

Proceedings of the Sixteenth 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 8th March, 1945.

PRESENT:

Hon'ble Mr. Basanta Kumar Das, Speaker, in the Chair, the ten Hon'ble Ministers and fifty-five hon. Members.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

Shareholders of the Assam Valley Supply Syndicate

Srijut BELIRAM DAS asked:

* 51. (a) Will the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Supply Department be pleased to state the names of shareholders of the Assam Valley Supply Syndicate?

(b) Are Government aware that there are complaints against this Syndicate as being responsible for supplying unwholesome foodstuff to the public?

(c) If so, do Government propose to cancel the license of this Syndicate?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

51.(a)—A statement is placed on the table.

STATEMENT SHOWING THE NAMES OF SHAREHOLDERS OF THE ASSAM VALLEY SUPPLY SYNDICATE

1. Kumar Sailendra Narayan Deb, Basugaon.
2. Babu Chandmall Sarawgi, Gauhati.
3. Babu Durga Dutta Lohia, Tinsukia.
4. Maulavi Wazed Ali, Jorhat.
5. Srijut Surendra Nath Gohain, Gauhati.
6. Maulavi Quazi Talmihur Rahman, Gauhati.
7. Maulavi Md. Fateh Ali, Gauhati.
8. Rai Bahadur Rameswarlal Saharia, M. L. C., Dibrugarh.
9. Rai Sahib Srijut Daulat Chandra Gohain, M. L. A., Dibrugarh.

(b)—No.

(c)—Does not arise.

Gazetted posts in the Forest Department

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked:

*52. Will the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Forest be pleased to state—

(a) The number of Gazetted posts at present held by the Muslims in the Forest Department?

(b) Whether it is a fact that the percentage of Gazetted posts held by the Muslims in the Forest Department is far below the quota they are entitled to?

(c) Whether Government observe any communal ratio in the matter of appointments in the said Department?

(d) If so, what percentage of Gazetted appointments each community is entitled to in the Forest Department?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied:

52.(a)—One in the A. F. S. (Class I). Three students are under training at Dehra Dun for the A.F.S. (Class I).

(b)—Yes.

(c)—Yes.

(d)—A statement is placed on the table.

PERCENTAGE OF GAZETTED APPOINTMENTS EACH COMMUNITY IS ENTITLED TO IN THE FOREST DEPARTMENT

Communities	No. of posts to which each community is entitled to.
1. <i>Scheduled Caste Hindus</i> —	
Surma Valley	1.2
Assam Valley ... ..	.7
2. <i>Other Hindus excluding Ahoms and Tribal</i> —	
Surma Valley	2.5
Assam Valley	6.1
3. <i>Muslims</i> —	
Surma Valley	6.3
Assam Valley	3.9
4. <i>Ahoms</i> ... ..	.9
5. <i>Indian Christian other than Tribal</i> ... ..	.1
6. <i>Tribal Plains</i> —	
Assam Tribes	2.5
Tea Garden Tribes ... ..	.8
7. <i>Tribal Hills</i> —	
Assam Tribes	2.0
Tea Garden Tribes	0.0
8. <i>Sikhs</i>	} 0.0
9. <i>Jains</i>	
10. <i>Budhists excluding Ahom and Tribal</i>	
11. <i>Others</i>	0.0
Total	27.0

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it a fact, Sir, that the Muslim Community is entitled to 6.1 per cent?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: The Muslim Community, as a whole, is entitled to 10.2.

Re Supply Superintendents

Maulavi MABARAK ALI asked:

- *53. Will Government be pleased to state—
- The names of Superintendents of Supply who were appointed on the recommendations of the Public Service Commission?
 - Their previous office experience or experience in supply work?
 - The substantive pay of those officers selected from other departments?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

53. (a) and (c)—(1) Maulavi Misbahul Bar Chaudhury, Superintendent of Supply, Silchar. His substantive pay is Rs. 130 per mensem.
- (2) Babu Ikshita Chandra Biswas, Superintendent of Supply, Sylhet. He held a substantive post of Lower Division Assistant in the Governor's Secretary's Office but from 9th March, 1942, he was officiating in the Upper Division which will eventually be substantively vacant. The last pay drawn by him in the Lower and Upper Divisions were Rs. 76 and Rs. 170 respectively.
- (3) Maulavi Azim Uddin, Superintendent of Supply, Dhubri. His substantive pay is Rs. 111.

