

**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, at 2 p.m. on Friday, the 18th February, 1938.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**STARRED QUESTIONS**

(to which oral answers were given)

**Industrial Research for the Province**

**Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN** asked :

- \*26. Will the Hon'ble Minister please state—  
 (a) The steps taken by Government for the Industrial research of the province ?  
 (b) If no steps have been taken, do Government propose to appoint a committee of experts for the purpose ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI** replied :

26. (a)—None except evolving some hybrid races of silk worms in the Titabar farm and eliminating diseases from seeds in model rearing houses.  
 (b)—The point raised will be examined.

**Total number of employees in the Survey Department**

**Srijut GHANASHYAM DAS** asked :

- \*27. Will Government be pleased to state :—  
 (a) The total number of employees in the Survey Department of Assam ?  
 (b) How many of these above the rank of Khalasees are inhabitants of Assam, and how many are Assamese ?  
 (c) The total number of Khalasees employed during the last three years—year by year and how many of them are *bona fide* residents of the Province and how many of them are Assamese ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** replied :

27. (a)—85 excluding the temporary field menial establishment recruited temporarily for about 6 months annually.  
 (b)—Inhabitants of Assam 45 (including 10 domiciled).  
 (c)—

Year	Total No. of Khalasis recruited	No. of <i>bona fide</i> residents of the province	No. of Assamese
1935-36	...		
1936-37	87	13	9
1937-38	75	16	7
	81	19	16

**Total number of Mandals working in the province**

**Srijut GHANASHYAM DAS** asked :

- \*28 Will Government please state—  
 (a) The total number of Mandals working in the Province ?  
 (b) How many of them had the certificate required by rule 13 of the Land Records Manual, at the time of their appointment ?  
 (c) The total number of passed students from the Jhalukbari Training School remaining unemployed ?
- \*29. (a) Is it a fact that of late some appointments have gone to unpassed men ?  
 (b) If so, do Government propose to stop this manner of appointment forthwith ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** replied :

28. (a)—1,230.  
 (b)—The informations have been called for from the districts and will be supplied to the hon. member when received.  
 (c)—No record is kept of the subsequent career of students in the Jhalukbari School.
29. (a)—Unpassed men are occasionally employed provisionally for various reasons (often for lack of passed local men) but always on the understanding that they will qualify within a reasonable time. There has been no recent alteration in this practice.  
 (b)—Government can give no such undertaking, though every attempt will be made to provide for passed candidates who are otherwise suitable.
- Srijut GHANASHYAM DAS** : Are Government aware that there are some passed men from Jhalukbari without any employment ?  
**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** : There may be, Sir, such men.
- Maulavi Syed ABDUR ROUF** : Are Government aware that the number of immigrant mandals is very negligible ?  
**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** : I know, Sir, that there are a few immigrant mandals.
- Maulavi Syed ABDUR ROUF** : Will Government kindly see that sufficient number of immigrant mandals be taken up in the department ?  
**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** : So far as I know, there is no bar to their appointment provided they are otherwise qualified, and eligible under rules relating to Government appointments.
- Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH** : Are we to understand that Government appointed unpassed mandals in preference to passed ones ?  
**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** : No, Sir.
- Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH** : Is it not a fact that overlooking the claims of some passed people, some unpassed mandals were appointed ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** : I am not prepared to admit that Sir, as a general proposition.

**Re agricultural indebtedness in Cachar District**

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA** asked :

- \*30. Will Government be pleased to state the extent of agricultural indebtedness in the district of Cachar ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** replied :

30.—If the hon. member is referring to Agricultural loans and the indebtedness of *ryots* to Government in Cachar, the reply is that all outstanding loans have been written off

If he refers to the general condition of indebtedness, Government have no information later in date than those given in paragraph 33 of the Report of the Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee of 1929-30. As noted in paragraph 35 of that report, however, these figures are misleading for Cachar, as they were collected just after the flood of 1929.

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA** : May I submit, Sir, that the paragraph which is referred to by the Hon'ble Minister is misleading in that it relates to a certain economic survey said to have been made only in the Hailakandi subdivision in Cachar years ago and does not cover my question ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** : As I have already said in my reply, we have no information later than that report which is a misleading one for various reasons because the figures were collected just after the flood of 1929.

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA** : Is not the position taken up by the Hon'ble Minister irreconcilable in view of the fact that he has been pleased to wipe out various agricultural loans *in toto* in the present year ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** : I could not quite follow the hon. member.

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA** : The Hon'ble Minister said that the figures are misleading because they were collected after the flood of 1929. Does not the Hon'ble Minister admit by wiping out the agricultural loans that acute financial distress in that district still continues as before ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** : That was not the question put. I have explained so far as the indebtedness on the head of agricultural loans was concerned. As regards the general agricultural indebtedness we have no other materials excepting what is given in that report because no subsequent general inquiry was made.

**UNSTARRED QUESTIONS**

(to which answers were laid on the table)

**Re " Model Villages "**

**Babu LALIT MOHAN KAR** asked :

31. Will Government be pleased to state—  
 (a) Whether sites for organising model villages in accordance with the new scheme have been finally selected ?

- (b) If so, will Government please give the names of those selected, in the districts of Sylhet and Cachar with the names of the *parganahs* within which they are situated ?
- (c) The considerations that prevailed in making such selections ?
- (d) Whether the details worked out for organising model villages have been finally settled ?
- (e) If so, what are they ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI** replied :

31. (a)—No.  
 (b) & (c)—Do not arise.  
 (d)—No.  
 (e)—Does not arise.

**Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED** : Sir, is it a fact that certain funds were allotted in the current year's budget for model villages ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI** : No fund was allotted particularly for model villages in the current year's budget.

**Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED** : Is it not a fact that funds were allotted for rural reconstruction in the current year's budget ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI** : Funds allotted in the budget were not particularly for that purpose.

**Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED** : Sir, I want a ruling from the Chair, why the Hon'ble Minister wants notice of the question.

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI** : I have not asked for any notice on any question.

**Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI** : Is it not a fact that a Special Officer is being appointed to formulate a scheme regarding village reconstruction ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI** : Yes, Sir, a Special Officer has been appointed.

**Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED** : Sir, may I have the reply from the Hon'ble Minister to my last question ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI** : Will the hon. member please repeat his last question ?

**Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED** : Is it a fact that funds were allotted for the rural reconstruction scheme in the current year's budget ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI** : Funds were allotted for the purpose.

**Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED** : May I know from the Hon'ble Minister how those funds have been utilised ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI** : The Rural Reconstruction Officers have been appointed and Government have probably been paying for their salaries out of those funds.

**Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED** : May I know, Sir, whether the funds were allotted only for the salaries of the officers who have been appointed for the purpose and not for other purpose ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA** : May I reply on behalf of my Hon'ble Colleague ? Funds were allotted in the budget for the salaries of the Officers as well as for other rural uplift works,

but not a single farthing could be spent out of them. I have mentioned in my budget speech that by an unfortunate oversight the sum of Rs.10,000 voted by the Assembly for the model village scheme was put under 57.—Miscellaneous which meant that the money could only be drawn and spent by the village authorities. As the village authorities could not be constituted, the Special Officer could not spend a single farthing of it. My hon. friend Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya criticised this.

**Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED** : If that is so, why did not the Hon'ble Minister advertise that funds were allotted for rural reconstruction scheme ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA** : There is no need to advertise about that. The funds are still there and it was only through an oversight the sums were misplaced.

**Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED** : May I know whether it is still the desire of the Hon'ble Minister to utilise the money for the purpose ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA** : Yes, it is still the wish of the Government to utilise the money for the purpose of rural uplift, otherwise they would not have appointed the Special Officer to draw up a scheme.

**Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH** : When was the Special Officer appointed ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA** : In December last.

**Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH** : What has he been doing so long ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA** : He has been touring round the province and collecting materials to draw up a scheme. Hon. members are aware that a conference was held sometime in June last and since then the scheme has been taken up and a Special Officer has been appointed.

**Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED** : May I know what is the salary of the Special Officer ? Is it Rs.1,000 per mensem ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA** : It is not Rs.1,000 but a little less than that.

**Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED** : Is it a fact that in the next year's budget Rs.25,000 have been allotted for the purpose ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA** : Yes, Sir, we have estimated Rs.25,000 for the purpose.

**Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED** : Is it a fact that out of Rs.25,000 nearly Rs.18,000 will be spent towards the salary of the Special Officer ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA** : Not necessarily, Sir. If we had taken a substitute during the last year, the money would have been spent, but we did not take any substitute.

**Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH** : What is in the contemplation of Government whether they would take a substitute or not ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA** : It has not yet been decided.

**Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI** : May we know, Sir, what schemes of rural development have been drawn by the Special Officer ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA** : Sir, the Special Officer has gone round the province to draw up a report and the report would have been in the hands of Government very soon but unfortunately for the last 10 days the Special Officer has been lying very ill.

**Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI:** Is it a fact that 17 sites have been selected for the model villages?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:** No, Sir after the conference they communicated selection of 17 sites but that is not final.

**Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA:** May we know, Sir, the places which have been selected for the constitution of the model village?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:** That has not yet been definitely decided.

**Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN:** May we know when it will be done?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:** As soon as we receive the report from the Special Officer.

**Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN:** May we know what are the criterions for selecting the sites?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:** There are various criterions which cannot be said in reply to one question.

#### Realisation of land revenue in Tezpur Subdivision

**Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS** asked :

32. Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge be pleased to state—

(a) The total amount of land revenue demand in the Tezpur Subdivision during the years 1936-37, 1937-38 and 1938-39?

(b) The total amount collected annually for the following years, 1933-34, 1934-35, 1935-36, 1936-37, 1937-38?

(c) The amount of land revenue realised from the *rai-yots* in Silabandha and Sakomath Mouzas but not deposited with Government, when the Mouzadars, namely Srijuts Golok Ch. Bora and Ghana Kanta Bora respectively of the above mouzas were removed from office?

(d) For how many years the said amount has accumulated?

(e) Whether there is any arrangement for regular inspection of Mouzadars' account?

(f) The names of other mouzas and the amount where land revenue realised from *rai-yots* was not deposited with Government for the years 1934-35, 1935-36, 1936-37 and 1937-38?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** replied :

32. (a) & (b)—A statement showing demands and collections up to 1936-37 is laid on the table—For the year 1937-38, it is presumed that owing to the late sanction of the reduction of revenue, the Deputy Commissioner has not yet finished calculations. The demand for 1938-39 is not now due for calculation.

#### Statement showing demand and collection of land revenue in the Tezpur Subdivision

Year	Current		Total
	demand	collection	
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1933-34	...	7,85,923	7,78,072
1934-35	...	7,99,800	7,91,201
1935-36	...	8,07,576	8,51,440
1936-37	...	8,21,116	8,55,153

(c) & (d)—According to the Deputy Commissioner's report Srijut Golok Chandra Bora and Srijut Ghana Kanta Bora defalcated for Rs. 14,431/12/3 and Rs. 12,355/5/0 respectively up to 1341 B. S. The liability ran from many years past but on pressure arrears up to 1339 B. S. were cleared. It appears that these sums were collected and not credited but without a further reference to the Deputy Commissioner which would entail more delay, it is impossible to be more explicit.

(e)—Yes.

(f)—The Mauzadars of Dhekiajuli, Behaguri, Biswanath, Gahpur and Mahabhairab did not deposit in full the amounts realised from the *ryots* for the years 1935-36 and 1936-37 for the reason that they utilised a portion of the current collections to meet the dues of the mauzas for the depression years. The actual figures cannot now be given of past years. It may be stated that it seems to have become a common practice with almost all Mauzadars to make such temporary use of their collections. But finally, if they cannot square up the accounts, they are charged with misappropriation of Government money.

**Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS:** The Government reply to my question No. 32 (e) is "Yes". Will Government be pleased to state how could the defalcated money accumulate, if there was any arrangement at all?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** Presumably, Sir, the defalcation could not be detected at the time of inspection.

**Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS:** Who checks the accounts of the Mauzadars?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** Generally the Deputy Commissioner inspects the Mauzadar's office, but sometimes he deposes the Circle Officer also and occasionally the Commissioner also inspects the Mauzadar's office.

**Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS:** Did the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang inspect the Mauzadar's accounts regularly?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** Presumably, Sir, he did that, but that question has not been asked.

**Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA:** May I know whether it is not an offence to utilise temporarily the current collections to meet the dues for the depression years?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** Technically speaking, it is an offence, but it is allowed as the Mauzadars square up their accounts afterwards.

**Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA:** Supposing a Mauzadar has misappropriated a certain amount of the collections, will he not be hauled up under the criminal law?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** As a matter of fact, Mauzadars are hauled up under the criminal law for not crediting the collections into the treasury, and I personally know that in some cases there were convictions. If Government find that the money which has been collected by the Mauzadar as current year's dues has not been credited into the treasury for the current year but credited for the previous year, then dishonesty is attributed to the Mauzadar.

**Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI:** In view of the fact that several such defalcations have taken place, do Government think it desirable to entrust the same officers with such responsible work?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** Government are trying to do their best in this matter.

**Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS** asked :

33. Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge be pleased to state the amount of demand from grazing dues in Tezpur Subdivision and the total amount of arrears of grazing dues for the following years 1933-34, 1934-35, 1935-36 ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** replied :

33.—The figures are—

				Demand from grazing dues	Arrears of grazing dues		
				Rs.	Rs.	a.	p.
1933-34	...	...	...	24,695	nil		
1934-35	...	...	...	27,751	154	8	0
1935-36	...	...	...	29,531	331	4	0

**Srijut MAHADEV SARMA** : Will the Hon'ble Minister please state the reasons why the demands for grazing dues are increasing annually from 1933-34 onwards steadily ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** : Possibly there has been increase in the number of cattle.

**Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS** asked :

34. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of land sale cases, the area of land sold, the area of land where previous pattas were annulled during the last three years from 1934 for non-payment of land revenue in each of the Mauzas of the Tezpur Subdivision ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI** replied :

34.—The numbers of land sale cases are—

1934-35	...	...	...	...	...	3,261
1935-36	...	...	...	...	...	8,082
1936-37	...	...	...	...	...	5,577

Figures for mauzas are not available separately, and the areas of lands sold or annulled cannot be worked out without considerable delay and undue labour.

#### Removal of Karimganj Civil Court Buildings

**Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN** asked :

35. Will Government be pleased to refer to the replies given to the unstarred questions No.988-992 by Babu Kamini Kumar Sen in the last August Session of the Assembly regarding the removal of Karimganj Civil Court buildings and state—

(a) Whether it is a fact that the two rooms with an area of 585 sq.ft. each are available on the two sides of the Illam Office which can accommodate the two Civil Courts which at present occupy an area of 542 sq.ft. each ?

