



PROCEEDINGS

Proceedings of the Twelfth 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 Thursday, the 11th March, 1943.

PRESENT

The Hon'ble Mr. Basanta Kumar Das, Speaker, in the Chair, the nine Hon'ble Ministers and thirty-nine Members.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Insufficiency of food-stuffs in the Province

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked :

*8. (a) Are Government aware that the people of the Province are passing through a severe crisis for insufficiency of food-stuffs ?

(b) If so, what action Government have taken or are taking to remove such insufficiency ?

(c) Are Government aware that the farmers and cultivators are undergoing serious hardships for not being allowed to export paddy and rice within the Province ?

(d) Is it a fact that the District Magistrates and Subdivisional Officers have stopped export of paddy and rice even within their own jurisdictions ?

(e) Is it a fact that Government are going to control the price of paddy and rice by fixing their rates ?

(f) If so, do Government propose to take into consideration the price of other daily necessities of life at the present time in fixing the rates of paddy and rice ?

(g) Are Government aware that the cultivators are to depend mostly on the income of their agricultural produce ?

*9. (a) Are Government aware that profiteering in articles such as salt, sugar, mustard oil, kerosene, etc., is going on in the Province ?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state what steps they have taken or propose to take to stop such profiteering ?

(c) Are Government aware that in the district of Sylhet the Price Control Committees are defunct now ?

(d) Do Government propose to form Price Control Committees again in each of the Subdivisions of the District of Sylhet with officials and leading non-officials ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

8. (a)—Government are aware that there is insufficiency of certain food-stuffs but staple food are available.

(b)—Food-stuffs are imported into the Province on Government account and are sold to the public at reasonable rates.

(c)—No. At present the farmers and cultivators are not allowed to export rice and paddy outside the Province or from one Valley to the other Valley of the Province but they can export from one district to another within a Valley.

(d)—No.

(e)—Government have no intention at present of fixing the price of paddy and rice.

(f)—It will be given due consideration if and when the question arises.

(g)—Yes.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Are Government aware that the supply conditions in the Province of Assam are in many respects greatly superior to those prevailing certainly in the neighbouring provinces and also probably to other provinces of India?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, Sir, we believe it to be so.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: What is the source of information of the Hon'ble Premier?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: My personal contact with the conditions prevailing in Madras, Delhi and Calcutta.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Are Government trying to collect paddy for selling to the cultivators afterwards?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: That was a part of the scheme of collecting 7½ lakhs maunds of paddy not only as a reserve stock but also to be utilised for stabilizing of prices when prices soar high. That part of the scheme has been nullified by the Central Government agreeing to buy the marketable portion of paddy and rice of the Province.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Is it a fact that Messrs. Steel Brothers are trying to collect paddy from all parts of Assam Valley, as they have their office at Mangaldai?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: They have also offices at 4 different parts of the Assam Valley, and they are buying paddy to meet the contract of supply of rice for the army and military projects.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Are the paddy and rice to be exported outside Assam also?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Not yet, Sir.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY: Is there any plan to export paddy outside Assam?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Not by Government of Assam.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Is it a fact that Messrs. Steel Brothers are allowed to export paddy outside the Province?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, unless Central Government authorise to do so on their own account.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: As the Hon'ble Premier has made a statement already, is he in a position to make a similar statement here regarding the export of several thousands or lakhs of maunds of paddy? (laughter).

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Was any statement made on the floor of this House, Sir?

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I heard it made yesterday on the floor of the Upper House, Sir.

May I know the reason why Government have made it a point not to allow any export of paddy from one Valley to the other?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It is the railway: paddy from the Assam Valley can only be exported by means of the Hill Section to the Surma Valley. On account of the essential and urgent necessity of using that part of the line for carriage of military goods, the Railway authorities have stopped booking, but as soon as the monsoon is over the ban will be lifted.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it the duty of the Government to see that paddy is exported to the other Valley by steamers, boats or by any other means?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The transport by means of steamer or by other means of transport is still open.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it a fact that the Surma Valley is a deficit one in the matter of production of paddy?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It is not so, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Is it a fact, Sir, that the Central Government have sent information to the local Government that they will purchase all marketable surplus paddy in the Province?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, Sir. My hon. Friend has perhaps heard it said on the floor of the Upper House.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: On account of that what step have Government taken to stop this?

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: May I intervene to clear up the position? I can amplify the statement made by the Hon'ble Prime Minister with the concurrence, of course, of the Hon'ble Prime Minister.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Let us hear the Hon'ble Prime Minister first and let the question be answered by him.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, the Government of Assam have placed their case at Delhi with the Government of India first. Then the Hon'ble Mr. Butler, a representative of the Government of India came here and discussed with us about the 19th January, 1943. We told that representative that we had a scheme of our own of keeping a reserve of paddy and rice in the Province, as our Province is liable to sudden floods when we require a great quantity of paddy and rice for consumption. We also stressed the necessity of not selling out at least 7½ lakhs of maunds of rice before we knew the next flood situation, *i.e.*, to wait till August next. Later on we received a communication from the Central Government saying that they were prepared to buy the exportable surplus of the Province of Assam for distribution in those areas of India where there was a scarcity of rice. It was conceded then that the exportable surplus would be calculated after discussion with the provincial Governments. Later on, the Government of India called a conference which met on the 24th and 25th of February last at Delhi, and Assam was represented by Messrs. Patton and Marar, Finance and Supply Secretaries of the Government of Assam, and Mr. Whittaker in his capacity as Secretary of the Economic Advisory Board. It is on this reason that Mr. Whittaker says that he is in a position to state what happened in the Delhi Conference. Since then we have had a further communication from the Government of India that they would like to have a discussion on the 10th of this month,

i.e., yesterday, at Calcutta. They specifically mentioned that Mr. Whittaker should be sent as Assam's representative. In view of the impending session here and the necessity of the presence of the Leader of the European Group, he was unable to proceed and I have, therefore, told Mr. Marar, our Supply Secretary, to go to Calcutta. I do not know what further demands the Government of India will make upon us. I await the return and report of Mr. Marar.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, much of this problem hinges round the alleged decision of the Government of India that they will take unto themselves the whole of the marketable surplus, meaning thereby the whole crop which comes on the market, and can be freely bought. At the Delhi Conference, the Government of India devised two definitions 'marketable surplus' and 'procurable surplus'. These definitions were criticised by the provincial representatives, including the representatives of the Government of Assam, that the Government of India abandoned any attempt to define what surplus they were going to buy. Therefore, the position has practically been restored to one which the Hon'ble Prime Minister took up in an earlier discussion, whereby Assam is prepared to co-operate on a reciprocal basis and make available to the Government of India her exportable surplus, but that the figure of the exportable surplus should be discussed between the Government of Assam and the Government of India. The Government of India practically accepted this position. That was the case put in Delhi, and any allegation that the Government of India will step into Assam and export everything on Government account being quite unfounded.

***Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE:** What is the exportable surplus of paddy in the Province according to Government calculation?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: According to the calculation which I arrived at in a meeting of the Subcommittee of the Economic Advisory Board, in my opinion, three lakhs of maunds of rice can be exported outside the Province. How I come to this I would like to elucidate. We got a report from the Agriculture Department that the net surplus over consumption in the Province in the current year will be in the neighbourhood of 42 lakhs of maunds of rice. In a discussion which I had with the Director of Agriculture in the presence of Mr. Whittaker, Secretary of the Economic Advisory Board, and Mr. Patton, we came to the conclusion that it would not be safe for the Province to accept a higher figure than 50 per cent. of the Agriculture Department estimate, which is 21 lakhs. That was before I proceeded to Delhi, where there was some discussion with the Central Government officers and I saw the then Commerce and Supply Member the Hon'ble Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar. The Military Authorities in Assam asked the Assam Government to supply them a quantity between 34 and 38 thousand tons for consumption in Assam for the Military and also for the military projects which employ a large labour force. The latter order was of two lakhs of maunds of rice for feeding the labour force. Assam Government accepted their request and promised to supply 34 to 38 thousand tons which roughly work out to 9 lakhs maunds of rice. We thought that we could supply these 9 lakhs of maunds and two lakhs for military projects, totalling 11 lakhs of maunds out of the 21 lakhs. So, 10 lakhs remain. In my scheme I had programmed to buy $7\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of maunds of paddy which in the terms of rice will be in the neighbourhood of 5 lakhs of maunds of rice to keep a reserve stock to be used in cases of

*Speech not corrected by the hon. Member.

necessity. So, there was a surplus of about 6 lakhs of maunds. I returned from Delhi after an absence of three weeks; during my absence the military requirement have gone up to 2 lakhs of maunds of rice and nine thousand tons of paddy or three lakhs extra have got to be supplied to them, and as the Military accepted to take it in monthly instalments of 95 thousand maunds, it was thought that it would benefit our cultivators, and so we agreed. Therefore, the exportable surplus came down to three lakhs of maunds.

***Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY**: Do the Government get any other food-stuffs from outside the Province, such as sugar and *ata*. What is the amount that has been imported from outside the Province of Assam in case of sugar?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have made a very long statement about sugar in an earlier session. Probably my Friend did not look into this. As my Friend is vitally interested in sugar which he requires for the production of orange squash—and we welcome his new industry in the Province—with your permission, I may be allowed to state what I have already said.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Please do it as briefly as possible.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: As my hon. Friend knows, sugar is controlled by the Government of India and each province has been given a quota. The quota upto November 1942 was about a lakh of maunds for Assam. It was considered an adequate quota. The Government of India allotted a particular factory from which we had to buy. That factory was burnt by saboteurs. Thus the source from which we obtained our supply was non-existent. I sent to Delhi Mr. Humphrey, our Secretary, to the Sugar Controller of the Government of India. He allotted seven different factories from which we could bring sugar. Some of these factories are in the interior of Bihar where there are transport difficulties—difficulties of getting waggons. However, so far, 58,000 maunds of sugar have been bought—the bulk of it has already reached the Province.

***Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE**: *Ata* and flour are not available in the Province.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, Sir, every one of us is suffering for want of *ata* and flour. It is due to the control system which the Government of India have very recently introduced about wheat. Since the Government of India have taken up the control of wheat, they have allotted a very small quota for Assam—for the month of January they allotted 100 tons and for February and March they were kind enough to allot 160 tons. Our Agent Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Company have got to mill them into *ata* and flour from Calcutta and send them on to Assam. As Mr. Whittaker has already placed before the House that I insisted on our parting with rice being reciprocal, the Government of India have released sufficient quantity of other food materials which we require, for example, *ata*, *mcida*, salt, sugar, *dal*, etc. We have been able to get very liberal terms from the Government of India. We have been allowed to import a large quantity—one lakh of maunds of *dal* from Bihar and on a representation from us the Government of India have released an extra 1,000 tons of wheat which is now being milled at Calcutta.

***Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE**: Is it not a fact that Government purchased 43,000 maunds of wheat last year for Assam?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We tried to get it but we never got it.

***Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY:** Sir, I have not finished my question yet. Will there be any amount allotted for industrial purpose from the amount of sugar that Government have got from the source of supply?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The amount of sugar that has been bought, if delivered to us, will be distributed district by district. I don't think there has yet been any kind of supply to industrial concerns. My hon. Friend had approached me on this subject many times and I had referred him with my recommendation to the Director of Supply or Controller of Prices. I think at one time he got about 90 bags of sugar.

***Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY:** I did not get anything, Sir.

***Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN:** Sir, is it not a fact that because the Government of Assam have stopped the export of paddy to the neighbouring districts of Bengal, the people of Assam have been denied any articles to be purchased from the districts of Mymensingh and Tippera? Have Government got any information of this kind?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir, but it may be in pursuance of the policy that each province wants to maintain the quota that it has received from the Government of India. I know, Sir, that when we wanted to buy certain food-stuffs like *dal* and *ata* in the Calcutta market, the Government of Bengal refused to part with them unless we agreed to the replacement of that quantity. It is perhaps in pursuance of that policy, the buyers of Assam have been denied to purchase anything in the markets of Tippera and Mymensingh.

***Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY:** I have not yet finished my question, Sir. I want to know whether Government will take any step to allot certain amount of sugar for industrial purpose. The District Officers say that they have got sugar only for the sake of distributing among the civil population and not for any industrial purposes. That is why I did not get any portion of sugar. I want to know whether it will be possible for them to allot certain amount of sugar for industrial purposes especially when it is the policy of the Government to encourage the industries of the Province?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It is very difficult for Government to formulate a policy in reply to a supplementary Question. If my hon. Friend will correspond with me on the subject, I will see what can be done.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

9. (a)—Yes.

(b)—When the cases of profiteering are brought to the notice of the District Officers by the public, adequate steps are taken.

(c)—Yes.

(d)—The rules under which these Price Control Committees were formed were superseded. The question of Price Control has now been reduced to one of supplies in which the Price Control Committees might not be of much help.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, the answer to question 9(b) is that whenever any specific case is brought to the notice of the Magistrate, the person at fault is severely dealt with. May I know from the Hon'ble

Minister what steps Government propose to take in order to stop this altogether ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : It is impossible to take any step to stop it entirely, for Government have not got sufficient staff to supervise over the petty shop-keepers throughout the Province. We have issued notices and circulars and given instructions to the District Officers and Subdivisional Officers to see that there is no profiteering. Beyond that, I do not see what further steps can Government take.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : Do not the Government admit that by constituting Price Control Committees, some work can be done in the way of checking profiteering ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : I do not see how the Price Control Committees will constitute themselves as Policemen over the retail shop-keepers. Their function will cease as soon as they have fixed the price.

***Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :** May I point out, Sir, that the method of distributing these food-stuffs is one of the causes of profiteering ? Will Government examine that question ? Many big Marwaris or big merchants get a large amount of food-stuffs for sale but they do not sell it at the rate fixed by the Government. They will only sell it when anybody will offer a higher rate. So, the method of distribution is responsible.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : What is the Question ?

***Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :** The Question is that whether Government will examine what is the proper method of distributing these food-stuffs ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Government have adopted what according to their own opinion, seemed to them the best method of distribution of food-stuffs. The Deputy Commissioners have selected certain number of firms which according to Deputy Commissioners' belief, are reliable, honest and financially sound. The necessary imported food-stuffs for the district are made over to the licensed whole-salers and they are asked to distribute them to the licensed retail shop-keepers that come from the interior of the Subdivisions. If the selection of the whole-salers made by the Deputy Commissioners, is not correct then nobody can help it, because the Deputy Commissioners report that they have selected whom they thought to be honest, reliable and financially sound.

***Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE :** Have Government issued any such instructions to the effect that whenever any case of profiteering or of storing is brought to the notice of the District Officers, they should take steps immediately ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Yes, Sir, Government have issued many circulars and instructions to the Deputy Commissioners that if any one of these licensed merchants is found to be profiteering, then his license should be withdrawn and he will get no more food-stuffs imported by Government and also under the Defence of India Rules, he should be prosecuted.

***Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN :** May we know what control the Government exercise regarding supply of food-stuffs by private dealers ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Excepting the fact that private dealers have got to take permission from the Chief Controller of Prices, to import certain kind of food-stuffs, Government have no other control over them.

***Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN:** Do not Government consider it necessary to put some control over the private retail-sellers who get their supply from outside the Province ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The number of such merchants who abused the concessions is few. We got only one or two such instances and we have stopped giving licenses to them.

***Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN:** Is it not a fact that even now the private dealers can indent articles of food-stuff from outside the Province without the help of the Government ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, those food-stuffs that have been controlled and for which the quota has been fixed, private dealers cannot indent direct from outside.

***Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN:** As regards *dal*, mustard oil, cannot the private dealers import from Bihar and the United Provinces ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, they can ; but often time they are confronted with the transport difficulty.

***Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN:** Is it not a fact that with regard to those articles which cannot be sold without a license from the Government, they form a bulk of articles, and the dealers charge a higher price than the price fixed by the Price Control Committee ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, Sir, one such instance was brought to our notice.

***Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN:** Is it not advisable for the Government to put some check with regard to such articles of food-stuff ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The suggestion will be taken into consideration.

***Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY:** Is it illegal under the present circumstances for the dealers to import stocks from outside the Province ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: They cannot get some stuffs which are controlled.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Are the Government prepared to constitute such committees which can serve some useful purpose in fixing up prices of articles of food after examining the neighbouring markets once in a week or a fortnight, so that the dealers may not charge higher rates than what are fixed by such committees ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The suggestion made by the hon. Member will be taken into consideration by Government. Our objects are also the same that there should be no profiteering in these hard times. Whether by reconstituting the Price Control Committee or otherwise it can be achieved will be looked into.

***Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN:** What are the articles which the Government have stopped private dealers to import excepting sugar ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: *Ata* and flour.

***Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE:** What about mustard oil ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We imported 6,000 maunds recently and have distributed them all over the Province.

***Mr. A. WHITTAKER:** May I suggest that these questions should be discussed in the cut Motion ?

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May we know what has been done by Government as regards standard cloth?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We have been able to get promise of $1\frac{1}{2}$ crores of yards of standard cloth and they are expected to arrive in April next.

(Starred Question No. 10 standing in the name of Mr. Binode Kumar J. Sarwan was not put and answered as the Questioner was absent).

Messages from the Assam Legislative Council re the Assam Speaker's and Deputy Speaker's (Salaries and Allowances) Bill, 1940

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have received a message from the Assam Legislative Council that at its meeting held on the 19th March 1943 adopted the Motion that the Council insists on the amendments made by it in the Assam Speaker's and Deputy Speaker's (Salaries and Allowances) Bill, 1940, to which this House, which was the originating Chamber, disagreed.

Now, under sub-rule 5 of rule 138, it will be necessary, if the House desire, to send a communication to His Excellency the Governor stating this fact of disagreement. But for that purpose, a Motion will have to be adopted, and I would request Government to consider whether they would put forward such a Motion before this House and direct the Chair to send this message to His Excellency the Governor. If such a Motion is desired to be moved by Government, then we may take it up on the 13th instant which is a Government business day. But I don't know whether the Hon'ble Premier will like to move it to-day or on the 13th.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Shall I explain the position? Hon. Members may remember that this Assembly passed the Assam Speaker's and the Deputy Speaker's (Salaries and Allowances) Bill, on the 23rd November 1940 including the clause among other things fixing the salary at Rs. 250 per mensem for the Deputy Speaker. After its adoption by this House, it was sent to the Assam Legislative Council, but the Upper House amended that particular clause and restored the original salary, *i.e.*, Re. 1 annually for the Deputy Speaker. This was done in its session in January 1941. In accordance with the rule it had again to be placed before this Assembly and this was done on 27th March 1941, when the Assembly insisted on the restoration of the original clause, *i.e.*, granting of Rs. 250 per mensem to the Deputy Speaker. After this Assembly rejected the amendment of the Council, it had again to go to the Council. The Council again insisted on their own amendment and have rejected the amendment of this Assembly. Now, according to the rule, the Bill has got to be sent by the Chamber originating the Bill to His Excellency the Governor. Because the word 'Chamber' is there. Therefore, I thought that without moving any Motion, the Chair could automatically send it to His Excellency the Governor. But apparently the Chair thinks that he should get a mandate from this Chamber. Therefore, he asks me to move a Motion which I will do on the 13th instant.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: This is not the first occasion that I am insisting on a Motion to be moved. The words in the Assembly rule relating to this matter are, "the Chamber may send a message" and therefore, on a previous occasion, *i.e.*, in regard to the Sylhet Town Land Tenancy Bill, a similar Motion was moved and passed on the floor of the House giving its decision to send a message and authorising the Chair in that behalf. As the Hon'ble Premier has agreed to make a Motion, it, will be taken up on the 13th.

The Secretary, Legislative Assembly—Mr A. K. BARUA: This is a message from the Assam Legislative Council. It is as follows:—

“I am directed to inform you that in accordance with the messages sent by His Excellency the Governor under proviso to section 75 of the Government of India Act, 1935, the Assam Legislative Council has, at its meetings held on the 8th and 9th days of March 1943, reconsidered the Sylhet Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 1939, the Goalpara Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 1939 and the Assam Money Lenders' (Amendment) Bill, 1937 and, having considered it desirable to introduce the amendments recommended by His Excellency, has accepted the amendments on those dates. The Bills, as amended, thereby were passed by the Houses.”

General discussion of the Budget and discussion on charged expenditure.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order order, General Discussion of the Budget.

I wish to know what time the Hon'ble Finance Minister will require to give his reply to all the points.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Half an hour to 45 minutes, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then punctually at 3-30 p.m. the Hon'ble the Finance Minister will be called upon to give his reply and before that all the hon. Members who want to speak will have to finish their speeches.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with regard to the criticisms against the Supply and the Police Departments I want to reply. The Hon'ble the Finance Minister will take up the points with regard to the other departments.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: How long will the Hon'ble Premier take?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: About 30 minutes, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then punctually at 3 p.m. all other speeches must be finished so that Government may get one hour for their reply.

Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: Will you kindly extend the time upto 5 p.m., Sir?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: It may be done, if necessary.

Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if I rise to-day to speak, I rise not to dilate on the monotonous, colourless, bureaucratic Budget, presented by the Hon'ble Finance Minister, not to complain against inadequacy of this or that Grant, want of any method, any system, any policy or to refer to this or that deed of omission and commission of the present Cabinet, but a compelling sense of responsibility towards the great institution to which I have the honour to belong, a keen sense of our duties to people of this Province, make me stand to-day.

Many false allegations, many lies have too long gone unchallenged against that great institution—the Congress. The Congress, whose basic creed is non-violence has been held responsible for all outbreaks of disorder, and all works of sabotage, following the arrest and detention of Congress leaders. I am here, with the fullest responsibility of my position as a Congressman to repudiate with all the emphasis at my command, that suggestion, that assertion. When the voice of Congress has been silenced behind the prison bar, any amount of lying propaganda is being daily carried on here and abroad in the interest of British imperialism. I am here to boldly assert that this is

calumny, this is blasphemy, this is a down-right lie. What was the actual state of affairs? The Congress, from the very beginning of the war was anti-fascist. Congress resolutions and speeches of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal bear testimony to that fact. Congress extended the hand of friendship. Congress wanted to fight in freedom's cause—shoulder to shoulder with other members of the Allies, to fight the battle of India's defences, but that offer was rejected, that offer was refused by the War Gods of England. Why? Because Congress demanded that India should be on a footing of equality, that she should be recognised as an independent member of the Allies. She only demanded that the much vaunted principles of war should be translated into action. India was the acid-test of British professions, and she failed and failed there and the real character of the war stands unmasked to the people of India. What does the British Imperialist Government want us to do? They want us to fight the battle as slaves, to co-operate just as a slave co-operates with his master. We are asked to fight fascism while fascism reigns supreme in India, we are asked to fight the battle of freedom, while the muffled voice of India cries for freedom from the prison bars. Can anybody feel any urge to fight under such unnatural condition, can we feel at any moment of the day, that we are masters of our own affairs? Can any co-operation materialise under the given background? I put this simple question to the leader of the European Group and pause for a reply?

The imprisoned soul of India cries from behind the prison bars for freedom, to fight for the cause of world's freedom; but the implacable, unbending bureaucracy with relentless cruelty and systematic barbarism puts down, strangles that voice. Can freedom and slavery go together? A promise of future was dangled before us. Sir Stafford Cripps was sent to India to dig his own political grave and he has successfully been removed from the Cabinet. I was laughing rather cynically when I heard the leader of the European Group waxing eloquently over the so-called four-fold freedom. I was then reminded of the Bengali adage—“ভূতের মুখে রান নাহি”—which translated into English comes to “Satan quoting scriptures”. Is there any thing of the sort in India? Living in a glass house, just as my Friend does, can he not realise—does he not know what massacre of these four-fold affair is daily being perpetrated on the soil of my unfortunate land? What shape these four-fold reforms are daily taking in the hands of his friends—in the name of good Government of India, is having a foretaste of the post-war reconstruction. Can my Friend enlighten me as to what became of the 16 points of President Wilson, what became of the League of Nations' idea, the principle of self-determination so much loudly proclaimed during the last war? I would request my Friend to give us an idea how he wants to establish these four-fold freedom in India. Is it by putting into jail for an unlimited period the popular representatives of the people? Is it by letting loose the military on the innocent villagers? Is it by imposing punitive taxes on all, whether guilty or not? How does my Friend make his position logical in the face of the statement of Mr. Churchill that he is at the helm of the affairs not to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire, in the face of the recent statement of the Colonial Secretary, to the effect that British Dominion over the colonies must be maintained, shall be maintained. Will my Friend care to reply? What was the actual situation? The last resolution that was passed at Bombay was for another attempt at compromise, but the bureaucracy did not wait for the issue of that compromise. The conspiracy was hedged in the heights of Simla, and leaders whose influence has always worked for preservation of law and order, were taken into custody and removed to unknown destiny. Unrest and disorder followed and bureaucracy

holds Congress responsible for the situation created by them. I boldly assert, had the bureaucracy not followed such a misguided policy of arresting the Congress leaders who have always worked for non-violence, such disorder would not have taken place. So, by removing from the land the forces of order, and creating conditions for an outbreak of disorder, it ill-befits even a bureaucracy to transfer the responsibility to the shoulders of those who were put into jail. Mahatma Gandhi wanted an opportunity to examine all the happenings but that has also been refused. So, my submission, Sir, is, if anybody is responsible for those disorders and works of sabotage it is the overzealous bureaucracy who has let loose in India, since then, worst type of Nazi terrorism. No body regrets these happenings more than us whose creed is absolute non-violence. What is the position in this Province, Sir? How Government is run in this Province? The empty benches on this side of the House are the best testimonials of the achievements of the Government. People's accredited representatives have been put into prison and prevented from doing their normal work as legislators—for what offence may I enquire? It is not for any offence under the Penal Code, not for any offence or crime under that notorious lawless law the Defence of India Act, not for any overt act, but for mere suspicion. Only on suspicion that something may happen, people have been taken away from their sick-bed, from the sick-bed of their ailing wives and dying children. Is it justice—is it good Government, not to speak of being a responsible Government? If they are really guilty, why do not the Government bring them before the Court of law? Elementary principle of justice, elementary rights of citizenship, are denied even to one who was once the Premier of this Province, in charge of law and order. What is the actual state of things prevailing in this Province, Sir? Reign of law has given place to reign of terror. Individual liberty, individual freedom of speech and action are denied to all, even women's honour is not safe. Press is gagged. Suppression of normal life and suppression of news are order of the day. Those who are paid from public money to preserve law and order, are themselves agents of *goondalism* in the Province. Those who were brought into this Province to save us from the Japanese menace have justified their existence by being used as tools for this reign of terror. Punitive taxes are being enforced without any consideration. Innocent and guilty being victimised by the same ruthless bureaucracy. No sensible men can object to guilty being punished; but the innocent people are the daily victims of police *raj*. I don't like to go to detailed stories of barbaric oppression, perpetrated on the people of this Province. Sir Saadulla is supposed to rule the Province as its Premier; but on his own admission, a telegram, duly passed by a Superintendent of Jail and the Deputy Commissioner of the district concerned as censored, does not reach the hands of the Premier. This very fact alone speaks eloquently on the condition under which Government are being carried on in this Province. This very fact ought to have been sufficient for a conscientious man, as Sir Muhammad is to refuse to blacken his hand by having anything to do with running this show of toy dance—I mean the so-called responsible Government. Is it any Government—not to speak of responsible Government? A responsible Government have been defined as a Government of the people, by the people and for the people. To whom is this Government responsible? There is of course an element of responsibility. If this Government is responsible to anybody it is responsible to the ghost, which acts from behind the scene and makes those poor Ministers give a show of toy dance here and elsewhere. It is virtually the Government of that unseen ghost, for that ghost and by that ghost.

The Hon'ble Finance Minister has spoken very eloquently of the war preparations of this Province. I rub my eyes and enquire how? Is it by the

Premier becoming the Provincial leader of the National War Front? May I enquire what is that affair? Are the people being prepared to face the enemy to resist the invader? The enquiring public only make the query—how? The public see that conferences are being organised for a mere cinema show, absurd songs in eulogy of individuals, dancing parties, lunches and dinners and what not? Altogether a comic show! Is it the way how people are being prepared for self-defence? Can there be a greater waste of public fund in the name of defence? The Ministry is supposed to organise food supply, to control prices. As a result of the activities of the Government, prices have gone up five times or six times. Necessaries of life are not available even with prohibitive cost. Government have established stores, where people must break their heads, tear their garments before they are to get anything, after standing 4 or 5 hours and after they have paid some tips to the pockets of those gods of stores. A Civil Defence Department has been opened only to distribute patronage of services amongst relatives. Whisper and bribery have become the order of the day. This is good Government indeed.

Now, Sir, not in a spirit of recrimination but in a spirit of perfect good will, I request the Hon'ble Ministers to give a reply—are they or are they not carrying on the reins of this Government with a clear conscience? Do they or do they not accept full responsibility for the *goonda raj*, let loose in this Province? Let them be candid at least for once and give a frank reply like Mr. Fazlul Haque of Bengal. If Sir Muhammad does not accept the responsibility for this *goonda raj*, I beseech Sir Muhammad to shake off the peacock's feathers lent by the bureaucracy to follow the only honourable course which Mr. Allabux has followed in Sind and which Mr. Shyamaprasad Mookerjee has followed in Bengal. Let the bureaucracy stand unmasked, let them rule the Province by bayonet and let him come out of this vicious circle as the natural leader of the people of this Province. On the contrary, if he accepts the fullest responsibility of the tragic drama that is being played on the soil of his fatherland, I only hang down my head in shame. I would only remind him that history does not forget anybody. When India shall attain her freedom, as she must, his name will go down to the posterity as the instrument—as the tool, who was used by the British bureaucracy to give some sort of sanction for this reign of terror prevailing throughout the Province just as in the middle of the 18th century Mirzaffor was found handy to bring slavery in India in the battle of Plassey.

With these words I beg to resume my seat.

Maulavi ABDUL AZIZ: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the Budget presented to us we see that the Government have been following certain policies with which I, for one, cannot see eye to eye with the Government. The Government policy of reappointing certain officers is one which I do not approve. This policy, to me, is one which is economically bad and morally unsupportable. By adopting this policy the Government is doing an obvious injustice to our unemployed youths. If these posts have been filled up from the rank of the Subdivisional Officers, *i. e.*, officers from the Assam Civil Service, the officers next to them would have got opportunity of officiating in their places and in this process there would have been vacancies at the lowest rank which might be filled up by at least some of our unemployed youths. In this view the policy is open to objection and I express my disapproval of it.

Next, as I look to the provisions, I find that the Government has been making permanent, certain temporary establishments in the Education, Agriculture and the Public Works Departments, and it is during this war time when we are so much in need of finances that this Government have seen their way to make those posts permanent and thereby have entailed a

permanent expenditure on the Government which, in my opinion, is rather rash and is un-businesslike. We are in the midst of a great war and we don't know where we shall be in the future. So, this temporary establishments might have been let alone for the time being and the Government in my opinion should have waited for normal times to see what to do with these temporary departments.

