



Proceedings of the Sixth 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 11 a.m., on Tuesday, the 28th March, 1939.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

(Starred question No.189 standing in the name of Srijut Purna Chandra Sarma was not put and answered as the questioner was absent).

Appointments in semi-Government and private companies

Maulavi MD. MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHOUDHURY asked :

*190. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether they have asked or requested the semi-Government or the private companies which are registered under the Joint Stock Companies Act, to appoint their employees, representing all the communities, as done by Government while appointing their officers ?

(b) If not, do Government propose to do so now ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI replied :

190.(a)—What companies the hon. member refers to, is not clearly understood. If he means the companies registered in Assam under the Companies' Act, the reply is that Government have not asked them to adopt the communal table but to employ only men of the province as far as possible.

(b)—No ; this may, in most cases, mean an undue interference with private business concerns.

Government Communiqué re Music before Mosque

Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY asked :

*191. (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the leading article of *Jugabheri*, dated the 16th January 1939, headed by “ মসজিদ সন্মুখে গীতবাহী ” (Music before Mosque) ?

(b) Is it a fact that it was a time-honoured practice at Sylhet not to play music before Mosque ?

(c) Is it a fact that the District Officials of Sylhet used to prohibit the processionists in the past at the time of issuing licenses to play music before any places of public worship and hospitals ?

(d) Is it a fact that on the night of occurrence, i.e., on the night of the 4th October, 1938, thirty-two processions obeyed the time-honoured practice and passed silently without playing any music before the Mosques ?

(e) Is it a fact that the time of *Juhar* prayer has been omitted in the recent Government Communiqué on the subject ?

(f) Is it a fact that on the last October, 1938, at the invitation of the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, leaders of both the communities assembled in a meeting and drafted a pact in which some leaders of the Hindu community expressed regret on behalf of those who did not stop playing music before Mosques ?

(g) Are Government aware that the Communiqué issued by the Government of Assam has violated the old practice of Sylhet and has thus wounded the sentiments of the Muslims ?

(h) Has the attention of Government been drawn to a report published in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, dated Saturday, January 21, 1939, headed by "Hindu-Muslim Fracas" ?

(i) If so, will Government be pleased to state the root cause of the communal fracas at Putijuri within the police station Bahubal, in the Habiganj subdivision ?

(j) Are Government aware that the Habiganj riot (Putijuri) is the after effect of that Communiqué ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI replied :

191. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Government have no such information.

(c)—The restriction of music at certain periods before places of public worship is imposed out of respect to religious feelings and before hospitals out of consideration of humanity to save sick people from being unnecessarily disturbed. It is reported that in actual practice the stoppage of music before hospitals and places of public worship was not strictly enforced.

(d)—Only 25 licenses were issued for processions that night.

(e)—This has since been remedied by a Gazette Communiqué issued on the 15th February, 1939.

(f)—Yes both the parties expressed regret, but the terms provisionally settled were subsequently disowned by the Hindus in public meetings.

(g)—No. Government do not accept this view.

(h)—Yes.

(i) & (j)—The case is now *sub-judice* and Government are therefore not prepared to make any statement at present.

Black flag demonstration at Nilamsbazar

Maulavi MABARAK ALI asked :

*192. Are Government aware that there was an assault made by the Inspector of Police, Karimganj, on the little school boys and others, participating in the black flag demonstration at Nilamsbazar on the occasion of the Hon'ble Minister of Industries' tour there ?

*193. (a) Are Government aware that the incident was communicated to His Excellency the Governor ?

(b) If so, what steps have been taken with regard to the incident ?

*194. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether any enquiry was made into the matter ?

(b) If so, what report was submitted after the enquiry was made ?

(c) On whose evidence, the findings of the report were based ?

*195. (a) Are Government aware that a criminal case was instituted against the said officer regarding the incident in the Karimganj Criminal Court ?

(b) If so, what was the finding of the case ?

*196. Will Government be pleased to lay a copy of the judgment of the case on the table ?

*197. Will Government be pleased to state whether the said Inspector of Police is a confirmed officer or a probationer ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI replied :

192.—An allegation to this effect was made. It transpired on subsequent enquiry that the Divisional Inspector of Police who accompanied the Hon'ble Minister pushed back a few of the black flag carriers who went too close to the Hon'ble Minister and tried to create some disturbance and assumed threatening attitude.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: May I know from the Hon'ble Premier by whom this allegation was made ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: It will appear from the subsequent replies that the allegation was not made at the time the incident took place, but subsequently the allegation was made by a boy who ultimately brought up the case before the Subdivisional Officer.

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI replied :

193. (a)—No.

(b)—The Subdivisional Officer, Karimganj, was asked to send a full report.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: If the answer to question 193(a) be "No", then how can there be any reply to question 193(b) ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: It was not known to us what information was sent to His Excellency, but the incident was brought to our notice and we caused the enquiry.

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI replied :

194. (a)—Yes. A summary enquiry by a Sub-Deputy Magistrate in the first instance.

(b)—The gist of the report is that the incident was only trivial and was as stated in reply to question No.192.

(c)—Names were not recorded by the Sub-Deputy Magistrate. It was a summary enquiry.

195. (a)—Yes.

(b) & 196.—The case was dismissed under section 203, Criminal Procedure Code. Apparently the accused was not summoned. A copy of the order is placed on the library table.

197.—A probationer.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know what offence falls under section 352 of the Indian Penal Code ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I do not understand the question. Does the hon. member want the definition of section 352, Indian Penal Code ?

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: The Hon'ble Premier said that the Police Officer pushed the boys. May I know whether it is not an offence under section 352, Indian Penal Code ?

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

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: May I know from the Hon'ble Premier whether it was a case of assault or a case of pushing back ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: There is no question of assault. Of course in certain circumstances pushing back may be an assault, but in other circumstances it is not an offence at all.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Has the Hon'ble Premier gone through the order, a copy of which has been placed on the library table ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: Yes, it was an *ex-parte* order. The accused was not summoned at all.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: What are the contents of this order?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: This order has no value in view of the fact that it is an *ex-parte* order.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Is it a fact that the Subdivisional Officer withdrew the case to his own file without assigning any reason.

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: That is probably a fact.

Re the Police Inspector of Karimganj

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked :

*198. (a) Are Government aware of the assault made on a Muslim League worker by the Police Inspector of Karimganj during the last visit of the Hon'ble Minister of Industries, etc., at Karimganj?

(b) Is it a fact that a regular criminal case was instituted against the said Police Officer?

(c) If so, what order was passed by the learned Magistrate in dismissing the complaint?

(d) Do Government propose to hold an inquiry into the conduct of the said officer?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI replied :

198. (a), (b) and (c)—There was no such assault at Karimganj. The hon. member probably refers to the incident at Nilamsbazar. He is referred to the replies to questions (Starred questions Nos.192 to 197) on the subject asked by Maulavi Mabarak Ali, M.L.A.

(d)—No.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN*: As regards (d) the answer is "No". So Government is not prepared to hold any enquiry. May I know whether Government is satisfied on the result of the enquiry that has already been made?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: The enquiry was instituted in the first instance very soon after the occurrence. In that it is definitely written that the occurrence was of a very trivial nature and as such the Magistrate did not summon the accused.

Maulavi ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY*: May I know whether the Hon'ble Premier considers that in a case where a Divisional Inspector of Police is concerned, the enquiry should be held by the Sub-Deputy Magistrate?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: The matter was taken up to Court.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA*: May I know if the Sub-Deputy Magistrate was in charge at that time?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: Yes.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN*: May I know whether the police has any authority to push back black flag carriers?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: In this case, the report is that they came too close and intended harm to the Hon'ble Minister?

Maulavi ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY:** Was there any complaint before the Inspector in writing for which the Inspector had to be in charge of looking to the peace and safety of the Hon'ble Minister? Did he make any entry in the general diary?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: It is not known?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: It appears that the case was dismissed under section 203 of the Criminal Procedure Code, and the complainant had the right to take it up before a superior Court. I do not think so many questions can be asked.

Maulavi ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY:** The matter is clear that the Inspector pushed the boy. Is there any tangible record to show that there was any violence on the part of the black flag carriers.

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: The decision of the Magistrate put the matter to an end.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN:** During the tour of other Ministers were any police escorts engaged for the safety of their lives?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: I do not know. But it is always the duty of the police to see that the personal safety of the Ministers is looked into.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN:** I understand the Hon'ble Premier had a prolonged tour. May I know whether he ever required police help?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: I travelled mostly not on State expense, but privately and I did not care to inform the district authorities about my visit.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN:** May I know whether the police came on their own initiative or were they requisitioned by the Hon'ble Minister?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: I think they were requisitioned.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI:** Is it an offence to go too close to the Hon'ble Minister?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: That is a matter to be decided by the man on the spot.

Girls' School at Baurbhag

Maulavi MABARAK ALI asked :

*199. Are Government aware—

- (a) that a Girls' School was established some years back in the village of Baurbhag under the Karimganj Local Board?
- (b) that the said school with the name of its mistress, was included in the Deputy Inspector of Schools' original list of venture schools taken up by the Board along with 21 other venture schools?
- (c) that the said 22 schools of the Deputy Inspector of Schools' original list were finally taken up by the Board and granted aid from the Board?

*200. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether the said Baurbhag School has received its grant?
- (b) If not, why not?

** Speech not corrected.

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI replied :

199. (a), (b) and (c)—Yes.

200. (a) and (b)—Bills for payment of the grant to the school have been kept in abeyance by the Chairman of the Board on account of the fact that a rival school sprang up after the taking over of the Baurbhag School by the Board and claimed the grant. The facts will be further examined.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Whether the bill for payment was passed by the Deputy Inspector and Sub-Inspector of Schools ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: I am not aware of that.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: I beg to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Premier to my question (b) above: Are Government aware that the said school with the name of its mistress was included in the Deputy Inspector of Schools' original list of venture schools taken up by the Board along with 21 other venture schools? The answer is 'yes'. Is there any justification for the Local Board Chairman to interfere with that grant ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: I am not aware of anything except the information that we have placed before the House. I have no other means of judging what justification he can have for this.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: It is evident from the answer of the Hon'ble Premier that on account of the setting up of a rival school, the bills are kept in abeyance. Will he please enquire into the matter ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: The facts will be further examined.

Promotions in the Education Department

Maulavi MABARAK ALI asked :

*201. (a) Is it a fact that the former Cabinet passed orders that promotions in the Education Department will go by communities ?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to lay on the table a copy of the said order ?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state whether promotions in this Department are actually going on by communities ?

(d) If not, why not ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI replied :

201. (a)—No. The last Government after examining the question, considered it undesirable to bring the question of communal representation into promotions.

(b)—Does not arise.

(c)—The reply is in the negative.

(d)—Because this would introduce serious complications and would deprive meritorious officers of advancement and by discouraging good work would impair the efficiency of the services.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(to which answers were laid on the table)

Assam Museum

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR asked :

187. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether the building for the Assam Museum has now been completed ?

- (b) If so, will Government be pleased to state whether any steps have been taken for collecting ancient relics and historical articles which are fast decaying and getting extinct?
- (c) Do Government propose to take early steps for the preservation and collection of such articles before they are destroyed by fire, flood or other natural causes?
- (d) If so, do Government propose to appoint one of their able officers as a Travelling Curator or Collector for collecting such articles for the Museum?
- (e) Are Government aware that Srijut Sarbeswar Kataki of the Education Department is a person having keen interest in respect of research work in this line?
- (f) Do Government propose to lend the services of the said officer to the Museum for a few months as an experimental measure for collecting historical articles?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI replied :

187. (a)—Yes. It has been taken over by the Kamrup Anusandhan Samiti, but some additional works are required.

(b) and (c)—Yes. The collection of ancient relics and historical articles has already been going on for some years, and will continue. The articles so far collected have been accommodated in the buildings of the Kamrup Anusandhan Samiti, Gauhati, and will be transferred to the Museum building when it is equipped to receive them.

(d)—The reply is in the negative inasmuch as there is a Curator already.

(e)—Does not arise.

(f)—Does not arise.

Creation of a new Local Board in the Kamrup district

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR asked :

188. Is the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Local Self-Government aware that the Gauhati Local Board is almost double in area, population and income of an average Local Board of the Province and it is unwieldy for proper management?

189. Are Government aware that the inhabitants of the mauzas falling under the Nalbari, Rangia and Boroma Thanas are persistently demanding a Subdivision comprising of these mauzas and that the Government have already recognised their claim?

190. Will the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge be pleased to refer to the Government's reply to my unstarred question No. 346 asked in the Assembly in its session of August, 1937 and to state whether the Government is in a position to take steps in the near future to give effect to the scheme of establishing a Subdivision comprising of the above mentioned mauzas with Nalbari, as its headquarters?

191. If the answer to question No.190 above is in the negative, do Government propose to give the inhabitants of the said mauzas some relief, in the absence of a subdivision by opening a separate Local Board for these mauzas?

192. (a) Are Government aware that the then Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the Department of Local Self-Government in reply to an address presented to him at Nalbari on 1st February, 1938 recognised the necessity of creating a separate Local Board for these mauzas and assured that the Government will favourably consider the question ?

(b) Do Government propose to amend the present Local Self-Government Act ?