(b) Whether it is a fact that besides those two side rooms which can be converted into two Court rooms, the other rooms available in the Illam Office building can be made quite sufficient for accommodation of the offices of the Civil Court only with slight additions and alterations ?

36. Will Government be pleased to state whether in the Sylhet District, there are several stations, where Courts are being held in rooms, which are not prepared according to type plan ?

37. Is it a fact that the present Illam Office building at Karimganj is sufficiently high and commodious to accommodate the Civil Court there only with slight modifications ?

38. Will Government please state if it is a fact that while the present Civil Court Bar Library and the Moharer Library buildings occupy an area of 1,820 sq. ft. only, and area of 20,948 sq. ft. is lying vacant in the Illam Office compound which can easily accommodate the Bar Library and Moharer Library even after leaving ample open space ?

39. Is it a fact that an area of 16,800 square feet of paddy field occupied by the Jail authorities just adjacent to the Illam Office compound can also be made available for the extension of that compound if necessary ?

40. Is it a fact that the present Civil Court compound being in the vicinity of the junction of two rivers may be utilised for the purpose of people travelling by boat ?

41. Do Government propose to reconsider the matter in the light of the facts and circumstances detailed in the above questions and take early steps to remove the present Civil Court near the Criminal Courts ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI** replied :

35-40.—Enquiry will be made from the local officers as to the correctness of the facts.

41.—It follows that Government can give no undertaking till the matter has been fully considered in the light of the reports which may be received from the local officers.

**Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN** : May I know, Sir, when the enquiry will be completed.

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI** : When the report of the local officers is received.

**Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN** : How long will it take ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI** : I cannot say just at present.

#### Establishment of a charitable dispensary in Kamalabari Mauza of Majuli

**Srijut RAMNATH DAS** asked :

42. Will Government be pleased to state—  
(a) Whether they propose to establish a charitable dispensary in the Kamalabari Mauza of Majuli in the Jorhat subdivision ?  
(b) If so, when they propose to establish it ?  
(c) If not, why not ?

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

42.(a)—No such proposal is before Government.

(b)—Does not arise.

(c)—The establishment of dispensaries is a duty of the Local Boards concerned.

**Srijut RAMNATH DAS :** Has Government felt the want of a hospital in the Kamalabari mauza of Majuli ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI :** I think the hon. member wants the public to feel the necessity of a hospital.

**Srijut RAMNATH DAS :** I want to know whether Government propose to establish a dispensary there.

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI :** I may explain to the hon. member that there is no proposal to establish a dispensary in this particular mauza concerned of the locality. But the other day it was pointed out by one hon. member of the Upper House that a travelling dispensary should be established in the Majuli area. That proposal is now under consideration of Government.

**Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI :** Sir, is the Hon'ble Minister in order ? He is not in charge of the portfolio, he knows nothing about it and I do not understand why he is trying to speak on behalf of the Minister for Local Self-Government.

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI :** Sir, we are trying to foster a sense of joint responsibility. (Laughter)

**Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH :** Will Government be pleased to state if it is prepared to contribute help to the Jorhat Local Board if a dispensary is opened at Kamalabari ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI :** As I said, the proposal to give relief to the inhabitants of that locality is under the consideration of the Government.

**Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH :** Is Government aware that Rai Bahadur Kanak Lal Barua promised to lend the services of a doctor for that purpose about two years ago ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI :** I do not remember it.

**Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH :** The Government may take it from me that it was so. Is Government prepared to repeat that help ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI :** As I have said the Government will try to give some help to that locality.

**Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH :** What is the amount of help that Government will be prepared to give ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI :** I am not in a position to say that now.

**Maulavi Muhammad AMJAD ALI :** May I know, if there is a necessity, what the Government will do ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI :** Government will try to help as far as possible.

**Adjournment motion** *Re encroachment by Police on the rights of the public to use public roads during the visit of the Town of Silchar by His Excellency the Governor*

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, before the commencement of the sitting of the House I gave notice of a motion for the adjournment of the House which I desire to move to-day—"that this House do now adjourn for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, encroachment by the police on the rights of the public to use public roads in the town of Silchar during the last visit of His Excellency the Governor of Assam to that town".

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** I want to know on what date the occurrence happened.

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA :** It happened I suppose on the 10th, 11th and 12th of February, but I have just had my attention drawn to a leaderette which gives an account of the whole occurrence.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** Is that the only source of information that you have ?

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA :** The occurrence has found its way to the press so, I presume, the facts are now known to everybody, also because I hear some appreciative laughter !

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** When did the hon. member come to know of the occurrence ?

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA :** From the paper yesterday evening.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** Is that the only source of information of the hon. member, or did he have previous knowledge of it ?

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA :** I was in the town of Silchar at the time, but I did not like to introduce my personal knowledge. In moving this matter to-day, I feel, Sir, I am reinforced by public opinion.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** Did not the hon. member try to find out the public opinion at the time ?

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA :** It would have been more hearsay, Sir.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** Did not the hon. member think the matter important then ?

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA :** I did think it important, Sir, but I did not like to rely wholly on my personal opinion in such a matter.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** If that was an encroachment of the rights of the public is it not an encroachment on the time for budget discussion ? (Laughter.)

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA :** Here only a few members are concerned and there, the public of a town !

**Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY :** What is the name of the paper ?

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA :** *Saptak*.  
**Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY :** Who is the proprietor of the newspaper ?

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA :** I do not know (Laughter.)  
**Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY :** Are you not the proprietor of the paper ?

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA :** I am not the owner of any newspaper, I have another profession to follow.

I submit, Sir, this is a very important matter. It appears that His Excellency the Governor visited the town of Silchar on the 10th of February

but the police in their zeal and ardour prevented members of the public from using public roads on certain dates on which His Excellency would be using those roads, hours before he would actually be passing a particular way. I am thoroughly aware of my responsibility in moving this motion. I am conscious of the fact that I am referring to the name of His Excellency the Governor in this connection, but I am not trying to lower His Excellency in the estimation of anyone or call him into disrepute. The question is whether the public have the right to use a road when an august person is using that road however high that personage may be. In this case, Sir, servants of the Government turned His Excellency into a public nuisance in their inordinate zeal to serve him. His servants in their zeal to serve him did him a great disservice and created public dissatisfaction.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** The hon. member is really arguing the case.

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA:** Yes, Sir, with your permission (*Laughter*).

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** I am to decide how far this motion is in order.

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA:** Sir, it was the conduct of the custodians of law and order which was completely out of order, but I submit, Sir, I am quite in order in moving this motion as it relates to an encroachment on the rights of the public.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** What was that encroachment?

**Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA:** Certain public roads were arbitrarily and illegally closed to the public, hours in advance of His Excellency's passing by that road.

*A voice:* How many hours?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, as this incident according to my hon. friend took place on the 10th and 11th of this month, when he was himself present at Silchar, if really it was of such urgent public importance, my hon. friend ought to have brought it up on the very first day of the session when he came here. The fact that it had since appeared in the press is no argument because the matter was in his own personal knowledge. Therefore, the motion is not in order. The second point is that the wording of the motion will lead one to believe that throughout the stay of His Excellency at Silchar the police had closed all the roads, but from what I hear from him now, it appears that the police regulated the traffic on a particular road when His Excellency was using that road. Therefore, the terms of the motion also is not in proper form. On these two grounds I oppose this motion.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** With regard to this adjournment motion given notice of by the hon. member Mr. Chanda, I do not think this motion can be held to be in order. The fact of encroachment complained of came to his notice when he was at Silchar just at the time when it took place. He did not think it important to make an enquiry. That goes to show that he himself was not thinking that this matter would be of any urgent public importance. He now says that after reading an account of that in the *Saptak* he has tabled this motion. I think this does not improve his case at all. This Assembly met on the 15th and he could have tabled a motion on that date if he thought that it was a matter of urgent public importance.

Of course, it might be called a matter of recent occurrence. But the hon. member ought to have taken the earliest opportunity to table such a motion. And in this view of the matter, I hold that the motion is not in order.

### Time limit for discussion of Budget

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Now, before the general discussion of the budget begins, I wish to know how long the hon. members propose to sit to-day, in order to make up the time that could not be made available to the House yesterday under very extraordinary circumstances. I know many hon. members are anxious to speak; but I am afraid it will not be possible for all of them to get the opportunity to speak within the utmost limit of the time that will be available to the House to-day. And I wish also to know how many of the Hon'ble Ministers want to reply to the budget discussion and to settle the time upto which we should sit. I think that if we sit up till 5 p.m. that would not be sufficient, as I have said many hon. members want to speak. I, therefore, wish to ascertain from the House the hour upto which the hon. members want to sit.

**Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL:** Sir, may we suggest that the House discusses the budget up to 5 o'clock and allows Government from that time onwards to take their own time to reply to the discussion. Then the House will have say two and a half hours for the general discussion and thereafter let Government to take whatever time they desire.

**Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY:** Sir, at 4-30 p.m. we shall want 15 minutes for saying our prayers.

**Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI:** I think, Sir, the House can sit up to 6 o'clock and beyond that it will be, I think, very difficult for the House to sit now-a-days. So we can sit till 6 p.m.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** What about the request of the hon. member Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahab Chaudhury for adjourning for prayers?

**Khan Sahib Maulavi MUDABBIR HUSSAIN CHAUDHURI:** It can be done for 15 minutes.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Again, I know, there is another prayer time. What is the time for that?

**Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY:** At 6 o'clock.

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:** We have to adjourn 10 minutes earlier. That should suffice for the preliminary ablutions and so forth.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** That takes away 25 minutes.

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:** I think, Sir, we can adopt the suggestion made by the hon. Leader of the European group.

**Srijut MAHI CHANDRA BORA:** I propose that we continue up to 7 p.m.

**Srijut DEBESWAR SARMAH:** And after that Government can take their time.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** I am ready to sit till 7 p.m. But I think it would be a strain on some members. The House should have also a quorum and I think, that if the House was to sit up to 7 p.m. the House will have to be adjourned, for want of a quorum even earlier.

**Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN:** How many of the Hon'ble Ministers will reply, Sir?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA:** Five.

**Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN:** I think they can finish in half an hour.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Then I shall be compelled to fix the time limit to be 10 minutes for each member. I must give opportunities to as many hon. members as possible. I think the House would agree to this time limit and it is settled that the House will not sit beyond 6 p.m.

### General discussion of the Budget

**Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA:** Sir, one thing is certain that our present budget does not involve any breach in our usual way of budgeting and there is nothing spectacular in it to arrest our special attention. I do not pay any importance as to whether a budget is shown to be a deficit one or surplus or balanced one. So long as the standard of public welfare and administration are in a rudimentary stage and the teeming masses are illiterate, so long as the public health and sanitation are most elementary, so long as we do not enjoy education and judicial autonomy, our province must be styled as a "deficit one." But perhaps the provincial Government is not to be blamed wholly for this condition of our province. After all they are facing a paradox. Whereas more money is required for various nation building departments of this province, enlightened public opinion is intent upon gradually decreasing or fully eradicating almost all the provincial items of revenues such as land revenue and excise. Most of the items, an increase of which is welcome falls under the Central Government and a considerable amount of money is charged upon the revenues of this province. Under the circumstances, it has become impossible to shape the financial administration of this province, faced as the Government is with an inelastic or decreasing revenue on one hand and the need for a progressing administration on the other hand. Hence we have no other alternative but to ask our Government again to make strong representations to the proper authorities for the abolition of the Upper House and for the allotment to this province of the proceeds of duty on oil. Government has already promised us to take steps in this matter and they must convince the authorities that our provincial purse is almost empty to meet the demands for progressive and developmental purposes.

But Sir, despite the limitations under which the Government is framing its present budget, there is room to strike a new note and to give a new orientation. The Government should give up the penny wise and pound foolish procedure of saving a thousand here or a thousand there, of robbing Peter to pay Paul but must be bold and take courage in their hands to cut down some heavy items which are not at all necessary for progressive administration. Sir, if this is done, there is no reason as to why the establishment of a University and a High Court in this Province for which a resolution was adopted in the last session of this House by a huge majority should be delayed any longer. The omission of these two items has disappointed the public and the legislatures alike and Government should give serious consideration in these matters.

As regards the small items of the present budget, I thank the Government for making some provision for better teaching of Assamese at the Cotton College and in Calcutta. I do not grudge the grant made for new premises for the Dawson Aided High School. But the apathy shown to the repeated demands of the Dibrugarh Government Girls' School cannot be justified. More than ten years ago a plot of land was purchased to make new buildings but this land still remains unutilised. On the other hand the present premises of the school are in a dilapidated condition and the attention of the Government was drawn to this fact last year. But it has gone unheeded.

I do not want to dilate upon the administration of the various Government departments at length but I take this opportunity of saying a few words with regard to the Government Excise policy and the administration of the Assam Valley Schools.

Since Vernacular has become the medium of instruction for the Matriculation examination, it is absolutely necessary that the Assam Valley schools should be managed by Assamese teachers. But it has been found very often that teachers from the other Valley are brought to this Valley and these gentlemen have to pass two or three years before they can express themselves in Assamese properly. No teacher from this Valley has ever been deputed to Surma Valley and for the interest of Assam Valley no teacher from other valley should be brought to this valley.

So far as Government excise policy is concerned, the attempt to eradicate the opium habit has been frustrated by the sale of opium saved by giving short weight. This kind of smuggling must be stopped either by increasing the staff or by introducing the pill system even though it may involve a little expense.

I am glad to find that Government is making some provision to increase the teaching staff of the Berry-White Medical School. The school, in spite of its immense importance, has been always found neglected. In this connection I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the difficulty of water-supply in its hospital and I hope that Government will make some provision for this purpose. The few suggestions I have made will, I hope, be accepted by the Government, so that the best is made of the present resources and the avenue is open to come to closer grips with the financial problems.

**Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL:** Mr. Speaker, Sir. Within the limits of ten minutes little opportunity is afforded to make what may be called a Budget Speech. I will endeavour to stress one or two points which we, as a Group, think to be important.

But first there are two requests that I would like to bring to the notice of Government—one, that as the Motor Vehicles Act has been operating for the past year with reasonable satisfaction, on the whole, we would invite Government to afford us an opportunity of reviewing the work of this Act. There are certain anomalies, inequalities and, in cases, real hardships, and we would ask that an opportunity may be afforded for doing justice where justice is due.