As to some new schemes in the field of education, I like to submit, Sir, that the posts of the Assistant Inspectresses which have been newly created are uncalled for and the time is not opportune for creating these posts.

I do not think there is at present any imperative need for these posts. So far as my information goes, there are very small number of female institutions and Government should have waited till the termination of the war and meanwhile to provide more institutions. As there is a great need for them, Government still can start some more such institutions, instead of involving itself in the creation of the two posts. So, I say that in making these new posts, during the war time Government is recklessly spending money which they should not have done.

So far as the policy of the Budget is concerned, I see further that the Government has created two new Departments, one, for Food Supply, and the other for Civil Defence. Both are very important at present and we approve of the opening of these Departments. Sir, Civil Defence Budget shows to have much money to spend but it does not show under what scheme it is to be spent. As to the Supply also, there is no scheme. We have just heard the Hon'ble Premier say that the Supply Department will purchase certain food and other essential commodities that the Province is in need of. But here also the Budget does not show any scheme for distribution of these commodities. From last December the Supply Department has been working, but we, living in the plains, have not seen anything whatever this Department is doing; in our parts of the Province we do not feel the existence of it at all. So far as our side is concerned, this Department is doing nothing, for the prices of food-stuffs have gone very much high and there is practically none to control the prices. The shop-keepers and merchants are realising very high prices for the commodities and they increase it as they like and the poor public is hard hit thereby, and as my Friend Mr. Chaudhuri has said, corruption and bribery have been the order of the day, and we see this in our every-day life. When complaints are lodged about undue profiteering by certain merchants, no step is taken by the authorities. So, we are helpless in the hands of the merchants and dealers. The Supply Department could not give us any relief nor has it been able to give any relief in the matter of Kerosene oil. In respect of supply we are living in perfect darkness. Though I am a Chairman of a municipality I cannot procure one bottle of Kerosene in my Subdivision, so, once I had to purchase 5 bottles of Kerosene from the black-market. I do not understand how the black-market gets the supply for sale. In the countryside the people are not getting any Kerosene oil for months together, and the Hon'ble Premier has said that if any complaint is made it will be duly enquired into and steps will be taken. But what steps do we find taken when complaints have been made. If any step is taken our people do not feel it. That is the state of the administration, that is the picture of the people living in the villages and in the mofussil and even in towns. So, there must be some well thought-out scheme for distribution of supply to the general public so that we may get the benefit of this Department. I humbly request the Hon'ble Prime Minister to think out some well defined scheme for the distribution of all commodities that we are in need of. Sir, if the whole thing is left in the hands of the executive without taking the public into confidence and any consultation with the

members of the public, the Supply Department will be of no use and do no good to the general public. Here I may be permitted to say that it is only the Government employees that are getting the benefit of this Supply Department and the rest of the people are not. The Department has been organised for the people, but there is no benefit out of it for the people and I bring this matter to the notice of the Hon. House and also to the Government for finding out means to make things healthy for the people whose lives are in their hands.

Sir, I now return to the local grievances which we have been suffering from for a long time. It is regarding the conditions of the town of Maulavibazar. The income of the Municipality of this town is very small and during the war time its financial condition has been very bad. For want of funds we are failing to meet the various needs of this Municipality, *viz.*, supply of good drinking water, etc. There is only one tank for the whole of the town people to get the supply of drinking water. For want of fund we cannot extend the facility of getting sufficient supply of such water.

Our difficulties have further been increased by Government adopting the principle of giving dearness allowance to their employees. Municipality and Local Boards are semi-Government institutions. Our employees are grumbling for dearness allowance, but our funds are not allowing us to do anything for them. To meet this extraordinary circumstances, there must be either a grant, or, failing that, a loan from the Government to the Municipality. I have already applied for a loan and I think my petition has already been in the hands of the Hon'ble Premier, and I hope he will give due consideration to our representation and grant my prayer for a loan to the Municipality.

Next, Sir, I should like to bring it to the notice of the Hon'ble Premier that ours is a subdivision where motor traffic is the only means of communication. We have one road from Maulavibazar to Shamshernagar. The Hon'ble Prime Minister knows this road too well. From Maulavibazar to Shamshernagar is a distance of 12 miles and this is a part of the Maulavibazar-Sherpur-Sylhet road. This road is in the hands of the Local Board and the Local Board is failing to maintain this road in an efficient order. I moved a Motion in this House on the importance of this road on more than one occasion and I again urge upon the Government to take up this road. There is a river which cuts this road some eight miles from the town. I would request the Government to span this river with a bridge and make the road a fit one and thus remove a long standing grievance of the people of that locality. This road is a very important one. It connects our subdivision with Hill Tippera and human traffic as well as a large portion of the produce of Hill Tippera come by this road. Therefore, from a commercial point of view this road is a very important one and I urge upon the Government to kindly handle the question of this road and take it up from the hands of the Local Board and improve this road.

With these words I close my speech.

Babu BIPIN BEHARI DAS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Budget presented before the Legislature is not satisfactory from the scheduled caste point of view. In view of the general poverty prevalent among the scheduled and the backwardness of education among them, it is imperative that special provision should be made to encourage primary, secondary, higher and other field of education such as Medical, Engineering, etc. I, of course, congratulate the Hon'ble Finance Minister for the increased grants to the Sylhet Harijan Hostel which has an accommodation of 27 boys. But do the Government think that this insignificant sum will help much in the spread

of education among the scheduled caste people? I am sure, it will not. If it is really the intention of the Government to spread education among the scheduled castes, should they not earmark more money for the purpose? In secondary Schools and Colleges, free-studentships and scholarships should be more liberally provided for the scheduled caste pupils for the rapid expansion of education. Engineering, medical, agricultural and post-graduate scholarships should be set apart for the scheduled castes. A special officer ought to be appointed to look after the education of the scheduled castes. A good number of venture schools are awaiting financial assistance from Government. Proper weightage should be given to the scheduled class schools at the time of selection, from this year's Budget provision. In this connection I may mention here that there is a great demand for the establishment of a scheduled caste hostel at Habiganj. I hope the Government will consider this very seriously. There are three high Schools and one first grade College there and the living is very cheap. So, if a hostel is established there, it will, I hope, be very much helpful to the pupils of the scheduled castes like that of the Harijan Hostel at Sylhet.

In the matter of services the scheduled castes are not getting their due share. In the replies given to a question put by Babu Balaram Sirkar, M.L.A., we find that our quota has not yet been filled up but still our candidates are not being provided though others who are over-represented in services, are being appointed. Is this fair on the part of the Government? I am informed that one Babu Nagarbashi Deb Mahara of Habiganj was recently a candidate for appointment for Assam Junior Civil Service, but though he was the only candidate from among the scheduled castes people of the Surma Valley, his claim was ignored. I hope the Government will enquire into this and do justice to him. It is really surprising to note that Government have re-appointed some retired persons as Additional District Magistrates; I think these posts should have been filled up by promotion.

I am surprised to note that sufficient money is not available for nation-saving department. Thousands of villages are undergoing immense difficulties for want of pure drinking water but no money has been provided for the supply of pure drinking water. Thousands of people die every year on account of cholera and other preventible diseases and this is more due to want of pure drinking water.

Owing to high price of medicine the dispensaries are going on practically without medicine. I suggested in my last Budget speech to introduce the system of Homeopathic medicine which is less costly. The Hon'ble Premier assured the House that it would receive due consideration but I am disappointed to find that no consideration has yet been given to that assurance.

Agriculture is the main source of income of the people of this Province. Attempts should be made to bring more lands under cultivation but for which people will starve. Agricultural schools should be started to give agricultural training to people. I moved a Resolution for the establishment of two such schools, one at Surma Valley and the other at Assam Valley. I am at a loss to understand why the Government have not yet considered that proposal which is a sure means to improve the financial condition of the people of the Province. I am really surprised to see the answer given by the Government to Unstarred Question No. 5(c). From my personal knowledge I can boldly say that the people did not get more than 50 p. c. of Aman crop in the district of Sylhet last year though the report of the Agricultural Department is otherwise. Will Government be pleased to state the source of their information? I say that the report is not correct. Due to the high price of the daily necessities of life it is extremely

difficult for the poor agriculturists to meet two ends. They are on the way of starvation. In this circumstance it is painful to note that Government are now realising agricultural loans in the district of Sylhet ; in the present state of things it should be immediately stopped.

With these words I resume my seat.

Mr. E. H. S. LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not propose to discuss the financial aspects of the Budget but to refer to a matter which is obviously causing most worry to the Members of this House. I refer to these questions of supply. The public are undoubtedly entitled to know as much as possible about the difficulties of supply because it is only by knowing the difficulties that they can appreciate them. I myself do know the difficulties about kerosene supply. This has been mentioned by two Members already in their Budget Speeches and in questions this morning. Therefore I crave the indulgence of the House in order to try to give a few facts about these difficulties. In order that they may be understood, I must first remind the House that India produces less than one per cent. of the total world production of petroleum. That is according to the last published figures. I may also remind the House that even in peace time, India only produces a small percentage of that petroleum which she requires and therefore a large percentage is normally imported by sea from Borneo, Burma, Java, Sumatra all of which are now in enemy hands and from Persia and surrounding countries. The House will be aware that enemy submarines have taken serious toll of the shipping of the United Nations and this has meant that no country can now import all the petroleum that she needs. As a consequence of the shortage of shipping, the Government of India found it necessary to introduce a 50 per cent. cut all over India in the supply of kerosene available. Owing however to circumstances which I cannot detail here, it was found that Digboi could supply temporarily the full normal requirements of the Assam Valley without in any way—and this is most important—affecting the supplies available to the Surma Valley and the rest of India. I want to make it quite clear that there was no question of the Assam Valley benefiting at the expense of the Surma Valley or of the rest of India ; nor was it possible to let the Surma Valley have a share of the extra supplies which were being given to the Assam Valley. As I said, Sir, the fortunate position in which Assam Valley found itself was only temporary and at any time it may have to come into line with the rest of India and suffer a 50 per cent. cut. Government have been warned of this. Unfortunately, however, the poor consumer in the Assam Valley did not benefit for the needs of the consumers but with thought only for their own pockets booked away kerosene from certain places in the Assam Valley to Bengal where such oil could be sold at a considerable profit in the black market. These consignments were not transferred in a straight forward manner. They were booked frequently as Ghee, mustard oil, etc., or loaded at the bottom of the country boats with legitimate cargo on the top. It was the attraction of these illicit profits, which are made at the expense of the consumers, that induced many people who had not hitherto dealt in kerosene to become dealers. The profits made by this illicit trade were so attractive that members of the well-to-do community such as Pleaders and members of Local Boards have been trying to get a footing in the market whereas in normal times, the kerosene business is in the hands of the small shop-keepers only because it was considered what I can best describe as third class business. My company has been making strenuous efforts to stop this illicit trade and as a result of considerable help and co operation from the Executive

Officers and the Police, I am glad to say that this illegal trade has been largely stopped, and that as a consequence the consumer in the Assam Valley can now get the kerosene he requires at a proper price. I wish I could think, Sir, that this was the end of the story. But I am afraid, that these unscrupulous merchants, who have always exploited the consumers for their own profit, will try again to do so. The Members of this House, Sir, could considerably assist in preventing this exploitation by raising public opinion against this monstrous practice on returning to their constituencies.

In conclusion, Sir, I should like to assure the House that the mal-practices which have been occurring do not affect my company financially in any way whatsoever, because they only occur after the kerosene has left the hands of our agents.

Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank Government at least for their food scheme and for the timely action they took in the matter, but I see now that I cannot support the appointment of their distributing agents. The original scheme was that this Government Agent would supply paddy to the mills and they would distribute rice throughout Assam. But now I find that the rice mills are starving for want of wagons. The price of rice is going higher and higher daily mainly due to transport difficulties. There are about 25 mills on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, but none of them are getting even one wagon each daily. Tihu, Nalbari and Pathsala are in the E. B. zone of the Bengal & Assam Railway; but the mill-owners are not getting wagons according to their requirement. I know Tihu mills are closed as they have not been getting wagons. They have written to the Government and to the Railway authorities but nothing has yet been done. They mainly supply rice to Upper Assam. Similarly the Oil mills of Gauhati could not get wagons to clear up their huge stock of oil cakes. I hope Government will see that the mills run regularly and they get wagons according to their requirement. Sir, some of the Deputy Commissioners out of their over-zealousness stopped booking of rice, paddy and mustard oil from one district to another. Government should intervene and stop such action of the Deputy Commissioners. We hope that the Government will always see that such things may not happen in future.

I have just received a letter signed by all the oil mill-owners of Gauhati that 13 wagons of mustard seeds have been exported from Barpeta Road and three from Sorbhog. The export of mustard seeds were stopped as far back as 13th September 1942 by a notification in the *Assam Gazette* and I know it has not been withdrawn and so how the mustard seeds were exported from Barpeta.

Sir, in spite of Government orders, mustard seeds were exported from Barpeta Road, Sarbhog and Bongaigaon. I cannot understand how it was done. Government should enquire about it. Sir, the Price Controlling Officers have checked the free movement of commodities throughout Assam. Corruption is at its height in this department. There is no necessity of this department at all. Many men are unnecessarily oppressed and this has discouraged the traders to bring goods from outside. I know in Shillong recently the Deputy Commissioner has not only searched the shop and godown but also the rooms belonging to ladies but he got nothing there. The merchants here are now terribly afraid of this Deputy Commissioner and they have stopped bringing goods from Gauhati and other places. Government should be strong enough to check the high handedness of such officer who takes delight in molesting the people. Sir, a large sum of money has been

provided for the police force. They are meant to protect our lives and properties ; but, in fact, we find that they are doing the contrary. The other day two of the big oil mills of Gauhati were searched and small coins of Rs.125 or so were seized there. Government should know that even in normal times such big business concerns required 500 rupees worth of small coins daily but the police must do something to have their existence felt.

Sir, next I come to Education. There is one Sanskrit Tol called Manikul Ashram in Gauhati established some 25 years ago, and was visited by our present Hon'ble Premier in 1927 and was highly spoken of by him. But I do not see any provision has been made for its maintenance. New institutions are being encouraged and large sums of money have been provided for them, but nothing has been provided for this institution. This institution is getting Rs.30 a month. It has its own building at the best site of Gauhati near the bank of the river on a hill and it is fit for a college building but the Government are not taking care of it. We have no grudge for providing new venture Sanskrit Tols with adequate money, but I shall request the Government to see that this oldest institution receives its due share. The teaching of Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit should be placed on equal footing and substantial amount should be provided for Sanskrit teaching which is also the demand of the Assam Sanskrit Board. The result of this institution is magnificent. In 1940 one of the students of this institution stood first in the Degree examination of the Assam Board of Sanskrit Education. In 1941, 13 students were sent up and all of them passed. But still it is not encouraged by Government. Only Rs.30 is being provided. I request that the Hon'ble Premier will see to this institution.

Sir, previously Rs.2,000 was provided for the spread of Hindi education, but from the Budget of this year I find that this has been stopped. I could not find the reason for this. Government have already appointed one Hindi teacher in every High School. Now, what is the reason for stopping this provision? Is not teaching of Hindi or Hindustani necessary any further? I hope Government will see to that.

Maulavi MUZARROF ALI LASKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to take this opportunity to speak a few words in connection with the general discussion of the Budget, but I do not like to go into its minute details excepting a few general observations and some grievances of the people of the subdivision I represent.