(c) If so, do Government propose to incorporate provisions in the amended Act for a Local Board for the above-mentioned areas ?

The Hon'ble Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN replied :

188.—No. It appears to be about sixty per cent. above the average in these respects. It has not hitherto been suggested to Government that management is difficult.

189.—Yes.

190.—The matter is under consideration but will take time: the financial implications have to be considered.

191.—This cannot be done under the existing law.

192. (a)—There is no record of the observations made by the late Hon'ble Minister.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—The suggestion will be considered.

Issue of Gun Licenses

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH asked :

193. Will Government be pleased to state the number of persons killed and injured by wild elephants, tigers and bears in the Dibrugarh subdivision in each of the last three years ?

194. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The number of applications for license to hold guns, by *raiya*s for self-protection and crop protection in each of the previous 3 years in the Dibrugarh subdivision ?

(b) The number of license granted to those people in that subdivision during the said period ?

(c) The number refused to them during that period ?

195. (a) Are Government aware that havoc caused by wild elephants in Tippling, Rahmoria and Tingkhong on men and crops is the largest among all the mauzas of the Dibrugarh subdivision ?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to state—

(i) The number of applications for gun license for self-protection and crop protection in each of the above mauzas during the last three years ?

(ii) The number of licenses issued to them during the said period ?

(iii) The number refused during that period ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI replied :

193.—None in 1936.

Two persons were killed by wild elephants in 1937.

Three persons were killed by wild elephants, three by tigers and one by a bear in 1938.

Government have no information about the number of persons injured during these years.

194. (a)—40 in 1936.
38 in 1937.
42 in 1938.
(b)—17 in 1936.
9 in 1937.
12 in 1938.
(c)—23 in 1936.
29 in 1937.
30 in 1938.
195. (a)—Government have no information.

(b) (i)—			
Tipling	Rahmoria	Tingkhong	
4	2	6	in 1936.
6	2	12	in 1937.
3	1	4	in 1938.
(ii)—			
1	1	2	in 1936.
1	...	2	in 1937.
1	1	1	in 1938.
(iii)—			
3	1	4	in 1936.
5	2	10	in 1937.
2	...	3	in 1938.

Srijut BELIRAM DAS*: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that Government are reluctant to issue gun licenses as people will be ready to revolt if there are sufficient number of guns?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI*: It is not a fact. Government do not think that by muzzle loading guns they can rise into rebellion.

Srijut BELIRAM DAS*: Have the Government issued any orders that the number of gun licenses should not be increased?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI*: No, Sir, it is not a fact.

Maulavi ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY*: During the last Assembly Session I asked a question about the cancellation of gun licenses, and the Government was pleased to bring the figures from the district of Sylhet. After looking at the figures the Hon'ble Premier promised that he will issue orders that licenses should be granted liberally. May I know if any steps have been taken in that direction.

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: The matter will be taken into consideration.

Fisheries settled with the Surma Valley Angling Association

Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA asked:

196. (a) Will Government be pleased to state if the fisheries settled with the Surma Valley Angling Association were put on auction before they were last settled with them?
- (b) If not, why not?

* Speech not corrected.

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED replied :

196. (a)—No.

(b)—Because it was then considered that these fisheries which were important as breeding grounds should not be worked in a way in which fish will be exterminated.

Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA : Who fixed the fees, Sir ?

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED : Fees were fixed by the previous Government.

Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA : Were the fees fixed arbitrarily ?

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED : It is difficult for me to reply to the question whether the fees fixed were nominal or not.

Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA : The answer to question 196(b) is "because it was then considered that these fisheries which were important as breeding grounds should not be worked in a way in which fish will be exterminated". May I take it that the present Government have decided to change the system which has been in vogue for so many years ?

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED : We have been able to find out that the purpose for which these fisheries were settled with the Surma Valley Angling Association, has outlived its utility, and the whole question will be taken into consideration by Government at the time of renewing the lease.

Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA : Are Government aware that the lease of Fishery No. 11 is expiring at the end of this financial year ?

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED : I am not aware of that, but I will take the information supplied by the hon. member into consideration.

Mr. ARUN KUMAR CHANDA : Is it a fact that the Surma Valley Angling Association sub-leased out certain fisheries on a basis of profit ?

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED : It was at one time reported that the Association had a mind to do that, but the last time when the lease was renewed, a clause was inserted in it as a result of which they have no right to sublet the fisheries.

Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA : Will Government be pleased to state whether it is a definite policy of Government to protect the fisheries which are the breeding grounds by leasing them out under some terms under which they are to be worked ?

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED : I have nothing more to add to what I have already stated. For the policy, which was adopted in this particular case, this Government cannot be held responsible and the reply given is quite clear that it was at that time considered that these fisheries should be kept for breeding purposes.

Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA : In view of the policy adopted in a particular case in a particular fishery may I know whether Government think it advisable to extend the same policy to other fisheries also ?

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED : Yes, Sir, after examination, if it is found that some such policy should be followed, Government will take the matter into consideration.

Chunarighat and Bahubal Dispensaries

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked :

197. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The total population in Chunarighat and Bahubal Thanas separately in the Habiganj subdivision ?

- (b) The number of Charitable dispensaries in each of the said Thanas ?
- (c) The areas of each of the said Thanas ?
- (d) The number of patients treated in each of the dispensaries of those two Thanas in the year 1938 ?

The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS replied :

197. (a)—By the Census of 1931—
Chunarighat Thana—89,820.
Bahubal Thana—61,330.

- (b)—One in each Thana.
- (c)—Chunarighat Thana—191 square miles.
Bahubal Thana—87 square miles.
- (d)—Chunarighat Dispensary—5,860.
Bahubal Dispensary—6,906.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know whether the Hon'ble Minister does not think that one dispensary in each thana is very inadequate ?

The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS: These are Local Board dispensaries and it is for them to judge whether they are sufficient or not.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: In view of the big areas just mentioned in the reply and the number of population, do not the Government consider it necessary to establish more dispensaries there ?

The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS: Government have established only three hospitals—one at Gauhati, one at Sylhet and one at Dibrugarh. In addition to these, Government at present undertake to open some subsidised dispensaries on experimental basis. If they prove successful Government will try to open some more.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know whether Government will consider the question of more doctors in these two thanas ?

The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS: The matter will be looked into.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know whether the Hon'ble Minister will take the matter seriously in view of the heavy population of these two Thanas ?

The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS: Sir, whatever we say we say seriously.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Whatever Government say, the hon. member should take it seriously.

Outbreak of cholera in the Habiganj Subdivision

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked :

198. (a) Are Government aware that cholera broke out in Habiganj in a serious form last year ?
- (b) If so, will Government be pleased to state (i) the number of persons attacked with cholera and the number of persons who died in each of the thanas of the subdivision ?
- (ii) The step or steps, taken by Government, to control the outbreak of the disease in future ?
- (c) Is it a fact that steps taken by the Government last time were inadequate ?
- (d) Will Government be pleased to state the reason or reasons for such outbreak of the disease ?

(e) Is it a fact that scarcity of good drinking water is the cause of such outbreak of the disease ?

(f) If so, what steps, Government have taken or contemplated to take to remove this ?

The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS replied :

198. (a)—Yes.

(b) (i)—There were two epidemics, one in the spring and one in the autumn. The figures are as follows :—

Thana	19th February to 23rd April		24th September to 31st December	
	Attacks	Deaths	Attacks	Deaths
Habiganj ...	165	81	129	73
Chunar. aghat ...	145	67	55	40
Baniyac hung ...	73	37	810	498
Ajmiriganj ...	79	13	266	147
Madhabpur ...	21	11	337	175
Lakhai ...	69	39	321	208
Nabiganj ...	84	55	519	392
Bahubal ...	145	61	207	109

(ii)—Government directed that the system of reporting and providing staff, etc., for the affected areas should be thoroughly overhauled and all possible delays eliminated. As a result the Subdivisional Medical Officer's reports are now sent direct to the Director, and every possible step has been taken to induce the persons concerned to give immediate information of any outbreak, on receiving which the medical and public health authorities are in a position to give immediate assistance.

Government have also asked that stricter action should be taken against defaulting reporting agencies.

(c)—No.

(d)—Cholera is endemic in Habiganj subdivision and neighbouring parts of Bengal.

(e)—The cause of outbreak of cholera in endemic areas like Sylhet is not actually known to science. It is believed, however, that the use of such water only as is safe from pollution both for drinking and also for washing vessels, clothes and the like, is an important factor in preventing such outbreaks.

(f)—Government are very anxious to improve the rural supplies of drinking water, and in order to devise the best means of tackling this very difficult problem are closely watching the experience obtained with the Central Government's grants. The supplies provided from provincial revenues, especially those in the form of tanks, have unfortunately proved in the past to have suffered much contamination not only by flood but by neglect. They are considering whether a comprehensive scheme can be financed and put in force in selected areas on the basis of the material now being gathered.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: In view of the huge number of deaths during one year in a subdivision, I want to know whether Government are going to take prompt action to remove this horrible situation. The answer does not seem to me to the point.

The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS: The answer is there,

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: The answer is voluminous and not to the point. I drew the attention of the Hon'ble Premier also to this.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The answer is there.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it not the duty of Government to look to the safety of the people?

The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS: Yes, Sir, we feel it to be our duty, and we are considering this matter very seriously and at the same time I must inform the hon. member that the duty of the Local Board is also not less.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: With regard to the reply to (f), what do the Government consider would be sufficient to combat this neglect? How do they propose to eradicate it?

The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS: That is what I say here "They are considering whether a comprehensive scheme can be financed and put in selected areas on the basis of the material now being gathered".

Maulavi ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY: May I ask the Hon'ble Minister whether it is a fact that formerly bacteriophage used freely to be distributed in all places wherever there was an epidemic of cholera, but for the last few months this has been stopped?

The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS: I am not aware of that.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know from Government whether any definite action has been taken by them since such a horrible state of affairs prevailed in the Habiganj subdivision?

The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS: This state of affairs has occurred this year and Government are considering this very seriously.

Maulavi ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY: May I ask the Hon'ble Minister whether it is a fact that formerly bacteriophage used to be freely distributed where there was outbreak of cholera but recently it has been stopped?

The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS: As I said I am not aware of that but I will enquire into it.

Karimganj High Madrasa

Maulavi MABARAK ALI asked:

199. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether the Karimganj High Madrasa was originally a Middle English Madrasa and when it was first recognised by Government?
- (b) The amount of grant-in-aid sanctioned to the said Madrasa at first?
- (c) The strength of the staff, the total monthly recurring expenditure of the Madrasa and the percentage of the Government contribution to it at that time?
- (d) The maximum grant-in-aid sanctioned to the Madrasa as long as it was a Middle English Madrasa, the number of teachers, the sanctioned recurring expenditure per month and the percentage of the maximum grant-in-aid to the total expenditure at that time?

- (e) Whether the said Madrasa has been gradually developed into a full fledged High Madrasa, duly recognised by the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dacca ?
- (f) If so, with effect from what date ?
- (g) The strength of the staff, their qualifications, the monthly sanctioned recurring expenditure, the amount of grant-in-aid and the percentage of the same to the total recurring expenditure at present ?
- (h) Whether the Government recognises that the Aided High Madrasas and the Aided High Schools are of the same standard and status in respect of qualification and pay of teachers and other matters ?
- (i) Whether the scale of pay of teachers of the Karimganj High Madrasa is equal to that of teachers with equivalent qualifications and of the same position serving in other recognised Aided High Schools ?
- (j) Whether the scale of pay of teachers of the Karimganj High Madrasa conforms to that prescribed by the Education Department for Aided High Schools or to that prescribed by the Dacca Board ?
- (k) If the reply to question (j) above is in the negative, will Government be pleased to state the reason for such a differential treatment in the case of this Madrasa ?
200. (a) Is it a fact that the Government have since adopted and introduced the High Madrasa Scheme ?
- (b) If so, do they propose to popularise the Scheme by giving the High Madrasas more grant-in-aid ?
201. (a) Are Government aware that the amount of grant-in-aid sanctioned to the Karimganj High Madrasa is inadequate and the scale of pay of teachers there is very poor ?
- (b) If so, will Government be pleased to state whether they propose to increase the grant-in-aid of the said Madrasa immediately so as to maintain at least the minimum scale prescribed by the Education Department or by the Dacca Board ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI replied :

199, 200 (b) and 201.—The hon. member's attention is invited to the replies given to similar questions (unstarred questions Nos. 1039-1044) asked by him at the December session of the Assembly, 1938.

200. (a)—What the hon. member refers to by the High Madrasa scheme is not clear.

The High Madrasa course of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dacca, has been introduced in the Sylhet Government Madrasa, and in the Madrasas at Jhingabari, Karimganj, Gauripur, Sibsagar and Rangia.

Appointment in the Assam School Service

Maulavi MABARAK ALI asked :

202. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) What is the total number of posts in Class III of the Assam School Service ?

