 6,171 under Grant No. 6, Major head—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, Minor head—B.—Inspection of Motor Vehicles (total), at page 52 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 51, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 2,32,500 do stand reduced by Rs. 51.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, under section 11 of the Motor Vehicles Act the rules were preliminarily

published in the Gazette before they were finally adopted. If all these criticisms had come at that time, they would have been considered.

(A Voice—There is yet time.)

Even now I am prepared to reconsider the points raised by the hon. mover and also any other points to be raised by other members.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: If there is any violation of the rules, not only the driver is fined but also the owner is very heavily fined. There was a case where the driver was fined Rs.10 whereas the owner was fined Rs. 100. (Laughter.)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have noted all these suggestions.

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: In view of the statement made by the Hon'ble the Premier I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question before the House is that a sum not exceeding Rs.2,32,500 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head "Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act."

The motion was agreed to.

GRANT No. 7.

(RAILWAYS)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.25 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head "Railways."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion before the House is that a sum not exceeding Rs. 25 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head "Railways".

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: I do not like to move the motion* standing in my name, Sir. May I be permitted to speak on the next motion which is more general?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member does not like to move. Srijut Debeswar Sarmah may move his motion.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: I beg, Sir, to move that the total provision of Rs.25 under Grant No. 7, Major head—15A.—State Railways and 15D.—Miscellaneous Railway Expenditure, at page 53 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1.

I want to criticise Railway Administration for not taking in local people into service, for withdrawing Second Class accommodation for the Assam-Bengal Railway, for not improving the Inter and Third Class accommodation, for not adequately opening level crossings and for giving mono-

*That the total provision of Rs.25 under Grant No. 7, Major head—15A.—State Railways and 15D.—Miscellaneous Railway Expenditure, at page 53 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs. 2.

(To criticise the defective timing of the Jorhat Provincial Railway for passengers of the Ferry Steamer.)

poly to particular bus owner at Moriani Station, etc. I hope and trust that the defective timing of the Jorhat Provincial Railway for passengers of the Ferry Steamer to North Lakhimpur should also be rectified.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I wish to point out to the hon. member that Railway Administration is a Central subject. He should deal with other aspects of the question.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: I will deal with other aspects of the question, Sir, namely, criticise the Government for trying to impress on the Railway administration about the importance of the matters I have raised and the public opinion on it. At Moriani station a large plot of land has been given to the Railway by the Land and Revenue Department and the Assam-Bengal Railway having taken advantage of the big enclosure round the Moriani station yard have given monopoly to one particular bus owner in exclusion of the others, thereby causing great trouble and inconvenience to the people. The Land Revenue staff ought to see that the Railway may not take an undue advantage over the land by giving monopoly to one particular bus owner. The bus owner also does not run the bus regularly according to the scheduled timings and sometimes the passengers are deserted on the way for want of petrol. (Laughter.) I myself suffered on one occasion in this way. This particular bus owner has a long purse to manage to get the monopoly and then to evade justice when cases are reported and taken up in Court. Now, I may be permitted to discuss the other aspects also.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Yes, you may discuss level crossing and employment of local people in railway service.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: I ask the present Government to see that in this autonomous province the Railway Administration do not employ people from other provinces. We find that they bring in people from outside the province who do not know the language of our local people and our people do not know Bengali or Hindi and the common passengers are put to great inconveniences and harassment often times, these alien employees often treat our villagers rudely and harshly.

As regards level crossing, I may also say that without adequate level crossing, people are put to great risk. If I remember aright at Jamuguri or somewhere else for want of level crossing there had been more than one serious accidents to motor cars and bullock carts colliding with Railway Engines.