Sir, the district and particularly the subdivision I represent, has been, during the last few months, labouring under, probably, the heaviest military activities in the Surma Valley. Aerodromes with all their paraphernalia have been constructed and in consequence, hundreds of families of cultivators have been ousted from their homesteads and best paddy fields. In some cases the homesteads have been taken but not the fields and in some others the *vice-versa*. But strangely enough the price of these lands, so taken, has not been paid to the owners who have been left entirely at the mercy of Providence for their shelter and food. No arrangements have been made for giving them land to cultivate for the maintenance of their families and children although the rainy season has already set in, as if the authorities by their action are telling them "Grow no food and starve".

One particular area of Forest Reserve called Jamira was deforested some years ago for settlement with the landless people and a portion thereof remained unsettled as it was not fit for reclamation. This area is being offered to these stranded people for settlement, but they do not like to go there as the land cannot possibly be brought under cultivation in a year or two. There are extensive suitable lands in the Gharmura Forest Reserve,

which could conveniently be deforested even before, but the Forest Department vehemently opposed the proposal of the District Officers and occupied a portion of the said area by establishing forest villages and starting plantations. There is yet suitable land available there, as well as at Bilaipur Forest Reserve in Lallacharra. I would urge upon the Government to throw open these areas for the people affected by the war projects and the landless cultivators of Cachar, without further delay.

Sir, we are glad that a new portfolio, namely, the Civil Defence Department has been started under one Hon'ble Minister, exclusively meant for the defence of the civil population against probable air raids by the enemy. Lucrative appointments as A. R. P. officers and the like, have been suitably made, but unfortunately no steps whatsoever have yet been taken for the protection of the civil population of particular towns or villages surrounding aerodromes or other military objectives. If there is any chance of air raids in the Surma Valley, that subdivision is most likely to be first raided; but the Government appears to be callous to this state of things and have started the works of civil defence in all respects according to the maxim "charity begins at home" (*hear, hear*).

Sir, next comes the question as to how the local administration in Cachar is going on. One Burma-returned officer is the District Magistrate and another retired officer who ought to have gone on invalid pension long ago is the A. D. M. now.

The district authorities send orders to the subdivisional officials to get huge works such as constructions of buildings, etc., done in a very short time—say in 3 days or so, for military purposes. The local officers employ contractors and fix rates for these works taking into their consideration the keen demand of labour for extensive military need all over the district and the urgent nature of the works. But when the bills for payment are submitted by the contractors duly checked and passed by the local officers, the district authorities reduce the amount therein to half or less than half saying that the charges are ludicrously high, making thereby the position of the local officers equally ludicrous at the cost of the wretched contractors and as if these Indian officers are not at all reliable. Appointments were made in connection with military works, of all available ex-Government servants—retired and dismissed, with the result that we hear of suspension of, and enquiry against one here, and prosecution of another there. Notices are being served on contractors now and then for refund of large sums of money alleged to have been taken out of the Government exchequer in excess of their dues. But I do not know who are primarily responsible for such payments and irregularities. In this connection, Sir, I like to point out that the policy of the Government in appointing retired officers and incomers from outside is open to grave objections. This not merely hampers efficiency in public services but also breeds discontent amongst the members of the permanent cadre whose legitimate claims of promotion to these prize posts are being unjustifiably superseded.

Sir, even in normal times the few officers at Hailakandi are over-worked, but in spite of voluminous military duties of urgent nature devolving on them no extra officers have been placed there. The public are, therefore, the worst sufferers in the usual course of administration.

Sir, the people of Cachar are all cultivators who derive their income from the sale of their surplus paddy. Orders have been passed restricting export of paddy outside the province, but there is yet another move to stop export of paddy outside the district as well. The intention is that the consumers who are mostly outsiders, including the officials, may get their

supply of rice at a very low price. This step will definitely go against the interest of the cultivators. They have got to purchase their cloth and other necessities of life at very high price — much higher than the price existing at other places of the Province. Owing to heavy military demands, things are not available and those available are being sold by the merchants and shopkeepers at any high rate they please. There is no control over them. The Government also do not seem to be taking keen interest in supplying standard cloth and other things. One small consignment of standard cloth ever received in Hailakandi had to be kept under lock and key for months together on the ground that orders for its sale were not forthcoming from the authority. When the orders came, the stock was exhausted in no time and not even one percent of the population could get a 3 yards piece out of the entire supply. There has been no further supply yet.

Sir, I have got to bring to the notice of the Government another very important matter. The Government this year, granted settlement of forest areas of Cachar and Lushai Hills with traders to work out timber for a period of five years. Tenders were called for, for monopoly fees. But at the time of settlement, all the coupes were settled with the members of only three or four families. The best traders having the largest number of elephants and big establishments were excluded. Those who had been annually paying the largest amount of royalty to the Government for over the last fifty years could not get any block. No principle whatsoever was followed in granting the settlements. Neither the highest offer of monopoly was accepted nor the best workers who for generations are working as timber traders with good records could get the settlement. And to crown all, all the traders of the Hailakandi subdivision were entirely excluded in spite of there being highest offers in some cases and the best traders with good records in the past; and as a result the timber traders of that subdivision as a class — who are not a negligible number, have been permanently ruined. In granting these settlements the recommendations of the Divisional Forest Officer, Cachar, were not also accepted.

Sir, my information is that the Conservator of Forests had consulted the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge at the time of disposal of these blocks and I represented the cause of the traders of my subdivision to the Hon'ble Minister by telegrams and letters while these tenders were yet pending. In this dispensation 3 members of the same joint family got each one block. The father and the son of another joint family secured one block each and similar things occurred in other cases too. Even persons who never owned any elephants nor have ever been traders have secured forest blocks. I fail to understand who are responsible for the destruction of this thriving class of traders of Cachar and particularly those of Hailakandi *in toto*. Sir, I have never come across such an instance of glaring injustice done to a community of traders of a subdivision. What an irony of fate it is and how ridiculously the destiny of the people is being wrought from the heights of Shilong!

Sir, I am to make mention of another very important grievance of my subdivision. There are only one Aided High School, one Alia Madrassa and one Girls' Middle English School in Hailakandi. The amount of Government aid to each of these institutions is Rs. 40 per month or less. The High School at Lala is one of the best aided schools in the Surma Valley having an enrolment of over 300 students. These institutions, in matter of receiving Government aid, are always getting a step-motherly treatment. The amount of aid in High Schools in other places particularly in the districts and subdivisions of the present and *ex*-Education Ministers are not less than Rs. 300 to 500 a month, but we could not increase the aid of our

institutions in spite of repeated prayers to the authorities. Sir, should the people of Hailakandi patiently wait till, in course of changes in the Ministry, the Hon'ble Mr. Chakravarty, who hails from that subdivision, comes to possess the Education portfolio?

Sir, one member of the Hailakandi Local Board died about a year ago and the Board is going on without the representative of that constituency all this time. I am told that the Government have no information about this vacancy yet. I do not know who is responsible for this. Another member of the same Board has since resigned but is there any likelihood of bye-elections in near future? I fail to understand when these drawbacks in the administration will be mended.

Sir, one word more and I have done. The dearness allowance provided for in the Budget for the ill-paid servants of the Government is not at all adequate. A much higher provision should have been made in view of the abnormally high cost of living in these days. Those in high position in life are living happily in their own palatial buildings over their own lands easily secured, but the poor clerks of the Secretariat and the offices of the Heads of Departments are mostly living in hired rooms unable to maintain their family and children with them in these hard days. The case of the clerks and the peons in the plains also is the same. I hope the Government will reconsider this matter. The Government should also extend their helping hand to the poorer Lower Primary school teachers as the Local Boards are not in a position to help them.

Sir, the time is abnormal, but the Hon'ble Finance Minister has presented a normal Budget as usual from time immemorial. He therefore deserves our thanks and congratulations.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: On a point of information, Sir. May I suggest that the last speech just delivered by the hon. Member contains a good deal of information which will be of great value to the enemy as he has made a reference to the number of aerodromes that are under construction and the works that have been done there. These things are not known to many Members of this House nor to those outside this House. May I suggest that while correcting his speech the hon. Member will, in the interest of the people of this province, delete the references to which I draw his attention?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: There was a Resolution during the last session of the Assembly authorising me to expunge certain portions from the speeches of hon. Members which would be considered by me as giving informations to the enemy. Since then I looked into the Parliamentary Debates of the House of Commons and I came across some instances of utterances of Members, which were objected to on the ground that they were likely to give valuable informations to the enemy. But the Speaker of the House of Commons said that he could not rule out those utterances on the ground that there was freedom of debate and freedom of expression to be granted to every Member. But we followed a different course in order to be very cautious about the safety of the people of this Province. However, I would request the hon. Member to see to it, when he would be correcting his speech, that those portions of his speech which are likely to give valuable informations to the enemy be so corrected as would not have that effect, but at the same time would not alter the main structure of his speech in regard to the materials he has placed before the House.

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Budget presented to the House looks a dull one as the market all around is dull. Though it is disgusting to many, it must be repeated that in these abnormal times one cannot expect much from the Budget. The general policy for all practical

purposes must be on behalf of the Ministry to carry on in these hard war times. Of course I have to admit, as Mr. Mookerjee has done, that I have not gone into very detailed subtraction and addition of figures, but it must be admitted that it is a pity that there should be so many mistakes. If this is any indication of what may be happening in other Departments, it is regrettable indeed for the Government of Assam. It shows what amount of vigilance, careful scrutiny and hard work is necessary for all the Ministers and their subordinates. This leads me to say that the hands of the Ministry are full and no new project can be or should be taken up, I mean new project in the sense, bold and big policy, where thousands of rupees are involved. At one time I said that any new project that would be taken up for the whole province crores of rupees would be needed and at that time many laughed. Take for instance, for the sake of primary education for Assam, a huge amount will be needed. The question whether it should be taken up or not, this Ministry alone cannot decide. It requires the co-operation of all parties in Assam and the present atmosphere is not the opportune moment. I agree with Mr. Whittaker what he spoke about post-war policies. But I would rather like to say, "why over-burden the present Ministry with post-war projects." We expect a complete change after this war, but why now anticipate those changes and thus make our hairs grey. For any bold project co-operation of all parties in Assam is needed. It is not possible at the present moment. For example, I come to Mass Literacy Campaign which was taken in war time. Look at the state of this campaign at the present moment. It was taken up during an exciting moment throughout India. At that time there was great force, but that force has lost its momentum now. Along with the rest of India Assam took it, but opinion of all parties was not taken and all did not agree to it and to-day we are to agree with the Mass Literacy Campaign. It may be called a bastard child of the Education Department: it has neither father nor mother. How it came we do not know and it is not receiving the motherly care as it deserves. This will be clear when the conference report is before the House and it will be found only nominal work is contemplated. On the whole, Sir, I am not in favour of this campaign.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order, the hon. Member will continue his speech after 2 P. M.

Adjournment

The Assembly then adjourned for lunch till 2 P. M.

After lunch

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: When I left I was talking about the Mass Literacy Campaign. No less a person than Mr. Lubach, a distinguished Christian, dealt with the question of adult literacy. He had toured round India and roused people from their sleep. He talked a lot about the expansion of literacy in India. In spite of that, I should say, this is not an opportune time when this project can be taken up in Assam. Mass Literacy is good; primary education is also good, but not one at the expense of the other. With the money at the disposal of the Ministry both cannot go on at the same time. This was only taken as an example to show what happens when a bold project is taken up without the co-operation of all parties. This rules out also the possibility of starting the Medical School at Sylhet.

I agree with Mr. Whittaker when he lays emphasis on one of the three freedoms of Mr. Roosevelt, *viz.*, freedom from want. From the world point of view this is the crux of the whole thing. Economic problem is a world problem. If this is solved in India today 99 per cent. of our troubles will go. We think of independence. Do we realise what it involves? Unless this economic problem is solved, this independence will mean nothing. England was independent, Germany was independent, prostrate France was independent, Japan is still independent, outraged China was independent; but were they free from want? Why was Beveridge Report necessary in England? We will get independence; but along with independence if the solution of her economic problem is not assured, independence will be a mirage. It will be like a nice looking apple from outside, but on opening it will be found to be full of vermin.

Therefore I will not overburden the Ministry with big projects. Let us see what best it can do to remove the wants of the people. We cannot expect the Ministry to make the country free from want completely. Necessaries of life and the essential commodities are needed everywhere. The duty of the Government will be to see that the necessaries of life reach the remotest part of Assam. "Grow More Food Campaign" is going on and that is the cry throughout India, but what does it mean? It means improvement of agriculture. Therefore the Finance Department ought to see that this department is furnished with money. And in agriculture what is the most important thing? It is the care of cattle. If the cattle are attended to, the grow more food programme will run well. Veterinary Surgeons have a hard lot. Due allowance should be given to them. More Veterinary Dispensaries are needed, but not in towns but where cultivators live and the cattle are. This is a very important Department of the Government. This Department should have ample money and the Finance Minister should see that it is well provided with money. All this will surely help the war effort. Government wants us to promote the war effort. This is an indirect and silent way to help the war effort. Complaints have already been made about lorries and waggons that they are necessary. If they are supplied, much help can be rendered. If the needs of the people are supplied and they are contended then the Fifth Columnists will not find any field to work. Let the Ministry see to that very carefully. So far I have spoken on general lines.

Finally, coming to particulars concerning my own community, I should say that proper recognition has not been given to this community. It is regrettable indeed that Government have not seen its way to have even one Officer in the Senior Provincial Service from the Christian community. That is an indication how this community is receiving treatment in all the departments. In the matter of scholarships, all the other minority communities have found places, but nothing has been provided for the Indian Christians. This Christian community has contributed largely to the welfare and development of Assam; it has not lagged behind in this regard. So this community, however small it may be, cannot be and should not be ignored in the body politics of Assam. If a small community is neglected then the province cannot be called a healthy State. This Christian community has helped in clearing jungles, in erecting hospitals and in educating the people throughout the whole province and so Government ought to recognise all these and give its proper recognition to this community.

Now I should congratulate the Government for providing grants to secondary schools or primary schools. I hope the Hon'ble Education

Minister will see that the backward Christian community get their proper share out of these grants. With these few words, Sir, I resume my seat.

Rev. L. GATPHOH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Budget has been presented to the House in a short and concise speech made by the Hon'ble Finance Minister, which has been characterised as a paraphrase of the Budget—whether the expression is appropriate or not it is a matter of opinion. I feel I must congratulate Mr. Mookerjee all the same for his originality, his prompt and ready speech and his bold stand to break the ice and set it rolling on the first day of the Budget discussion. To a layman and a few others in the House like myself who have not been initiated up to this hour to the intricacies of budgetary figures who cannot have the patience and intelligence of a statistician to carefully examine and closely scrutinise the correctness of the figures in the Budget, for such of us we can have nothing but a word of praise for the Finance Minister, for having made it quite clear to us, within a short space of time as to how (a) does the Province stand financially (b) what are the new responsibilities of the Government (c) and how best to discharge them.

Whatever may be said, in the nature of adverse criticisms against the Ministry—it is perfectly plain and evident even from a cursory glance of the Budget Memorandum and from the number of the new schemes although I wish there could have been more new schemes and more money sanctioned for old and new works and their expansion—it is clear, the Ministry are not lacking in courage and imagination.

They look ahead even in these dark and cloudy days when the storm and stress of the war is beating hard at the door, when our province has actually become the objective of the enemy—when hardship and sufferings and want consequent on long and protracted prosecution of the war are to be the lot of the province. They look ahead and have not neglected the nation-building departments.

Education and Agriculture are on the forefront of their mind. New schemes involving heavy expenditure in both the departments have been provided for.