- (b) How many of them are held by the Muslims and how many posts they are entitled to (figures to be given separately for each Valley) ?
- (c) Whether the Government propose to make appointments in this service from Muslims of the two Valleys on the basis of population separately ?
- (d) How the recruitment in the recently notified 20 (twenty) posts in this service will be distributed among the different communities of the two Valleys ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI replied :

202. (a)—348.
- (b)—Assam Valley—41 against 34·39 to which they are entitled.
Surma Valley—86 against 76·36 to which they are entitled.
- (c)—Yes. Appointments in this service are on a divisional basis.
- (d)—In accordance with the orders of Government in regard to communal representation.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS

GRANT No.22

(43.—Industries)

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi MUHAMMAD ALI: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.2,31,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March, 1940, for the administration of the head "43.—Industries".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.2,31,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March, 1940, for the administration of the head 43.—Industries."

Maulavi BADARUDDIN AHMED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.11,870 under Grant No.22, Major head—43.—Industries, Minor head—B.—Industrial Development (total), at page 167 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,31,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

The object of my moving this motion is not to criticise Government but to draw the pointed attention of Government as to the desirability of opening a Tannery school in the Province.

Sir, we are shouting both inside and outside this Legislature that we want to solve the unemployment problem, but we have not yet taken any definite step towards this direction. If a tannery school be opened in the province, in that case many of the unemployed educated youths will be employed and the problem of unemployment will be solved to a great extent. Sir, thousands of maunds of hides are annually going out of this province, but in return we get very little for it. If a tannery school be opened, these hides may be tanned here and the finished leather may be profitably used here. The article, of leather have turned to be the daily necessities of our life. We use shoes but these shoes are provided by the

foreigners and the belting leather is also used in our province but this is supplied by other provinces. Similarly other articles of leather are also used by the people of our province but we have not made any provision to tan the hides here in our province. Sir, our hills and jungles are full of varieties of trees and out of the barks the tanning materials can very safely be produced and we should not go outside the province to get tanning materials. If a tannery school is opened here the tanning materials may be obtained without any cost.

Government have also got two trained men in the tannery department. Two of the youths of this province were deputed to Jullunder City by Government to get tannery education and they have completed their course. Government have spent a lot of money in getting them trained. They were given stipend of Rs.30 a month each for two years and again Government had to pay a big sum of money to the institution to give them training. These two persons after completion of their training, have come back from the institution ; but they have not been employed now. They are now serving in some private firms in Calcutta. Now, Sir, if they be given some employments, then the money spent after them could have been profitably utilised. So if a tannery school be opened and these two trained persons are employed, then many of the youths of the province will get training in this department and many of the youths will easily get employments and thereby the problem of unemployment of the province would be solved to a great extent. With these words I commend this motion for the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Cut motion moved :

“That the provision of Rs.11,870 under Grant No.22, Major head—43.—Industries, Minor head—B.—Industrial Development (total) at page 167 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,31,00 do stand reduced by Rs.100.”

Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : My hon. friend Maulavi Badaruddin Ahmed is a little ambitious than myself. He wants a regular tannery school to be established within the province so that our unemployed youths may get training and thereby find employment within the province. But my scheme is much more modest than his. I want to place some of my experience and personal knowledge about this matter before the Government and particularly before my Hon'ble friend the Minister in charge of Industries, who had sought my advice.

It is known that a very large quantity of raw hides and very ill cured skins are sent out to Calcutta from Assam. All the big dealers in skins in Calcutta have complained that for want of a little knowledge about curing of these skins, Assam skins fetch a smaller price. In other words, these people whether educated or uneducated who run hide business suffer a very big loss simply for want of an elementary knowledge of the subject of curing, not to speak of tanning. It may be news to my hon. friends that an uncured skin is sold in Calcutta market by the piece. I have heard that such a skin of goat is sold for anything between 12 annas to Re.1-8-0. But with a little curing that very skin is converted into leather and this is sold by means of weight so much for a pound and the whole skin fetches as much as Rs.5 to Rs.7 per piece. I, therefore, suggest to the Ministry that they might consider whether a small scheme on the lines I will adumbrate now will not be to the best interests of the province. My hon. friend has already told us that we have a wealth of trees in our forests, the bark of which can be utilised for tanning material. All that is required is a simple knowledge how to utilise them for the purpose of tanning or curing our raw skins and hides. While I was in office, a

certain gentleman from Sylhet who had had foreign training but is now employed unfortunately not in Assam or Bengal but outside, wrote to me that he is prepared to draw up a scheme for the consideration of the Assam Government which without much outlay will bring at least thrice the amount to our traders who deal in hides and raw skins. As a matter of fact it will be news to my friends that the treatment that the Hindu cobblers in the Sylhet district who go by the name of Rishis—they have their own methods of treatment—is so good that such treated variety of skin which is sold in the market of Laksam, has a big demand in Calcutta. Only in January last, a Brahmin dealer of skins and hides of Calcutta enquired from me whether I could not place him in direct touch with these Rishis so that he could get goods earlier and direct without their being sent to Laksam, thereby ensuring good name and better price in Calcutta for Assam goods. I will suggest to the Hon'ble Minister whether he would not like to train some of these Rishis on more scientific lines for that will improve the system of treatment and also I would suggest that they should enquire of that Sylhet Muhammadan gentleman who is now employed outside Assam to give us the benefit of his scheme so that we can introduce and benefit by those improved methods.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: He is now in Madras.

Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: But he wrote to me from Baroda. As I was suggesting, I would like the Government to consider whether we could not introduce some system like the peripatetic training scheme in soap manufacture rather than a regular school. As my hon. friend has already intimated, this is not a censure motion but a motion to draw the attention of the Ministry to this lucrative method of improving our skins and thereby bringing more money to the coffers of the people who deal in such goods.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: In this connection I may also refer to a few practical things which has done splendid work by starting this tannery work in Habiganj. The Rishis of Villages Usbainagar and Choripur through the attempts of the Ramkrishna Mission at Habiganj started tannery work and the then Director of Industries, Mr. I Majid, gave them a grant of Rs.500. With this grant the work received a good impetus and those two shops have now enlarged their activities and they have now opened many branches. They have extended their business up to Sylhet town. In Sylhet town also they have a branch, they have another in Habiganj and also in other subdivisions. This, of course is only to draw the attention of the Ministry to the practical side of the matter. These poor people who were unable to earn even two pice have in the course of these nine years through the attempts of the Ramkrishna Mission, are now employed in this business and, therefore, they are getting a flourishing business. My request to the Ministry is to start a tannery business or industry somewhere in the province so that the question of unemployment may be solved to a great extent.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: I am grateful to the hon. mover who has brought this motion not for censuring Government but for bringing certain facts to Government notice and for thier consideration. Sir, I may say that this Government notice and for thier this matter and desired to introduce this industry. We wanted to open a tannery class this year; but unfortunately for paucity of funds our earnest intention could not materialise and it had to be postponed to next year.

Regarding the elementary knowledge of these cobblers and other people, it is regretable no doubt that these people do not know how to tan the

skin. The trouble is in tanning. For tannery there are very small factories throughout the province but everyone of them is a small shop. The hon. Leader of the Opposition was in charge of Industries for a considerable number of years and he knows a lot about these industries. I met him and had a talk with him and I am glad to admit that I learned many things from him. This matter also was considered as to how we can help the dealers in skin and hides. This year we considered this point, namely, how to help the dealers in skin and hides. But unfortunately lack of funds stands in the way. But if our friends will help us in getting money, we hope to be able to do something towards improvement of tanning next year.

Maulavi BADARUDDIN AHMED: Sir, in view of the assurance given by the Hon'ble Minister, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think Maulavi Abdur Rahman will move his motion No. 7.

Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: In place of No. 7. Sir, we have proposed to take up No. 2.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: All right.

Maulavi NAZIRUDDIN AHMED: I beg to move, Sir, that the provision of Rs.34,372 under Grant No.22, Major head—43.—Industries, Minor head—A.—Director of Industries (total), at page 167 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,31,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

By this motion, Sir, my object is to censure Government for not appointing a Fishery Expert inspite of the recommendations of the Development Board.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, while I thank the Government for having a Development Board in Assam, I cannot but censure them for their regrettable indifference towards giving effect to the recommendations of the Board.

Sir, fish is admittedly a staple food for the people of this province. Every one from prince to pauper depends for his living on *mach* as much as he does on *bhath*. The supply of ordinary *mach bhath* is the crying need at all times. One can hardly go without the other. No one can deny that there has been for some years past a gradual deterioration and decrease in the supply of fish in many a part of the province. This combined with its extensive export, has deprived the children of the soil of the supply of fish even at the minimum scale. This is really a matter of grave concern. Fish is of universal consumption, and fisheries are bringing in a satisfactory income to Government. In 1937-38 Government received an income of more than 3 lakhs of rupees as against an expenditure of rupees nine-hundred only. The Development Board recommended to the Government the appointment of a fishery expert immediately, but Government have up to date been entirely callous to such a pressing need.

Sir, as it has failed to receive Government attention, I must say that those who are guiding the destiny of the province are forgetful of public weal, and by the mere formation of a farcical Board at the expense of public money and without the real intention of doing things, forfeit their claim to the responsible position as the Government of the people.

Sir, if the hon. members of this House will give a little of thought to the matter, they will easily find a sad contrast between the rate of increase in the population and that of the decrease in fish supply. Besides, such

callousness of Government to the improvement of the fisheries, which will ever be bringing a large revenue, means a detraction from their prudence and intelligence. Lack of foresight in this regard will eventually bring danger to the people who depend so largely on fish for their lives.

If the Government would not improve fishery with the advice and help of a fishery expert, their laxity in the matter of looking to the interests of the millions under their charge would be unpardonable.

Sir, with these words I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Cut motion moved:

“ That the provision of Rs. 34,372 under Grant No.22, Major head—43.—Industries, Minor head—A.—Director of Industries (total), at page 167 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,31,000 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.”

Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, being the oldest legislator in this House and having a fund of unwanted knowledge, I thought I should impart some of it to my hon. friends, and therefore I have taken my stand to speak on this subject, although I should confess I am not a fishing expert. I have never in my life touched a rod and hook.

Fish is one of the staple foods of all Indians, and therefore we should try to have a constant and considerable supply at all times. The previous Government, not to speak of the Reform period after 1921, but even in the pre-Reform period, took considerable pains and incurred big expenses to increase the fish supply. I remember that between the years 1912 and 1918, for six years, the then Government proclaimed that any one killing a crocodile will get a reward of Rs.10 ; for the fishery experts, consisting of Sir Nicholas Beatson-Bell and Mr. K. C. De of the Eastern-Bengal and Assam times, have reported that each crocodile is responsible for devouring nearly two tons of fish every day. Their report, probably my friends will find in the Secretariat Library. The Government had appointed our present Income-tax expert, Mr. Abinash Dutt, as the fishery expert then, and it was his duty to bring fries from East Bengal as well as North Bengal and issue them to those people who wanted to start pisciculture. But when there was a stringency of funds during the Great German War—unfortunately I was responsible for moving that resolution—the reward for killing *gharials* stopped in the year 1918. Somehow or other, with the transfer of Mr. Dutt from the Fishery to the Income-tax Department, that system of introducing fries from Rajshahi and Chittagong also stopped. But certain people found advantages in starting this as a side industry, and I know that two of the Professors of Murarichand College had bunded a valley in their tea garden and started rearing fish. I had heard from them that they expected to make thrice the amount of their capital in three years from the fishery. Unfortunately for them a heavy and unusual down-pour in one year caused a breach in the bund and bulk of the fish escaped. But this has not deterred other educated young men from taking to the industry of rearing fish. I know that Mr. C. K. Bezbarua, a rich tea planter in Upper Assam had taken settlement of two big old tanks nearabout Sibsagar for starting scientific rearing of fish. These tanks which can very well be termed lakes, were excavated by the Ahom Kings and their area is nearly one square mile. They invested quite a large sum of money in setting up pump, to drain out the old polluted water and in putting new fishes in. That adventure was started in a very grand style.

I have got no personal knowledge but my Hon'ble friend the Minister in charge coming from Surma Valley will be in a better position to know that in Sunamganj and Habiganj, there are immense fisheries where local people get such a big haul of fish that they do not know what to do with it. The heads of fish and its offal which have got to be removed before the fish, can be preserved or dried as a very good manure, as good as the 'gauna' manure of America. Those who eat in European style know very well that small fishes can be very well converted into sardines and they can be preserved for a long time. If I remember aright, a previous Government of Madras has started sardine factory there and as a result the fish industry is growing there. The Government of Bengal have also got a big establishment to look after the fish supply. I would therefore request the Government to turn their attention to this industry because it can be very well taken up by our educated youths and it can be made a source of income. I will explain how money can be made by rearing fish. About the year 1916 or 1917 fry of Rohit fish was introduced in the celebrated Digli tank at Gauhati by the Municipality and within three years the fish became average of 5 lbs. in weight and the Municipality derived not an inconsiderable amount by allowing persons to fish there for a day on payment of one rupee per rod. Sir, I was Chairman at that time and I engaged one man who was reputed to be an expert in this line to fish there, like a member of other permit holders. I paid one rupee as licence fee to the Municipality and during one day my man caught three fishes which on the aggregate amounted to more than 20 lbs. I mention all these facts simply to show that without much initial expenditure, or capital, a profitable side-line industry can be started in rearing fishes. I therefore commend this resolution, not in a spirit of censure but in the spirit of co-operation and help to my Hon'ble friend the Minister in charge of Industries, for the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: Sir, this motion was moved for not appointing a Fishery Expert in spite of the recommendations of the Development Board. I find that in 1938, in the Industrial section of the Development Board Meeting, there was a resolution accepted for the appointment of a Fishery expert. Then in 1934, the then Government granted a stipend to a gentleman of Surma Valley to receive education in this line. That gentleman comes from the South Sylhet subdivision, *i.e.*, the place of the hon. member who has moved this motion. Then after some years training, that gentleman returned to this province and the Government in pursuance of the resolution which was passed in that Development Board for appointing an Expert wanted to know as to what he was doing then. He replied to the Director of Industries which is as follows:— With reference to your kind letter, dated 7th November 1938, I have the honour to state below that at present I am at home and looking after my own wordly affairs including my own fisheries. I shall, however, be very glad to work as Inspector of Fishery under the Government provided that I be classed as Second Class Officer with a suitable scale of pay befitting the post with headquarters either at Shillong or anywhere in Surma Valley.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: What is the date of that letter?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: 7th November, 1938. After our assumption of office, we found that resolution and that reply from that gentleman. Now the hon. member can realise that the demand of that particular gentleman is that he must be a second class Officer and his headquarters must be at Shillong or somewhere in Surma Valley. Our necessity is to preserve fish in abundance. So according to my opinion, this expert will not be of much use to us in this respect. Now

if we are to appoint any man, he should be either from Madras or somewhere else. We must have an outsider for this job when that gentleman is not willing to accept our offer.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: What is the post you are going to offer ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: We may first offer him the post of a Demonstrator.