The second request is that Government should give their serious consideration to the appointment of a Minister for communications. By that we do not mean one Minister should be allotted to Communications alone, but that all matters relating to this subject should be in one Minister's hands. Four years ago the European Group in the Centre originated this idea for the Government of India and in spite of much opposition extending over two years, they ultimately succeeded in bringing about that amalgamation which we believe is now working well. Here in Assam communications are developing fast although not perhaps as fast as we should like. If now the waterways, roads, railways, Posts and Telegraphs could be combined in one portfolio, it is possible to review the whole field and this is very necessary if we are to avoid mistakes.

And now to the Budget itself. It has always struck me as difficult that we are invited to review three year's figures at one and the same time. We have the actuals for 1936-37, the revised estimates for 1937-38 and the Budget proper for 1938-39. I will not now dilate on this subject but will ask Government to consider if this is the best method of presenting the Budget. It does not obtain in other countries although it extends to most of the Provinces in India. It is also a matter for the Retrenchment Committee to consider, as simplicity in accountancy will help members and the departments alike.



My next point is that we are faced with a deficit for the year 1938-39. It may be urged that the deficit is a small one, being only 4 lakhs of rupees, but 4 lakhs in a Province with such slender resources is an appreciable amount and we must bear in mind that there is no provision made for natural calamities, floods, droughts, etc. Our 4 lakhs, therefore, may not unreasonably extend to a larger amount. But it is not the size of the deficit that we criticise so much as that budgeting for a deficit at all offends one of the principles which we place in the forefront of our policy—solvency and a balanced budget. This principle is as necessary in State as in domestic affairs. The repercussions of a deficit budget are widespread but I will refer to two aspects for the moment. It is well known that we are already indebted to the Centre to the tune of 30 lakhs, for which we shall have to undertake a loan during the coming year. Obviously we shall have to pay a higher rate of interest than would normally be the case if we had a balanced budget for, with the State as with the individual, the condition of one's credit determines the conditions of accommodation. I do not overlook the fact that in certain circumstances Government may be embarrassed by finding that the loan is not fully subscribed. Another consideration is that so long as Government is content to budget for a deficit, a feeling of irresponsibility is left in the minds of uninformed and uneducated people. They feel that if a loan can be taken to make up for current deficiencies, they are entitled to ask for more remission or the provision of more amenities, feeling that Government has a bottomless well into which it is only necessary to dip a bucket every time replenishment is required. Rather than create this impression, I would have expected every department to curtail its expenditure by 1½ per cent. which would have saved 4 lakhs, and balanced the Budget.

But while I deplore a deficit, I am no pessimist and I can admire the manner in which the Hon'ble the Finance Minister has taken stock of his position. His chief asset is land and on page 3 of his Budget Speech he indicates the expectation of an expansion of land revenue as the result of the recommendations of the Line Committee. Not only so, but we would indicate the necessity for the better use of the land; in other words, the improvement of agricultural practice.

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

**Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL:** I would ask your indulgence, Sir.

In the matter of expanding land revenue I will resist the temptation of anticipating the report of the Line Committee, neither will I follow Mr. Debeswar Sarmah through the labyrinth of figures which he indulged in last Wednesday. I will reassure him, and all who feel like him, that if in the future the expansion of cultivable waste land proceeds no faster than during the past 15 years, it will take 100 to 120 years to settle the whole of the cultivable waste land in this Province. Land being the principal stock in trade of Government, it is necessary that it should be treated as a valuable possession. Propaganda should be indulged in, so that a resident in this Province who wishes to take up waste land may know where it is, at what rate he can take it up, whether or not premium will be demanded and to whom he should go for assistance. Further, orderly settlement instead of the hap-hazard system which now prevails is essential. A new block should not be opened before an old one is completely filled and these blocks, before settlement, should be mapped out so that road sites, hat sites, wells, *namghars*, etc., should all appear on the map to avoid what has been aptly called "rural slums".

With regard to the improvement of agricultural practice, I stated in December that we would give definite schemes at this Budget Session. For two reasons I propose not to do so—first because the Agricultural portfolio has changed hands and it would be unfair not to give the new Minister a chance. I have no wish to flatter him. I have worked with him both here and in Delhi over a period of 4 years; from his drive, his energy, his broad outlook and his deep sympathy for the welfare of the agriculturists I have every hope that we shall see a ready improvement. But there is another reason why I am diffident in speaking on this subject, for during January I travelled with the Line Committee and visited the Mymensinghia settlements. I have seen the finest agriculture in the world and it would be impertinent on my part to suggest anything other than imitating the Mymensinghia immigrants. There, in the off season, you may see anything from 25 to 40 varieties of crop; where every *bigha*, nay every *lusha* is occupied; where you will find splendid cattle, stall fed from the crops of the agriculturists themselves grow; where they understand the secret of improving the soil by growing manurial crops; and where milk sells at 16 seers for the rupee.

I would recommend my Assamese friends to see these things for themselves, for it is the best method of improving their own agriculture.

We have already stated that remission of land revenue is but a palliative. If we are to improve the condition of the agriculturists, in the end-avow to have a sturdy independent and self-reliant population, we must raise their standard of life, and the slogan which I submit for your acceptance is—"produce more in order that you may consume more".

**Babu HARENDRA NARAYAN CHAUDHURI:** Mr. Speaker, it is really our misfortune, Sir, that we have been deprived of the pleasure of hearing the budget introductory orations of the hon. gentlemen adorning the Government benches excepting the hon. gentleman in charge of the finances of our province. We were eagerly awaiting for this occasion, Sir; we had a curiosity to see how the 3 new occupants of the Ministerial *Gaddi* figure in their respective spheres and share the responsibility they have taken upon their shoulders. At least I had a natural longing to see how the two hon. gentlemen hailing from my own subdivision play their parts. But, Sir, the Hon'ble Finance Minister has disappointed us. He concluded his introductory speech—let me quote his own words "the Ministry has decided to follow the previous practice of Finance Minister alone introducing the entire budget". Our curiosity thus remains unsatisfied, but as it is a matter which concerns the Ministers themselves I have nothing to grumble.

Sir, the Ministry has been reshuffled. This reminds me of the Poet's words "old order changeth yielding place to new" and I am naturally inclined to sing "ring out the old and ring in the new". Sir, the Ministry has been reshuffled; I do not know with what results. Instead of a galaxy of five we now find a galaxy of six illuminaries in the political firmament of the province of Assam. There have been two subtractions and three additions, Sir. I do not know whether this demonstration of mathematical calculation will better the position or make it worse. The time will only show the result. Time will only show whether the ship of administration piloted by the gallant Knight from Gauhati with the help of 5 other hon. sailors will steer through the rough and tempestuous seas of opposition to a safe anchorage or there will be another ship-wreck as one that has only recently happened.

**Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY:** Will the hon. member be a bit louder?

(Voices from the Congress bench—We cannot follow what the hon. member is asking for.)

**Babu HARENDRA NARAYAN CHAUDHURI:** I am no Prophet, Sir. So I make no prophecy. But I crave the indulgence of the House to show to the hon. members a cartoon depicting the future of the Saadulla Cabinet that has been printed in the *Amritabazar Patrika* the day before yesterday. Here is the cartoon, Sir. (The member here showed a cartoon) (Loud laughter).

**Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY:** Sir, is it a relevant speech?

**Babu HARENDRA NARAYAN CHAUDHURI:** The hon. member may better ask the Hon'ble Speaker whether I am speaking relevant or irrelevant.

The future will show whether *Amritabazar Patrika* is a true or a false prophet. Sir during the last year's budget discussion the Ministry was criticised not only by the Congress benches but by other parties representing all shades of opinion in this House. The Ministry was criticised for not coming forward with a plan or programme. If I remember aright, it was perhaps Hon'ble Mr. Abdul Matin Chaudhuri—he was then without the prefix 'Hon'ble'—who was first to take the Ministry to task for this lapse on their part; it was he who set the ball rolling and other members took up the subject he started. Instead of coming forward with a straight answer the Chief Minister tried to evade the issue and lay the blame at the doors of the Opposition. I am quoting his words "Ministry has been criticised and very vigorously for not proclaiming a programme. I want to ask this House was it necessary for me to publish a programme in this House when we know the mentality of the opposite benches?" Sir, it is not a secret that Congressmen entered the legislature with the avowed object of wrecking the constitution thrust upon us against our will. I do not deny that, but at the same time it should not be forgotten that we are not unwilling to do a bit of constructive work through our legislatures. Now, if the Ministry shows some inclination of doing some benefit to the country, if they are desirous of doing something for the poor toiling masses, I do not see any reason why we should stand in its way and obstruct. Are we deprived of reason? Are we mad that we should oppose anything and everything that come from our opposite? Sir, the Congressmen had been accused of many things by the highest to the lowest in the land, but they have not yet been accused of lunacy. I have doubts, Sir, whether our Ministers have the capacity of evolving out any programme for the amelioration of the condition of the poor masses a programme for the benefit of the country. If they had, they would have come forward with it by this time. Instead, the Chief Minister, during the last budget session, assumed the role of injured innocence and like one "more sinned against than sinning" said "if any programme for rural uplift come from the Ministry it is nothing. Well, if it come from the opposite it is magnificent".

Sir, I have gone through the introductory budget speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister with attention and care it deserves. The whole speech reveals a bluffing tendency on his part to show us that his intention is to do something good,—holding out hopes never to be fulfilled. I now take the liberty of quoting abstracts from his speech to prove my assertions. I would refer to page 6 of his speech "the preservation of old and ancient families from total ruin is engaging the Ministry's consideration". Again in page 8 "it is the aim of this Government to encourage such self-help and improvements in the rural areas". Again in the same page referring to the 'prohibition' he says "the Ministry is however alive to the importance of this subject and they are giving considerable attention to it".

Sir, I will not take up the time of the hon. members by drawing their attention to various "engaging the attention of the Government" printed in the whole speech. They have certainly noticed it in the speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister.

Sir, I will not try to enter into the labyrinth of figures shown in the budget lest I should be lost in the wilderness of statistics and may not find my way out. Many hon. members who are experts in figures have already dealt with them and some will deal with the subject threadbare after me. But I ask—is there any necessity of examining the figures, Sir? Last year we cried hoarse and exercised our lungs to the highest pitch and voiced forth our grievances for redress. But the Ministry has turned a deaf ear to them. I have grave apprehension—why I am sure—our cry will be a cry in wilderness this year too. For what can we expect from a Ministry, Sir, which is more busy in stabilising its position than giving attention to the crying demands of the country? It is no exaggeration, Sir, when I say that I labour under no delusion or false hope that some tangible benefit will accrue from this Ministry—a Ministry bossed by one who is well known for his communal bias like his compeer in the Bengal Cabinet—I mean.....

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** The hon. member's time is almost up.

**Babu HARENDRA NARAYAN CHAUDHURI:** I will finish it soon, Sir. I mean Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Haque, who has been aptly described by the *Hindustan Standard* of Calcutta as the 'Mad Mulla of Bengal'.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Order, Order—Maulavi Fazlul Haque is not here. He should not be criticised.

**Babu HARENDRA NARAYAN CHAUDHURI:** I am not going to criticise him because that will be unparliamentary. (Loud laughter.) I am not going so far, Sir, and call Sir Saadulla the 'Mad Mulla of Assam' because that may be unparliamentary. And to crown all, Sir, he has got a political turn-coat as his worthy lieutenant.

Sir, last year Sir Saadulla taunted the Congress Party by saying "if the country was prepared to accept the Congress ideal, we would have had the Congress Party sitting on this side of the House to-day, but the fact is that the country has not accepted the Congress ideal, the majority in the country is not of that opinion." Shrewd and experienced politician as he is, shall I have to tell him why this is so? Shall I have to tell him that had not the notorious Communal Award created an artificial electorate the result would have been otherwise. With Communal Award gone, let there be a general election on population and adult franchise basis, he will be here to witness a different scene and to tell a different tale.

**Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI:** Is the hon. member talking about budget?

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Yes, he is speaking about the grievance of the province.

**Babu HARENDRA NARAYAN CHAUDHURI:** I am sorry, Sir, I could not cry hallelujah on the present Ministry like my hon. friend Mr. Hockenull. I have finished, Sir.

**Rev. L. GATPHOH:** Sir, I must confess that my knowledge of the budget for 1938-39 is drawn mainly from the speech made by the Chief Minister in introducing it before the House and also from the budget speeches made the other day by several of the members. And so, I hope a few remarks and suggestions that I am going to make during the time allotted to me will be quite within the scope of the budget.

Sir, from my own point of view, I find the budget a very disappointing one. It is neither the one for commendation nor for just criticism. It no doubt shows that Government are fully alive to the urgent claims and needs of the unemployed youth and for the uplift of the rural population and the development of the resources of the province—but at the same time it clearly indicates that Government have yielded and are always willing to yield to the clamour of the people for a reduction in land revenue, for remission of agricultural loans and other such things, etc., in order to lighten the burden of the people.

What that all comes to, is this,—increased and increasing expenditure, but a gradually decreasing income. This to me, it appears, is the position in which we are placed in this province. This being the case, therefore the Chief Minister and his Colleagues deserve our full sympathy and hearty co-operation.

The duty of devising ways and means for increasing the income of this province rests not, I personally think, on the Ministers alone, but to a very large extent on this House to whom the Ministers are responsible for their policy and action. The Chief Minister in his great anxiety to make it possible at least to balance the budget in future years went so far as to suggest the possibility of raising more revenue, if it should be found advisable, to throw open further areas of land for settlement under the Colonisation Scheme.

A motive was read into the Chief Minister's words which was not there, by one of the hon. members from the opposition side, and it became the text for his very eloquent and fiery speech.

Looking ahead, I am perfectly at one with the hon. member who so ardently and strongly advocated the justice of reserving all uncultivated and arable land in the province for the people who have always lived in the province. Whatever may be the ruling of the Central Government or any authoritative body corresponding to it in regard to immigration, I think that this province being an autonomous province should have the right and power to reserve land for its own use for the present or the future generation.

Having the same principle in view or rather the golden rule of "do as you would be done by" I much regret that I utterly fail to see the point of contention on the part of the hon. member when he threatened to urge the removal of the capital from Shillong to the plains, if Government refuse to make it possible for non-Khasis to secure land in Shillong.

To me, Sir, the threat is a very welcome one. For it will mean if it be carried out to its successful end that the capital will then be removed to the British portion of these hills from which I come. I do not pretend to prophesy, but the tug of war between the two valleys will help to fulfil my anticipation.