In the case of the latter, I mean Agriculture, special attention is being given; war conditions, of course, have made it an inevitable necessity. But it is creditable, all the same, for the response made by the Ministry to the demand of war conditions and circumstances. "Grow More Food Campaign" has called for new sanction both of a number of officers and considerable sum of money. Money will be available for the purpose, we are glad to know it. But I feel, I am on a sure ground, when I say, that having appointed sufficient number of new officers, having sanctioned or secured sufficient funds for pay of officers, for buying seeds, and for other things, Government would be under a great delusion to suppose that the desired object has been achieved, that more foodstuffs are available as the produce of the land.

There is always the danger of Government Officers concentrating their work or the staff of Demonstrator class within an area or areas only which can be served by existing good roads; it being easy for officers to supervise and travel comfortably in cars and other easy modes of conveyance. It is a common knowledge that for people living in such areas that are served by good roads, when probably all available lands have already been brought under cultivation, very little inducement is needed to make them grow "more food".

It is the people who live in tracts of country—though rich and fertile—but are greatly handicapped in that easy means of transport either by land or water are not theirs lot to have—it is such people who need much encouragement from Government to grow more food—it is such people who need help from Government to find a market for their produces. It is from those tracts of land—outlying-areas—that we can hope to produce more food in the province.

Mere propaganda work as it has been hitherto done will be a sheer waste of paper and more serious still, waste of money in salaries and travelling expenses of Officers. To me, Sir, at the present time, there is no work which has a greater claim than this, on the willing co-operation of all civil Officers with the public.

Now I come to the Medical and Public Health which is no less important than the other two departments. The excuse that the demands made by the Military on the available medical personnel have made it not possible for more new schemes to be entertained and for some work of reorganisation in providing medical facilities in order to remove the long standing grievances of the people here and there to be undertaken, the excuse will not hold good, if considered in the light of the new schemes and of the means and methods proposed for implementing the new schemes under General Administration. Here new posts have been created, old and retired Magistrates recalled—appointments to be made both direct and by promotion to Senior Services—recruitment both from the Bar and Subordinate services is conceded to. That is well and good. But I have not the least doubt if the same procedure is followed in recruiting medical men, that is, if retired doctors are recalled, those due to retire are given extension, private medical practitioners are invited, expressly to relieve doctors already in service, so that they may be set free for war service. I am sure there can be no dearth of doctors in the Province—at any rate, I can say that that is the state of things in this district—Khasi and Jaintia Hills—where there are more private Medical Practitioners in rural areas than work could be found for them in Government Civil Medical services.

My criticisms have been so far by way of suggestions. I hope, I shall have occasion in the course of this session to say more on this subject. Before I take my seat, I feel a reference—only a reference and nothing more, should be made to what, in my opinion, is the key note of hon. Mr. Whittaker's speech—namely the importance of finding out the taxable capacity of the people in the Province. This is the pivot on which hangs the administration of the Province—nay the well-being, contentment, and prosperity of the people in the Province. The confession of Mr. Whittaker is, therefore, not to be surprised at, that mostly the training of the I. C. S. officers is concentrated on the subject and work of revenue. The war with its implications—the war with all the changes brought about by it—may perhaps or shall compel Government, when normal times return or even before that—to revise their ideas about system or systems of taxation in the province. Before that time comes, I would humbly at this stage lodge a protest—for it is too early or premature to say anything—against anything in the way of uniformity, anything in the way of treating the different parts of the Province, as there were no differences among them—in respect of physical feature and resources of different kinds and that the same system of taxation be applied to all. Such steps will spell ruin to the people—especially in the Hill districts and loss to Government—because the real taxable capacity of the people has not been found out. We expect Government to launch such new schemes to anticipate, if possible, post-war conditions. We force Government hands to borrow money in the open market, but at the same time we

must be willing to help Government to find out the taxable capacity of the people and must be prepared to pay taxes to the utmost limit of our taxable capacity—knowing that these are abnormal times and knowing that it is all done in the interest of the Province—for the safety of hearth and homes, for supplying the needs of all—to meet the wants of all—starving and unemployed and to raise the standard of living in the country and for exploring all the avenues for increasing the wealth of the province. With these words, I resume my seat.

(At this stage the Hon'ble Speaker vacated the chair and the Deputy Speaker occupied it.)

Maulavi DEWAN MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY :
Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Assam may truly be called a frontline province, and we may characterise the present Budget as the Second War Budget. Assam like her sister province of Bengal feels proud that she has also experienced air raids and has kept up her morale and defied the attacks of the enemy. Sir, we have heard something of the Civil Defence in other parts of the world and we must congratulate the civilian population of Assam, who have stood up to the most intensive bombing and devastation. It has only reminded us of the heroic and brilliant defences by the inhabitants of Britain, of Moscow, of Malta and of Chungking. In the words of Hon'ble Sir J. P. Srivastava, Civil Defence Member, Government of India—"I am sure after we have got used to air raids, we shall be found equally ready to take it and the enemy will soon find that India who has already given such a wonderful account of herself, in the battle field, is not going to take any notice of the bombing skirmishes."

Sir, at this critical juncture of the history of Assam, nay of the whole world, while the enemies are knocking at our doors, all our effort should be concentrated, as to how to defeat the Axis enemies and save innocent people of Assam from the attack of Japan. It is no longer the war of Britain alone; it has now become a people's war, the war of every citizen of Assam, and of India. We have no faith in unwise and suicidal slogan of the Congress of "Quit India" which means "Enter Japan". It is foolish to say that while our houses are on fire, the inmates of the house should not try to put out the fire and allow themselves and their houses to be burnt. Whether we like it or not we cannot escape being mixed up in the war or avoid its consequences. We have had our political differences, but, Sir, I venture to think that there is no sane man in this country who would welcome the prospects of an Axis victory or who does not unequivocally condemn Axis tyranny and aggression. We have realised too that the fate of India in the international sphere turns on the success of the Allied arms.

Sir, my hon. Friend Mr. Dakshina Ranjan Gupta tried to give a reply on behalf of the Congress and referred to the question of Indian freedom. Congress under the masquerade of the Indian freedom want to establish a Caste-Hindu Raj in India. "Pan-Asiatic freedom" of Desh Bandhu C.R. Das, "Greater Indian Movement" of Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, "Akhand Hindusthan" of Mr. Savarkar and "The United India" of Mr. Gandhi, all have got the same aim of annihilating the separate political and cultural identity of the Muslims and other minorities from the surface of India. The Congress demand freedom from Great Britain, but they at the same breath refuse to grant the freedom or right of self-determination to the Muslims and other minorities. If they are sincere in their demand, let them grant freedom or the right of self-determination to every community of India. The hypocritical policy of the Congress has now been revealed to the world. This is why the Dravidians of the South and the depressed Hindus did not go to Mr. Gandhi or to

Mr. Savarkar, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, for the safeguard of their interest. They have come under the flag of Quaidi Azam Jinnah and have accepted him as their political saviour. We follow the principle of live and let live. We stand for the freedom not only for a particular class or community but freedom for all, freedom for Muslims, freedom for Dravidians and Depressed classes, freedom for Christians, freedom for Europeans who accepted India as their home.

So, the Hon'ble Finance Minister has rightly said that "the conditions still pervade the atmosphere and the problems that they brought in their train still continue to influence and determine actions of the Government and their policy".

But, Sir, we are very glad to learn that even amidst the over-riding demands of war situation, Government have not allowed themselves to deflect from the policy of steady and gradual expansion of education, in its stages throughout the province. Our heartiest congratulations go to the Hon'ble Finance Minister and the Hon'ble Minister for Education in particular who have included many new schemes in this year's Budget. Every community including Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Tribals and members of the two valleys have found a very fair and *daradmand* educationist in our present Education Minister.

Sir, in the last November session of the Assembly, I urged upon the Government the necessity of forming of a Muslim Education Board for co-ordination of education and culture amongst the Mussalman of the province. I am very grateful to find that he has kindly made provision in the Budget of Rs.3,000 for holding a Muslim Educational Conference to discuss the question of re-organising the present system of Madrassa Education which was started 25 years ago. My original demand was that the whole system of Muslim Education both religious and secular should be revised and re-organised. So, I humbly re-iterate my demand that the function of the Board should not only be confined to Madrassa Education alone, but it should include our collegiate and technical and industrial education as well which should prepare our boys to face the hard struggle for existence which lies ahead. The sum of Rs.3,000 is inadequate for this purpose and should be increased at least to Rs. 10,000. We are also glad to find that the status of the Principal of the Sylhet Alia Madrassa has been raised in class I of the Assam Education Service. Sylhet Madrassa is the only unique institution of its kind in the whole of the province and we hope and trust that under the sympathetic and able patronage of the Hon'ble Premier and the Hon'ble Education Minister it will become the centre of Muslim culture, the Jomi-i- Azhar and Cordora of Assam, nay the whole of India. Like the convocation expenses of Sanskrit Education Board, Sylhet Alia Madrassa should get a grant of Rs.1,500 for the convocation of title classes which should be re-named as Dourai-Hadis.

No mention has been made for the much neglected primary Muktab education in the Budget Estimate. So we urge upon the Government to earmark an adequate portion from Rs.40,000 for the expansion of Muktab Primary education in our rural areas to enable Local Boards to take over a large number of venture Primary Muktabs awaiting financial assistance from Government. Like our sister province of Bengal, Muktab Assistant Sub-Inspector should be appointed to inspect these Muktabs.

Number of Junior Madrassas have now been increased and there should be two special Deputy Inspectors for Muslim Education, one for the Surma Valley and the other for the Assam Valley and the post of the present Special Deputy Inspector should be converted to the post of Assistant Inspector for Muslim Education.

Sir, in page 64 the Memorandum of the Budget Estimates we find that provision is made for the creation of two additional posts of Assistant Inspectress of Schools. We also agree that since the devolution of the power of administration of girls' schools to the Inspectress of Schools, Assam, the strengthening of the female Inspecting staff has become a necessity. But, Sir, we regret that up till now no Muslim Assistant Inspectress of Schools has ever been appointed in the province. We must frankly admit that we are very much backward in female education than other communities. Muslim ladies are proverbially very orthodox and they do not want to mix with the Inspectress who belongs to the other community. So in order to encourage and spread the female education among the Muslims, at least one Muslim Inspectress of Schools should be appointed. Hindus, Christians, Khasi Tribals are well-represented in the female inspecting staff. But the Muslims are utterly unrepresented in the female inspecting staff of the province and they should get their due share. At least one of these two proposed posts of Additional Assistant Inspectress of Schools should go to a Muslim. Now-a-days there is no dearth of competent, experienced and suitable candidate for this post and we urge upon the Government to appoint at least one Assistant Inspectress for Muslim Female Education of Surma Valley in the province.

With these words, Sir, I resume my seat.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order. I have got only 25 minutes more beyond which it will be my painful duty not to allow an individual member to make a speech and, therefore, I would like to know how many of the hon. members intend to speak.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: There are many more, Sir.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will the intending speakers please stand up.

(At this stage some members stood up in their seats).

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: How am I to accommodate so many members when I have got only 25 minutes more?

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I make a suggestion, Sir? A list was taken by the Hon'ble the Speaker. So I think it would be better if preference is given to those who submitted their names in time.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, in the morning there was a proposal to extend the period up to 5 P.M.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order. Rai Sahib Daulat Chandra Gohain to speak now.

Rai Sahib DAULAT CHANDRA GOHAIN: মাননীয় সভাপতি মহোদয় এই পৃথিবী জুৰি মহাযুদ্ধৰ দিনত মাননীয় অৰ্থসচিব ডাঙৰীয়াই যি বাজেট দাখিল কৰিছে সেই বাজেট বিশেষ সম্ভাষণজনক হৈছে। বৰ্তমান, বায়ত সকলে অনুবন্দৰ ভীষণ সমস্যাত পৰিছে। যদিও ধান চাউলৰ দাম অলপ বাঢ়িছে, কিন্তু অন্যান্য বস্তৰ দাম ৪৫ গুণ বাঢ়িছে। সেই কাৰণে আগেয়ে দিয়া খাজানা মাফ একেবাৰে উঠাই নিদি বৰ্তমানে দিয়া খাজানা মাফকে গভৰ্ণমেণ্টে দয়া কৰি যুদ্ধ শেষ হৈ নাযায় মানে বাধিব পাৰিলে ভাল হয়। চলিত বছৰত যি সকল বায়তে ৩১ মাৰ্চৰ ভিতৰত খাজানা আদায়

কৰি দিয়ে তেওঁবিলাকে টকাত ১০০ অনা ও ১০ অনা হিচাপে খাজানা মাফৰ যি সুবিধা গভৰ্ণমেন্টে দিছে সেই সুবিধাকে আৰু কেইমাহমান বহলাই ১০ জনলৈকে দিলে বায়তৰ মহৎ উপকাৰ হব।

মুছলমান, ট্ৰাইবেল আৰু অনুনৃত জাতিবিলাকৰ দৰে শিক্ষাৰ বিষয়ত আহোম বিলাকো পিচপৰা আৰু তেওঁবিলাকৰ আৰ্থিক অৱস্থাও ভাল নহয়। গতিকে পিচপৰা সম্প্ৰদায় সকলক যি দৰে special বৃত্তি, freeship আদি দিয়াৰ ব্যবস্থা কৰিছে সেইদৰে আহোম সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ লৰা-ছোৱালী বিলাককো দিয়াৰ দিহা কৰা উচিত।

কৃষি বিভাগে Grow More Food Campaign চলাবলৈ আগাম গভৰ্ণমেন্টে ভাৰত গভৰ্ণমেন্টৰ পৰা যি টকা পোৱাৰ আশা হৈছে সেই টকা যাতে বায়তৰ বিশেষ ভাৱে কাৰণে ব্যৱহাৰ হয় সেই বিষয়ে যেন কৃষি বিভাগৰ মাননীয় মন্ত্রী ডাঙৰীয়াই বিশেষ চকু ৰাখে। প্ৰত্যেক মহকুমাত একোজনকৈ ৰাইজৰ ভিতৰৰ পৰা মুখীয়াল লোকক Grow More Food Campaignৰ বিষয়ে প্ৰচাৰ চলাবলৈ Honorary Propaganda Officer হিচাপে যেন নিযুক্ত কৰে।

শিল্প বিষয়ে মই কব খোঁজো যে আমাৰ লাভজনক ঘৰুৱা শিল্প বিলাকৰ উন্নতিৰ কাৰণে যেন গভৰ্ণমেন্টে চিন্তা কৰে। বিশেষকৈ, এড়ি, নুগা আৰু অসমীয়া পাটৰ যাতে বিশেষ উন্নতি হয় সেই বিষয়ে যেন শিল্পবিভাগৰ মাননীয় মন্ত্রী ডাঙৰীয়াই বিশেষ যত্ন কৰে। এই কেই আমাৰ কথা কৈ মই বহিব খোঁজো।

Srijut RAMNATH DAS: Sir, I am really sorry that I cannot congratulate the Hon'ble Finance Minister for the Budget he has presented before us, as he has not provided any sum for the expansion of education amongst the scheduled castes whose backwardness in education is known to one and all. I do not know, Sir, for what reasons he has shown this antipathy towards the scheduled castes. But I will be glad if I am given a chance to congratulate him in the next Supplementary Budget.