Maulvi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: What you can expect from a Demonstrator ? Has he got any training in England ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: He has got training in Madras. The hon. Leader of the Opposition perhaps sent him in his time.

So, Sir, we find that he will not be useful for our purpose, but if he accepts the job we are ready to appoint him from next year. We think, Sir, that there is no necessity for an Expert for the ordinary purpose of rearing fish. In our Surma Valley we find that young ones of fish are brought from Chittagong and they are reared in the tanks and the people generally rear them there. When they become marketable fish, they sell them and earn money. So, for that kind of fishing we need not appoint any expert, but for other things we are still ready to appoint that gentleman if he accepts our terms.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: May we know what is the name of the gentleman who has applied and whether he has got training for inland or sea fishing ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Minister has already said that he cannot give this information. He only knows that the gentleman was trained in fishery.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: From the records I find that he was trained in Madras for some time.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: What is his name ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: What is the use of name ? Does the hon. member press his motion ?

Maulavi NAZIRUDDIN AHMED: In view of the assurance given by the Hon'ble Minister, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion. The motion was, by leave of the House, withdrawn. ✓

Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs.2,31,000, under Grant No.22, Major head—43.—Industries, at page 166 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,31,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, I have brought forward this motion to criticise the Government for not adopting a definite policy regarding industrial development of the province. Sir, the working of the Industries Department has been anything but satisfactory in the past, and this is admitted in the Administration Report. At page 3 of the report Mr. Mehta, the Director of Industries, says: "It is a matter of great regret for me that in spite of my earnest desire to develop certain industries and to start a few new industries in the province, I could practically do nothing for want of expert staff and the necessary funds. Proposals were submitted to Government from time to time for economic survey of the province, sericultural research, establishment of *Muga* firms, etc., and the Board of Development recommended various such schemes for industrial development of the province, but all were turned down by Government on account of financial stringency. All other provinces in India are

making rapid strides in industrial development, but this poor province is unfortunately lagging behind in this respect". The Government also admit this in their resolution, which says: "The present Government are considering how this object can be best achieved and though the part to be played by the enterprising public in the development and expansion of the industries of the province cannot be ignored, Government recognise that the initiation must come from itself in laying before the public, the results of a systematic survey of the raw materials, their nature and extent and the manner in which they can be best utilised for the industrial and economic development of the province".

Sir, when the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mahmud Ali was called to the *Gaddi* of the Industries Minister, he made many promises. The newspapers were full of headlines, giving the impression to the public that the industrial regeneration was coming. But what do we find? In the Budget Memorandum under the head "New Schemes" I looked in vain for any such indication. The most important work that was before the Government, was to start a survey of the cottage industries; that was advocated in this Administration Report, that was advocated on the floor of this House for the last two years, and that was also promised by the Government in the resolution. But I do not find any provision in the Budget for carrying out such a survey. The other day I understand there was a meeting of the Industrial Development Board, and there also this question was discussed. But from the report of the deliberations of that Board I find that the work of industrial survey has been postponed till the findings of the National Planning Committee. Now is this the way to effect any industrial regeneration in this province? I do not think we have got anything to do with the National Planning Committee now. What we are mainly concerned with, is the examination of the possibilities of improving the existing cottage industries, and of opening new industries in the province. So I do not see any wisdom in postponing this proposed survey which had been overdue.

Again, Sir, in the Budget Memorandum, among the new schemes, I find that the Hon'ble Minister has made provision for the appointment of a Peripatetic Hosiery Demonstration Party. Now looking to the report of the Director of Industries I find that there are five small hosiery knitting factories of which two belong to foreigners. The Director writes that it is a new industry of the province and has a good future. Then he goes on to say "Some of our boys were trained at Ludhiana Government Hosiery Institute but for want of capital they are not able to start hosiery factories yet. It is hoped that local capitalists will take advantage of their training to start this industry in the province."

In face of these remarks, I do not see the necessity of having a peripatetic hosiery party in Assam because the main thing necessary is one of enterprise and capital.

Of course in the Budget, I must say to the credit of the Government that they are starting a bell-metal works training class in the "His Royal Highness Prince of Wales Technical School, Jorhat." This is a move in the right direction (*Hear, hear*) because I find from the report also that the Industry has a great scope for improvement, but until the workers take to improved tools and designs and introduce better polish, they cannot earn better wages and extend this business. In view of this, Government ought to be congratulated for starting a bell-metal class.

Nothing is possible by way of improvement of this Industries Department unless we have Experts to advise in the matter. The necessity for expert advice is recognised in this report and also the question had been raised whether the Head of the Department should not be a technical man.

Or even if an I.C.S. Officer is deputed to work the Department, I think he should have some requisite training. The necessity for an Industrial Laboratory and an Industrial Chemist is essentially great to find out what are the possibilities of utilising the raw materials of this province and to improve the industrial and commercial activities in this province. In this connection, I want to bring it to the notice of the House that there is a great future for cinchona cultivation in Assam. The other day some questions were put in this House and the report of the expert is being awaited. I hope that it will be possible for the Government to have cinchona cultivation on a large scale, particularly in the Khasi Hills, the Garo Hills and the Mikir Hills, so that cinchona febrifuge may be supplied cheap to the people at large and Government may get a decent revenue out of it.

Another industry which promises a great future has been nipped in the bud here. I mean the Soap industry. In the Report it is stated: "There are over 43 soap factories in the province and some of them are owned by local people. There is a great competition between the Dacca soaps and the locally made soaps. Some of these factories are also making scented cocoanut oils, snow, toilet soaps, etc., to a limited extent. It is gratifying to note that as a result of our peripatetic Soap Demonstration classes, several passed boys have started soap factories on a small scale and are running them fairly satisfactory now". In face of these remarks it is very surprising to find that the provision for the soap instructor has been discontinued in this present Budget. So as I began that this Government raised very high hopes amidst the people that an industrial regeneration was coming, but they have not done anything substantial to implement their pledges, I can only close with a remark that you can fool some people for some time, but you cannot fool all people for all times.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Cut motion moved:

"That the total provision of Rs.2,31,000 under Grant No. 22, Major head—43.—Industries, at page 166 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,31,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the motion moved by hon. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman. Sir, I find here that the port-folios of Industries and Agriculture are entrusted in the hands of two separate Ministers. Industries and Agriculture are the two pillars on which the foundation of our nation-building department depends. Under the previous Government the same Minister held the charge of both Industries and Agriculture. So I say it would be desirable if the same Minister held the charge of both the port-folios.

Sir, Assam is primarily an agricultural province. Her industries and export trade earned for herself a high place in the world market. But now our trade and industry are gone, and, Sir, Assam is now turned into a purely agricultural province.

Now, we have no food to eat and no cloths to put on. Thousands of families have been rendered helpless and unemployed. Our old villages were quite self-supporting. Our village oilmen weavers, carpenters and blacksmiths have lost their profession and have increased terribly the number of unemployed youths in the province.

Sir, unemployment is the burning topic of the day, but it has sprung an unpleasant surprise upon us that the Hon'ble Finance Minister in his Budget speech has totally ignored the question of unemployment. I am very glad that one of the supporters of the Government Party took up the question of the unemployed youth. But his outlook was confined to his own class—I mean the educated middle class unemployed youth. The present Government represent only the interests of the higher middle class. So it is

but natural that they have ignored the cause of the poor unemployed youth. It is a regrettable fact that the present Government which pretends to claim to be saviours of the toiling masses, did not even shed some crocodile tears for the poor unemployed villagers.

Sir, we are wholly dependent for our clothes and daily necessities of life on foreign countries. We are exploited every now and then. Political independence is a meaningless term until and unless we are made economically independent.

Sir, Charka is a symbol for the revival of our village indigenous industry. It signifies our economic independence. Our Indian tradition and our social structure also have identified themselves with the ideals of cottage industry. But our Hon'ble Finance Minister has been imbued with the ideals of national planning. In his Budget speech he says :

“As regards big industries, we have an idea of making a proper survey of the possibilities of such industries through an expert. We are also keeping ourselves in touch with the National Planning Committee and the Government of India Committee on the subject with a view to derive such help from them as may be available. The question of what big industries this province can take up and under what conditions will be a matter for our future consideration.”

It is a direct challenge to our cottage industry. Revival of cottage industries and National Planning are two contradictory terms. This so called national planning is the harbinger of economic imperialism in Assam. These facts are the root of all evils. It creates social and moral corruption in our life and will enslave thousands of labour. We hear, Sir, that we are fighting imperialism, but National Planning is a synonym for economic imperialism. There is little difference between foreign imperialism and indigenous imperialism. So I oppose the introduction of the principle of National planning in our poor province.

With these few words I support the motion.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is indeed a pleasure to find that some of the hon. members of the opposition are now convinced that with regard to the question of industrial development there should be a definite policy to be followed by the Government; with certain grant to one industry, some concession to another, and some encouragement to the third industry, and by that sort of haphazard dealing, we cannot touch the fringe of the whole problem. The hon. leader of the opposition is a veritable mine of information, and he requires a little bit of boring before we can extract any information from him. He narrated the possibilities of some industries in this province, and the prospects he held out were so alluring that I thought of drawing up a prospectus of a Joint-stock company and as its success was assured by no less a person than hon. Sir Saiyid Muhammad Saadulla, I am sure there would be no dearth of share money coming in thousands. Nobody can deny that there are possibilities for industries in this province of Assam, and there is certainly a sure chance of success if they are rightly tackled. He went on to name some industries with the possibilities of their success, but the question with which we are primarily concerned is what should be the attitude of the Government with regard to these industries. Are Government going to directly to start and manage these industries, or to invite some enterprising business man to start these industries with the help and financial facilities from the Government or whether the Government should themselves start these industries and give over the management to some private individuals or firms?

These are the questions which will have to be considered before the Government can take up any attitude with regard to the industrial development of the province.

Next, comes the question of industrial finance. How these new industries are to be financed and whether the Government has got any role to play in the matter ; how the State could provide the money or find finances for these industries. These are the questions which should be seriously considered before hand.

Sir, we thought that the hon. members of the Opposition would enlighten us with regard to these serious questions of vital interest. I am sorry that no enlightenment has come on this important question.

Then, Sir, criticism has been levelled against the National Planning Committee. Those who have cared to read the questionnaire and the preamble with which that questionnaire was framed, will be convinced that the object of the National Planning Committee is not to discourage cottage industries but to help the cottage industries side by side with the bigger industries. It is a well known fact that simply by reviving our cottage industries we cannot raise the standard of living. If we want to double the standard of our living, we must take up some big.....

Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: What is the present standard of living ?

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: I do not understand what the hon. member himself means by the present living standard or the future standard. If the hon. member would enlighten me on the subject I will try to answer him ; he said something about people having no food and no clothes.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: The hon. member started by saying that the Opposition have started to understand that there should be a definite scheme for industrial development of the province.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order. Let the hon. member finish his speech.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: If we want to raise our standard of living certainly we shall have to take up big scale industries, and particularly when we are faced with competition from other countries we cannot do without big scale industries. So National Planning will not in any way obstruct the course of development of cottage industries, rather it would help the cottage industries, and both will develop side by side. That is the object of the National Planning Committee, and I would request the hon. members on the opposite to carefully go through the questionnaire that has been framed by the National Planning Committee in this respect. Sir, our Government is seriously considering the question of industrial development, and during this short period of six months it was not possible to frame a policy. As I have already said the question of industrial advance is linked up with the question of industrial finance, the entire problem will have to be dealt with from various aspects.

Sir, I am not very much anxious of the various schemes that have been suggested in the new year's Budget ; I am not very much enthusiastic about this or that industry mentioned here on the floor of the House. What I aim at is that there should be a definite plan and definite scheme arrived at and the whole question of industrial development should be looked at from a comprehensive point of view so that within the course of 5 years or 10 years Government can achieve some definite results. I am sure Government is moving in that direction.