Labouring under that supposition, I can see that the grievances of our subdivision will then be redressed. We shall have good motor roads connecting the two valleys and bringing the greater bulk of the population of the province nearer and closer to the new capital. Educational and medical facilities and plenty of good water-supply which are so sadly lacking will be adequately provided for without asking for them.

But what is still more better is that the inspections and visits of officers who are directly connected with the various sides of the life of the subdivision will be more frequent and not few and far between as they are now, probably being the fault of the present age. In these days of motor car, the people being very much dis-inclined to travel on foot,

the importance of a locality is very often determined by the convenience of travelling.

I am afraid, I am digressing from the point. And to come to it which is a very important one—I ask the question—will there be any justification for saddling the colossal expenditure on the poor agriculturists mostly which would be involved in the removal of the capital from Shillong? Certainly none—for it will not be for the benefit of the people as a whole in the province—but only for the sake of the personal gain and enjoyment of the few intelligentsia and rich people who are non-Khasis.

This is a very delicate and serious matter. Both the British Government and the Legislature of the province need to go into it very carefully and conscientiously. We must be consistent, Sir, when we do not want land to be taken away from us by an act of legislation. It is not right and just for us to put pressure on the British Government to take away land from the Siem and his jurisdiction over it.

It is a common knowledge that this province of ours is a unique one. It is the whole of India in a nutshell. And this fact which we do not always realise must be brought to the forefront of our consciousness in dealing with the budget and criticising it. In it we find people of various races of diverse interest and of different cultures ranging from that of a primitive man to that of the most modern one.

No budget will be a satisfactory one which does not bear the impress of this fact. No legislature or cabinet will be a just and fair minded one which does not include in its programme a handicapped race—giving a start in life to those races and communities which have had no opportunities in the past to improve and better themselves educationally, and economically.

The people of the backward areas and backward tracts have been so long inarticulate and they suffer in silence. They have not been able to make their voice heard in the chorus of claims made by the strong and advanced parties or communities.

Before taking my seat I want to emphasise the same fact and urge it upon the attention of the Cabinet and the House. After I have done this, I feel I have done my duty leaving the rest to the good sense and conscience of the legislature.

Last but not the least, I feel, I must not forget to thank Government for the response to the appeal for relief work in the Jowai subdivision out of the sum of Rs. 20,000 sanctioned for the purpose. The greater portion of the amount was well and productively spent on the construction of two new bridle roads for the convenience of the general public.

**Srijut GAURIKANTA TALUKDAR:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I go through the budget one question strikes me most. And that is: whether they are not going to plunge us in matters—financial? And are most important question which we are confronted with and which we all should seriously ponder over.

Sir, from the final actuals it transpires that in the year 1936-37 there resulted a deficit closing balance of Trs. 30,65. And it had to be met by a temporary loan from the Government of India which loan our Government propose to repay sooner or later by floating a loan in the open market.

For the current year, Sir, our Ministry presented us with an inflated budget and showed a surplus of Trs 2,26. But alas, the revised estimate of the year which is based on the latest actuals has disclosed a decrease of

Trs.6.07 over the current year's sanctioned estimate on the revenue side. That being the case, there is every likelihood of there being a big deficit in this year as well.

Coming to the present budget we find, Sir, that our Ministry have grown wiser in the meantime and they have not, therefore, indulged in presenting us with a surplus budget. They have placed this time the dismal facts before us in their natural nakedness and have frankly admitted that the present revenue estimate discloses an excess of expenditure charged to the revenue to the tune of Trs.4,62.

Thus, we find, Sir, that our Government are leading us from deficit to deficit from year to year. But are there any sign of their making any bold and effective attempt to meet these accumulated deficits and save the province from impending insolvency—not to speak of making some saving for financing the starving nation-building departments? Except the common place method of approaching the Central Government with a begging bowl for loans and the easy but ruinous way of inviting immigrants to come and help him in running the administration, the Hon'ble Finance Minister has not practically been able to suggest or come forward with any other means of meeting the gradually growing deficits. He regrets that in spite of their best efforts his Ministry could not get the funds for any heavy list of new schemes. But what efforts the Ministry made have not yet been disclosed. Probably they have been struggling more for their own existence than for solving the life and death problems of the nation. They will, I believe, plead and, as a matter of fact, they have pleaded that the Government coffer has been robbed of several lakhs of rupees and that they have been made helpless by this House by reducing land revenue and insisting upon remission of the outstanding agricultural loans. But, Sir, is it a sound plea and will this plea go to solve the hard problems of meeting the deficits and bringing back solvency of the Province? Or will this excuse satisfy our people? Certainly not. In reply to this plea our people will, on the other hand, ask the Ministry pertinent questions like these. Have the Ministry seriously endeavoured to find out any new sources of income for replenishing the Government coffer? Have they properly attempted to exploit the immense mineral, agricultural and forest resources of the Province? Have the Ministry ever thought of taxing the well-to-do people who are at present going practically untaxed though they are earning thousands of rupees annually? Have the Government sincerely attempted to practise economy by amalgamating suitable Departments and doing away with some of the superfluous high posts? Have they made any serious efforts to remove the ruinous top-heaviness of the administration? Have they been earnest and sincere in taking advantage of the labours of the *Resources and Retrenchment Committee*? Has the Hon'ble Finance Minister been able to give any convincing reason for the inordinate delay in not finishing the labours of the said Committee? Have our popular Ministers ever thought of making a little sacrifice by way of reducing their salary (except of course for their own existence) and thereby paving the path of general reduction of the princely pays of our high officials? Have they not seen—how nobly and efficiently the Congress Ministers with humble salaries are discharging their arduous duties in mighty provinces like Madras and Bombay? Even in our own province if the Hon'ble Mr. Akshay Kumar Das can discharge the duties of a minister with a monthly salary of Rs.750, what prevents the other Ministers from being satisfied with similar salaries? These are some of the vital questions, Sir, our people will justly ask. And the Hon'ble

Ministers shall have to give a good answer to them if they want to claim confidence of the people and of this House and to hold the most responsible position in which they have been placed.

We also find, Sir, our Ministry talking in season and out of season how they have sacrificed huge amounts of money by reducing land revenue. But can they honestly say that the reduction has been adequate? Have not the Government been compelled to admit that acute distress is still prevailing amongst the cultivators due to poor price of agricultural produces? Moreover, can the Government deny that the burden of taxation has been very heavily and most inequitably laid upon the poor cultivators beyond any comparison? And are not they, therefore, crying hoarse for 50 per cent. reduction of land revenue? And can anybody rightly say that their demand is unreasonable? Moreover what have our Hon'ble Ministers done to give relief to the *Nisf-kherajdars* and the vast number of their under-tenants? Are not their grievances as keen and genuine as those of the holders of the *kheraj* estates? And do the Ministry expect to keep our people pleased with these cruel denials?

Our Ministry cannot even justly claim the credit of the petty relief the cultivators have obtained from the revenue reduction. For did the Hon'ble Ministers grant this relief gracefully of their own accord or did they do so under unavoidable pressure from this House? There again, Sir, as we all know, did not our Hon'ble Revenue Minister cleverly manage to frustrate the unanimous desire of the House by imposing upon us a so-called Revenue Enquiry Committee?

One word about the monopoly over the Gauhati-Shillong Road. Sir, the grievances of the people of my valley arising out of the monopoly granted to the Commercial Carrying Company Limited, have been made abundantly clear to the Ministry beyond any doubt and at least two of the Hon'ble Ministers have got their personal knowledge in this matter. But though the time of expiry of the existing contract is drawing very near, we have not seen any sign of our Ministry moving in this matter and taking any step whatsoever for any future arrangement. On the other hand the mighty Company which have been enjoying the monopoly so long, are, it is reported, doing their best to strengthen their footing by various means. Let us hope our Hon'ble Chief Minister will have strength enough to resist the formidable demand that will probably be made by the Company for a fresh monopoly and will take early steps for some future arrangement that will give real relief to the people of my valley.

One word more about my own constituency and I finish. There is a country liquor shop, Sir, at Dhantola about three miles away from Nalbari. The people of the entire locality including Nalbari are persistently and pathetically appealing to the authorities for abolishing the shop. But strangely to their misfortune, it is now reported that the Department instead of discontinuing the shop is going to shift it to Nalbari itself where they expect better sale of that pernicious liquid. Now, will it be too much to hope that our Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Excise Department will be pleased to concede to the popular demand and abolish the shop altogether?

**Srijut OMEG KUMAR DAS:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, the budget that has been presented to this House has no feature in it to raise any hope in the heart of an agriculturist or in the heart of a labourer. Thousands and thousands of persons are being recruited every year from the distant provinces of India to work in the tea plantations of Assam. They are made to leave their hearth and home, their kith and kin, and when they come here they are closed up in a ring fence, if I may use the term used by the

Whittley Commission in its report on labour. (Mr. Hockenull—Question.) Sir, eleven lakhs of people, including five lakhs of children, have been made to live within these plantations isolated from the world outside. (Mr. Hockenull—Question.) You may question it, but it is a fact. (Mr. Hockenull—not true.)

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** The hon. member should be allowed to proceed.

**Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS:** Sir, I searched the pages of budget to find if there is any provision made for the amelioration of these 11 lakhs of people, but I was disappointed. The meagre provision of Rs.480 for the B class primary schools is absolutely nothing. It means nothing and it is only a drop in the ocean. Nothing is being done for their education or for their evolution as citizens. Sir, under the new constitution, some labourers in some selected areas have been given the right of franchise. And they have been permitted to send representatives to this House. But I am sorry to state here that these representatives are not permitted to go to the voters without the permission of the managers (*Shame*).

**Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL:** Untrue.

**Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS:** I repeat they are not permitted to go to their voters without the permission of the managers (*Shame, shame*).

**Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL:** No, no. It is untrue.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Order, order.

**Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS:** They have got no access to their own voters and the managers within the gardens are their masters and no one can go within without permission.

**Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL:** Sir, I must rise to a point of protest. The statements which are being made are literally untrue.

**Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS:** Sir, I say that they cannot go to them, they cannot speak to them, they cannot hold any hope to them what they can expect from the legislatures and they cannot tell them what they should do to better their standard of life, to better their conditions, as if they are destined to live forever within the plantations.

Sir, I had the privilege of working with Messrs. Purcell a Labour Member of Parliament and Hallsworth who were deputed by the British Trade Union Congress to visit India and to report on the Indian labour conditions. I was with them for seven days when they toured round this province. The report that they published can be had and the report also condemns this. The Whittley Commission also stated that it was objectionable on principle to isolate so many labourers from the world outside and to their being closed up in the ring-fence of the garden. I charge the Government for not having done anything on these recommendations. I charge this new regime which is said to have brought a new order into the land that they have not taken any step in this direction. In Bengal, the Government has made it obligatory on lease-holders of tea estates to keep the roads north to south and east to west open to the public. But this Government has not taken any step in this direction. I need not cite here the instances of persons who have had to put up with insults, nay, had to pay the penalty by even death for having entered the sacred precincts of gardens.

I must tell you that I am not carried away by emotion when I say that persons had to pay the penalty by even death. I remember the case of Tehloo. He was a labourer in the Belijan Tea Estate in the Golaghat

subdivision. He happened to go to a neighbouring garden to his friends—it was Wookha Tea Estate. But the kick he received on his enlarged spleen put an end to his life. (*Shame, shame*.) This case was the subject matter of Court proceedings. I need not cite here the case of Evena Telenga which is in the pages of in the Whittley Commission Report. Instances are numerous. And I want the present Cabinet to take up the recommendations made by the Whittley Commission and to take steps in this matter and make those garden roads open to the public.

Sir, the majority of the tea garden population belong by heredity and habit to the drinking class. It is estimated by the Excise Department that they are responsible for over two-thirds of the total consumption of liquor in the province. Though the Government cannot be credited for having done anything for their amelioration, but they have at least this to their credit that they have paved the way for their depravity at present. I charge the Missionary Minister who was in charge of this portfolio for having open canteens in the tea garden areas and for opening up canteens this year also.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** The hon. member has got only four minutes more.

**Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS:** I am going to finish soon, Sir. Though the Government is not doing anything in this direction, on behalf of the Congress Party I say on the floor of this House that we cannot allow this matter to drift like this. We are taking up this question of carrying on intensive temperance movement in the garden area and in this I invite the co-operation of my tea planting friends to conduct this temperance movement within these gardens.

**Mr. F. W. HOCKENHULL:** We can assure you of our help.

**Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS:** Thank you very much. The Tezpur Congress Committee has resolved upon an intensive campaign of temperance. I shall myself personally visit the tea garden areas and carry on the movement myself. I must thank the tea planting community for the co-operation that has been promised.

Sir, lastly, the Government which has been responsible for bringing in so many thousands of persons to this land are not giving any facilities to them for settlement when they come out of garden. I understand that in the Barpathar area they have to pay a premium when they want land for settlement. It is a shame that the Government which is a party to their being brought here from their home and their having lost touch with their families is putting obstacles when they want to make this land their home. I say it is a shame that premium should be charged from them when they come out from the garden with a brass pitcher and an earthen pot. With these few words I sit down.