†Speech not corrected.

(4) Srijut Hem Chandra Datta, Superintendent of Supply, Tezpur. His substantive pay is Rs. 127.

(5) Srijut Surendra Nath Sarma, Superintendent of Supply, Dibrugarh. His substantive pay is Rs. 100.

(6) Srijut Jnyan Chandra Bora, Superintendent of Supply, Nowgong. His substantive pay is Rs. 100.

(7) Maulavi Reazuddin Ahmed, Superintendent of Supply, Jorhat. His substantive pay is Rs. 88.

(8) Maulavi Amin Khan, Superintendent of Supply, Gauhati. His substantive pay is Rs. 125.

(b)—Messrs. Ikshita Chandra Biswas and Reazuddin Ahmed had office experience and the others were recruited from the Education Department.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May we know, Sir, whether the pay of all the Superintendents are equal?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, Sir.

Appointments made by the Supply Department

Maulavi MABARAK ALI asked:

*54. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The number of various appointments made by the Supply Department in Assam since its inception?

(b) The number of appointments at first made by the Department, the Public Service Commission being consulted subsequently?

(c) The total monthly establishment cost of the Supply Department?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

54. (a)—The number of various appointments under the Supply Department is 857.

(b)—72 Sub-Inspectors of Supply and 9 Assistant Controllers of Rationing.

(c)—The total monthly establishment cost of the Supply Department is Rs. 46,572.

Babu BIPIN BEHARI DAS: May I know, Sir, the number of Scheduled Caste candidates?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am afraid, Sir, that I must want notice of this Question as it is entirely a new one.

Expenditure incurred in connection with Grow-More-Food Campaign

Maulavi MABARAK ALI asked:

*55. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The amount received by the Government of Assam from the Central Government for Grow-More-Food Campaign?

(b) The various items under which the amount was spent?
(Amount to be shown item by item.)

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA replied:

55. (a)—The Government of India has sanctioned for our Grow-More-Food Campaign for the year 1944-45, a grant of Rs. 4,38,150 and a loan of Rs. 10,86,100 on the basis of our proposed estimated net cost, i.e., gross expenditure minus recovery.

(b)—Expenditure incurred up to the 31st December, 1944, is shown in the statement placed on the table.

STATEMENT SHOWING EXPENDITURE INCURRED IN CONNECTION WITH THE GROW-MORE-FOOD CAMPAIGN

						Rs.	a.	p.
Paddy	...	...	...	...	...	1,27,548	10	6
Pulse	...	...	...	...	...	2,18,811	12	0
Potato	...	...	...	...	...	3,11,627	10	6

	Rs.	a.	p.
Wheat and Barley	51,646	7	6
Oil Seeds	13,545	2	0
Manures	1,53,066	12	6
Storage and Contingencies	79,309	4	6
Irrigation projects	32,030	8	0
Persian Wheel	2,581	5	0
Staff	1,41,782	13	0

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Sir, what is the amount spent regarding free distribution of seeds ?

†The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Sir, I cannot say off-hand.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Have Government earmarked any amount for the purpose of free distribution of seeds ?

†The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: We do not make any free distribution of seeds but we do so at concessional rates.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Do Government earmark any amount for this purpose ?

†The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: We do not earmark any amount.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: I think, Sir, that my original Question covers this Supplementary Question. My Question was: "The various items under which the amount was spent ?" Now I want to know what was the amount spent under free distribution of seeds ?

†The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Sir, we do not make free distribution.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(To which answers were laid on the table)

Dhanarghat Murder Case

Maulavi Dewan ALI RAJA asked :

24. (a) Are Government aware that there had been a murder case recently at a fishery called Dhanarghat, Baniyachong ?
(b) What steps Government have taken to arrest the accused and with what result ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

24. (a)—Yes.