Some questions have been raised with regard the appointment of experts in the Department of Industries. Of course, I for one am not in favour of a Civilian holding the portfolio of the Department of Industries. At the

same time I do not know what is meant by a technical man remaining in charge of that portfolio. A technical man is not versed in all the subjects. A technical man may be an expert in weaving, may be an expert in geology, may be an expert in one subject but not in all.

Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Did not this hon. member advocate for an expert in the past ?

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: I am not in favour of a Civilian Director and I stick to that position even now. All that I say is whether the appointment of a simple technical man would serve any useful purpose. A technical man may be an expert in one department but the Director of Industries should be a man who can give some idea in every industry so that his strong common sense and general knowledge may be of good help to the industrial enterprisers and whenever necessary expert knowledge may be invited from outside or from people within the department.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. member should finish.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Yes, I have almost finished. So, what we expect is not superficial criticism of the Government but some concrete suggestions with regard to the policy which Government should adopt for the industrial development of the country. If somebody says that within six months the whole country should be industrialised then I would say in reply that there is no Aladin's Lamp in the hands of any Government.

Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, while on the Treasury Bench I used to contribute my quota of admiration to the mental alertness of my hon. friend Mr. Aditya, but to-day he was apparently so pre-occupied with planning the prospectus for the very alluring trade prospects, that I am alleged to have placed before him that he has missed the very import of the present grant that we have been discussing.

Everyone knows that the grant of "Industries" deals with only the portfolio which is in charge of my Hon'ble friend Khan Bahadur Mahmud Ali and that portfolio is that of the small industries like cottage industries and not of big industries. Therefore, we cannot discuss to-day under this motion anything of either National Planning or big industries. So, what I spoke previously referred only to cottage and smaller industries.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Is he a Minister for cottage industries alone ?

Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, if the hon. member will ask the Ministry behind whom he is sitting, he will find that this "Industries" subject is limited to small and cottage industries. The big industries like tea industry or the oil industry at Digboi are beyond his portfolio and jurisdiction. Therefore, we cannot talk of big industries or of such big questions like National Planning which has been started by the Congress Ministries and the scheme of which wants to embrace the basic industries of entire India. I will leave that subject alone.

The main point that we have to see here is whether Government is moving on the right lines. My hon. friend Khan Bahadur Sayidur Rahman, the mover of this motion has commented upon the omissions and commissions on this subject as revealed in the Budget Estimates. He commented that the branch of training in washing and soap-making has been dropped in the Budget whereas another section, for imparting hosiery training has been put instead and he rightly complains that those people whom we trained in the past have not been able to start any small factory or cottage industry of hosiery in the province. My hon. friend the Khan Bahadur however complemented the Minister-in-charge for his proposal to introduce a bell-metal section in the Jorhat Technical School. But I will

not complement him on this point. My reasons are two for this—that this trade in bell-metal is limited, at least in the Assam Valley, to the particular subdivision from which my hon. friend Kabiraj Ghanashyam Das comes, namely Barpeta. There is a place called Sarthebari which is reputed in Assam for bell-metal industry, but woe to the families who are indulging in buying the produce of our present-day methods in that industry. At one time, urged by patriotic motive, I invested a little sum in buying a plate from Sarthebari. Well, one plate alone consisted 3 pounds of bell-metal. That is, a dozen plates of the present-day method could have been made with the metal in that one plate. Sir, there are glaring defects of our present industry. By starting a class at Jorhat which, as we have heard the day before yesterday from one of the hon. members, is a very costly place, you cannot induce students from Sarthebari Kahar community. It will be very hard for the children of the poor Kahars of that place to come to Jorhat which is a very costly place. As my Hon'ble friend the Minister in charge wants to modernise that industry he should have some technical expert and depute him to the places where old methods are in vogue. And I would ask him to specially mention that the plates and cups and the glasses that are now made should be reduced to one-tenth in weight than at present, otherwise it will be a huge waste of money and quite a big sum will be necessary to supply demands of a family. One plate made of bell-metal at the present time is so heavy and the cost of which is so high that you can buy two dozens of China ware for the same price.

My hon. friend Mr. Aditya complained that the previous Governments had no policy and, therefore, it is very wrong of the Opposition to criticize the present Government who are only in existence for the past six months. Nobody is asking them to industrialise the whole province in one night. All that we have been speaking is as a result of the request that was made by the Hon'ble Minister himself in the corridor asking us to give him all suggestions so that he can work up his own plan or policy. I am surprised to find that an ardent Congressman like Mr. Aditya criticising us for changing our attitude. I would request him to consult the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge whether he did not request us to extend our hand of co-operation to him in this matter.

There are enough small industries which can be taken up by Government and by way of suggestion I can mention just one or two in passing. Before I give my suggestions I want to point out, as has been done by my hon. friend Khan Bahadur Sayidur Rahman, about cinchona plantation. Here too I have to draw from my own memory and state before this House that about 50 years ago.....

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: Cinchona would come under Agriculture.

Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It is not Agriculture as the febrifuge has to be manufactured and so discussion comes here under Industries. Sir, about 50 years ago the Assam Government experimented in growing cinchona trees in Cherrapunji. For reasons best known that was abandoned. But recently, at least since the time when I became connected with Government, the experiment has been revived in other places and the old plantation has also been newly taken care of. So far as I remember, now our Forest Department says that the plantations are extremely hopeful and they will be in a position to extend the cultivation later on, so that Assam in future may be independent of the monopolists of cinchona products like Java and Bengal. Of course this would not strictly come under the purview of the present discussion. I am sorry, I am taking up the time of the House and I shall finish in another two minutes.

The small cottage industries that I wanted to mention is firstly about manufacturing match. Our pine trees in Shillong would make good sticks for matches. At one time some people started sending them to Calcutta but the pine tree is so full of resin that these sticks burn out quickly. So the wood was not favoured. In Bengal, specially the Ramkrishna Mission have introduced match manufacture as a small cottage industry and I remember the use of bamboo sticks ordinarily for them. If in our province we could have a small plant by which to extract the turpentine and the resin from the pine wood and I am told by an expert that it is possible and would be a profitable concern, the wood after extraction of the oil would be very good for the purpose of match manufacturing. This is the only suggestion that I shall make for the present to my hon. friend the Minister-in-charge.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my knowledge of these subjects is scanty and so is the time before me. As regards soap industry, I may inform the House without disclosing any detailed facts about it, that I found that it was to be stopped. During my visit in different localities where soap manufacturing was taught, I found that it would be a very useful industry and people were taking to it earnestly and that it would be helpful to them. These are taught in a short time, in about three to six months and so I have decided to revive it. I shall present a supplementary demand for this in the next session and I hope that the hon. members will enthusiastically pass it.

As regards the question whether the Director of Industries should be an expert or not, Government have already taken up the question and when the House will come to know of our final decision, I am sure they will find that we have moved in the right direction. Government feel no doubt that they will be successful in their attempt.

Regarding the survey and planning of definite schemes, I would ask the House to consider one thing. Every one knows that during the last 200 years, industry has not been receiving adequate attention and we are all familiar with the scanty progress that it has made. What has not been achieved during the 200 years that had passed can not be achieved in 200 days. It is expecting the impossible.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: May I know which Industry was in a decadent state during the last 200 years?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: I should like to say just this. When I took over charge of this Department of Industries, I examined the existing condition and had a circular issued requesting the prominent gentlemen concerned, the Congress Committees, the Jamait-ul-Ulema, and other organisations to help us in our mission. The District and Subdivisional Officers, the Congress Committees, the Deputy Commissioners and the Commissioners were requested to send to the Deputy Secretary, Education and Local Self-Government, a list of existing Cottage Industries in their locality by the 10th January and they were also requested to go through the list and consider the present possibilities of industrialisation in their locality and also the prospect of future development. They had also to state what further industries could possibly be started, what local materials were available. But after all these, when I found that there was no money, I was really disappointed. The money that was budgeted for the year 1938-39 was already exhausted or it was already invested. In that position, what could I do? If a survey of the necessary details had to be undertaken, it requires money; we should have some experts. To avoid this source of expenditure, I took the step of consulting others to be benefited by their knowledge, experience and intelligence.

Here in my hand you will find the file containing any number of lists of suggestions. I got out many schemes. But then, as I said, I am faced with the question of funds everywhere. It is, therefore, very difficult to bring out a policy. But the only hope I have is the co-operation of my hon. friends in this House. If they will help me in my efforts and place the Government in possession of funds, I promise I shall do all I can to develop our industries. There are the Bills for taxation that are before the House. I do sincerely hope that they will help us in passing these Bills. If they only do so, I assure them that their hopes to improve the industries in Assam will not be frustrated and they will find our people of Assam prosperous and the economic condition of the masses would be better, the people will be rich and they will not be as poor as they are now. With these words, Sir, I hope the hon. mover will be prepared to withdraw his motion. (*Loud applause*).

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order, the question is that the total provision of Rs.2,31,000, under Grant No. 22, Major head—43.—Industries, at page 166 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,31,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

The motion was negatived.

Now, the original motion before the House is that a sum not exceeding Rs.2,31,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March, 1940, for the administration of the head "43.—Industries".

The motion was agreed to

Adjournment

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

After Adjournment

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

GRANT No. 11

(28.—JAILS AND CONVICT SETTLEMENTS)

The Hon'ble Eabu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.4,53,300 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March, 1940 for the administration of the head "28.—Jails and Convict Settlements".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.4,53,300 be granted to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March, 1940 for the administration of the head '28.—Jails and Convict Settlements'. Has any decision been made as to which motions should be moved?"

Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, Sir. Nos. 3 and 7 will be moved.

Maulavi NAZIRUDDIN AHMED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 1,72,109 under grant No. 11, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements, Minor head—A.—District Jails, Sub-head—2.—Pay of establishments (total) at page 86 of the Budget, be reduced by

Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.4,53,300 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

It has been an accepted principle of every civilised society that a Government should uplift the morality of convicts so that they may go back from jails as better men. Moral depravity is the main cause of crimes. Every rational means is to be adopted for the reformation of prisoners. Prisons must aim at reforming the convicts and not at inflicting brutal punishment. Prevention is better than cure.

Sir, education is the only way which can remove such evils. In district Jails, arrangement have been made for imparting moral and religious education to the convicts so that on release they may turn better citizens and not spread crime contagion any further among others. This really deserves appreciation. But want of similar provision for subdivisional jails is again a drawback on the part of the Government. To maintain religious instructors only in district jails and neglecting others in subdivisions is a mere apology intending to welcome public criticism. To eradicate evils arising out of bad characters, an elaborate system for the proper education of prisoners in all the jails is imperative in the interest of the society. Brutal ways of punishment of the dark age must entirely go and prisoners in all the jails should get equal facilities for their training and raising of their moral standard.

Sir, with these words, I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The cut motion moved :

“That the provision of Rs.1,72,109 under Grant No. 11, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements, Minor head—A.—District Jails, Sub-head—2.—Pay of establishments (total) at page 86 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.4,53,300 do stand reduced by Rs.100”.

Maulavi ASHRAFUDDIN MD. CHAUDHURY* : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support this motion moved by my hon. friend Maulavi Naziruddin Ahmed. This is a matter which I think, the Hon'ble Minister in-charge will take into consideration. The main grievance of the mufassil jails so far as the juvenile offenders are concerned is this that no provision has been made for the education of the criminals. From my experience as a visitor in the Sylhet Jail, I can say that there has been a laudable improvement. I think those prisoners who are now getting education in the district jail can now compete with any other school students and they can make appreciable impression upon any examiner. So far as those juvenile offenders are concerned, I can say that sometime we find many better brainy and intelligent people among them, but unfortunately due to lack of education or lack of training or lack of good atmosphere, they are suffering in jails. I am sure that if they are given proper education and training, then their moral tone will be improved and they will be turned out as good citizens and then they will improve not only the society but also many other things. I think, for a matter like this, a big amount of money will not be required. Having regard to the number of criminals now we have got in the mufassil jails, I think, the number is not negligible. I think, this matter ought to attract the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in-charge specially in view of the fact that there is already a movement all over the province to spread education among the masses. I congratulate the Hon'ble Minister in view of the fact that he has already given a serious consideration over the question of the release of certain political prisoners. I think that he will also consider the case of these unfortunate convicts who are illiterate and ignorant. With these few words, I support the motion and resume my seat.

* Speech not corrected.

The Hon'ble Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I agree with the hon. mover of this cut motion that there should not be different principle with regard to the question of imparting education between district jails and subdivision jails but at the same time I think Sir, if we consider the fact and circumstances that prevail in the subdivision jails, then I think, the hon. member will agree with me that the expenditure that will be involved in it will not be justified. First of all Sir, it should be remembered that if education is to be of any use to the convicts, then it must be extended over a sufficient period of time—at least for a year, but according to the Jail Manual only those who are convicted for a period of three months or less are kept in the subdivision jails whereas persons convicted for a higher term are always transferred to the District Jails. Besides this the average number of convicts in the subdivisional jails is also small. Secondly, Sir, I should point out another fact to the hon. members of this House that education is imparted only to prisoners of 30 years or below.