**Maulavi ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I take this opportunity of discussing a few local grievances of the constituency I have the honour to represent. I am not very much amused by lofty discussions for glorious institutions like the University or the High Court of this party or the philosophical discourses of the rights and privileges of the House of the other Party. I represent the masses who form the dumb millions. They are the pride of the country, backbone of the society and we should first look to their needs and requirements. They are to-day struggling for light and life. They are to be raised from lethargy and idleness and they are to be kindled with a determination to live like a man. These people cannot be helped by such revolutionary laws like the Money-Lenders' Bill

or by a no-rent campaign and we cannot make themselves self-supporting by these means. Friends on the other side abuse the managers of tea gardens for lording over the labourers, I should say that our own officers are equally lording over the people who are really their masters. I shall presently show how the district Magistrates and the Deputy Commissioners and the Commissioners have drawn fat halting allowances and travelling allowances but they have never cared to go beyond the district headquarters or the subdivisional headquarters or some other suitable places like these where they can have the luxury of having a comfortable circuit house, etc. These people, I should say, have never cared to go a bit away out of motor roads. The Inspector General of Police probably never in the annals of Assam cared to go out a few steps from the *thana* in a subdivisional or district headquarters, to enquire about the rural people and as to whether any officer has ever misused the privileges of the department and injuring the liberties of the people. In the same way I should say that the head of the Veterinary Department has never cared to go beyond a few hospitals situated in the prominent places as in the town of Sylhet. In the same way I should say from the report of the Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Division that the District Magistrate Khan Bahadur Azizur Rahman was in charge of Cachar district from the beginning of the year till the 9th December 1936, and again from the 14th March 1937 till the end of the year. During the intervening period Mr. Humphrey was in charge. The Khan Bahadur was on tour for 64 days and Mr. Humphrey for 30 days. They inspected all the offices and garden factories due for inspection. Mr. Patton was in charge of the Sylhet district from the beginning of the year till 1st April 1937 when he was succeeded by Mr. Stewart who held charge till the end of the year. Mr. Patton was on tour for 80 days and Mr. Stewart for 23 days and inspected offices at headquarters and subdivisions and also the outlying *tahsils*. They visited the *tahsils* because they can have the aforesaid luxuries there. What I actually mean to say is that all officers from the highest to the lowest in the rank have never cared to go and enquired about the distressed condition of the people who are actually filling the exchequer of the Government with their life-blood. Now, I hope that the Ministry will at once go round and see the condition of the *raiyats* personally. Especially my appeal goes to the Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture because in my constituency almost all the people are agriculturists. It is not possible for the Agriculture Minister alone to do all that is needed; he must have the co-operation of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Medicine and Public Health. I do not say that such kind of visits by officers of Government would involve any extra expense. What I find in my few days' association with these local people is that they have got heart and they have got the energy latent in them. If an initiative is taken by our officers these people will at once pick up everything and do the work by themselves. The officers should realise that they are the real masters who are living in the villages. I should say that it is not the Congress, it is not the League but it was those great patriots like Sir P. C. Roy who first raised the cry "back to the village". I do not say that all the Congressers are bad men or all Leaguers are angels. As in many cases, Congressers exploit masses, so equally it is applicable that many Leaguers exploit the name of the Muslim Community for personal aggrandisement. I appeal to them all to forget for the time being their party friction and on the name of God, in the name of humanity, we shall all join and take up constructive work so that it will benefit our people. Simply praising one party and accusing the other will bring no good. None can ask Mr. Hockenull to be charitable to the coolies so

long as we have not been charitable to our own people. I do not know what do some of the Congress members mean by saying that I should be only flattering in my expression in giving due thanks to Mr. Dawson for what he has done during the Sylhet-Cachar flood. I fail to see why they should not appreciate one's service if he happens to belong to a different party. At least I find that so far as Mahatma Gandhi is concerned he has appreciated the service rendered by the Hon'ble Mr. Sarkar in the release of political prisoners in Bengal. So I appeal to the Hon'ble Agriculture Minister to do something for our people. Time has not come either to congratulate him or to curse him. All that I would say is that we must give him proper opportunity and help him in his programme of work so that concrete work may be done which will satisfy the people as well as the legislators. I must impress upon Hon'ble Ministers that by paper propaganda or platform propaganda, they cannot satisfy people any longer. The masses are now conscious of their rights, they want works and only works.

There is another painful thing which I just find on reading the speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister. "By an unfortunate oversight the sum of Rs. 10,000 voted by the Assembly for the model village scheme was put under 75—Miscellaneous which meant that the money could only be drawn and spent by the village authorities. This sum, therefore, could not be utilised for the purpose meant". At the same time I find that "in the increased number of stipends to remove unemployment of educated youths an glazed pottery, umbrella making was granted for training in metal working, this I find that we are always a bit partial towards our educated youths. I am not however callous to the needs of our educated unemployed brethren, but what I would like is that the provisions and concessions that have been given to the unemployed youths should also be extended to the villages. With these words, Sir, I resume my seat.

**Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN:** Sir, I also beg to take part in the discussion of the budget presented before the House by the Hon'ble Finance Minister. Sir, I do not find adequate expression by which I should congratulate the Hon'ble Finance Minister for the skill he has shown in the preparation of the budget with the temporary resources or with that of others and ignoring the liability for State Provident Fund. He has tried to improve the financial position of the province with those temporary resources. From Appendix A of the Budget Memorandum it appears that a provision of a sum of Rs. 31,000 and odd has been made for different heads and a cursory glance will convince everybody that major portion of the amount will be spent for the purposes of establishment and other minor things. Sir, the Hon'ble Finance Minister in his speech has consoled the House by saying that "in the Agricultural Department more effective measures have been undertaken by Government for bringing home to the rural population the benefits of scientific agriculture". Will the department be able to satisfy the House that the poor agriculturists have hitherto derived any benefit thereunder?

Then, Sir, coming to the Co-operative Department which is the most important one for the uplift of the rural population, we are taken to despair. The provision that has been made in the budget under head "Co-operative Department" is mostly consumed by the establishment and it is very sad indeed that the name of this department has become rather a terror to the people. People now-a-days prefer private individual *mahajans* to the Co-operative Department.

**The Hon'ble Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI:** Terrori-  
sing Department?

**Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN :** I think the remark made just now by the Hon'ble Revenue Minister takes me to go into the matter more fully. This clearly shows that the Hon'ble Minister has got very little idea as regards the condition of the electorate through whose support he had the fortune to get this elevated *gadi*. I do not think whether he knows the condition of the people. I can say very boldly that for want of proper organisation the department has become a total failure. I throw an open challenge to Hon'ble Members of the Cabinet to examine the condition of the villagers where these unfortunate societies have been established. The movement is going from bad to worse. But I expect my Hon'ble friend Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri will try to get first hand information from the people. I will make an appeal to him that he should leave no stone unturned to give practical shape to the movement if he minds any improvement.

Then again, Sir, let me enumerate some local grievances. Probably it is known to the hon. members of the House that I come from a subdivision which lies in one extremity of the province. The subdivision of Habiganj has got a Local Board and that Board maintains about 600 miles of road. Some years back the Local Board used to get a grant of 33 thousand rupees for communication from Government; but in the course of 5 or 6 years that grant has been reduced to Rs.11,000 only and now there is a great demand for the improvement of road communication throughout the province. Sir, we heard from a long time that the town of Sylhet will be connected with Habiganj by an improved road and that this road would be likely to be taken up in the Road Board scheme. But this scheme is not going to materialise. Again, Sir, I know, from the Road Board fund that most of the subdivisions of the province have got their quota; but up till now the case of Habiganj is being deferred.

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

**Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN :** I am finishing Sir.

Then again, Sir, Habiganj town has become so congested by increase in population that a serious agitation is going on for the extension of the town towards the other bank of the river Khowai. To that effect there were public meetings and so far as I remember representations were sent to Government. The Divisional Commissioner was kind enough to pay his visit to the town and he also took up the matter very earnestly. But since then though a year is passing, no action seems to have been taken by the Government.

Then as regards primary education and middle english education I see in comparison with the area the allotment that is being made by the Government for Habiganj subdivision is so meagre that even 1/60th part of the necessity cannot be met. As for Madrassa education, Sir, as many as 7 junior Madrassas which are in a good condition and which were very strongly recommended by the educational authorities are not receiving aid from the Government for the last 5 to 7 years and these Madrassas are situated mostly in backward areas in my constituency—Bahubal-Chunarughat Thanas.

Then again in my last Budget speech I said that the Sylhet Medical School building was a monument of disgrace. I do not know if the dream of this medical school will be materialised even during the life time of the present Assembly. Lastly I offer my thanks to the out going Hon'ble Education Minister for making a permanent monthly grant of Rs.100 to

Habiganj College; but I regret for the invidious distinction made in connection with another college of the province of the same footing.

With these words I take my seat.

**Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is the occasion when in every country where constitutional Government prevails the opposition gets an opportunity to ventilate the real grievances of the people.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** The hon. member will please try to finish his speech within his time limit.

**Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI :** But as I rise, my mind is filled with dismay and despair. We are supposed to represent the people—the great voiceless mass—the millions of my countrymen who are somehow eking out an existence but no living. A budget always puts to light the policy of the Government in power. I would request the hon. members to go through the budget from page to page and say if there is any real attempt not to speak of solving any of the problems that face the province. It merely shows the policy of putting off, a policy of drift, a policy of evasion a shameless attempt to leechlike cling to office without meaning any attempt to work out anything. I would offer challenge to Sir Saadulla and ask him to define the policy and programme of his party and Government both before and after resurrection. In every constitutional country Government have got some programme. But has this Government got any programme? I pause for an answer. Will he enlighten me on this points?

I maintain, Sir, in the nature of things as his Government is constituted it is impossible to have anything clear and definite. It is composed of heterogenous element, a forced mixture of contradictory principles of groups who change party colour and complexion over night without any reference to those whom they represent. Friends of yesterday are becoming foes of to-day. The parties or groups or individuals supporting the Government represent varieties in a museum providing mirth and food for research to any student of constitutional history. (Laughter).

During the last budget session, Sir Saadulla told the House that he was a great sportsman. He has shown us the fine sportsmanship in the Star Chamber method in the safe fort of the hill station capital in the resignation of the old Ministry and incoming of the new Ministry. The Ministers resigned suddenly after a life of ten months and the next morning by telephonic message as if by the sudden sprinkling of the sacred water of Jordan and by a touch of magic wand there was a resurrection of Sir Saadulla's Government from the land of the dead. This is a fine specimen of sportsmanship which every sportsman ought to emulate. Colleagues have been overturned in favour of new love—I mean Muslim League. But I would ask him one simple question. On what ticket did he seek the suffrage of the electorate? Was he a Moslem Leaguer then? If not did he resign when he joined the League? If party colour and complexion can be changed at sweet will without any reference to those whom they represent, then there can be no end of such change.

**Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI :** May I ask one question Sir?

**Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI :** I am not yielding to that. I am disposed to congratulate newcomers, wish them good luck but I must remind them that history repeats itself. The same Nemesis may overtake them ten months later with the discovery of another new love by that single great person whom I am disposed to call 'Hitler of Assam'. (Laughter).

**Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY:** May I ask the hon. member one question?

**Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI:** I am not yielding, Sir (*laughter*). I would only say that they may find some day in course of their travel that they are in a devil's elbow. Same fate may overtake them. The addition of number three is very ominous. (*laughter*). When I heard Sir Saadulla's periclean funeral orations I said 'amen'. I was reminded of a news which I recently read in an American Illustrated Weekly—a wife swearing allegiance to her eleventh husband.

**Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY:** Is it parliamentary, Sir?

(*Voices:* What is meant by parliamentary).

**Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI:** Sir, as I see the multicoloured creation of Sir Saadulla, a fine specimen of art.....

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** The hon. member is dilating too much (*Laughter*)

**Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI:** I was reminded of Wordsworth's few lines in 'Brook' "men may come and men may go, but I go on for ever." I maintain, Sir, that in the nature of things, this Government as it is constituted, it cannot possibly have any programme or policy. It is because of its constant changes and weakness, the demand which was once refused by this House and to which the Ministry was a party has again come before the House in the shape of supplementary demand. The Ministry even though fully opposed to it and is in full accord with the legislature does not make it an issue for resignation. It is because of this that in spite of more than ten censure motions having been carried against the Ministry, it did not consider the defeats a confidence issue, but sat complacently. The Ministry seems to be censure proof.

Now coming to the actual deeds and misdeeds let us see if we can find any redeeming feature. What does the balance-sheet of Sir Saadulla show? In my last budget speech I declared boldly that the closing year would end in a deficit. The artificial manipulation of figures, high expectations which are sure to be belied gave us a false picture. Last year the budget was presented as a surplus budget. This year the real financial problem of the province could not be suppressed. The Hon'ble Finance Minister has been compelled to present a deficit budget. No attempt has been made to tap the new sources of revenue. We find, Sir, that even in this budget there is no programme. To all interpellations we get three parrot like replies—consideration, assurance, immediate consideration. Nothing passes the consideration stage. Assurances are given only to save the neck for the time being. We heard tall talks about retrenchment at the beginning of the last financial year, but nothing has come out of the pigeon hole, whereas other provinces are following planned economic programme. Here the whole atmosphere is poisonous. There is constant whispering, rumours, about motor cars, bank cheques and what not. Last year a sum of Rs.50,000 was granted for extension of primary education. This year we have the monumental sum of Rs.12,000. I would ask him, Sir, whether this sum satisfies his conscience. We for ourselves would be glad if the House would be spared of this practical joke and utilise the sum for the addition of another Minister to the already existing miscellaneous and etc. Minister.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** The hon. member has got only two minutes more.

**Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI:** I hope the newly installed Education Minister has not yet forgotten his last budget speech. Memory is short, but may I ask whether it satisfies the conscience of the Hon'ble Minister?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWARALI:** For the information of the hon. members I may say that last year I made no budget speech.

**Babu DAKSHINARANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI:** Whenever the question of any programme for the amelioration of the people comes the only plea is paucity of funds but there is no dearth of funds when the Government want to add to the number of Cabinet Ministers. Last year, Sir, a censure motion was carried against this Government for the non-completion of the Medical School at Sylhet but even now the scheme stands where it was.

Want of education, any scheme of industry, any scheme for improvement of agriculture and marketing facilities present a dismal sight, unemployment paralyses the best youths of the country, people die in thousands from preventable diseases and for want of medical aid. Government sit tight. The Chief Minister gave an assurance that an unemployment bureau will be created but we find nothing has been done as yet. In Surma Valley, flood and consequent loss of crops has become a normal affair of life. A suggestion was made to tackle the problem by means of a loan. The Chief Minister promised to consider but we find no trace of it. In my subdivision the Director of Public Instruction promised an increased grant to a Girls' High School but no reference has been made to it. The Minister in charge of Registration promised to establish Sub-Registrar's offices, but those promises have become ineffective. The want of a bridge over Dhalai at Chaitraghat in my constituency is causing immense trouble to the people. Nothing is going to be done in that direction. In the town of Maulvi-bazar people are compelled, in the dry season to drink mud water and as a result cholera broke out last year. Government admitted this fact and that there was only one tank which could be utilised for drinking purposes. But to the shame of the Government no money has been provided for supplying drinking water to that place. The year closes with a history of broken pledges and promises and no hope for future.

With these words, I would request the hon. members to ponder and realise how slowly but surely the whole province is proceeding towards ruin and at the head a gentleman, an honourable gentleman no doubt is playing dice with the destiny of 9 millions of people. The cartoon in the *Amritabazar Patrika* of yesterday shows Sir Saadulla's Government in its proper mood.