As the Jorhat Provincial Railway do not run the train to the scheduled timing of the ferry which plies on the Brahmaputra, the passengers between Jorhat and North Lakhimpur are put to great inconveniences and troubles.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved is that the total provision of Rs. 25 under grant No. 7, Major head—15A.—State Railways and 15—D.—Miscellaneous Railway Expenditure at page 53 of the budget be reduced by Re. 1.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, to talk about a local grievance, I may mention that the Railways in Assam have made a dictionary. Inasmuch as when a member of the fair sex enters the First and Second Class compartments she is—a lady—and as soon as she enters an Inter class compartment she is a female and as soon as she enters a Third class compartment she is a woman. (Laughter.) This disparity, Sir, in the interest of decency, has got to be removed. Another fact which I want to mention is about the disorderly and indecent condition of the waiting rooms and resting places of the Railways in Assam where no decent human being can very well resort to. That is another point which I want to inculcate upon the Government to look into.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, his is a very comprehensive motion. It is an omnibus cut of five different grievances lumped together. As to the first grievance, *i. e.*, employment of local people in the railway service, I may inform the hon. member that the Assam-Bengal Railway have now employed—3,212 indigenous people, the Eastern-Bengal Railway—491, the Dibru-Sadiya Railway—822, the Tezpur-Balipara Railway—98 and the Jorhat Provincial Railway—217. When this matter was discussed in the last session, we said that we would address the different Railway Agents so that the claims of the local people are considered. We have since done it.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Has the hon. mover got to say anything now?

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: Sir, the Hon'ble Chief Minister has not replied about level crossing.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: As regards the level crossing if the hon. member gives me an indication of the place where he wants it, I will write to the Agent of the Railway.

As regards monopoly in Moriani station yard it has been reported to us that the bus owners in order to get a fair used to quarrel amongst themselves and instead of affording comfort to the passengers put them to great discomfort. It is for that reason that the Railway has restricted the number of buses entering the compound.

(A Voice: There is only one bus concerned, Sir.)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Our information is that there are a number of buses.

(A Voice: Monopoly has been given to one man.)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: However, I will place the discussion on this matter before the Agent of the Railway, and we will also request him that no monopoly should be given.

As regards the ferry, I find from the time-table that the ferry runs only once a day in each direction. There is no difficulty as regards the crossing from Jorhat to North Lakhimpur, but the difficulty comes in when the ferry returns to Kokilamukh. The train starts from Kokilamukh at 13.20 but the ferry arrives at 14.30. But on the road between Kokilamukh and Jorhat there are many buses plying and therefore the people do not find any difficulty. This timing is necessary so as to catch the Up Mail train for Tinsukia at Moriani.....

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: I may inform the Hon'ble Chief Minister that there is only a difference of 5 minutes in the time of the departure of the train and the arrival of the ferry.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If the difference is only 5 minutes, I shall see what can be done. I was quoting from the Railway time-table.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: On the assurance given by the Hon'ble Chief Minister I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

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

The original motion that a sum not exceeding Rs. 25 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head—"Railways" was then put and agreed to.

GRANT No. 13

(30.—PORTS AND PILOTAGE)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,500 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head—"30.—Ports and Pilotage."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved is that a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,500 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939 for the administration of the head "30.—Ports and Pilotage".

Srijut MAHADEV SARMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 2,900 under Grant No. 13, Major head—30.—Ports and Pilotage, Minor head—C.—Pilotage and Pilotage Establishments (total), at page 102 of the Budget be refused, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 6,500 do stand reduced by Rs. 2,900.

Srijut MAHADEV SARMA: সভাপতি ডাঙৰীয়া, মোৰ এই প্ৰস্তাবৰ বিষয়ে memorandum on the Budget Estimates ত দেখা যায় যে গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে এই টকা প্ৰত্যেক বছৰে River Steam Navigation Companyক subsidy হিচাপে দিয়ে। গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ যি বিলাক জাহাজ আছে সেই বিলাক কঢ়িয়াবলৈ এই subsidy দিয়া হয়। কিন্তু গৱৰ্ণমেণ্ট যতিয়া এইটোৰ নিমিত্তে usual charge দিয়ে তাৰ ওপৰি কিয় এই subsidy দিব লগাত পৰে সেই টা মই বুজিব নোৱাৰোঁ। গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টে আগতে ৩,০০০ টকাকৈ গ্ৰাণ্ট দিছিল আৰু এই বছৰ as a measure of economy ১০০ টকা কমোৱা হৈছে। এনে ধৰণৰ ১০০ টকা কমোৱাটোক measure of economy বোলাত আমাৰ আপত্তি আছে। মোৰ ভয় লাগিছে জানোছা এনেকৈ ১০০ শতক টকা কমোৱাত কোম্পানী কিবা বিপদতে পৰে? কিয়নো ইমান ডাঙৰ Economy কৰিব লাগিছে? এনেকৈ টকা কটাত মই হলে আপত্তি কৰোঁ। যুঠতে কোম্পানীয়ে usual charge for carrying Government Vessels যদি দিবই লগাত পৰে তেন্তেহলে নো কিয় আকৌ এই subsidy? সেই কাৰণে এই ২,৯০০ টকা অগ্ৰাণ্ট বা নামঞ্জৰ হ'ব লাগে।

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved is that the provision of Rs. 2,900 under Grant No. 13, Major head—30.—Ports and Pilotage, Minor head—C.—Pilotage and Pilotage establishments (total), at page 102 of the budget be refused, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 6,500 do stand reduced by Rs. 2,900.