But the number of convicts in subdivisional jails are very few and of them the number of prisoners below 30 years of age is almost negligible. I would like to inform the House the average number of convicts in some of the subdivisional jails to show that the number is not sufficient to justify expenditure involved in appointing teachers for subdivisional jails. The average numbers of convicts in some of the subdivisional jails during the year 1937 are furnished below:—

Sunamganj	...	...	...	...	...	52.45
Karimganj	...	...	...	...	...	37.16
Habiganj	...	...	...	...	...	46.41
South Sylhet	...	...	...	...	...	49.54
Mangaldai	...	...	...	...	...	32.14
Sibsagar	...	...	...	...	...	50.02
Golaghat	...	...	...	...	...	31.79
North Lakhimpur	...	...	...	...	...	20.13

I have already said that of this number most of the convicts are above 30 years of age. So, if we have to appoint teachers for the subdivisional jails I don't think sufficient number of convicts would be available for the purpose; also most of the convicts confined in subdivisional jails are those convicted for a month or two. Under these circumstances, Sir, Government do not consider, and I hope the hon. House will also agree, that the expenditure involved is justified, at least at the present time when we require money for urgent prison reforms. We have not the time to take up some of the most emergent measures. So, if the hon. House still wishes to appoint teachers for the subdivisional jails we can take up the matter at a later stage. In view of this, I hope the hon. mover will see the way to withdraw this cut motion.

Mau'avi NAZIRUDDIN AHMED: In view of the figures given by the Hon'ble Minister, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion. The motion was, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs. 4,53,300 under Grant No. 11, Major head—28.—Rs.101, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.4,53,300 do stand reduced by Rs.101.

Sir, the other day I was struck to hear from the Hon'ble Minister, in reply to a question put by Maulavi Badaruddin Ahmed in connection with Mangaldai jail affairs, that the convicts in that jail are used for dragging fuel for the purpose of jail consumption. The Hon'ble Minister said that the practice was in vogue there for want of other facilities for taking fuels.

Sir, during the last two years my friends opposite were crying hoarse in this House for better treatment of prisoners inside the jail, and I was convinced that they were the fittest persons to speak about internal administration of jails because most of them have come from jails. But this time when I heard from the Hon'ble Minister that prisoners were engaged for dragging fuel for want of bullocks, it really surprised me. Sir, the practice in other jails of the province are not much better than that of Mangaldai jail though the prisoners are not required to drag fuels. I have got a little knowledge of a particular jail, and I can say that the prisoners are engaged for work which is inhuman. The other day the Hon'ble Minister said, and my hon. friend Mr. Mookerjee corroborated, that these people have to do harder work in pursuit of their household duties, so why should they not work hard in jails. I do not understand the logic of this argument. This is opposed to the notions of the civilised world. My friends opposite used to say that the present practices in our jails are not prevalent in other jails of the civilized world, and I do not see why this state of things should be allowed to continue when they themselves have taken over the reins of office. As regards other internal affairs of this particular jail, I have very little knowledge and I hope my friends who come from that part of the province will enlighten us about them.

With these few words, I commend my motion for acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Cut motion moved :

“That the provision of Rs.4,53,300 under Grant No.11, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements, at page 85 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.101, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.4,53,300 do stand reduced by Rs.101”.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : On a point of personal explanation, Sir. While my friend Maulavi Abdur Rahman was moving this cut motion he mentioned my name and said that by putting some supplementary questions I wanted to prove that because the convicts while outside the jail have to do harder work, why should they not work hard inside the jail. I am sorry I did not say anything like that. My supplementary question was to the effect whether the same system, as obtains in the Mangaldai jail, *i.e.*, pulling of carts by human beings, is not prevalent in many towns. That was my point. I did not want to establish that prisoners do harder work while outside the jail. That was not my point at all. My friend just to suit his purpose brought this question, but while I am present in the House.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. member will please say what his point is.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : My point was that people adopt this system even when they are not jail convicts.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, for the last two years, we have been talking of jail reforms. Unfortunately, the portfolio has been entrusted just now to one who has no previous jail experience. (*Laughter*). He does not know what a hard labour jail life means. In this respect the portfolio was quite safe when my hon. friends Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri and Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhury were in charge. Both these gentlemen, in their time, presided over this portfolio quite well because they knew jail life more than my friend Hon'ble Mr. Sen. (*Voice*: Do you like to put him in jail?) I do not like to put him in jail (*laughter*) but I would ask him to get experience from some of his compatriots of the Coalition party to which he now belongs, because most of them are habitual jail goers (Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee: They were all 'B' class prisoners.)

They know what jail life is. They know in what condition convicts have got to live inside the jails. Last year we had been talking of *ghani* labour. That form of labour is decidedly an inhuman labour. That was the point mooted out against the former Ministry. We all pleaded that *ghani* labour should go. To this my friends as well as Opposition agreed. *Ghani* labour is gone. But this treatment of putting these prisoners to the task of dragging fuel from a distance of four to five miles like bullocks is inhuman. Lower animal power has been entrusted to the man power. It is deplorable. I do not see how in a civilized country, particularly the Government that is running the show of the Congress programme just now could be a party to such inhuman labour. The other day, during the interpellation, the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge unhesitatingly told us that this sort of labour was not at all arduous or was not more arduous than *ghani* labour. To that a question was asked: whether during his regime he is prepared to see that this sort of labour goes and more humane treatment is meted out to prisoners. He said that he could not see how this sort of labour can be in any way more arduous than *ghani* labour. He also said that this sort of labour as is found in the Mangaldai Jail is not inhuman. If this is humanity, I do not see how the portfolio could be safe in his hands. With these words, I support the motion.

Maulavi BADARUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I desire to say a few words in respect of this motion regarding the accommodation in the Mangaldai Jail. There are a limited number of seats in the main building; but in times the number of prisoners and under-trials increases to such an extent that it becomes almost double the fixed accommodation in the jail. The room becomes quite congested and the convicts and under-trials are to reside there. Thus the building requires extension. Probably the jail visitors recommended to the Government that the building should be extended. But we find that no action has been taken by the Government. As to the hospital, it is confined to a narrow room. It is under the same roof of the main jail building where some persons suffering from some contagious and infectious diseases like tuberculosis and cholera are placed. I think it is not safe on the part of the prisoners to dwell in the jail together with the patients suffering from contagious diseases and occupying such a hospital. This matter also had been on many occasions referred to the authorities, but it is found that no action has been taken by the Government in this direction.

Now, Sir, as to the dragging of the bullock carts by prisoners. So far regarding the *ghani* labour, the hon. members who are now occupying seats behind the Treasury Benches pressed the previous Government that *ghani* labour should be abolished forthwith. They said that it was a very inhumane labour and very arduous task. *Ghani* is drawn by one bullock, but in jail *ghani* was pushed by a human agency, i.e., convicts. Also whereas a cart is drawn by two bullocks or two buffaloes, but the Hon'ble Minister considered that if a cart is drawn by human beings it is not as arduous as *ghani* labour. So, if this is not arduous task, I do not know what that is. So, I appeal to the Government to kindly remove this inhuman practice and exempt jail convicts from drawing bullock carts for bringing fuel and other things.

With these few words, I support the motion.

The Hon'ble Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Mr. Speaker Sir, I did not expect that after the assurance that I gave the other day during question period this cut motion will come over the same subject. The other day in reply to a question by my hon. friend Khan Bahadur Maulavi Keramat Ali I informed this Hon'ble House that I would try to substitute bullocks for the purpose of dragging fuel from the hills, but it

now seems that there has been a considerable misapprehension on the subject. I never said that it was not arduous more or less arduous—I replied that it was not inhuman, because the practice of dragging carts by convicts in the Mangaldai Jail, is not an unusual practice only at Mangaldai but even now, it is used in many subdivisions by labourers as a labour saving device, to carry heavier and bulkier loads.....

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Even in Shillong.

The Hon'ble Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: These carts are not as heavy as the ordinary bullock carts—they are lighter and have got easier wheel system. The system also prevails in many other jails. But as it seemed to me the other day that it is the desire of the hon. members of the House that human labour should be substituted by bullocks, I give this assurance, and I have already asked the Inspector-General of Prisons to look into the matter and see whether bullocks are available in the jails. So, I think, hon. mover can count on the assurance that I have given.....

Maulavi BADARUDDIN AHMAD: If bullocks are not available in the jail, will the Hon'ble Minister see that they are procured from outside?

The Hon'ble Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Yes, Sir, I shall try to do that.

Then, as regards accommodation, I admit that the Mangaldai Jail is in a bad state of disrepair and requires additional accommodation. Even this year we had a project costing over eight thousand rupees and we included it in the list of new schemes to be financed—it stood fifth in the list but owing to financial stringency we could not make provision for it in the current Budget. But we hope to be able to do so in next Budget when we hope to have sufficient funds for the project.

In view of this assurance I hope the hon. member will please see his way to withdraw the motion.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is that a sum not exceeding Rs.4,53,300 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1940, for the administration of the head "28.—Jails and Convict Settlements".

The motion was agreed to.

GRANT No. 24

[50.—CIVIL WORKS—(EXCLUDING ESTABLISHMENT AND TOOLS AND PLANT CHARGES)]

The Hon'ble Maulavi MD. ALI HAIDAR KHAN: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.36,86,900 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1940, for the administration of the head "50.—Civil Works (excluding Establishment and Tools and Plant charges)."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.36,86,900 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1940, for the administration of the head 50.—Civil Works—(excluding Establishment and Tools and Plant charges)".

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.7,000 under Grant No. 24, Major head—50.—Civil Works, Minor head—A.—Original works, Sub-head—(a)—Buildings, Detailed head—Education (Other than European), at page 177 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.101, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.36,86,900 do stand reduced by Rs.101.

My object is to censure Government for not extending the building of the Sunamganj Government High School in the district of Sylhet.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Which Minister does the hon. member wish to censure by this motion?

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Both the Education Minister and the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Public Works Department.

Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I was just going to point out to the hon. member that the Public Works Department only carries out the orders of the Administrative Department concerned, and that this motion is out of order. We do not want to move this motion, Sir.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.7,74,424 under grant No.24, Major head—50.—Civil Works, Minor head—A.—Original Works (total), at page 178 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.101, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 36,86,900 do stand reduced by Rs.101.

Mr. Speaker Sir, by this I wish to criticise the general policy of Government for not taking up certain original projects in hand.

I shall first point out to the Hon'ble Minister that the provision made under head original works, in the Budget, and also the details which have been put in the Budget do not show that the Government is very much enthusiastic in the matter. I find that under this head the provision made for the ordinary roads is not satisfactory, and also the provision under detailed head under ordinary road works for village communications is disappointing. And, what I find now is that the Government is coming forward with a supplementary demand which is now before the House for consideration, and the Hon'ble Minister is going to ask for the vote of the House for that supplementary grant, but I find that the amount which is now going to be asked for the scheme for village roads is unsatisfactory. Sir, there is a surplus amount now in the hands of the Ministry available from the proceeds of motor vehicles taxation and there is another surplus amount in their hands from the petrol tax, but the projects which the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge has undertaken are not sufficient. Of course more projects are meant for the other valley and the valley from which I come is, it seems, deprived from getting its due share. The amount in the supplementary demand is Rs. 76,800 and this is going to be distributed mostly in the other valley and only a small portion of it is to be spent under original works for the construction on some Police Station buildings—one probably at Karimganj and the other at Silchar. Besides this, I would ask the Hon'ble Minister to convince me whether he has spent anything for the village communications either in my district or in the district of Cachar. Of course there is a grant from the Central Government Fund and that grant is distributed in the various subdivisions and the Subdivisional Officer is placed in its charge for taking up projects. But it will not be news to this House if I say that these Subdivisional Officers cannot take up the actual rural communication work. They spend the money only to construct bigger roads because now-a-days it is a fancy that people want to travel bigger car than on foot and in order to make the motor car ply on the roads the Subdivisional Officers generally take up the big projects and spend the money for that. Of course they do that in consultation with the Local Boards. So far my knowledge goes, the amount obtained from the Local Government Fund is primarily meant for village uplift and village communication, but may I ask the Hon'ble Minister if he can satisfy me whether in Habiganj subdivision even a furthing has been spent for rural

communication? Of course some amounts have been spent but those amounts have been spent on long roads—roads of 10, 12 or 15 miles.

There is another complaint and that is a local complaint of my subdivision in the matter of communication. We had been told that we would be very recently given a road from Srimangal up to Teliapara and that project has been pending before Government from before the Reforms. We simply heard that that project had been taken up—but we do not know when it would be materialised. I want to bring it to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister that communication particularly in the lower part of my subdivision is so bad that this important question is not only raised by me but by high officials as well. The Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner had very often suggested and recommended to the Government that some roads should be taken up in the lower part of the subdivision.

Then regarding the extension of Habiganj town. In order to remove the congestion of the town Mr. Walker Commissioner, Surma Valley very strongly recommended to the Government that this project should be taken up as early as possible. Sir, the situation of the Habiganj town is so bad that very frequently epidemics break out there and the expert opinion is that it is due to the congestion of the population in town. Sir, the town should be extended towards the east by bridging the Khowai river. The then Minister Rev. Nichols-Roy had been to Habiganj and being accompanied by myself and some other prominent men of the town, enquired into the matter very closely. But since then I do not know whether any project was submitted before the House and whether Government have taken up the matter at all in hand. Sir, more than once, if I remember aright, the Executive Engineer was sent to the locality and he personally examined the question and so far as I remember some projects were also submitted to the Government. But may I know from the Hon'ble Minister whether he has at all given his attention to this question. This is a question of the improvement of a small town which consists not less than 12,000 people. Though it is a subdivisional town, the population is so big that it is now impossible to accommodate the people there.