Although, Sir, we have got a share in the Cabinet in the person of the Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Nath Saikia, yet it is a pity that we have not received through him any share in the expansion of our education. Certainly, Sir, coming as I am from Jorhat, a place in which most of the political prisoners of the Assam Valley have been brought together, I think, Sir, I shall be failing in my duty if I do not speak something about these prisoners at this stage. For the present, Sir, I will not refer to the atrocities committed by the jail staff of the Jorhat Jail on the evening of the 24th February last upon a large number of political prisoners, because the incident is under a judicial enquiry. But, Sir, I think I should bring to the notice of this House and through it to the Government the manner in which the political prisoners and particularly the security prisoners and their dependents are subjected to untold hardships, unnecessary humiliation, and all manner of privations. Sir, in the Assam Valley alone over 1,600 people were arrested and detained in jail; a number of them are members of this House occupying as respectable position as are now being held by the Hon'ble Premier or the Finance Minister; some of them are eminent lawyers and distinguished doctors, tea-planters, businessmen, newspaper editors, school teachers, graduates and under-graduates of Universities, all enjoy the esteem of the public. Of these, more than 200 are detained without any specific offence being alleged against them; a fairly large number of these security prisoners have either been declared innocent by criminal courts, or against whom the police after prolonged detentions have failed to bring

any specific charge. Most of these prisoners have left behind them, family and dependents in their homes. Some of them have got to maintain menial establishments to look after the family, pay for the education of their children, municipal and other taxes, life insurance premia etc. etc. and yet the Government have not thought it necessary to make any provision whatsoever for them in jail or for their families outside. Sir, most of the Congress leaders of the province were arrested before the movement was even known here, and as I said just now, many could not be implicated by the police with all their surveillance. And yet all the gentlemen are being detained in preventive custody to satisfy the Government that they may be "out of harm's way" as Mr. Amery put it. I want to say, Sir, that if the Government want to detain these people, it is their bounden duty to give maintenance to their families and to provide in jail the comforts which they were used to while they were outside. These are the least that any Government should do if it is not to be called an inhuman Government. Yet, Sir, for all I know none of them have been provided with any such allowance—not even the Members of the Assembly.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: What did the hon. Member say, Sir? Did he say 'inhuman Government'?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member should use a happier term.

Srijut RAMNATH DAS: All right, Sir. I do not know, Sir, whether all the members have got facilities to draw their salaries, but assuming that they have done it, do the Government consider it adequate to meet the requirement I have mentioned above? How are the families of these prisoners are going to be saved from want and starvation? It is therefore clear that not only are the Government depriving these prisoners from their usual amenities in jail, but the Government are wilfully starving their families and children, depriving them of their education and putting them to all manner of hardship for no fault of their own. Sir, even detenus suspected of violent activities were treated better in this behalf than what are being meted to these prisoners. We have been told, Sir, that Government are prepared to consider such prisoners as may apply to Government. I submit, Sir, this plea can have no other object than to humiliate them. It is not known why such applications are necessary. Is it for securing informations about the status of the prisoners and the requirements of their families? Did not the police with their widespread espionage arrest these prisoners on some information? If it is possible for Government to obtain informations for detention I am sure, Sir, it should also have been possible for them to find out any disinterested man to give necessary information for assessments of allowances. But may we ask what the Government have done even in respect of those from whom applications have been received? Sir, I will not give names; but I know two persons—one from Gauhati and the other from Sibsagar, both having high status in society, but who were on application allowed Rs.10 each for their personal amenities in jail and Rs.15 only for their families at home. I have heard, Sir, that the allowance of one of them has been increased—I do not know to what amount. But is it not disgraceful for any Government to make such offer to such people? Do not such attitude of the Government show how callous and how cruel are their administrators? I strongly maintain, Sir, that it is the Government's duty to inquire into the conditions of the families of these persons and to provide adequate allowance for their maintenance and their financial commitments.

Then, Sir, looking into the condition of the prisoners it need not be stated that the provision of the prisoners' diet according to the jail rules for all classes of prisoners falls far short of the standard dietary accustomed by the most prisoners. I will mention only a few of the deprivations from which they must be suffering. You know, Sir, that in Assam few people can do without tea in the morning and in the evening, however poor their position in life may be ; but a very few only are allowed to take tea in the morning and none are allowed any in the afternoon. Cannot there be a general order for tea for all political prisoners ? Similar is the rule for the supply of fish and milk. Unless they are to come as diet on medical grounds milk is given to none, and fish is supplied only twice in the week for 'C' Division prisoners and twice or thrice to the upper division prisoners. The same callousness is seen in the supply of vegetables, oil and Ghee, the last of which is never given to the 'C' Division prisoners at all. Cannot the Government provide these things on a more liberal scale to these prisoners—particularly the security prisoners ? Sir, even for the supply of small amenities reference has got to be made to the Inspector-General of Prisons. Why, can it not be done without any reference to him ? In reference to clothing, the security prisoners have got to find their own clothing, purchase their own toilet and other necessaries. It is ridiculous to think that while the Government should be detaining them, the prisoners would be expected to get them from their own funds. Again, Sir, if the students are to be educated, they should be supplied with facilities for study, but the restriction in respect of study is so severe that even religious books are not allowed unless passed by the Police or the Deputy Commissioner. In these and in many other ways which are too many to enumerate and which I have no doubt that the Hon'ble Minister for Jails has heard from the prisoners themselves, the Government are inflicting all manners of sufferings on these prisoners. I again repeat that they should be removed if the Government is worth its name.

Sir, in offering the above criticism and advice I have been guided by the sole motive of creating a better and a more human atmosphere in the country by and on behalf of the Government. I also hope, Sir, that in a matter like human treatment to political prisoners, there should not be any party-politics and that we should all join hands in asking the Government to carry out the suggestions I have submitted. I only hope, my voice will not be crying in the wilderness.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: Sir, I am sorry to find the Budget as presented void of future progress of the province. I want to speak a few words regarding the position of food-stuffs in the province. In the morning the Hon'ble Premier has given us an assurance that he will consider the question of export and import of the surplus paddy of the province. But I may point out that export cannot be possible or desirable before the month of June or *Vadra*, for this month is the time for harvest and before harvest none can say what amount of paddy will be surplus. As this is the time for cultivation and for strengthening the Grow More Food Campaign, great facilities should be given to the cultivators. Now, some people are getting much money by selling their paddy, but some do not know how to utilise their cultivable land and some cannot cultivate their lands for want of plough cattle, because they have to sell their cattle for want of money and to meet the high prices of other commodities and cloths. I again request the Hon'ble Prime Minister not to make any scheme for the sale of surplus of paddy until next June or *Vadra*. One way of giving facilities to the cultivators is to postpone realisation of the agricultural loans given to them, and if it is not done the Grow More Food Campaign cannot succeed.

Realisation of the Agricultural loan should be stopped to allow the cultivators to grow more paddy.

We find people getting much benefit by joining military activities, but if we look at other aspects of this we find that they gain nothing. Whatever they get they are to spend when they buy things at very high prices. So, we cannot say that their conditions have improved in any way. In the same way we have seen people earning good wages while working at aerodromes at certain places. But after working for some time they return home ill, some attacked by malaria, some with cholera and dysentery, and so on. The ultimate result is that they have to spend much money on their treatments—out of them some even die at home. Some people die in the aerodromes like cats and dogs and there are practically none to take care of them. These dead persons leave behind their families without any source of income and thus make their children destitute. Once I found some people coming by boats but without boatmen. When I approached the boats I found some lying sick and one dead. This fact was brought to the notice of the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet, but I do not know what step was taken.

I wish to speak a few words with regard to the great inconvenience felt now-a-days in travelling by train. This is mainly due to the military people. Sometimes all the carriages of a train are occupied by them, and our civil passengers get no room so much so that some have to stand outside the doors. While so doing many persons are said to have met with serious accidents. Government should move in this matter also so that more carriages are allotted for civil population.

Sir, we attribute the reason for dearness of food-stuffs to war. But it is not entirely due to that—but due to transport trouble and profiteering by the merchants also. In regard to this as well I request the Government to take due steps.

With these few words, I resume my seat.

(Babu Nirendra Nath Dev rose to speak).

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: May I ask the hon. Member to finish his speech within five minutes, otherwise I shall have the painful duty to ask the Hon'ble Prime Minister to begin his reply?

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: May I not have an extension of time?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. I have already committed that the Hon'ble Prime Minister should begin at 3 p.m.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: Very well, Sir. I shall require only 10 minutes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was very much amusing to hear the hon. Leader of the European Group accusing the present Ministry for lack of courage and imagination. Except for a compliment for cancelling the land revenue remission Mr. Whittaker's was a scathing condemnation of the present Ministry—condemnation in a manner, Sir, which I think, could not have been surpassed even by a Leader of the Opposition. Well might the Hon'ble Ministers exclaim *যার জন্য চুরি করি সেই বলে চোর*, *i.e.*, he for whom we are stealing calls us thieves.

Sir, Mr. Whittaker was vehement in his attack upon the Ministry for not finding out new sources of income by fresh taxation. Mr. Whittaker was thoroughly disgusted with the present Ministry for not taking up any reconstruction plan. Fourteen lakhs for Agriculture was a mere sop in view of the urgency of the problem.

Mr. Whittaker warned the Ministry against any false sense of security, for 32.5 lakhs of our present revenue income was a mere war windfall and

even from now we must guard against post-war dropping down of our revenues. Mr. Whittaker deserves our thanks, Sir, for pointing out some of the worst features of our economic position. I thank him also for the manner in which he has taken up the cause of the hungry citizens of this Province.

Sir, Mr. Whittaker was pleased to tell us of the four freedoms—War aims as enunciated by President Roosevelt. While talking of freedom from want he was also pleased to mention about freedom of speech and freedom of fear. I hope, Sir, while mentioning them he did not take them for mere platitudes. I submit, Sir, just as at this moment people in India have not only to face extreme want so far as material comforts are concerned, but they have also to live constantly under fear of imposition of collective fines, under fear of any day being run over by military lorries and above all under fear of imprisonment and Police molestation for no fault of theirs except that they love their country, as do true Britons in Britain or true Americans in America. Sir, as for the freedom of speech, the world knows, India has none of that commodity just at the present moment.

Sir, President Roosevelt has tried to enunciate war aims. If he is at all serious about his war aims, Sir, he will also have to tell his Allies in England that they cannot have this war won and their aims fulfilled by denying to 40 crores of people the very things they are fighting for. Mr. Whittaker and his people will not win this war by denying freedom of speech to 40 crores of people in India. They cannot expect to make the world free of fear by keeping a whole country constantly under threat of fines, imprisonments and gagging orders. If Mr. Whittaker and his people are really serious about fighting against aggression let them also acknowledge, Sir, that their fight will bear no fruit unless their means of fighting are commensurate with their aims of fighting.

As for freedom from want, Sir, Mr. Whittaker was pleased to suggest fresh taxation for increase in Provincial revenues and reconstruction plans for augmenting Provincial wealth. Sir, we have not forgotten as yet the vehement opposition which the party now led by Mr. Whittaker gave to the very legitimate taxation proposal on agricultural income which the Congress-Coalition Ministry brought before this House and had to carry it through with a good deal of strife and strain. If at last good sense has prevailed Sir, let Mr. Whittaker be sure that money raised by fresh taxation does not go to cover the day-to-day administration cost of the Province as has been the fate of 27 lakhs raised annually by Agricultural Income-tax. Let us be sure that all fresh incomes do go exclusively to nation-building departments for the permanent benefit of the Province and not squandered away in the name of war emergency and establishment charges.

While talking of fresh taxation, Sir, Mr. Whittaker gave the Ministry compliments for cancelling land revenue remission. We on this side, Sir, hold quite other views in the matter and many hon. Members in this House and the Press outside have expressed their total disapproval of the land revenue policy of the present Government. It was most unfortunate, Sir, that the present Ministry instead of tapping other sources of income should have thought it wise to fall upon the poor cultivators who after 10 or 12 years of acute economic crisis have now to face the horror of rise in prices and scarcity of essential commodities.

Mr. Whittaker was telling us that just now the bulk of population in this province have more money in their hands than they used to have sometime back. I am sure, Sir, that bulk does not include the poor cultivators—victims of floods and droughts. I am sure, Sir, Mr. Whittaker's bulk of population does not include the ten or twelve lakhs

of tea garden labourers or the poor Primary School Teachers living on a mere pittance of 12 or 15 rupees a month. I am sure the bulk of population referred to by Mr. Whittaker does not include Aided School Teachers or low-paid clerical staff, certainly not also lawyers and doctors, journalists, Insurance Agents or petty landholders or for the matter of that any private wage earners in this province.

I quite agree, Sir, war has given some money in the hands of some people in this province, but they are none except those that are connected with the two wasting departments of the Provincial Government; I mean the National War Front which was so aptly called the National Waste Front by our esteemed colleague, Mr. Mookerjee and I mean also, Sir, the Public Works Department, which may as well be very rightly styled the Public Waste Department, against the head of which department, Sir, very serious allegations have recently been made in the Press to which my hon. Friend Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury made a reference the other day. Military and Public Works contractors, merchants and shopkeepers, tea planters and big farmers—these are the people for whom the war has been a blessing and these are the sources that have to be tapped for increase in provincial revenue and I am sure, Sir, the Ministry may expect public support if they can bring in proposals for taxing these war profiteers; but I must remind them again, Sir, that any money thus raised must exclusively go for the purpose of the nation-building departments.

Mr. Whittaker was pleased to give us a very rosy picture of possibilities of industrial development in this province. Hydro-Electricity and irrigation, water-supply and intensive cultivation and improved communications and industrial plants, I submit, Sir, none of these are any extravagant ideas any day for a Province like Assam. But Mr. Whittaker must admit that if these are also as much war efforts in these days as going to the front and manufacturing planes and tanks they must have popular enthusiasm at their back to make them practically realised and that popular enthusiasm will not be created until the people find their own trusted leaders at the helm of affairs. For the present, Sir, the people of this Province want nothing more than two meals a day, some cloth to cover their bodies, a little bit of education for their children and some medical help in their death beds—even these very very modest demands, Sir, the people of this province are denied by their administrators to-day. As for the two meals, Sir, the Provincial Head says we have 42 lakhs of maunds of surplus, the officers in-charge give figures that contradict each other and the people find the price of rice rising higher and higher. Standard cloth has been stranded, Sir, nobody knows where, and people go on cursing their *kismet* for want of a piece of cloth. My last word is that this war is a war for the Empire and if England has thought it fit to fight others who may have designs on her Empire it is only in the fitness of things, Sir, that England should pay for the fight from her own pocket—they have no right to spend a pice from India's revenues for keeping their hold upon the Empire. I submit, therefore, that this lump sum for Civil Defence, namely 16 lakhs, ought not to have been budgeted from the coffers of the Provincial Government and the Provincial Government had no justification in entering into an agreement for bearing any portion of the cost on this head, particularly when the Province was not in a position to meet even the minimum requirements of the nation-building departments.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, when the Constitution under which we gather in this Assembly Hall was on the Legislative anvil, I really wondered what was the necessity for this "general discussion of the Budget". I now find that this is necessary as a safety valve to let out lot of gas which otherwise would have remained as an explosive mixture. I found to-day that some Members were really speaking on wider subjects that one could think of under Budget discussion. We have heard in the name of the general discussion of the Budget, an apologia for the attitude of a certain party. We have heard under the same nomenclature a disclaimer on the point of freedom for minorities. (At this stage the Hon'ble Speaker took the Chair). We had had just now an exhibition of advice gratis to no less a person than the President Roosevelt of America. How in the name of relevancy, such a kind of talk could be allowed under general discussion of the Budget passes my comprehension. I for myself would not follow this example. I will confine myself to the remarks that certain hon. Members made as regards the departments which I administer. Unfortunately on account of my preoccupations in the Upper House, I was not present here when two hon. Members of the Opposition delivered their speeches but some of my Hon'ble Colleagues have given me certain notes about this and I base my reply on these notes. If there is any omission or if there is any commission, I hope my hon. Friends will excuse me as they have spoken in my absence. I have divided the subjects of my reply into four heads which I will term as follows:—(1) moral, (2) material, (3) maintenance of law and order and last (4) makers of future.