**Maulavi SYED ABDUR ROUF:** Sir, last year we reduced the land revenue to the extent of some twelve lakhs of rupees and for that we have got to suffer. By placing the deficit budget before the house the Hon'ble Chief Minister has cut a joke—a very cruel joke with us. If I try to congratulate the Government for such a budget it will be only adding insult to injury. I can simply thank them for the trouble they have undertaken in preparing the budget. The Government have paid us in our own coins and after realising fully where we have dragged our country down, I feel ashamed to ask this thing and that thing from the Government.

To be serious, I must say that the present budget is a hopeless failure, a monument of mistake and a tower of administrative folly but fortunately a light house for the future administrative navigators of the province. I see eye to eye with my hon. friends of the opposition bench when they see no rays of hope, no policy and no scheme behind the budget but I see one



thing there—I see a heart—a sobbing heart behind the budget while they deliberately refuse to see it. Here I must admit and that most sincerely that for this ruinous state of affairs of the province as has been depicted in the budget the Government is not at all responsible—the Government cannot be blamed to the least. Under the circumstances we had placed them they have done their level best and for a Government truly responsible to this House it was beyond their power to do anything more. A Hitler, a Mussolini or a Kamal might possibly have averted the situation but we have got nothing to do with that. We are here to work out democracy with its inherent weakness.

Sir, let me now discuss the land revenue question a bit elaborately. Last year in the name of giving relief to the poor agriculturists we have reduced the revenue by about 12 lacs and as a result all the nation-building departments have seriously suffered. As a result of the remission granted, thousands of middle class rich men have been benefited and when they have found that land can be had at a low rate of revenue thousands of middle class men have applied for land apparently for speculating purposes. Most of the middle class men are not actual cultivators—they are either so many land speculators or so many Zemindars. They get lands cultivated on *adhi* system and thus realise a high amount of rent from the actual cultivators but these people have been allowed to pay a low rate of revenue. The land speculators have found it easy to get settlement of land on *Kabuliat* and they can now afford to keep their land fallow for years only to part with the land when they can get a handsome price for those jungles. In my subdivision this year hundreds of middle class men have submitted *Kabuliat* and I understand many of them have been given settlement. The rate of revenue should be increased by hundred per cent. in the case of these men. Then again, there are other people who have got more land than they can cultivate, the excess land should be assessed to double revenue. The *khirajdars* and *nisf-khironjars* who sublet their lands either on *adhi*, *chukti* or *ryotwari* system should be assessed to a local rate upon the rent they receive from the *ryots*. As suggested above, if the non-cultivators and assessed to double the rate of present revenue it will not be hardship neither it will be unjust. As a consequence it will be possible to remit the whole land revenue of the really poor cultivators and at the same time Government will not suffer any loss. If the Government want our suggestions in the matter we are ready to help them with a definite practical scheme.

Let me now discuss another aspect of the land revenue question. It is an open secret that Assam Valley temporarily settled districts only have got some 50 lacs of *bighas* of cultivable waste land. Whenever the question of settlement of this vast area arises, my friends of the Valley raise objections mainly on two grounds. Firstly, they say that the lands would be taken up by the immigrants. To this I say that the immigrants do never claim to get all these areas. They simply want that the areas should be settled and no discrimination should be made between them and the *bonafides*. They go further to say that they have absolutely no objection if preference in settlement be given to those who have no land and to those who have less land than they actually require. It is both fair and economical to try to have equidistribution of land between the cultivators as far as practicable. Let it be the policy of the Government that the land should not be settled with the Assamese, it should not be settled with the immigrants but it should be settled with the really poor and needy cultivators who are really living in a most miserable state of life.

The second point of objection by my friends is this that they want to keep this land reserved for the future generations. Well, Sir, do you then want that settlement of waste land should be stopped, if that is your position, you shall have to constitute reserves of all *khas* land inch to inch and then say that such and such blocks would be thrown open in such and such years. If my Assamese friends agree to such a definite proposal, I also agree. But no body can allow this vast tract of land to remain fallow for indefinite period. Sir, I ask you another question. Will the future generations drop from the planets or they will be only your sons and grand-sons? If they are the offsprings and descendants of the present generation, how will they be deprived of the land if we get settlement thereof now? Do you mean to say that the present generation after getting settlement of the land will take it to the next world when they will die? Even if I and you take settlement of the *khas* land it will be inherited by my and your descendants. Outsiders cannot have a share after our death. So, if you are really sincere to make provision for your sons take settlement of the land to-day and you will be in a position to leave behind you for your sons a smiling corn field and not a patch of jungles.

Sir, if this vast area be settled it will fetch an annual income of some 40 lacs of rupees and if a moderate rate of premium is realised the area will give us some two crores of rupees, over and above that, the produce of this vast area will increase the national resources to such an extent that the word poverty shall have to bid us good bye for ever. Out of the sum realised as premium we have not to spend more than ten lakhs as cost of the department. We can then spend some 190 lakhs of rupees for our nation-building departments. This amount is sufficient for us at least for the present.

I have got yet another suggestion to improve the financial position of the province. Sir, you are perhaps aware that a buffalo in Assam has got some 20 *bighas* of land while a man has got some 4 *bighas* and the buffalo pays only Rs. 3. We should waste no time to increase this tax to at least Rs. 8. Then, again, some villagers have taken settlement of all their lands in the village and every settlement-holder grows fodder for his cattle. He pays land revenue for the land upon which he grows fodder. In other villages the villagers have preferred to keep village grazing reserves. These villagers do not pay any revenue for the land covered by such reserves. This is extremely iniquitous. Either the villagers who grow fodder should be given full remission of land revenue for the land upon which they grow fodder, or the villagers who have preferred to keep grazing reserves should be assessed to a revenue for the land they thus utilize.

As for the needs and wants of my constituency, I do not like to speak a single word because Barpeta has all along been willfully and deliberately neglected by the Government. To cry for anything for my constituency to this Government will, I know, be only crying in the wilderness. I simply request the Hon'ble Members of the Cabinet, specially the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Revenue and Education to see my subdivision once very soon. If, however, they fear to go there alone because it is infested by the immigrants, let them take the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Police with them. (Laughter).

Before I resume my seat I would like to ask the Government one question "will you put your shoulder to the wheel"? And I would like to ask the House one question "whither Assam"?

**Maulavi ABDUL AZIZ:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, The budget that has been presented to us by the Hon'ble Finance Minister is very disappointing. The Government has made a very poor provision for the growing needs of the people, and out of the two crores and odd of revenue they have provided only Rs. 12,000 for the spread of education among the teeming millions of the ignorant masses. I must say, Sir, that this is a trifling drop in the vast ocean of our teeming millions which are steeped in ignorance. Our Government has made a very poor provision for these teeming millions whose revenues fill the Government coffers. These people have so long been ignored—they have been neglected. The money derived from these people has so far been spent on the pay of the officials, etc. I mean the whole money has been spent for those more lucky beings. These people have so long been ignored but the time has now come for these people to make their voice heard, and it is high time for the Government to take note of the time. The masses were so long driven like cattle,—like dumb cattle, but now they have learned to talk and to make demands, and it behoves the Government to take note of the cries of the people and apply remedy where it is needed.

Sir, the most important departments are the Agriculture and Industries Departments, and the new schemes which the present Government has sanctioned are not at all adequate to make any improvement in these departments. The new schemes which the Hon'ble Chief Minister has placed at page 79 of the budget are no new things at all—it is a few additions to the existing institutions. I have gone through the budget and I find that he has made provisions for some scholarships for backward classes and some scholarships for some other class of people. These are not new schemes. Primary education is the important problem of the province. In the solution of that problem lies the future of our province; all progress depends on the education of our illiterate masses. The poor provision that the Hon'ble Finance Minister has been able to make, namely, Rs. 12,000 (out of which Rs. 5,000 is earmarked for scheduled castes leaving only Rs. 7,000 for general purposes) is a mere drop in the ocean—it is a negligible sum—it won't touch the fringe of the vast needs of the masses.

Sir, I beg to remind the Ministry that the new schemes which it is proposed to execute this year have been largely confined to the Assam Valley. Of course it is a rather delicate question for me to mention, but I cannot help remarking that nearly all the schemes are confined to the Assam Valley and the Surma Valley will not have a share—the state of things recently has been such that I have been compelled to remind the Hon'ble Chief Minister to remember the needs of poor Surma Valley also.

Sir, this much for the general budget discussion. I now refer to some little grievances of my constituency.

I hail from the South Sylhet subdivision where communication is very bad. We have neither railway nor steamer communication. Some years back it was decided to open a loop line from Srimangal station to Kulaura via Maulvibazar but as depression made its appearance the scheme was abandoned. I respectfully urge upon the Government to see their way if they can kindly give us the benefit of a loop line from Srimangal through the headquarters to Kulaura. Lack of communications has left my subdivision most undeveloped and I respectfully urge upon the Government to see if they can give us better communications and facilitate the development of my subdivision.

#### ADJOURNMENT

(At this stage the Assembly adjourned for 15 minutes.)

#### After Adjournment

**Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI:** Mr. Speaker, Sir. As we come to discuss this year's budget, Sir, our attention is naturally rivetted to the burning question of the hour—the question of Line System in Assam Valley—to the policy of which I and my party is thoroughly wedded. We deplore the depleted condition of the budget. We cry that the economic condition of the *rayats* require reduction of land revenue. But should we not deplore the lack of statementship on our part that the vast resources of the province in waste land are still lying untapped—which put to plough is sure to bring about an economic regeneration of the province and not only facilitate to open up new schemes of nation-building departments but also far out-weigh the required reduction in land revenue.

The landless immigrants from Bengal are in our midst. They have come to stay without any idea of going to their original home in Bengal. Give them lands. Give them the benefit of education. Make them by all possible means our own. The economic prosperity of the province is sure to come by abolishing the Line System and throwing open to the hungry masses the land which they are crying for.

Sir, one other point which I want to bring before you is the land tenancy in my district of Goalpara. The stringent provisions of Public Demands Recovery Act, the *Nazar* and *Salami*, *Sanbankar* with all the attendant evils of *Abwabs*, which obtains in Goalpara Tenancy Act were sought to be mitigated by a Bill by me, but His Excellency has refused sanction to its introduction into this House as some of the provisions of my Bill, it is said, militates against the provisions of the Permanent Settlement Regulations. May I mention that the analogous land law existed in the sister province of Bengal? The Government of Bengal have tried to do away with the stringent provisions of the Act by a Bill. I fail to understand how our Ministry did not think it worthwhile either to amend this Act or humbly advise His Excellency to admit my Bill.

Sir, a Government which does not go with the wishes of the people cannot claim to have any semblance of responsible Government. I leave it to the Hon'ble Revenue Minister to bring a Bill in the next session of the Assembly to amend this Act.

Sir, to ventilate another local grievance I have to inculcate upon you that my district of Goalpara suffered most in the memorable earthquake of 1930 and all the sources of drinking water from wells and tanks have dried up. I beg of this Government to be alive to this need, Sir, and give my district the much needed relief in the shape of a lump sum for drinking water.

**Mr. D. B. H. MOORE:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I crave your indulgence in permitting me two minutes to touch upon at least certain statements which have been levelled against tea planters by a member of the Congress party just now. He has stated that some 11 lakhs of labourers were made to come from their homes in their country to work in the tea gardens. I would like to emphasise first of all that there is no compulsion whatsoever to bring labourers from their country to the tea gardens. They are advised and are made known very fully of the conditions on the gardens and they are asked either to come or to refuse to come as they wish. Further, I would like to point out that in every month enormous sums of money are remitted by the immigrant labourers who work on the garden to their homes. Further, that every year a considerable number of immigrant labourers do, of their own accord, elect to remain in the garden for periods of 1 year, 2

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years or even longer than the 3 years actually put in the agreement. I would like to quote an extract from the Whittley Commission Report from page 382 which reads as follows:—

“The emigrant must be convinced that Assam holds out more opportunities for a better life than is open to him in his own home land.

If he is not convinced, nothing else will secure a flow of emigrants; if he is convinced it will be difficult to keep him away”.

That in practice has been found to be the case. Actually those gardens and companies which recruits now-a-days find no difficulty in meeting their requirements and a large number of immigrant labourers have to be turned back. Further, I would like to quote from page 362 of this Report—“We are satisfied that immigration to Assam for work in the tea plantations deserves encouragement in the interests of labour”. I think, these two quotations bear out my argument.

The hon. member made an attack on the labour representatives and said that there was little or no opportunity given to the representatives for visiting their constituencies. I would like to say that there is no basis for this allegation. Recently a conference of labourers was held at Rangapara on 30th January. Mr. Sarwan, I hope, will agree with me that every facility was given to him to enable the labourers to be present at the meeting and he was grateful for the assistance and help that he received from everybody concerned.

Further a statement was made that the Whittley Commission condemned the isolation of labourers but that Government took no action in the matter. In reply to this I would say that an exhaustive examination of the question has led them to believe that no further action is at all necessary. Labourers now-a-days are free to come and go wherever they like and anyone genuinely interested in their welfare can approach them without any difficulty.

A further statement was made that there is no attempt to decrease the amount of drunkenness in the tea gardens. I can only repeat what Mr. Hockenull stated that we would be only too happy to give our cooperation in this respect to reduce the amount of drunkenness.

Finally, Sir, I would like to say that we are always prepared to hear and indeed welcome criticism and give effect, as far as practicable, to any constructive suggestions. We regret, however, that our friends in the Congress benches are making attacks and statements which are entirely unfounded and untrue (*applause from the Planting group.*)

**Maulavi NAMWAR ALI BARBHUIYA:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Budget presented by the Hon'ble Finance Minister has come in for severe criticism as defective and disappointing. It is no doubt so, but whether the entire blame for this state of things should be thrown only upon the Ministry is a question which I would ask the House to consider seriously. The House had, by its own motion, under pressure of necessity, forced the Government to cripple the revenue of the province by granting remissions of land revenue and agricultural loans and also by foregoing the excise revenue to an appreciable extent. After doing all these, this House cannot pertinently expect expenditure on a liberal scale for the development of the province. If we miss any well-defined policy or well-thought out scheme of education, sanitation, agricultural or industrial developments, it is not due to the poverty of brain or sincerity of purpose on the part of the Ministry, but it is due entirely to the scantiness of funds at their disposal.

With these preliminary remarks about the Budget, I deem it my duty to touch on a few matters of urgent local importance, which I wish to bring to the notice of the Hon'ble Ministers, with a view to their immediate redress.

There are only two aided High Schools in the district of Cachar—one in the town of Silchar and the other in the rural areas, besides the two Government High Schools in the headquarters of each subdivision. These two aided Schools receive very inadequate grant-in-aid from the Government. It is high time that the aid be increased.