Then I come to another very important question *i.e.*, the housing of Habiganj Municipal office which is now housed in a small *kutch* house. The Government was in charge of this Municipality for the last two years, but nothing has been done in that respect. Now, we have heard that order have recently been issued for the restoration of the Municipal Board to electorates, but I am afraid if Government will do anything to construct the building. The project is not new to Government. It is an old one.

With these words, I draw the pointed attention of the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge and request that he would kindly give serious consideration particularly to the local grievances. And I have been asked by my hon. friend on the right to make another suggestion regarding the road from Mewa to Beanibazar connecting the same with Sylhet. Government also gave an assurance that they would take up this project, but it is still lying as before. There is another road—Tazpur-Balaganj road and in the case of this road also Government gave an assurance. With these words, I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to avail of this motion to ventilate a very important grievance of my district. My hon. friend Maulavi Abdur Rahman has referred to certain roads which connect one place of the subdivision with another. But my complaint is with respect to a road which is essentially necessary for connecting the headquarters of a district with the subdivisional headquarters. I mean there is no road connecting the sadar of Lakhimpur district with

North Lakhimpur which is the subdivisional headquarters. The question of a road has been discussed many a time in this House, but North Lakhimpur is now quite cut off from Dibrugarh. People have to go to North Lakhimpur *via* Jorhat, the headquarters of Sibsagar district. The result is that the administration of justice has been taken out from the district headquarters to Jorhat. The Public Works Department also submitted a project for transferring North Lakhimpur subdivision to the district of Darrang. From this it will be clear how important it is to connect the headquarters with the subdivisional headquarters. As I said, the question has been discussed many a time and in the meeting of the Communications Board the project was placed for approval. But I am sorry to say that it was given either a secondary nor a tertiary importance. I looked in vain for the inclusion of that item in the supplementary demand which is going to be placed before the Assembly in a day or two. I also looked in vain in the Budget presented to us whether there is any provision on this scheme. My object is that if the Government is really in earnest to keep North Lakhimpur within the district of Lakhimpur as its headquarters then the importance of this road connecting the North Bank with the town of Lakhimpur cannot be overstressed. This distance is only 60 miles. There seems to have been a road before and it was made over to the Local Board with its limited resources and therefore the board could not manage it. So the road is there; only the Public Works Department is to take up the work and metal the same. I hope the Government will take note of this very important grievance and do the needful at an early date.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think cut motion No.7 can also be dealt with under this motion.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: I shall take the opportunity of moving that motion separately, especially as we have some time at our disposal, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: But this cut motion is wide enough to include that.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: It is with regard to certain original projects. This one is not an original project. So, Sir, from the lawyer's point of view it is not within the purview of this motion.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHOUDHURY: I rise to support this motion, Sir. So far as communication is concerned, I think the grievances of the Sunamganj subdivision will be recognised to be the foremost. There is not a single inch of road under the Public Works Department in that subdivision. Only this year a portion of the Sunamganj-Sylhet road was taken up by the Public Works Department; but that is only three-fourths of a mile. As far as village communication is concerned, we the people of Sunamganj know nothing about that. While we go home we often remember the lines of Nazrul Islam.

“ থাকিতে চরণ মরণে কি ভয়, নিমিষে যোজন ফরসা,

মরণ বাবণ নিখিল শরণ জয় শ্রীচরণ তরনা। ”

Meaning, “I care not for death while I have legs because I can cover miles in a moment. Victory be to my legs, the saviour of my life”. This is true with Sunamganj only. We repeatedly brought the condition of Sunamganj before the notice of Government, but we are sorry that Government did not pay due notice to the fact. I understand the High Officers and the Hon'ble Ministers who went to Sunamganj are well acquainted with the facts. This is perhaps the only subdivision which has got no metal road. I take this opportunity of bringing the grievances of this subdivision to the

notice of the Hon'ble Minister of the Public Works Department. I hope he will take up the matter and within a very short time remove our grievances.

At present only the Sylhet-Sunamganj Road is under their consideration. I asked the Hon'ble Minister to consider the question of other localities also. In subdivisions other than Sunamganj we find that almost all the thanas and even the villages are connected by roads. But in Sunamganj there is no such thing. No thana and no locality is connected with the town. Last year, I pointed out to the Government that roads should be constructed in such a manner that all the localities should be connected with the subdivisional town. This year's Budget does not show any indication that Government took any notice of those suggestions. I simply bring it to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Public Works Department so that he would see his way to constructing the roads at least to connect the thanas of Sunamganj with the subdivisional town. With these words, I support the motion.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MUFIZUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a long cry that Sunamganj, Jagannathpur thana which is the most crowded area and which is only 15 miles from Biswanath is not connected by road. Even the other day the Deputy Commissioner went there with me and examined the question of having a road there. We found it urgently necessary and although the people were again and again petitioning the Government and the Board, the bankrupt Board could not help. Now I must draw the attention of the Coalition Ministry to come forward and help them.

The other point I would like to say is what I have mentioned in budget speech last year about Balaganj market. It was a most prosperous market and at one time it used to supply goods to the Sylhet market. This place is not connected by steamer or train and the river Kushiara is silted up. There was a proposal by one of the Members of the Board that he would be willing to contribute Rs.25,000 if in return he would get a monopoly to run motor service between the two places. Lately, I learn from the Commissioner that this is not allowable. This point also I bring to the notice of the Minister for a favourable consideration. From Balaganj where there was a Sub-Registry office, on account of the communication difficulty it has been shifted to Tajpur which is only half an hour's journey on the Sherpur road from Sylhet. It is the main road connecting it with Maulvibazar. The people of Balaganj are completely isolated. The difficulty of communication is noticed by all high officers. The sooner Balaganj is connected with Tajpur, the better.

The other thing is about the Bishwanath-Jagannathpur road. It is about 15 miles and the *nallas* and rivulets have silted up. People during rains find it very difficult to travel by boats. So the people even during the rains walk over the distance to go to Bishwanath. The most congested area in the Sunamganj subdivision is Jagannathpur and their claim should be favourably considered. I would therefore draw the pointed attention of Government to these two projects.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, during the discussion of this motion I want to point out one thing, and that is that there is no direct communication between our district and the capital of Assam. The most urgent need at present is the completing of the Tura-Bajengdobah road, which road is connected with the main trunk road, Assam. I had asked the Deputy Commissioner, Garo Hills, the probable cost of completing it as to make it a *kutch* motorable road during the dry season at least. He replied to me that only 17 miles of the road are to be

completed. Twenty-two miles have already been finished by our district fund money, and that for the remaining 17 miles it would require Rs. 93,000 for completion. So I would ask the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge if he would kindly see his way to have that money made available so that the road may be finished within one year and thus enable us to have direct connection with Shillong meeting the main trunk road either at Krishnai or at Agya.

Another important point is that we want two *pucca* bridges on the Tura-Mankachar road. Last year also I pointed out to the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge during the previous regime, namely that these two bridges are absolutely necessary, because during the rainy season numberless bullock carts have to wait on either bank suffering the heavy and incessant rainfall and becoming a prey to swarms of mosquitos, as the Deputy Commissioner's order is that no carts are to ferry over after dusk. When they reach these places after sunset they have to wait there for the whole night. So, it is very inconvenient to the public and *pucca* bridges in these places are absolutely necessary. I asked for the probable estimate and was told that it would come to about Rs. 50,000 for each bridge. So, one lakh for these two projects and Rs. 93,000 to complete the Tura-Bajangdobah road would be necessary for these two projects. I hope the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge will kindly see to these things.

Maulavi Syed ABDUR ROUF: Mr. Speaker, Sir, though I take my stand to support this motion, I do not like to criticise Government, but only to give some suggestions.

It is well known to this House that roads are necessary everywhere throughout the province. But, Sir, in my opinion roads should be constructed in those places where the necessity is the greatest and where they would be most useful. If it is seen that in some places in the province the opening of roads would serve a double or treble purpose, I think those places should be given first preference. In this connection, I should like to bring to the notice of the House that the south-western portion of the Kamrup district is a place where a road is most necessary and where it will serve more than one purpose. It is not unknown to this House that south-western part of Barpeta subdivision is a jute-growing area, and it is also known that the market for jute rises generally from November to March. But the cultivators cannot retain the jute for the dry season, because they cannot take it to the market when boat communication ceases. And why? Because they suffer from want of cartable roads from jute-growing areas to the markets. In the Assam Valley the jute markets are generally situated by the banks of the Brahmaputra. It is very necessary that the jute-growing areas should be connected with the markets which lie by the banks of the river. Tarabari in Barpeta subdivision is one of the most flourishing markets of the province. Unfortunately for us and for the province as a whole, the road from the jute-growing area of Barpeta to Tarabari is not motorable and sometimes it is not even cartable. It is very necessary that that road should be improved. It will serve a double purpose in the sense that the cultivators will get due price for their jute and at the same time the Government of Assam will derive a greater amount of jute duty, because in that quarter the jute is being carried by Bengal traders in boats and our Assam jute passes as Bengal jute.

Then again, Sir, a road from the opposite bank of Goalpara town to Barpeta is another necessity. If this road is constructed, I think at least 100 square miles of area will be saved from annual inundation. It will practically save the whole south-west and western side of the Kamrup district and the Government shall not have to undergo a great loss in the form of land revenue remission from year to year. This will help the cultivators in keeping their jute for the dry season, so that when the market rises they can export it to Goalpara, which remains a flourishing market for jute throughout the year.

In view of all the circumstances, I earnestly appeal to the Government to see if they can save millions of cultivators from losses which they are suffering every year from flood, and also if they can see whether they can help the poor cultivators of the locality by constructing a road from some suitable point of the old Kholabanda Road to a point on the bank of the river just opposite the Goalpara district.

If that can be done by the Government, I think, the whole subdivision will bow down in gratitude to Government. With these few words, Sir, I resume my seat.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MD. ALI HAIDAR KHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir. I quite agree with the hon. members that the improvement of communication in the province is the crying need of the present day. Sir, if we are to have our trade, business and things of that kind, I admit that we should have better communication and better roads, but Sir, everything requires time and money. I can say that Government have done much towards the improvement of the roads specially the trunk roads out of the grant made by the Government of India as well as by this Government. As regards the communications in villages, it is mostly a matter for the Local Boards to decide. Recently we have got a small saving from the motor taxation money and that money we intend distributing to the Local Boards for the improvement of the roads which might be called feeder roads to the main trunk roads, and we are going to request the Chairmen of the Local Boards to give us the names of those roads which they like to take up.

As regards the point raised by my hon. friend Maulavi Abdur Rahman, I can assure him that the road from Maulvibazar to Teliapara will be taken up very shortly. As regards the bridge at Habiganj, I should tell him that I have not been able to go through the files as yet, but I can say that I shall see whether anything can be done to have a bridge constructed on the river Khowai in order to extend the town. As regards the other points raised by my hon. friends, I should say that all these things shall require time and money. Of course, I shall remember what they have said and in course of time I shall see whether their legitimate claims can be fulfilled. On this assurance, I hope the hon. member will see his way to withdraw his motion.

Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: On a point of information, Sir. May I know what Government are going to do with regard to Sylhet-Sunamganj road?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MD. ALI HAIDAR KHAN: Sir, the Sylhet-Sunamganj road is already under construction. We have taken up the earthwork from Sylhet to Govindganj which is about 13 miles. It will require two or three years more to complete it.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: On a point of information, Sir. May I know from the Hon'ble Minister whether Government is prepared to accept the report of the Divisional Commissioner and the Engineer with regard to the bridge on the river 'Khowai'?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MD. ALI HAIDAR KHAN: Sir, I have already said that I have not yet been able to go through the papers. I shall of course see what can be done in this matter.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I expect that the Hon'ble Minister will treat this as very urgent matter?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MD. ALI HAIDAR KHAN: I shall, of course, consider it as urgent.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I should like to inform the Hon'ble Minister that the people of Habiganj are quite prepared to contribute up to the extent of Rs.5,000 for the construction of this bridge. An estimate was

made by one Local Board Surveyor that this bridge will cost about Rs.30,000 or so.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: This fact ought to have been mentioned by the hon. member before.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, there was a public meeting and the people agreed to contribute up to Rs.5,000 or more.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: On a point of information, Sir. May I know whether the Hon'ble Minister will do anything about the Damrah.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: When the Hon'ble Minister has finished his speech the hon. member need not raise that point. The hon. member could have raised this point before and taken his chance.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Sir, I want to know whether anything will be done about the Garo Hills.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: From the trend of the reply given by the Hon'ble Minister the hon. member can very well understand that he cannot give any definite assurance.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Sir, I understand that the Secretary, Public Works Department, Mr. Pennell, has drawn up a scheme, viz., the diagram of Public Works Department Subdivisional organisation. I saw that the north bank and south bank of the Brahmaputra have been included in that diagram and I want to know why Garo Hills was excluded from that scheme.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Minister has given his reply. He said that he would examine all these questions.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Sir, I want a reply to my question.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Can the Hon'ble Minister give any reply?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MD. ALI HAIDAR KHAN: The suggestion of the hon. member will be taken into consideration.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw the motion only with the hope that the Hon'ble Minister will give a prompt attention to my question.