As regards the first, I should say that some hon. Members who were kind enough to speak about the duties of the Ministry wanted that I should resign and make room for others. Certain Members have made it their business of being a shuttlecock between the country-side and the Assembly Chamber; I welcome their criticisms for no other purpose than because it gives me an insight into their mental working. We have been accused of fiddling when the country is burning; we have been accused of living in palaces while persons equally distinguished and holding the same position as myself are behind prison bars. I thought that the hon. Member who spoke to-day about the cruel treatment that is being meted out to the prisoners in Jail was an eye witness. I also thought that he is perhaps a Jail visitor but subsequently on an inquiry I found that his statement was based on hearsay. I am constrained to say that when any advice is given unsought with an ulterior motive, it passes through one ear to the other and into the void; therefore, I will not take any heed of these libels that have been levelled against the Ministry specially myself. I for one, can say boldly and with a free conscience that I had never any hand in putting those highly distinguished persons behind the prison bar—some were arrested even before the Ministry came into existence. As a matter of fact, I remember one hon. Member twitted me in the last session that I have stepped in after putting these M.L. As behind Jail walls. We have been criticised chiefly because that the Ministry have got no plan and therefore it is to be condemned. There is a Bengali saying which I think, at some other time, I have already mentioned to this House. It runs thus:—“যাঁর সনে ঘর করি না সে বড় দরদী”, that is the Ministry which is not functioning at present must be better than the Ministry that is administering the country now. There are some who even went to the length of saying that 93 Administration was far better than this Ministry, but I can tell the hon. Members that most of these Members ran to me and asked me to form the Ministry so that the people's representatives can atleast get a forum to place their complaints. Now these very Members seek to condemn us on the plea that we have got no

plans. I can very well now go into my next category, i.e., about "material."

Whether we have plan or not will be evidenced from our food supply scheme for the distribution of paddy and rice throughout the province; our attempts to control the prices will also clearly show whether we have got a scheme or not. The hon. Members who went through news papers must have found that at the time when rice is selling at Rs.8 per maund within the province of Assam, across a very slender boundary line, in Bengal the price of rice was soaring as high as Rs.23 per maund. Even now I am told that the *Amritabazar Patrika* received to-day is publishing the fact that at Calcutta the rice is selling at Rs.22-8 whereas the highest price of rice in Assam is Rs.10 per maund. Has this state of affairs come out of nature or on account of the working of a plan by the Ministry? There was a time when at Habiganj the price of rice had gone up to Rs.11 per maund but when the Ministry banned export of rice and paddy beyond the borders into Bengal from that subdivision, price of rice immediately came down to Rs 8 per maund. We are pursuing a policy not for plaudits but according to our moral conception of duty, but we get condemnation. We have heard on the floor of this very House that we were ruining the farmers, because had they been allowed to send the food-stuff to Bengal, they would have realised higher prices and they would have been rich by this time. Probably they would have got a temporary gain, but by the policy the Ministry have adopted, they have conserved the food-stuff for the province and this has kept the prices to a reasonable level and saved the people of Assam.

Then, again we have been condemned for the fact that the food-stuff, that have been bought from outside have not been properly distributed. It is all very well to say that there have been some mal-practices in the distribution. A word of credit should go to the Ministry who have boldly taken over the Government after the 93 Administration and been able to keep the rising prices of food-stuff at a reasonable level. Can the hon. Members find out another province throughout India where Government have ventured to control the prices as has been done in this province? We say that the experiment that has been performed in Assam is the very first of its kind, and we have the boldness to say that we have to a great extent been able to supply the people with their daily necessities of life at a reasonably low price. If the distribution has not been up to the standard, it is not our fault. There are social lepers in every community, who taking advantage of the conditions prevailing, want to benefit their own purse. There are certain merchants who have taken advantage of the illiteracy and simple mindedness of the people in the countryside. Although Government have fixed the price, the rural people often time do not get the food-stuff at the price settled by Government and have to pay a higher one. Is the Government responsible for this state of affairs? Is it not a discredit to our own characteristic that we cannot see beyond our own personal gain? Government issued instructions to the District officers to see that the prices of food-stuff remain at the reasonable level which has been settled by the Government. If that is not in vogue in any particular locality, is it not the duty of the citizens themselves to complain to the proper authority? If Government do not take necessary steps, then only Government should be condemned. But what can we do when no less than the first citizen of Maulavibazar, the Chairman of the Municipality, kept silent when he had to pay Re.1 for a bottle of kerosene without making any complaint? He says that he realised the futility of complaints, because other persons did not get relief. Being the representative of the constituency of South Sylhet, he could very well correspond not only with the District officer but even with me who am in

charge of the Supply Department, and then, he could come and complain that Government is at fault. So, if we have not been able to keep the prices at a reasonable level and if the price control scheme has been a failure, it was because we did not get proper support and co-operation from the people. If leaders of public opinion—the representatives of the people would have helped us in the matter and co-operated with us, then surely we would have been able to keep the prices under proper control. Some suggest that the Price Control Committees should be reconstituted so that the committees may attempt to control the prices. I do not see how the Price Control Committees in urban areas would be able to check the prices in illicit sales that go on in the rural areas. What we want is public co-operation and a set of people who should watch over the nefarious activities of a set of merchants. For the Surma Valley, I am thinking of utilising the services of the volunteers of the National War Front and the Civil Defence parties that have been set up under this organisation. In the last November session I remember my hon. Friend Babu Kamini Kumar Sen praised the activities of the National War Front parties in Karimganj in distributing kerosene. But some hon. members have been pleased to call this National War Front as the National Waste Front. If my hon. Friends have cared to watch the activities of the National War Front, they would have learnt what this organisation is doing. But I know that they are all mis-informed and are ignorant of the activities of this organisation which has been created to guide the people and help them in many ways. I will give hon. Members only one instance about their activities. We have heard about the scarcity of kerosene in different parts of the Surma Valley. We have also heard Mr. Lewis who comes from the oil producing centre at Digboi. This National War Front Organisation has tried to make the people grow castor plants so that from castor plant they can get castor oil to supplement kerosene. We have already ordered for 500 maunds of castor seeds for the National War Front to be distributed by them among the people. This will give some substitute for kerosene. Some people criticise that it will take 14 months to grow castor seeds to give relief. I concede it is so. But the National War Front Organisation has not been sitting idle. In Sylhet, every body knows that they get oil produced from a kind of fish known as "Ice" oil which was utilised in lighting before kerosene was cheap. I have asked the National War Front Organisation to purchase 15 maunds of this fish oil for distribution among the people as an experiment. I had a demonstration at the Circuit House, Sylhet, to see whether this oil could burn and could give the light that is needed. I was satisfied that it could be used for ordinary purposes of illumination and light. So these activities of the War Front clearly show that they are there to help the countryside, the people in the rural areas who have been very badly treated by some of our greedy merchants. I have asked the volunteers of the defence parties—we have got an enrolment of 30,000 people there with about 500 parties—to watch that the village people are not charged extra by illegal sale of things.

Now one of the activities of this National War Front is to see that their villages, their hearth and home, their people are safe and law and order is maintained. I now take my third subject of maintenance of law and order. I am told that one hon. Member who probably has missed the vocation of life who by his jesture and posture even in very serious argument here, remind me that he is an expert in the histrionic art, had regaled this House with tales of cruelties performed by the Police Department. The same hon. Member had also mentioned about the treatment which has been afforded to the security prisoners. I can inform the House that if people

expect home comforts and luxury within the jail, they are much mistaken. Under the Jail Code, these prisoners, however high they may be, cannot expect the same kind of life they live outside the jail gate. If they are there, it is on account of their own doings and sayings which Government of the time thought, will endanger law and order in the Province. One hon. Member has been crying that suitable allowances have not been given to these security prisoners but that is a partial and mis-statement of facts. Every security prisoner has not got an allowance from Government as yet. But I have made it no secret before the House that as soon as they apply, I will get an enquiry made as regards their earning before they were put to jail and on receipt of the report from the district officer, Government will grant the allowance that he or she should get.

One hon. Member spoke about the very poor allowance that is given to the learned President of the Assam Provincial Congress Committee. It is true, originally a sum of Rs.25 was granted to him but on his protest and after an enquiry, that has been raised to Rs.55 per mensem with a special allowance for his own pocket while inside the jail. Similar allowance has also been granted to a few cases coming from the Surma Valley. Each case is judged on its merit and payment made according to what is found to be just. Those hon. Members have condemned the Ministry on account of their alleged negligence of not saving the country from police *julum*, they had not a word of condemnation about the lawlessness that reigns in the country for the last 3 or 4 months. Innocent persons have been killed by the sabotage and wrecking of trains policy adopted by such misguided people. Properties worth lacs of rupees to Government, properties worth thousands of rupees to our local bodies and properties worth thousands of rupees to private individuals have been burnt to ashes for no reason whatsoever except that those misguided people thought that thereby they will paralyse Government and they will so upset the ordered routine of the administration that swaraj or home rule or their own goonda rule will come to existence. No word of condemnation was heard against this violent activities from those benches who plead that their creed is non-violence. If there be a little over-jealousness on the part of certain Government officers to meet this abnormal situation, we shall have to condone that for it is lawlessness on the part of that band of goondas that has created a little over-enthusiasm on the part of certain officers. Government servants have been intimidated, some Government servants have actually been murdered and every day I get reports of threatening letters being sent to Government servants saying that unless they resign, their relatives, their near and dear ones will be put to very great assault, their properties will be burnt and even Government servants themselves will be put to severe torture by way of boycott. Not to speak of lesser officers, I, the Prime Minister himself, received such threatening letters issued in the name of the Congress or in the name of certain other organisation.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOERJEE: There is a Criminal Investigation Department.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, Sir, there is a Criminal Investigation Department. I have sent those letters to the Criminal Investigation Department but up till now no body could be traced who have sent those letters. (After a pause). This interruption has disturbed my thread of thought. Yet one hon. Member who has spoken said that lies and calumny have been thrown against the great Congress Organisation and that they had no hand in this movement of sabotage and wreckage. I do not impute these actions to the door of the Congress but I would leave it to the public at large to judge from this fact that

before the congress leaders were imprisoned, there was no such occurrences in the Province or in India. Now the country is divided in political outlook into two camps—Congress or non-Congress. If these occurrences came into existence after the Congress leaders were put in jail, then it must have been done by either the subordinate ranks of the Congress or people who sympathise with the Congress Movement. Why should the non-congress element go out of their way and burn the houses of Government, of private people and primary schools where their own children get education simply because congress leaders have been sent to jail? No, there must be some connection and this has been proved in the Blue Book that has been issued by the Government of India. In Assam we have got definite evidence that some Congress volunteers have taken part in these offences. I therefore say that although I condemn with everyone here the excesses committed either by the police or the military wherever it has been proved, I also condemn the action of those people who have started a campaign of lawlessness, a campaign of destruction and murder, of arson and *loot* which has clearly and emphatically spoiled the fair name of Assam, a very peaceful and law abiding province. Some people say that these are all figment and myth. I have personally in my recent tours seen the acts of vendalism, charred remains of a few post remaining standing. One instance was taken hold of by one of the Members who spoke on the first day and he narrated with dramatic attitude a misunderstanding between a senior Extra Assistant Commissioner and a Superintendent of Police. I wish that he had not brought this out in the House as the matter is still under enquiry and only very recently I have heard both the parties at Tezpur. Cases of misunderstanding like this if ventilated only makes it difficult for a compromise. I therefore leave that incident at that stage and speak no further. It is the people who can calmly judge facts and sift what is the evidence and the truth and then make a constructive proposal who should alone handle this subject and not people who want to bring into conflict both sides. This leads me to the category, *i. e.*, the scheme for making the future of Assam and India about which Mr. Whittaker has spoken with very great knowledge and ability and which suggestion of his has been criticised by two other Members of this House. There are two modes of living of an individual, *i. e.*, one who lives from day to day and the other who looks into the future and provides for it. If Mr. Whittaker had advised the Ministry to have a distant vision and plan for the future, his only advice to the Government is to take the best possible course which will bring benefit to the people of this province. He has mentioned certain items and similiary other hon. Members have said that Nation Building Departments like drinking water, better communication, better facilities for higher education and things of this kind are all necessaries, but how could they be provided unless we have funds. Is it any crime to think how best people could be taxed so that money could be provided for these proposals? People who are in a position to pay a tax should submit to such taxation so that the country at large may be benefited. These things are not of the visionary but these matters should be taken into consideration by every practical politician.

I will not dilate on the subject any more. I will conclude my reply by referring to another subject which most Members have touched, *viz.*, the re-employment of four officers as Additional District Magistrates. It is unfortunate that all the criticisms levelled against these officers have been made for want of knowledge of the main principles and status of the Additional District Magistrates. According to our constitution, these officers must be either in the cadre of the Indian Civil Service or what is

popularly known as the "Listed" posts of promoted officers of the Provincial Civil Service. Under certain Orders-in-Council, the number of persons who could be promoted to listed appointments is regulated by the Secretary of State and fixed. We have now the normal quota of such promoted officers still serving in the province. While they are existing, we could not promote subordinate officers to the posts of Additional District Magistrates. If we promoted or if we deputed only the Provincial Service men to assist the Deputy Commissioners who have been hard worked on account of war conditions and Assam's front line positions, then the Deputy Commissioners would not have got relief thereby because functions and duties of the Deputy Commissioners could be transferred only to men of the status of Additional District Magistrates. It is for this reason that three officers who have recently retired from Government service but whom Government know to be physically capable of rendering further service have been appointed and these appointments had to be made or otherwise we would have to import officers from other provinces or recruit officers from the Burma evacuees. This Ministry fought against the importation of officers from other provinces, for the Government of India has ruled that if covenanted service holders from other provinces do come to Assam they shall have not only their salaries but also 25 per cent. separation allowance because they have to live separate from their families and they have to work in a place for which they were not meant. If we refuse to take such officers, we are asked to take Burma officers—officers who are, according to me, are not conversant with the custom or the laws prevailing in this country and, so, would not be of great help to us. In order to avoid this, owing to the pressure of the military exigencies, we had to take in 26 Burma officers of other categories. I need not go into other criticisms, but I cannot help replying to my hon. Friend Mr. Goldsmith when he said that not a single Christian holds the post of Extra Assistant Commissioner. By the term "Christian" what he exactly means I do not know, but I may point out that Mr. L. M. Som, who is now working as Deputy Commissioner, is an Indian Christian from the Surma Valley. Over and above that, there is a number of Christian Extra Assistant Commissioners from the Khasi, and other Hills. Why Mr. Goldsmith forgets this fact and why he does not include these officers in the term "Christian" I cannot say.