Mr. W. R. FAULL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, here I can but reiterate the remarks I made in the case of the grant under the heading "Navigation" and supplement these with a little further information.

Pilotage and Pilotage establishments are maintained at an annual cost exceeding half a lakh of rupees. The channels are marked and lighted so that all craft may ply by day or night, and here again the benefits that accrue to the Steamer Companies and others are recognizable in efficient service of comparatively low freights in the public interest.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, like the previous cut motion, my hon. friend is short of information. This subsidy is given to the Steamer Companies by the Government for measuring the depth of the river at different places and marking the navigable channels by suitable signs and the entertainment of a group of people who go by the name of "Arkatis" in the vernacular who are versed in charting water courses. Hon. members who have travelled by these steamers must have noticed that wherever there is shallow water the Steamer Company has put a mark to indicate danger.

Srijut MAHADEV SARMA: It is for their own interest. But we pay for charges for piloting vessels.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, it is for their own interest, but my hon. friend is mistaken in saying that Government pays for piloting vessels. Government have no steamers now for piloting in the Assam Valley. We have done away with the Brahmakund meant for the Governor and the Kestrel meant for the Commissioner and now there is only the launch Sonamukhi which is towed by steamers of the Company and for which we pay a towing charge. This money is paid for marking the navigable channels, etc. This payment originated with an agreement which the Government had entered into as early as the year 1919, when the Assam Government had several vessels and also ferries. Even now in the other Valley, Government have got two vessels which are used by the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police of the District of Sylhet. However, I think the hon. mover of this cut motion for bringing this matter to our notice, because now that the Government have not got the Brahmakund and have also dispensed with the Kestrel and the Government ferry Nelly there is most probably a case made out to take this matter up with the Steamer Companies with the object of reducing the amount.

The hon. member was very sarcastic in his speech for the reduction of Rs. 100, but he need not be so because that Rs. 100 is paid by the Eastern Bengal Railway which enjoys the benefit of the pilots for their steamers plying between Pandu and Amingaon.

Srijut MAHADEV SARMA: On the assurance given I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

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

The original motion that a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,500 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head—"30.—Ports and Pilotage" was then put and agreed to.

GRANT No. 15

(37.—EDUCATION—EUROPEAN)

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI:

On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.78,100 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head—"37.—Education (European)."

The motion was put and agreed to.

GRANT No. 25

(TOOLS AND PLANT AND ESTABLISHMENT CHARGES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam I beg, Sir, to move.

That a sum not exceeding Rs.7,78,000, be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the Public Works Department (Establishment and Tools and Plant).

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved is—That a sum not exceeding Rs.7,78,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the Public Works Department (Establishment and Tools and Plant).

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: I beg to move:

That the provision of Rs.6,40,358 under Grant No.25, Major head—50.—Civil Works and 81.—Civil Works, Minor head—B.—Charges on construction (total), at page 179 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.2, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.7,78,000 do stand reduced by Rs.2.

My object is to draw the attention of Government to the fact that in spite of repeated assurances given in this House by the Hon'ble the Chief Minister contracts are still being given out to outsiders. These assurances are always readily made in this House but when we go back to our places we find that in violation of all these assurances the contracts continue to be given to outsiders and the Punjabies and other outside people are going on merrily with the big contracts for ever. Even ordinary contracts like collection of gravels and spreading of them over the road surface are given to Punjabies in preference to Assamese and other indigenous people. We have been protesting against such treatment again and again but to no effect. Therefore, I again raise the voice of protest with these words.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved is that the provision of Rs.6,40,358 under Grant No. 25, Major head—50.—Civil Works and 81.—Civil Works, Minor head—B.—Charges on construction (total) at page 179 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.2, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.7,78,000 do stand reduced by Rs. 2.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, I need only read three sentences from the circular which now holds the field as regards distribution of Public Works Department contracts. The circular was issued in April 1934. It says "It is the definite policy of Government to give every encouragement to Assamese and natives of the Surma Valley to take up contract work in their respective valleys of origin".