It is a matter of great regret that in spite of repeated demands for the last few years, the Government High School at Silchar is going on without an Arabic teacher. The boys of this school evince a keen interest in Arabic. One of them stood first last year in B. A. Honours in Arabic and another stood second in Persian Honours. It will be great injustice if despite all this display of merit in the Islamic subjects and inconvenience the boys go without the much needed facility of taking up Arabic in that School for want of a qualified Arabic teacher.

It really pains me to bring to the notice of Government that there is only one Middle English School in the whole district receiving aid from the Government. There are unaided Middle English Schools at Narsingpur, Dhalai, Sunai and other places in the Silchar subdivision and at Lala in the Hailakandi subdivision. These schools are sure to die a premature death if they fail to receive aid from the Government at once.

Although there is demand for more dispensaries in the district of Cachar, especially in the Silchar subdivision, the Local Boards are unable to meet it on account of paucity of funds. Let me, therefore, plead for increased grants to the Local Boards of my district for this purpose.

Although there are about four dozen of Public Health Dispensaries in the Surma Valley, there is but one such dispensary in the whole district of Cachar at Manipur Tea Estate in the Hailakandi subdivision. A portion of the district within Katigora *thana* has been declared as *Kala-azar* affected area, and yet there is no Public Health Dispensary there. Two Sub-Assistant Surgeons of the Public Health Department have of late been attached to the Sadar; but they cannot possibly cope with the work in the district. In the circumstances, it is not too much to ask for more Public Health Dispensaries and doctors in the district.

My district is entirely agricultural, and the people have agriculture as their only stay. One Agriculture Inspector for the whole district is grossly inadequate to affect any improvement in the villages, and as such one more Agriculture Inspector for the Hailakandi subdivision is absolutely necessary. My district is particularly unfortunate in not receiving any allotment from the Road Development Fund either last year or this year. The Sylhet Cachar Trunk Road from Panchgram railway station to Ghagra ferry within a length of 10 miles contains four ferries over small tributaries and *nalas* which need to be bridged over. I hope the Communications Board will take up the work very soon.

The sanction of the Local Government had long been sought for by the Silchar Municipal Board for taxing boats and steam boats moored within the municipal limits. The matter has been pending since 1929 and the correspondence rests with the Chairman's letter to the Deputy Commissioner, Cachar, dated the 6th November, 1937. I hope the Government will be pleased to expedite this much needed sanction for the increase of the income of the Silchar Municipal Board. The Government will from the revenue on shop site lands in the municipal market to the Board when the actual revenue realised was near about Rs.2,700 was fixed at Rs.2,500. Now that the actual revenue is over Rs.4,300 it is only in the fitness of things that this contribution should be proportionately increased in accordance with the promise made by Government by letter No.5787-M.,

dated the 27th October 1919, and letter No.122-Munpl./12820-F., dated the 3rd August 1904. Land revenue of the other lands of the town has also been increased from Rs.13,861-11-0 to Rs.22,654-13-0 in the meantime. Hence the ten per cent. cut in the provincial grant should also be removed.

Then, Sir, for increasing the resources of the province, I wish to give one suggestion. Let the vast tracts of lands lying as forest reserves in the boundaries between Cachar and Lushai Hills, between Cachar and Manipur and within the district of Cachar without valuable trees therein and yielding no income to the Government be thrown open for settlement with the landless cultivators of the district who have been submitting petitions after petitions for that, as the preservation of the said forest reserves is of no utility to Government as the people of the district cannot conveniently go up to the Assam Valley for lands.

Sir, with these few words, I beg to close my budget speech.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** It is past 5 and Ministers are to speak. We are to disperse at 5-45. I think, therefore that Hon'ble Ministers should begin now. I feel that there are hon. members who are very anxious to speak. But hon. members will please refer to the time and this is due to circumstances over which I have no control.

**Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA :** Not a single scheduled caste member has got an opportunity to speak on the Budget up till now.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** As I have said there is not much time. This will no doubt mean strain on many hon. members. I feel hon. members are not willing to stay after 6. If this be the sense of the House, we may continue further.

**Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA :** I will only speak for 7 or 8 minutes, Sir. Sir, the Budget has already been sufficiently criticised by many of the hon. members of this House and I take my stand to touch on one or two points only.

At the very outset, I am sorry to say that the Budget for the year 1938-39 placed before the House by the Hon'ble the Chief Minister is far from satisfactory. This is reproduction of the same last year's Budget without any new constructive scheme. Rather the list of new schemes as compared with that of the last year appears to be considerably poor. However, I have up till now nothing to doubt the sincerity of the Hon'ble the Chief Minister. It appears to me that he is very much handicapped for want of funds. But I am sorry to see that he has not been able to evolve a policy to increase the sources of revenue to the Government, of course without taxing any further the poor peasants who have already been overtaxed. He has stated in his speech that the settlement of waste land will fetch more revenue. Here I am at one with my hon. friend Srijut Debeswar Sarmah when he says that the greater part of the revenue thus obtained will have to be spent for the development of the area. So the Government cannot expect much from this source.

Forest reserves are good sources of revenue to the Government. If extensive plantation of valuable trees like *Sal*, *Segun*, etc., are done, I believe, the revenue under this head will greatly increase. It will not be wise policy of the Government to throw open any part of these reserves for settlement simply because it is not giving much revenue now. People will be subjected to a great disadvantage for want of thatch and *ekras*, etc., if forest reserves producing these are thrown open for settlement because they are not paying so much towards revenue of the province.

Now I come to grazing reserves. Village grazing reserves are beyond questions and must remain untouched. If the professional grazing reserves

are thrown open now for settlement, no suitable land for the future will be left available for the extension of *khuties* when with the increase of population there will be a great demand for food-stuff like *ghee* and milk from every quarters. In my opinion the grazing reserves should not be thrown open for settlement because it will go against the cattle upliftment policy of His Excellency the Viceroy of India.

Fishery is also a great source of revenue to Government. Fish is one of the most important foods. And it has become dear day by day and in my opinion it is due to want of experts for its culture. Silting up of the mouth of Chaulkhoa river fishery in the Barpeta subdivision has caused a great loss both to the lessee and the Government. If it is attended to by the Government a vast area of land now under water of Chaulkhoa river will be available for extension of cultivation.

This being an agricultural province, the Agriculture Department is an important department. But unless the condition of the poor peasants appears to be improving, the department cannot be said to have been of any use to them. In my opinion Government should either evolve a better policy or abolish the department altogether.

I am glad to see that Government in giving land revenue remission has accepted the policy of giving graduated relief to the people, inunciated by me as stated in my last year's budget speech. I would rather request the Government to evolve a policy, to give more relief to the needy poor peasants than what has been given at present, and less relief to the others and the saving thus made may better be utilised for the development of the rural areas. If out of the land revenue remission some six lacs can be thus saved by giving less relief to those who deserve less and out of this saving if 2 lacs is spent for Agriculture Department and 2 lacs for primary education, 1 lac for medical aid and 1 lac for roads and water-supply in the rural areas, earmarking a considerable sum for the scheduled caste and tribal people separately, the face of the province will altogether be changed within next four years of the life time of the present Assembly and the needy poor peasants will be doubly benefited by this scheme.

(Many hon. members then stood up to speak.)

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** Is it the desire of the House that the Hon'ble Ministers should not speak? (*Hear! hear!*). If we adjourn at quarter to six then I think the Hon'ble Ministers should now begin their speeches. If I allow the hon. members to go on in this way there will be no end of it. In the general discussion of the Budget, the replies of the Hon'ble Minister are very important. If the House is not at all anxious to hear the Hon'ble Ministers I may go on and allow the hon. members to speak.

**Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI :** I as leader of my group have got to say something.

**The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :** May I say a word Sir? Nobody from the tribal group has spoken as yet. My hon. friend Srijut Rupnath Brahma wants only five minutes.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** Let one hon. member from tribal group speak and then I shall ask the Leader of the Opposition to say what he has got to say.

**Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA :** Sir we expected this time that our popular and responsible Government would come forward with definite scheme for education of the backward tribal people of the plains, but unfortunately to our utter disappointment no specific earmarked provision has been made for the plain tribals in the present year's budget also.

There is a general provision of only Rs.5,000 for all the backward people but this is too inadequate for the purpose. It is a known fact that the tribal people of the plains are the most backward people in the whole province and I think Government have greater responsibility for the education of these people. If there is no definite move from the Government for the education of these people, then I think all nation-building projects will be left far behind in Assam. Therefore, I beg to suggest that a definite scheme should be made in consultation with the representatives of the tribal people for their education. I take this opportunity of suggesting that a Special Officer for the education of these people should be appointed as it has been done for the Muhammadan education. We are grateful to the present Government for giving some grants to certain schools. We hope in the next year Government will give more aid to the deserving schools in tribal areas. There are plenty of primary schools in plain tribal areas which have not been taken over by the Local Board. Under the Dhubri Local Board there are more than 15 such Venture schools in the tribal area which the Board has not yet been able to take over owing to the shortness of fund. I hope Government will give special consideration to these primary schools in the tribal areas. Sir, the hon. members of this House know full well that the tribal areas are the most undeveloped areas in the province. I therefore urged upon the Government that at the time of selecting sites for model villages, these areas must not be ignored. At least some sites may be selected in tribal areas for model villages.

I now come to my district (*laughter*). There are demands from the tenants in the permanently-settled areas of our Goalpara district for the reduction of rents and rates of interests and abolition of *Chhanban* and for amendments of certain sections of Goalpara Tenancy Act. I hope Government will try to meet the demands by taking earliest steps. In my last budget speech I drew attention of Government to the fact that the people in the northern part of the district of Goalpara mainly depend on irrigation for supply of water to their paddy fields and I also stated then that owing to heavy damages caused to the irrigation canals and bunds by the breach of the river Champamati there have been failures of crops for some years in the Kokrajhar locality which is under the Bijni Raj Court of Ward's Estate. The condition of the raiyats in that locality has become worst. This year food shortage is greatly apprehended in some villages. So, I hope, the Government will extend its helping hand and render some relief to the suffering people of this locality.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** As it appears that many hon. members are willing to speak, may I know the opinion of the House as to how long they like to sit up this evening?

**Maulavi JAHANUDDIN AHMED:** Sir, in that case the House should sit up to 7 p.m.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Those who are in favour of sitting up to 7 p.m. with an adjournment of 15 minutes at 5-45 p.m. will please rise in their places.

(Some hon. members stood up in their seats and it was found that majority are unwilling to sit up to 7 p.m.)

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** The hon. members will get time to speak when the cut motions are moved.

**Khan Bahadur Dewan EKLIMUR ROZA CHAUDHURY:** আমাদের party থেকে কিছুই বলা হয় নাই। বাজেট একটা important বিষয় সেই জন্ত কিছু বলিতে চাই।

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** All right. The hon. member may speak for 2 minutes and his speech should not be a repetition of arguments urged by other hon. members.

**Khan Bahadur Dewan EKLIMUR ROZA CHAUDHURY:**

অদ্য বাজেট আলোচনা করিতে যাইয়া আমার সেই মুরগী এবং মোল্লার কথা মনে পরিয়া গেল। অর্থাৎ একটা শিয়াল একটা মুরগীকে প কড়াও করিয়া নক্ষণ করিতে উদ্যত হইলে জনৈক মোল্লা দোড়াইয়া গিয়া সেই মুরগীটিকে শিয়ালের কবল হইতে রক্ষা করিল বটে কিন্তু বাড়ীতে নিয়া নিজেই সেই হতভাগ্য মুরগীটিকে জবাই করিয়া ফেলিল। Assam Cabinet আজ মৃত্যু রূপে গঠন করা হইয়াছে—হয়ত আগের আলি পাছে অনিলেন—কিন্তু আমি জিজ্ঞাসা করি ইহাতে এই আসাম প্রদেশবাসী দরিদ্র জনগণের কোন উপকার হইল না কি? হয়ত মুরগী শিয়ালের কবল হইতে রক্ষা করিয়া মোল্লার তীক্ষ্ণ চুরিকাথাতে হত্যা করা হইবে কিন্তু ইহাতে মুরগীর কি উপকার সাধন করা হইবে তাহাই আমি জানিতে চাই। যদি হত্যা করাই উদ্দেশ্য হয় তাহা হইলে শিয়ালের দস্তাধাতে হত্যা করা মুরগীর পক্ষে যেমন, মোল্লার অদ্বাধাতে হত্যা করাও হতভাগ্য মুরগীর পক্ষে তেমনই। ইহাতে মুরগীর এক বিলুপ্ত বিশ্বর্গও লাভ বা লোকসান নাই

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** This is a repetition of what was said by other members. (*Laughter*).

Order, order. The hon. member should please take his seat.

**Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would not have liked to tax the patience of the hon. members further had I not felt myself called upon to speak on one aspect of our Government. I mean the political side which to my mind is as important as the financial side of the budget. So far as the latter aspect is concerned, I must say that the year's budget is surely a franker one than that of last year. It speaks of complete impotence on the part of Government to do any good to the people. It is a document of despair writ large over it and what is worse, the Ministry has not been able to give any indication as to how we can get over this gloom.

Taking this financial position to be a grim reality, does it strike us all, Sir, that the present Act gives us no power to improve it or therefore to do any good to the people, that with reservation of big salaries and with this top heavy administration with reserved expenditure for unnecessaries, the condition of the people is bound to go from bad to worse.

The inevitable remedy must, therefore, be, that the people should have more control over their purses and that their representatives should be free to dispose of the entire taxes and that their representatives should be And it is exactly this which the people pay in the best way they like.

The next question is—does the present Constitution Act does not allow of freedom? Some indication about this possibility has been given to us by the working of this Act in our province during the last 11 months, and it will be my particular attempt to show what achievements we have obtained so far by working the Act in our march for freedom. Sir, the other day Lord Lothian in a statement to the Press before he left India said that in the Provinces the Act was working satisfactorily—much beyond the average expectation, and that if it was worked in the same spirit in the centre, *Purna Swaraj* will be near at hand. I cannot speak with accuracy as to

what extent there has been advancement towards real freedom through the working of the Constitution in other Provinces, but if we are to judge the noble Lord's statement by what has taken place in our province, we must say it is the voice of the propagandist that is being heard through his statement.