Lastly, Sir, I again say that all the criticisms which have been levelled with regard to the incidents of supposed oppression that have been recited here will be very carefully considered after the proceedings of this Assembly are in our hands and I can assure hon. Members that I will give due consideration to other suggestions as well, and if after an enquiry into the Jail incident, punishment of the guilty comes up, I will not fail in this regard.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have got to say very much less than what I originally intended because the Hon'ble Premier has in his speech covered a good deal of the points which I would have otherwise to traverse. Before I say anything on the criticisms that have been made regarding the Budget I have got an explanation to offer. This year, Sir, it has not been possible to send out to the hon. Members the Budget Memorandum and the Budget Estimates three weeks before the Assembly, as has been the practice in the past. The other day a complaint was made with regard to that. Sir, owing to the absence of some of the Hon'ble Ministers who were away from the Province

on urgent Government business, it was not possible to hold a cabinet meeting for budget discussion earlier enough to enable us to have the Budget published three weeks before the session—it was sent to the hon. Members about a fortnight before—and I do hope hon. Members have not been inconvenienced in any way for this. This year, Sir, we tried to avoid the mistakes and misprint in the Budget which were pointed out after the presentation of the Budget during the last session. Mr. Mookerjee, this session also, has pointed out certain mistakes, but we do maintain that in majority of these cases they are not mistakes at all, and in few cases that there were mistakes, Finance Department is not at all responsible. I will explain how and why they are not our mistakes. Mr. Mookerjee has pointed out a number of mistakes in the estimates. As most of these relate to the provision for “pay” I think it best first to state for the information of the House how the Budget is compiled. Estimates are prepared by each disbursing officer and submitted to the controlling officer who, except in the cases of estimates submitted by Deputy Commissioners, consolidates them and forwards them to Comptroller together with a statement showing the scales of pay and the pay actually to be drawn in the budget year by each Government servant. One of the chief reasons why the Budget is submitted through Comptroller is that that officer must for audit purposes maintain a register showing the scale of pay sanctioned for each and every appointment in the Province. The Comptroller’s office checks the statements submitted by the estimating officers and the amount actually required in the budget year with their register and alter the figures where necessary. The Finance Department maintains no such register and are therefore unable to check the figures of pay submitted by Comptroller when he forwards the Budget to Government. The Finance Department naturally assumes, as is done in other provinces, that the figures submitted by Comptroller are correct—in fact they cannot but do otherwise. It appears however that the checking in the Comptroller’s office has recently not been as careful as one would wish and the matter will be taken up with the Comptroller after the session is over. So far therefore as these mistakes are concerned the Finance Department must be absolved from blame. The Finance Department has now looked into the errors in consultation with the Comptroller’s office and I deal with them seriatim below:—

Page 31. Pay of Establishment—Mandals.—The scale of pay is Rs. 14—19. The Deputy Commissioner, Garo Hills provided Rs. 696 at Rs. 14 each plus Rs. 24 for increments, but Comptroller’s office in copying the figure in the Budget submitted to Government put Rs. 496. It is not proposed to make this small change in the Budget and the error will be set right when the revised estimates are framed.

Page 45. Pay of Establishment—Servants.—There is a special pay of Rs. 2 attached to the post. The provision is correct.

Page 53. Secretary, Provincial Transport Authority.—Half the pay of the officer is debited to the head “29, Police”. The provision is correct.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Shall I get a chance, Sir, to show that these are not correct?

The Hon’ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member may just point out where it is incorrect.

The Hon’ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: The matter was discussed by the Finance Department with the Comptroller and the estimates as presented were found generally correct.

The Hon’ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI:

Page 68.—The special pay of the Director of Land Records is Rs.250 and not 150 as shown. The provision of Rs.30,000 is correct.

Page 68. Pay of Establishment—Elephant establishment.—The pay is Rs.20-30 and not Rs.11-20 as shown.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Then I take it that the mistaken figures are in respect of scales of pay. That is why Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri said that Mr. Jones has become too old for the job and the Finance Department stands condemned and not the Comptroller's Department.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: How do we understand whether the Finance Department or the Comptroller is responsible for the mistakes. There is none here to represent the Comptroller and to speak on his behalf.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Mistakes where found will be pointed out. There are mistakes no doubt, but not all of them.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Yes, Sir, then there are mistakes in cases of scales. If the provision is correct, the Hon'ble Minister may say that there are mistakes in the scales, otherwise the provision cannot be correct.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: But Mr. Mookerjee's calculation is to find out the average by multiplying with 12...

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Exactly so, Sir, because in some cases I take the highest figure of pay of a post, and after calculating I find the provision much more than is actually required. I am sorry, Sir, that the Hon'ble Minister could not follow me.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: I admit that there are mistakes and I shall point them out where they are.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: What I find is that owing to the absence of some necessary details even correct figures appear to be serious mistakes.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Mistakes are only in the scales of pay and these figures were given by Comptroller's office.

Page 71. Subdivisional Establishment.—Elephant establishment.—The number of appointments is 4 and the scale of pay Rs.20-30. The Budget provision is correct.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: But what was the scale shown in the Budget?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: There is a difference, of course, which is pointed out.....

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I may take then in this case that the figure shown in the Budget is not the figure that has been corrected by the Hon'ble Finance Minister.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Should not all these corrections be put in a separate list? Many hon. Members are not in the least interested in this, so they may be published as an appendix to the Budget.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Yes, they should be published by means of a correction slip. Now let us hear the Hon'ble Finance Minister what he has to say about these mistakes.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: About the responsibility for the mistakes, as I have said, the figures are compiled in the Comptroller's office and not in the Finance Department. These are not checked in the Finance Department again. So, the responsibility for these mistakes, wherever they are found, is not of the Finance Department

Now, coming to the Budget discussion itself, Mr. Mookerjee opened the Budget discussion by making a reference—I shall call it a digression into all-India Politics—and asked us whether the Air Raid Precautions and the Civil Defence Department were enough to save the nation, which he said, could only be done by its own leaders. I do not propose to go into a discussion, why all-out effort could not be made by India in war efforts. I will say, it will not do to lay all the blame to British imperialism. Unless and until the Hindu Muslims difference is solved, unless and until Hindus and Muslims take up the responsibility of the defence of the country jointly, the entire resources of the country in men and material cannot be mobilised for the defence of the country. I agree with Mr. Mookerjee that it would have given us greater pride if Japanese raiders were brought down by Indian airmen. Indian Air Force is expanding and Mr. Mookerjee will be doing a real service if he encouraged our people to join in large numbers in the Air Force that is being recruited.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I always advise.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: As regards the criticisms that were made by Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri, most of them have been replied to by the Hon'ble Premier. I need not go into them. But I would like to say a few words with regard to what Mr. Whittaker has said. Mr. Whittaker's speech has been a thought provoking speech. He pointed out that when the war would cease, the windfall that we are getting from income tax from petrol or from forests would cease, then even in spite of the withdrawal of the remission of land revenue, the Government will be faced with a recurring deficit, and he urged upon the Government to think ahead, plan ahead and explore new sources of revenue. In this connection, he made a reference to President Roosevelt's declaration about freedom from want. He also referred to Beveridge plan. He wanted to know how the Assam Government were preparing themselves to tackle the question in future. It is a truism that the prosperity of the people depends upon the progress in the sphere of education, sanitation, public health, agriculture, economic and industrial development, and the normal activities of a Government are directed towards attaining these objects. Mr. Whittaker has drawn our attention towards certain direction in which he said, spade work may usefully be done. He referred to the case of electrification. Government is not unmindful to this aspect of the question. As a matter of fact, the question of hydro-electric scheme in Garo Hills and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills has been investigated into by Government. We have gone into the question of a hydro-electric scheme from Garo Hills in consultation with Bengal Government and an expert was on his way to India to investigate when the war broke out. Government does intend to take up this question when suitable opportunity offers. I think, when Mr. Whittaker spoke of exploring new sources of income, he did not exclusively mean fresh taxation. The experience gained in the matter of purchasing food-stuffs or in the matter of transport organisation will be valuable in Government undertaking quasi-commercial activities in future; all these have benefited the province by increasing its revenue as a whole. He also referred to the question of opening up more land and wanted to know from Government what they are doing in the matter. I can inform him that in view of the present food situation, my Hon'ble Colleague has taken up the matter and immediate and fruitful results are expected from his endeavours.

Mr. Abdur Rahman and Mr. Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury referred to the agricultural loan being remitted in the Assam Valley to the extent of

Rs.69,000, but nothing being done in the case of the Surma Valley. In the past large remissions have been granted to the Surma Valley. Even this year, instructions have been issued to the Deputy Commissioners that coercive measures should not be employed in areas where people found difficult to repay the agricultural loans.

Maulavi Mabarak Ali referred to the creation of a multiplicity of posts and increase in the number of staff, and complained about the top-heavy administration. Last session while I was attending the Upper House Mr. Gawthorp who was speaking in the other House complained that there has not been enough officers. As a matter of fact the work has so enormously increased that the increase of staff has become both inevitable and necessary. Mr. Mabarak Ali wanted to know why we did not appoint Air Raid Precaution officers from the cadre of our Junior Civil Service officers as has been done in Bengal. He is perhaps aware that there has been such a great demand of our Junior Civil Service officers for other kinds of work that we have no officer to spare for Air Raid Precaution work. He has complained about the pay; but having regard to the responsibility involved, I don't think, the pay of Rs. 300 is so high for the Air Raid Precaution officers.

Then, Sir, both Messrs. Mookerjee and Mabarak Ali raised the question of the Sylhet Medical School. This is a question, Sir, in which we are in the grip of a vicious circle. Due to the absence of a Medical School there are not enough Doctors available and again as there are not enough Assistant Surgeons available, we cannot start a Medical School for want of Doctors and other staffs and equipments. There is also difficulty about accommodation, difficulty about equipment and difficulty about finance but in spite of all these difficulties, the Sylhet Medical School is always before us with the prospect and the hope that some day it will materialise. (Laughter).

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May we now have some idea of the time?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: It is difficult to forecast.

Then, Sir, Mr. Maqbul Hussain Choudhury drew the attention of the House to the discrepancies that exist between the Government circular giving the communal ratio and the establishment Roll of the Secretariat. He said that this was operating to the detriment of the Muslim community. He also drew the attention of the Government to the injustice that is being done to the Muslim employees; he also mentioned specific cases. I can, however, assure him that the matter will be looked into and if any cases of real injustice appear, it will be rectified.

Maulavi Abdul Aziz complained about the temporary establishments being made permanent. The Public Works Department Division in Sylhet has been made permanent this time. I should point out that it has been existing for the last 13 years and this has, in a way, affected the prospects of the staff that are being employed there; it has affected their position with regard to pension as well. Therefore, Government thought it necessary that when the Division is to exist and continue its function, it should be made permanent so that the staff may not suffer in the long run.

With regard to educational institutions, only the Earle Law College which was on a temporary basis has been made permanent. This Earle Law College has been on a temporary basis from the year 1914 and I think, the House will agree that it is time that it should be made permanent.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Should we not wait?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: We have waited enough, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: But we should wait for the Medical School at Sylhet.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: The Medical School involves a large expenditure.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: We are hearing it for the last so many years.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: The question of Medical School will remain as it is.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Maulavi Abdul Aziz also spoke about the difficulties of the Maulvibazar Municipality. He said that he has sent an application for the grant of a loan. I can assure him that it will receive consideration it deserves. With regard to the Maulvibazar-Shamshernagar Road which he wants us to take up from the Local Board to the Public Works Department, I should like to point out to him that under the Motor Taxation projects some of the roads from the Local Boards are now taken over for improvement by the Public Works Department but before this is done, it is for the Local Boards to select the roads and make recommendation to Government. So, I think, it will be much better if he approaches the Local Board for including that road in their recommendation.

Mr. Goldsmith and I think Mr. Mabarak Ali referred to the Mass Literacy Campaign and criticised it as a failure. There may be room, Sir, for difference of opinion as to the success or otherwise of the Campaign. Having regard to the difference of opinion existing, Government has appointed a Committee to inquire into the working of the Mass Literacy Scheme and I am sure, the recommendation of the Committee will receive very careful consideration of the Government.

Then, Sir, Rev. Gathloh made a suggestion that experienced and senior Medical officers should be employed in the vacancies caused by the Medical officers joining the Military service. As a matter of fact this is being done but the demand is very much in excess of the supply and it is not possible to compel the private practitioners to accept the jobs unless they are willing to volunteer.

Then, Sir, Srijut Ramnath Das and Babu Bipin Behari Das have complained about the education grants not being ear-marked for the scheduled-castes. I am sure, in the distribution of grants for the Venture Schools, the cases of the scheduled-castes will also be taken into consideration. Before I sit down, Sir, I should like to reply to the remarks made by Mr. Nirendra Nath Dev about the land-revenue remission. He expressed his disagreement with the policy that Government has adopted of withdrawing the land-revenue remission. In this case also, Sir, there is a room for difference of opinion. But, Sir, we maintain that the conditions under which the remission of land-revenue was originally granted has considerably changed and there is a need for re-examination of that policy.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: Change for the worse?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: I will tell you how it is changed. It was in the year 1932, during the slump of that year Government adopted this policy of granting remission at the rate of annas 3 in the rupee. They accepted this policy because the prices of commodities had fallen considerably and the raiyats found it difficult to pay the land-revenue which was assessed at that time. The rate has been changed from time

to time till 1940-41. The remission was costing Government about 40 lakhs of rupees. Now, Sir, the primary consideration that influenced the Government to grant remission of land-revenue was the fall in the price of primary commodities. At the time when the land revenue remission was granted, rice was selling at Rs.3 per maund. It is now sold at Rs.10 per maund and for almost all the agricultural produces, the cultivators are getting better and higher prices.

Srijat GHANASHYAM DAS: The cultivators are not getting the real prices.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: My hon. Friend Babu Nirendra Nath Dev has pointed out that a good deal of money is going into the pockets of the adventurers in military works. But I may point out that a large amount of money is also going into the pockets of the cultivators who have undertaken work in connection with the war activities as labourers and wage-earners.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: What about the commodities, such as cloth, sugar, etc.?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: The justification for granting remission of land revenue was the low price of agricultural produce at that time, and now that the price of agricultural produce has risen, Government had to reconsider the policy of granting the same remission.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: But the cultivators are now paying more for the purchase of cloth, sugar, etc.

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: I think, the balance of advantage lies in withdrawal of remission.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: What has become of the demand of Maulavi Dewan Ahab Chaudhury regarding a Muslim Inspectress of Schools?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: I am sorry, Sir, I missed that point. Maulavi Dewan Ahab Chaudhury wants an assurance that in the appointment of Assistant Inspectresses of Schools, the case of Muslim ladies should be considered. I can assure him that the claims of Muslim ladies, if qualified ladies are available, will surely be considered by Government in the appointment of Assistant Inspectresses of Schools.

Maulavi DEWAN MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: What about the money allotted for the Educational Conference?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: If the Hon'ble Education Minister finds that the money allotted for the purpose is not sufficient, he will certainly ask for a supplementary grant or re-appropriation. When the House has accepted the proposal of having the Conference, if the money allotted is not sufficient, of course, it will have to be provided.

Discussion of the Appropriation Accounts and Finance Accounts for 1941-42

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: On the objection of some hon. Members the other day, the discussion of the Appropriation Accounts and Finance Accounts for the year 1941-42 was postponed. Now, this discussion will be fixed for tomorrow and they will be discussed just after the presentation of the Supplementary Statement of expenditure.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : May I make a submission, Sir? In other years the Public Accounts Committee is formed beforehand, and after the Public Accounts Committee examines the accounts, it submits a report to this House, and we discuss on that report. But so far as this year is concerned, the Committee will have to be formed. As it will examine the reports and Heads of Departments and then submit its report, it will be proper to discuss it later.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Very well, the item will be there for tomorrow, and I will consider this aspect of the question tomorrow and take the sense of House.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 2 P. M. on Friday, the 12th November, 1943.

*Shillong ;
The 16th April 1943.*

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