Then it goes to say: "A competitive rate is essential and where these are tendered by a native of the soil they should be given preference unless there are good reasons for not doing so. It is not sufficient to take up a negative attitude such as the tenderer is not known or has not had contracts before, there should be some good and positive reason for not giving a contract to the lowest tenderer if he is a native of the soil, except that obviously absurd rates must be disregarded".

Again it says: "The most difficult cases are when a native of the province tenders a little above a foreigner; in such cases I think the contract should go to the former if the latter is not an old established and reliable contractor".

This is the policy of Government. My hon. friend mentions that in some subdivisions ordinary contracts for collecting gravel and spreading them over the road have been given to non-natives. If he will only give details I will surely have the matter enquired into. I had similar details of unskilled contract going to outsiders in Golaghat subdivision and I have already started an enquiry. I shall do the same as regards North Lakhimpur if I am supplied with the details.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: What about the Jorhat subdivision, Sir?

Srijut PURANDAR SARMA: And Nowgong?

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: In many instances contracts are given to outsiders even on higher rates even though they are non-natives.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: But I have agreed to look into them if I am given specific instances.

Srijut SARVESWAR SARMA: In view of the assurance, we will take another chance and I beg leave of the House to withdraw the motion.

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

The original motion that a sum not exceeding Rs.7,78,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the Public Works Department (Establishment and Tools and Plant) was then put and agreed to.

GRANT No. 27

(55.—SUPERANNUATION ALLOWANCES AND PENSIONS, ETC.)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA to move:

On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.16,62,300 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head "55.—Superannuation Allowances and Pensions including payment of commuted value of pensions".

The motion was put and agreed to.

GRANT No. 28.

(56.—STATIONERY AND PRINTING)

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI:

On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.3,14,700 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head "56.—Stationery and Printing".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Is any hon. member moving his cut motion? There is no time. I shall put the demand to the House.

The motion was then put and agreed to.

GRANT No. 26

(54A.—FAMINE RELIEF)

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:

On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 50,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head "54A.—Famine Relief".

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: Sir, I beg to move—

That the provision of Rs.34,000 under Grant No.26, Major head—54A.—Famine Relief, Minor head—A.—Famine Relief, Sub-head—(b)—Gratuitous Relief—Detailed head—in other ways at page 183 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.50,000 do stand reduced by Re. 1.

(To criticise Government for not giving adequate relief to the last year flood-stricken people of Jorhat.)

Sir, most of the hon. members had heard that there was a flood of the Bhogdoi river and a good area of the cultivated land was over flooded affecting the paddy and in certain portions cultivation could not be done. Other properties of the people were also considerably damaged. The representations that were sent out to the Government from the district officers were not to the point and they minimised the distress and the loss of the people. But when some of the members of the places concerned reported to the Government then those district officers replied to say that the reports of the hon. members were not correct. It is a fact that till Mr. Cantlie, the Commissioner of the Valley went to the spot, none of the district officers actually took care to visit the affected areas and see things for themselves. When this was brought to the notice of the Government, those district high officials felt injured and later on when Government took the matter they said "the damage was done anyhow and we shall give redress at the time of the next *ah*o paddy and help the people in buying cattle" and so forth. These nice promises were made but as usual not kept up. So I draw the attention of Government to this regrettable aspect of the matter.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved is "that the provision of Rs. 34,000 under Grant No. 26, Major head—54A.—Famine Relief,

Minor head—A.—Famine Relief, Sub-head—(b)—Gratuitous Relief—Detailed head—in other ways at page 183 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 50,000 do stand reduced by Re.1.”

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: Sir, what my friend Srijut Debeswar Sarmah has said as regards the Bhogdoi floods is equally true with regard to the floods in the North Lakhimpur subdivision. There also the relief given is very inadequate and the local officers tried their utmost to minimise the damages and the distress of the people and consequently the measure of relief required.