Sir, it was urged by many British Round Tablers that the scheme of Provincial Autonomy would usher in healthy development of political parties with distinct party programmes. What programme had the last Government put before the country? In the last Assembly sessions, the question was pointedly put to the Ministry—the same question is being put to-day. What answer has the Ministry been able to give? No, Sir, there has been no answer till now and there is no possibility for any answer from them in future. We have seen that one portion of the Cabinet thinks of a particular problem in one manner, while the other portion of the same feels in a different manner; the result is that not only can there be no public declaration over any question, even the Ministerial party with the Ministers themselves do not go to the same lobby. Sir, the position of the present Ministry over the "Line question" is a point at issue. We find a Cabinet member in the new Cabinet who held view just opposite to another member of the same Cabinet—just combining together, to form a happy family of Ministry. Over the Sylhet Medical School motion we had the interesting spectacle of one section of the Ministerial party going to a different lobby from the one entered by another section. In the motion for the acceptance of Communications Board and their recommendation in the last Budget Session, the Hon'ble Chief Minister himself did not vote for his own motion; and similarly in other motions regarding Members' Salary, the Ministry was maintaining inexplicable attitude. Inscrutable had indeed been the ways of the Ministry and yet it is to be believed that Government is being run on party lines and we want a noble Lord to sing support for this autonomy.

Then, Sir, look at the party honour or honour of the Ministry. The defeat of the Ministry over many important measures is too well known: all the important newspapers of India including the *Statesman* were expressing surprise at their continuance. Anybody of men with any sense of party honour or of party politics would have resigned, but did the Government feel the least ashamed to continue their government. It did not matter whether their point of view was not accepted by the House; it did not matter if the House disapproved of their action over a particular matter; they must continue in office. But the pertinent question in this connection would be "to do what". The ostensible reply of course has been "to carry on the administration". Sir, the old bureaucratic administration also carried it the same way—I feel sometimes—more efficiently, and surely with less rancour.

Then look at the honour of the Hon'ble Ministers in reference to their relation with the executive head of the Province, whose advisers they are. The attitude of the House over the staff of the Commissioners is known to us all. With only 11 votes in favour of retention, and with practically all the rest of the House the supplies for the staff of the Commissioners were refused—not surely to harm the clerks, but to express our protest against the retention of the Commissioners against constitutional demand for doing away with them in a poor province like Assam. We voted even the supplementary demand for payment to them during the period of the notice. The Hon'ble the Chief Minister assured us that he would not bring any more demand; yet the day after the Governor directs the acceptance of

another demand for the next three months of the year. When questioned the Hon'ble Chief Minister told us that he refused to introduce the demand himself when asked to do so by the Governor; but although the Governor did introduce this demand by virtue of his own prerogative, what protest the Hon'ble the Chief Minister lodged is not known to the world. He however remains in his office, happy and contented. His honour as head of the popular Government is probably not of much concern; but is the honour of his party and of the House as a whole any concern to him? No, Sir, not so long as he can carry on. Taken to task possibly by His Excellency, and denied by his party on occasions, the Government yet chooses to carry on, and not resign in protest to one or the other.

But a proper reading may give yet another interpretation of the Hon'ble the Chief Minister's whole conduct, and we naturally ask is not this whole affair a pre-arranged transaction between the Governor and the Chief Minister? It looks as if the Governor and the Chief Minister are supplementing one another. Thus, between the Governor and his Chief Adviser the right of the representatives of the people is most unjustifiably taken away. The electors' demand for a reasonable retrenchment is turned down—rank autocracy has its full play, and the Hon'ble Ministers are either conniving or actively helping this suppression of legitimate popular rights. This state of affairs is reported as successful working of the Constitution Act.

But the Government have given an even more degrading exhibition of their tactics for the only purpose of retaining their office in relation to the last reshuffling of the Ministry. We have heard and are hearing of resignations of Ministers for failure to implement one's programme due to adverse circumstances, of resignations due to the faintest want of confidence of the House they lead. Only the other day the Congress Ministry in two provinces resigned because the Governor interfered with their decisions regarding release of political prisoners. This is of course unthinkable to the Assam Ministry as their conduct over the demand for the Commissioners' establishment shows. But they are prepared to resign to oust some of their erstwhile Colleagues with whose help they managed to carry on the Government for about a year just to get in again. They are prepared to go by the count of the heads and never by measures, and have no hesitation to overthrow their colleagues and work behind their back, in order that they may have better chance of "carrying on" under the new count. Is it any change of policy or programme that requires this change? No, Sir, the world knows nothing about it. The Hon'ble Chief Minister did not tell us that in his statement the other day. The whole thing reads to us like some plot to overthrow the unwary and the simple, and it is in acts of this kind that the Ministry seems to revel.

But the most singular thing about it is that even His Excellency the Governor lends his seal to these transactions. He brushes aside all popular wishes and healthy conventions over all the important matters in allowing the Ministry to continue in spite of defeats. He plays the rôle of an autocrat in invoking unwanted special powers for turning down popular demands.....

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** I do not think criticisms like these are permissible. (Applause.)  
**Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLAI:** All right, Sir, I refrain from this as ruled by you. Thus analysing the whole work of the Government during the year, we see that none of the demands of the people could be satisfied, their representatives in the Assembly could not function on their behalf.

The Ministry remained irresponsible to the wishes and desires of the representatives of the people, and His Excellency the Governor himself has played the rôle of an autocrat on occasions instead of being the Constitutional head of a province.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** The hon. member should not criticise His Excellency the Governor in this way.

**Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLAI :** The whole Government is based on the count of heads without any policy and programme. On the other hand, the people continue to be ground under abject poverty and distress. This is the picture of autonomy that we are having ! Is it very surprising for any reasonable man to try to get rid of this dispensation as early as possible ?

And this is exactly what the Congress is out to do. In spite of this abject failure we are told that the Constitution is working and that we should also work out the Federal Scheme. In my last budget speech, Sir, I pointed out the defects of the Scheme: how all the powers were reserved in the hands of the alien rulers. One can well understand the mockery of a Constitution for a free people, when it is found that the defence of the country and the foreign relations, are in the hands of their foreign rulers : when its financial policy is controlled by foreign interests, when one cannot get rid of fat-salaried public servants who absorb so much of the revenues of the country ; when you cannot have control of your own trade and commerce ; when railway and banking interests are governed by a body of men out to serve the interests of Britain than of India. All these disabilities are perpetuated by specific provisions in the Act. Then, Sir, look at the composition of the proposed Federal Chamber. More than one-third of the members of the Council of State and nearly one-third of the members in the Federal Assembly will come from the States, in most of which autocracy in a most undiluted form prevails. And these members of the States are not to be elected by the people—they may be sent to the respective Chambers by them in any way they like. Thus we will have a curious combination of the most reactionary elements out to serve the interests of our foreign rulers on the one hand, with other representatives of British India, where also a fair population of the communally-minded people would be there. Thus through this tug of war between many reactionaries and small number of progressives, through the motley combination of irreconcilables, and with all the powers of free government in the hands of our British rulers, we are asked to hail this scheme, and Lord Lothian asks us to work it. Sir, I feel we should cease to exist before we voluntarily accept this scheme. We should surely do all that lies in our power to resist it.

Thus the whole Act has got to be rejected: both reason and experience point to the same conclusion. We cannot remain satisfied with the present Constitution: it must go. It must be substituted by a Constitution which should be drafted by our own men without any imposition from outside. Our own representatives, chosen on adult franchise—representatives of majorities and minorities—must be our Constitution makers, and it is only to such a Constitution that we will lend our willing allegiance. And even if that Constitution has to be written with our own blood, Sir, we must be prepared for it.

### Finance Minister's reply on budget discussions

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** I think there should be one reply from the Government.

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA :** Sir, during my temporary absence in the Upper House, I am told that one of the leading lights of the party which is led by the last speaker said that there was no sportsmanship in me. I have seen curious example of sportsmanship from the Leader of that group. The learned Leader burnt many hours of midnight oil, writing a thesis on political philosophy and, without giving me time to reply, goes on reading in spite of rulings from the Chair that the Ministry should be given a chance to reply. He is sportsman enough to criticise Lord Lothian who, he has forgotten, is not present before the House to reply. He is sportsman enough to give us a lecture on the two resolutions which he has tabled and which may come up for discussion on Monday next. We heard that this Constitution Act is no good and that the sooner it is scraped out by one framed by a Constituent Assembly the better. I think in all fairness he should have spared us from all that bit of lecture inasmuch as he and some members of his party have tabled a resolution on that matter. And this lecture he foisted on us in spite of your protests, Sir, and he has encroached upon the time meant for the Ministers to reply. Sir, I must refuse to reply to the charges he has made because I have got no time and I have only seven minutes to reply on behalf of myself and five of my colleagues.

Sir, this is supposed to be a discussion of the budget. If a lecture on political philosophy was to be attempted and the Constitution Act has to be attacked, the learned Leader of the Opposition in his absence should have detailed his Deputy Leader or some other Constitutional lawyers of his party to argue that point at the same time giving me sometime to meet his points and give a crushing reply that the arguments merit. In a general discussion of the budget we are primarily concerned with the financial aspects of the administration. So, Sir, I will not be lured into the trap which the hon. Leader of the Opposition has set.

He has become the unwanted custodian of my honour and the honour of the Ministry. Sir, he has also assigned for himself the unrecognised custodianship of the honour of one of my erstwhile colleagues. He said that the Ministry has got—not in so many words but in effect—no honour or self-respect and they have continued to remain in office in spite of so called cuts that were effected in this House in the last budget session. If I had the time, I would have given a thoroughly convincing reply to these charges which have been levelled by the Leader of the Opposition. But having only six minutes now at my disposal I have got no time to go into them as fully as I could wish. Of course, I and most of the hon. members of this House know where the shoe pinches. The bitterness lies in the fact that the Leader of the so called biggest group in this House has not been called by His Excellency to form the Ministry. *(Cheers and laughter.)* I am told that any number of telegrams were sent during the recent Cabinet resignation asking that the Congress Party should be called upon to form the Ministry. This recommendation, however, His Excellency did not accept. That is the genesis for this diatribe and that is the reason for this burning of midnight oil by a disappointed soul.

Sir, I must finish his criticism as regards the financial aspects in less than five minutes which is all I have now got at my disposal. By profession I am a lawyer and I know how to argue my case. I have practised at

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Gauhati with the hon. Leader of the Opposition and I suppose he will give me that certificate. (*A voice*: You are arguing a bad case.) By a fortuitous circumstance I find myself here as Finance Minister of the Province. But I confess I am not as good a financier like some of my hon. friends sitting opposite. However, I never pretended to be a magician and I never promised to produce rabbits from my cap. Every one knows about the limitations of our finances. Everyone knows what our liabilities are from the figures I have laid before the House in the shape of budget estimates. Where is the money I could produce for new schemes? Of course the reply from my friends in the opposite will be 'Why don't you borrow'? That will be mortgaging the future generation for the benefit of the present generation. Sir, from what little of financial problems I have studied, I cannot bring myself to that conclusion and it is my view that the present generation has no right to burden the future generation with a heavy load of debt. Therefore, Sir, there was not much that I could produce by way of new schemes.

Some hon. gentlemen remarked that I should have anticipated the decision of the Retrenchment and Resources Committee and produced all my cards now. Sir, my sportsmanship does not lead me to take that course. One hon. member was uncharitable enough to say that I have purposely delayed the holding of the Retrenchment Committee session in order to avoid making any reductions or economies. I emphatically deny that charge. Those hon. members who have sat with me in the Retrenchment Committee know how far I was helpful and enthusiastic in bringing about a reduction in expenditure (*Hear! hear!*). It is well known to everybody that we had to adjourn our deliberations on account of the imminence of the Durga Pooja holidays. Some hon. members who sat in the Committee requested me to close the session so that they may reach their homes before the Mahalaya. I had to accede to that religious request. After the Pooja holidays, I had to get ready for the sessions of the Upper House and from early December began the session of this House which continued till the Christmas holidays. After that in the new year, I had to go to Delhi to attend a very important Conference and I hope my hon. friends who are members in the Committee will bear me out when I say that without my help and guidance they will not be able to conduct their deliberations in the way they themselves would like and so they require my presence (*Hear! hear!*). Then we had to start this budget session. Where was the time to convene a meeting of this Committee? Therefore, I could not produce anything in the way of economy or in the shape of new taxation.

Sir, I was amused by a remark made by the hon. member Dr. Saikia when he said that I must produce the goods without taxation. How can I do that, I would like to know. I wish he had given me some indications how this feat can be performed.

I mentioned in my budget speech that there is a vast quantity of land which is waiting settlement and if settlement could be given of this land, the much needed revenue to the province will accrue. Exception has been taken to that remark I made, from various quarters. I must say that there is a misconception about that in many hon. members' minds. I did not ask that immigrants should be brought in from outside and the land settled with them. According to one hon. leading light of the front Benches on the opposite there are as many as 270 lakhs acres of cultivable waste if I remember aright, available. These 270 lakhs of cultivable waste land, if converted into *bighas* gives  $8\frac{1}{2}$  crores of *bighas*. If we can settle even a

fourth of that vast quantity, we can have a large income. These figures were given by hon. Srijut Debeswar Sarmah in his speech.

**Srijut KAMESWAR DAS**: I think he quoted it from the Census Report.

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA**: That may be, but I collected my figures from his speech.

As I was saying, even if one-fourth of that available waste lands were now thrown open for settlement that will bring in from ten to fifteen lakhs of revenue which will go a great way to meet the growing demands of our nation-building departments.

I was amused also to hear another criticism from a quarter from which I least expected criticism namely from the hon. representative of Tribal people. Since the formation of the present Ministry, that is to say within the last ten months, the present Ministry has earmarked Rs. 10,000 for spread of primary education for the schedule and tribal people out of a total extra grant of Rs. 62,000. That is the provision that has been included in next year's budget, that is one-sixth of the grant has been set apart for spread of primary education. And what is the number of the tribal people? The tribal people and the hills people settled in the plains form roughly 6 lakhs of people out of 86 lakhs or they are one-fourteenth of the total population. And we have provided for them very nearly one-sixth of the new expenditure on primary education. Sir, if this is not helping them, I do not know what will?

Sir, the clock shows that I have got no time to speak further. I will close by saying that the criticisms and various suggestions which have been made by the hon. members will be carefully considered by me and my Hon'ble Colleagues, when they appear in the printed proceedings.

### Adjournment

The Assembly then adjourned till 11 a.m. on Saturday, the 19th February, 1938.

Shillong,

The 19th March, 1938.

A. K. BARUA,

Secretary, Legislative Assembly, Assam.

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