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

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir. I beg to move that the total provision of Rs.36,86,900 under Grant No.24, Major head—50.—Civil Works, at page 178 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.36,86,900 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, this is a motion by which I want to bring to the notice of the Government or for the matter of that to censure Government for their apathy in not constructing the Haripani bridge instead of the persistent demand for 30 many years. At the outset, I should say that this is the crying need of the people of my subdivision. The importance of this road was recognised as long as 1928.

During the year 1928 this road from Jogighopa to Chapaguri was taken up for gravelling and a sum of Rs.21,024 was spent during that year. Subsequently as the work proceeded, that sum was found to be not sufficient to cover the entire expenditure, so another estimate was prepared and during the year 1935 a sum of Rs.1,65,000 was spent over this road. So nearly two lakhs of rupees was spent for the road alone, but, Sir, I cannot see how the road would have been complete without the bridge. It is surprisingly mysterious to me how a road could be complete without construction of the bridges over it. If 2 lacs could be found for the road why another 30 thousand for the bridge was grudged.

The road in question runs from Jogighopa to Chapaguri, a distance of about 24 miles from the bank of the river Brahmaputra. The streamlet Haripani is on the fourth mile of the road. As years have rolled by, the importance of this road has increased considerably. This road was taken up by the Communications Board and it is to be remembered that the Communication Board takes up only those roads which either connect subdivisional towns with headquarters, or with principal business centres, or with big steamer or Railway stations. So, this road which connects the subdivisional town of Goalpara from Jogighopa to Banaigaon, a business centre and a Railway Station, must be taken to be growing in importance daily. Now that the Postal Department has established a Mail-cum-Passenger Motor Service from Jogighopa to Banaigaon, and by the establishment of motor lunch services from Goalpara to Jogighopa the road has become more important. But this streamlet is a serious impediment to vehicular traffic as well as to pedestrians. This is a demand, Sir, over which we have been crying for long long years. Our local officers have also recommended for the immediate construction of this bridge. We have been agitating by interpellations and by proposals in the Road Board, and we have also taken the opportunity of ventilating our grievances before the Ministers who visited our district during the last cold weather. The Revenue Minister, the Hon'ble Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed was taken from Jogighopa to Abhayapuri by motor, and he was particularly shown the spot, and it was impressed upon him how the construction of the bridge would facilitate transport from Jogighopa to Abhayapuri and from Abhayapuri to Banaigaon. During his last monsoon tour to Goalpara a deputation waited on the Hon'ble Premier to impress upon him the insistent demand of the local people for this bridge. So, all the Ministers who cared to visit our district were impressed very much with the necessity of constructing this bridge immediately. With these.....

Srijut BELIRAM DAS: On a point of information, Sir. Is it not a fact that the present mail contractor has to pay Rs.180 per month for crossing the mail van over the Haripani river while he gets only Rs.150 per month from the Postal Department for carrying the mail?

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: I am grateful to the hon. questioner for the point he has raised. It is a fact that the ferry man at Haripani has already served the mail contractor with a notice for a monthly payment of Rs.180, while he only gets Rs.150 for carriage of mails per month. I gave notice of a question to that effect. The Hon'ble Minister-in-charge has assured me that he will surely see his way to remit that sum. And also that in future the contractor need not pay. So, Sir, the urgent and immediate necessity has been urged. If a cut motion is surely an effective way of bringing pressure upon the Government I have done it. Government will see its way of constructing the bridge.

So, with these few words, I commend my motion for the acceptance of House and I hope the Hon'ble Minister will kindly see that this serious local grievance is removed at an early date.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Cut motion moved:

"That the total provision of Rs.36,86,900 under Grant No.24, Major head—50.—Civil Works, at page 178 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.36,86,900 do stand reduced by Rs.100".

Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, during the discussion of the previous motion, I found a lot of misapprehension as regards taking up construction of new roads or adding to the number of bridges on our existing roads. I, therefore, take this opportunity of removing the misconception, as well as of putting in a word

for the bridge at Haripani about which we have been hearing ever since the 1st of April, 1937. Sir, everyone knows that the finances of the province are so meagre that Government cannot take up any improvement of the existing roads or build new roads. But it is on account of the funds which we have got as our legitimate share of the excise duty on petrol, as also the large doles from the reserve of that fund, that we got in the past and which we hope to get in future from the Centre, that the province has been able to improve its communication. If the Ministry—whether it be a Coalition Ministry or a Congress Ministry or even a League Ministry—do not get funds from that particular source, they would not be able to give any help or implement any promises that any Minister may now give on the floor of this House. I found that misconception existing on both sides of the House, this side as well as the Treasury side, and I hope the House have now understood the implication of the request made to the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Public Works Department. He has said that he has not got the funds at his disposal, and it is a question of time before he can give effect to any of these requests.

From the previous exposition of the case, I do not say that reasonable requests of the type of the Haripani bridge should not be taken into consideration. I really wonder why, when this road connecting the town of Goalpara with the railway head Bongaigaon was taken up, this little piece of bridging the Haripani was not taken into hand. Of course, if my friend wants to censure the Government, he shall have to censure not only the present Government, but also the previous Government of which I was the chief, as well as its predecessor because, as has been informed by the hon. mover of the cut motion, this road was taken up some time in 1931 and was completed in 1935. Everyone knows that communication to the subdivisional headquarters at Goalpara is very bad. There is a road connecting with Gauhati and the distance is about 92 miles. Major portion of that road is not passable during the rains by motor transport. There is a steamer service from the district headquarters of Dhubri; but it is not daily, but runs on alternate days. Bongaigaon, the station connecting that subdivisional headquarters is only 22 miles. Therefore if the road between Bongaigaon and Jogighopa, which is just across Goalpara and is on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, is improved, the communication to Goalpara will be much facilitated. This is why this road was taken up. My friend has stated that the difficulties and delay of transit at this point has been shown to the Premier and the Finance Minister and it devolves upon the Government to take up the question of this bridge as early as possible. But I would request my hon. friend to push his case in the Communications Board for as soon as that Board takes up that particular bridge in its programme and sends it up to the Central Government for their sanction, I have no doubt they will sanction it because the Government of India give preference to all feeder schemes, that is, schemes which facilitate transport between one place to its railway station. If I am right, the Public Works Department made an estimate of about Rs.46 thousand for this bridge. So, I am very doubtful whether the provincial finances will be able to produce this sum unless it comes from the Petrol Fund. I think, Sir, I have explained sufficiently both the procedure as also the necessity for this bridge and the House will have no difficulty in accepting my friend's motion.

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of the kind of misconception which, according to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, was spread on the floor of the House during my absence. But I am thankful to him for removing such misconception both

for the benefit of the Treasury Benches as well as his side of the House. Sir, as he has explained, the province has to depend on this expenditure on roads or the construction of this bridge on the grant from Government of India either on account of Excise duty on petrol or Road Fund contribution. As expenditure from such fund or from such receipts is sanctioned by the House on the recommendation of the Communications Board, the Government cannot take up any other road programme. Sir, if I think right, in reply to a question put by the mover during the early part of this session, I told him that if the construction of this bridge was considered so essential by him, the proper place for him was to press this motion in the Communications Board and if it is accepted by the Communications Board, Government will have no objection in giving effect to such recommendation. We cannot incur any expenditure for this claim out of the other funds at our disposal and the reason for this has been fully explained by the hon. the Leader of the Opposition. I hope, Sir, in view of this explanation the hon. mover will see the reasonableness of withdrawing his motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: May I take it that the Hon'ble Minister is not going to reply.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MD. ALI HAIDAR KHAN: After what has been said by the Hon'ble the Finance Minister, I have hardly anything to add.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: This proposal was placed before the Communications Board sometime ago and it is still awaiting decision.

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: It is very unfortunate that the hon. member could not get his proposal recommended by the Communications Board. However, I shall try to help the hon. member as far as I can.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI: Sir, on the assurance given by the Hon'ble Minister, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion. The motion was, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question before the House is: "That a sum not exceeding Rs.36,86,900 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March, 1940, for the administration of the head "50.—Civil Works"—(excluding Establishment and Tools and Plant charges)."

The motion was agreed to.

GRANT No. 31

LOANS AND ADVANCES BEARING AND NOT BEARING INTEREST

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: On the recommendation of His Excellency, the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.5,30,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March, 1940, for the administration of the head "Loans and Advances".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.5,30,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March, 1940, for the administration of the head "Loans and Advances".

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.1,10,000 under Grant No.31, Major head—Loans and Advances, etc., Minor head—B.—Loans and Advances by the Provincial

Governments, Sub-head—Loans to Municipalities, Port Funds, etc., Detailed head—Advances to cultivators at page 202 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100. *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.5,30,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

By this I mean, Sir, that the old outstanding agricultural loans, and not the new loans issued after 1936. Before I speak on the motion, I want to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to one point, *i.e.*, at page 77 of the Budget Memorandum under head Repayment it is stated:—"The balance of agricultural loans outstanding on 1st April, 1938 was Trs.2,54. In the original estimate for the current year recoveries were estimated to be Trs.1,00 including Trs,50 which was the amount of loans estimated to be written off during the year and the debit on account of which appears under the expenditure head '57.—Miscellaneous'. Before a remission is sanctioned, a District or Subdivisional Officer is required to satisfy himself that adequate steps were taken to recover the dues and that they are actually irrecoverable". Then, again, I would like to draw his attention to page 74, where, under the heading Irrecoverable temporary loans written off, it is written:—"This represents debit of loans or advances written off as irrecoverable. A determined effort was made in 1937-38 to clear up the position with regard to old outstanding agricultural loans as will be evident from the actuals of that year. The revised follows the current year's sanctioned grant and the Budget provides Trs.10 only for normal charges as all the outstanding agricultural loans have now been written off". I want to tell the Hon'ble Minister that if all the outstanding agricultural loans have been written off then my motion is out of order, and I would ask him which of the statements is correct?

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED*: I do not understand the hon. member's question.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: On page 77 it is shown that there are some outstanding agricultural loans, but from page 74 it is clear that all the old outstanding agricultural loans have been written off. I want to know which of the statements is correct?

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED*: Both the statements are correct, but the hon. member has not been able to understand it. In one place the reference is to the year 1936-37, and in the other place to the year in question, *i.e.*, the current year.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: My point is that if all the old outstanding agricultural loans have been written off then my motion is out of order, and I will not move it.

Then I want to know another thing. Last year I tabled a motion like this, and the previous Government said that they had written off all the outstanding agricultural loans in the Assam Valley and Cachar, but that in the district of Sylhet only 80 per cent. of the loans had been remitted and 20 per cent. remained. I want to know whether this 20 per cent. also has been written off?

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED*: No, Sir, this 20 per cent. has not been written off. Only action has been taken in consonance with the motion moved last year.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: But I find from page 74 that all the old outstanding agricultural loans have been written off.

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED*: That is the old Sir. With the exception of the 20 per cent. we have written off that we could not realise.

*Speech not corrected.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Then am I to understand that all the old outstanding agricultural loans written off means with the exception of 20 per cent. all the old outstanding agricultural loans have been written off?

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED*: The statement is there, and the statement is correct. The hon. member may draw his own conclusions.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: I am not referring to loans issued after 1936.

The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED*: As I have already pointed out, it is stated in the Budget that all the old outstanding agricultural loans have been written off, and so the motion is not in order.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Is the hon. member satisfied?

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: If they have all been written off then I have no ground to move my motion.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.50,000 under Grant No. 31, Major head—Loans and advances, etc., Minor head—B.—Loans and advances by the Provincial Governments, Sub-head—Loans to Municipalities, Port Funds, etc., Detailed head—Loans to local bodies, at page 202 of the Budget, be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.5,30,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

The Hon'ble Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Is this motion in order?

Srijut MAHADEV SARMA: This, I think, conveniently comes under Grant No.29.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think hon. members are correct. It would be more appropriate to have this cut motion under that grant. It is coming on 30th and I will allow the hon. member to move this motion under that Grant.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Very well, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question before the House is: "That a sum not exceeding Rs.5,30,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the the year ending on the 31st March, 1940, for the administration of the head 'Loans and advances'."

The motion was agreed to.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 11 a.m., on Thursday the 30th March, 1939.

* Speech not corrected.

SHILLONG:

The 9th June, 1939.

A. K. BARUA,

Secretary, Assam Legislative Assembly.

ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

GOVERNOR OF ASSAM

His Excellency Mr. H. J. TWYNAM, C.S.I., C.I.E., I.C.S.

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

1. The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI, M.A., B.L., in charge of Home and Education Departments.
2. The Hon'ble Mr. FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED, Barrister-at-Law, in charge of Finance and Revenue Departments.
3. The Hon'ble Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN, B.L., in charge of Local Self-Government, Legislative, Judicial and General Departments.
4. The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS, B.L., in charge of Medical, Public Health, Welfare of Labour, Boilers, Factories and Electricity Departments.
5. The Hon'ble Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS, B.L., in charge of Excise and Agriculture Departments.
6. The Hon'ble Maulavi MD. ALI HAIDAR KHAN in charge of Public Works Department.
7. The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA, B.L., in charge of Forests and Registration Departments.
8. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI in charge of Co-operative Societies and Industries Departments.