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am sure it will not be necessary for me to defend Government at any great length in this matter. I am just reading a few lines from a letter addressed by the hon. mover of this motion to the Government on the subject. This letter is dated the 4th of October 1937. It runs:—“All thanks are due to the Government for bestowing speedy attention and sanctioning money for the relief of the flood-distressed people. But the local officers, I mean the district and subdivisional officers, particularly at Jorhat and Sibsagar, by their negligence and callousness nullify the best intentions of the Government to lend a helping hand to the suffering humanity.” In another letter, Sir, he drew the attention of the Government to the fact that before the Commissioner who was asked by the Government to visit the locality actually visited the flood-stricken areas, no officer went to the place. But I am afraid, Sir, that my hon. friend was not correctly informed.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: I was absolutely correctly informed. I demanded a public enquiry on the matter.

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: My friend was at Shillong when the flood had actually come on and he was in the same place until the 19th September, on which date only he arrived at the locality. We have here the diary from different officers and a letter addressed to the Commissioner on the 24th of August 1937. In that letter the Deputy Commissioner mentioned to the Commissioner the places which he had actually visited. I cannot for a moment believe that the Deputy Commissioner can fabricate that information and address that false letter to the Commissioner anticipating that such a remark, as has been made by the hon. member, may be made later on. The remark of the hon. mover was made some time in October 1937, but the date of the letter of the Deputy Commissioner was the 24th of August, shortly after the flood had taken place at Bhogdoi on the 17th or 18th. The Deputy Commissioner wrote to the Commissioner about the places he had visited.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: Sir, I demanded a public enquiry to substantiate that my report was correct. The Deputy Commissioner did not actually leave his motor car and go to the over-flooded area before the Commissioner went.

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, there is the diary of the Deputy Commissioner and he could not have anticipated that my hon. friend would make such a criticism some time later. These circumstances speak another Sir. We have also got the reports of several Sub-Deputy Collectors and the Subdivisional Officers of Golaghat and Sibsagar, and they have written several weeks before this remark was actually made by the hon. mover.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Will the Hon'ble Minister finish?
The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Yes, Sir. I will finish soon. After that there was a discussion between the hon. mover and the Deputy Commissioner, which the Government had suggested.

All that the hon. mover then suggested was that all the people of the flood-affected areas should be fed gratuitously for a month more. But there was.....

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: Only for a month more, Sir, and nothing else?

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Yes.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: That is a lying statement.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Is that Parliamentary, Sir?

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: I will repeat it, Sir, because I demanded a public enquiry on the matter which the Government was not pleased to permit.

The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Our officers were going out in all places to give relief. But no self-respecting people will try to take gratuitous relief. Every one did not take. What can we do in the circumstances? The money is there in the hands of the Deputy Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner said—“at this time they are not in need of gratuitous relief, but there may be necessity of such relief after the harvest”. We are watching the situation now. The money is already in the hands of the Deputy Commissioner and he will grant gratuitous relief in deserving cases.

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: If you believe them, you do not believe the people.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Does the hon. member want to press his motion?

Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH: Yes, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is that the provision of Rs.34,000 under Grant No.26, Major head—54A.—Famine Relief, Minor head—A.—Famine Relief, Sub-head—(b)—Gratuitous Relief—Detailed head—in other ways at page 183 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.50,000 do stand reduced by Re.1.

The motion was lost.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I now put the original motion, namely, that a sum not exceeding Rs.50,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the head “54A.—Famine Relief.”

The motion was agreed to.

GRANT No.14

(36.—Scientific Department)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.3,800 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the “Scientific Departments”.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved is that a sum not exceeding Rs.3,800 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the “Scientific Departments”.

There are two cut motions. Instead of moving the cut motions the hon. members may speak on the motion itself.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this ancient land of Kamrup, which covers the present province of Assam as well as a considerable portion of Eastern and Northern Bengal, is replete with ancient relics. Practically the ancient history of this province is lying buried under the old bricks and stones, sometimes in the midst of deep jungles, all over the land. Similarly manuscript, *Puthis* another best material of ancient history, are also lying scattered all over the province and are rapidly being devoured by fire, flood and white ants. And I am afraid if speedy steps are not taken most of these valuable relics will soon become extinct for want of collection and preservation.

With a view mainly to save these relics from destruction and to carry on research work of unearthing the ancient history of this province, Sir, that the Kamrup Anusandhan Samiti was founded. This Samiti, Sir, is the only society of this nature in the province, and as such it is entitled to get all possible assistance from the Government coffers. The annual grant of Rs.1,900 which has been made by Government to the Samiti is quite inadequate for the vast work that is lying before it, the speedy execution of which requires exclusively the services of an able officer. So with a view to draw the serious attention of the Government to this urgent duty of preserving these valuable ancient relics of the province from destruction that I have brought this motion for the acceptance of this hon. House.

I may also add in this connection, Sir, that the sum of Rs.600 granted by the Government to the Assam Sahitya Sabha, in spite of their earnest request for more, is quite inadequate. I would therefore request the Government to see their way to increase these grants to an adequate extent.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, I am one with my hon. friend who has just spoken in regard to his statement that Assam is full of material for research. As a matter of fact that is why this Kamrup Anusandhan Samiti was established and that is also why the Government have been granting contribution to that institution. The Sahitya Sabha is a literary society and Government has been giving a contribution to this society as well. The monumental work of this society was the publishing of a dictionary of the Assamese language. Most hon. members will agree with me that since the production of this book no new book has appeared, although Government contribution is still continuing. If we find any renewed activity of the Assam Sahitya Sabha, Government will take this request into consideration.

As regards the Anusandhan Samity, when a museum in Assam is built this society will be tagged on to the museum and the question of increasing the grant will come as soon as the museum is established. I can give this assurance to my hon. friend.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is that a sum not exceeding Rs.3,800 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1939, for the administration of the "Scientific Departments".

The motion was agreed to.

Adjournment

The Assembly then adjourned for 15 minutes

After adjournment

Presentation of supplementary statement of expenditure

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, under the provision of section 81 of the Government of India Act, I have to place the supplementary financial statement before the House to-day for its consideration by the hon. members at a subsequent date. Hon. members have been supplied with two such lists, one appertaining to the excluded areas over which we have no power to vote, and the other is for the purpose of administering the included areas or the areas over which the present Constitution functions. I am making a general statement on behalf of my colleagues and each supplementary demand item is accompanied by explanatory notes which will show the necessity for which we have to come before the House. As I do not want to repeat what has been mentioned in these explanatory notes, I will cut short my speech by saying that there is no controversial item in this list excepting one item, item No. 4, which will be moved by my Hon'ble Colleague the Minister in charge, Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri. That relates to the supplementary demand which was placed before the House in the form of a message from His Excellency the Governor. So far as the Ministry is concerned, we dissociate ourselves and undertake no responsibility for this item, but as I mentioned the other day, we want to give the House a chance of expressing their views by their votes. That is why it would be formally moved by my Hon'ble Colleague.

The current year was unusual in more respects than one. This was the beginning of the new Reforms, and the expenditure which would be required for the administration of the Province could not be properly gauged at the time when estimates were framed. The House is aware that for the first six months of the year His Excellency framed a Budget which continued till the end of August. It was in the August session that we produced a hurried budget for the rest of the year which was placed before the House. Of course, the figures that were supplied to hon. members, *i.e.*, the estimates framed by me took into account the figures provided in His Excellency's budget. On most matters our Budget estimates have either been exceeded and in some places due to audit objections we have to come before the House. There is money in the Budget to carry out particular projects. In one of the instances the necessity for the expenditure which we now place before the House was unforeseen. These are the reasons why we have been compelled to come before the House with these lists of supplementary demand. As hon. members will get a chance of discussing all these items on the 4th March, I would not detain the House any further.

Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: On a point of information, Sir, I think our impression was that the Hon'ble Chief Minister gave an assurance that he was not going to move the supplementary demand for Com-
Colleague Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri will move that demand. I want to know whether he is going to move it in his personal capacity or as a representative of the Cabinet.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:
As a representative of His Excellency the Governor.

Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: As a Minister of the Cabinet or as a private individual ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:
He is here as a representative of the Cabinet. At the time I gave the assurance he was not included in the Cabinet and now he has just been included. He will move on His Excellency's behalf.

Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: I wanted to know whether he will move in his individual capacity or on behalf of the Cabinet.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: All these questions will be discussed when the demand is moved. There will be a discussion and answers may then be had from the Minister concerned on this question.

Adjournment

The Assembly then adjourned till 11 a.m., on Tuesday, the 1st March 1938.

Shillong,

15th April 1938.

A. K. BARUA,

Secretary, Assam Legislative Assembly.