(b)—The case is under investigation.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Is it a fact, Sir, that previous intimation was given to the Police by the local Chaukidar that there was a chance of rioting and even murder being committed but the Police did not render any assistance and the murder took place ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, the Question is rather involved and I require notice of it.

Re Pujah and Christmas Holidays

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI asked :

25. (a) Is it a fact that the Government servants who are employed in the Secretariat and in the offices of Heads of Departments at Shillong are not allowed in general to avail the Pujah and Christmas holidays ?

(b) Is it a fact that only a small fraction of Government servants of those offices are allowed permission to avail those holidays ?

(c) Are Government aware that there is a great discontentment among the Assistants of the Secretariat as they cannot attend to their worldly affairs even during the holidays ?

†Speech not corrected.

(d) If so, do Government propose to remove the cause of the said discontentment ?

(e) Do Government propose to show special consideration in the matters of leave and permission to avail holidays, etc., to those Shillong clerks who live there without their wives and children ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

25. (a)—No, it is not a fact.

(b)—The hon. Member is referred to his Question No. 146 (f) at the last Session of the Assembly.

(c)—No ground for such a statement is known.

(d)—Does not arise.

(e)—As stated in the last Session, individual claims are always considered, and the great majority are allowed leave of absence in part or in full.

Non-stoppage of Bengal and Assam Mail Train at Nalbari

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR asked :

26. (a) Are Government aware that Nalbari is a very important Station of the Bengal and Assam Railway in the district of Kamrup ?

(b) Is it a fact that the Mail train at present does not stop at the said Station ?

(c) If so, do Government propose to move the authorities concerned so that the Mail train may stop there in future ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

26. (a)—Yes.

(b) & (c)—The hon. Member is referred to the reply given to a similar Question [Question No.41(h)] asked by Srijut Rabi Chandra Kachari, M. L. A., at the November 1944 Session of the Assembly.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR : Will Government be pleased to make another representation to the Central Government to see that the grievances of the public are removed ? It is over four months that the last decision was taken.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : Sir, we already made representation to the Railway Authorities and they expressed their inability to accede to the request.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR : My request is that Government should make another representation.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : Sir, I do not think any useful purpose will be served by representing again.

Srijut GHANASHYAM DAS : Sir, cannot the Assam Government influence the Central Government in this matter ? Are we to take it that the Government of Assam is incapable of influencing the Central Government in this matter ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : Sir, we did approach the Central Government but with no result.

- Re Jirati Cultivators

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

27. (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether it is a fact that many lands in Sanirhaor have remained uncultivated in absence of Jirati cultivators who have not come this year as they could not carry their paddy in their respective homes in the district of Mymensingh ?

(b) Do Government propose to guarantee that Jiraties will be allowed to carry their portion of paddy next May ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

27. (a)—Government have no information.

(b)—If the hon. Member means the Bhagalooos or harvesters, they will be allowed to take away their wages in paddy up to a limit of 8 maunds per head as was allowed last year during Boro harvest.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Sir, will Government take it from me that the *Bhagalos* and *Jiraties* are not the same? The Question was for *Jiraties* but the answer given relates to *Bhagalos*.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: But perhaps on the assumption that the hon. Member meant *Bhagalos*.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Yes, Sir.

Settlement of lands in the Bongalmora Grazing Reserve

Srijut KARKA DALAY MIRI asked:

28. Will Government be pleased to state what information they have received on the following Questions asked at the last November Session of the Assembly—

(a) The total area of the Bongalmora Grazing Reserve in Laluk Mouza in North Lakhimpur subdivision?

(b) The number of registered cattle in the Bongalmora Grazing Reserve, North Lakhimpur subdivision, during the years 1941-42, 1942-43 and 1943-44?

(c) The total amount of collection made during the said years from the professional graziers as grazing tax?

(d) Whether it is a fact that with the approval of Government, the Sub-Deputy Collector in charge of the circle called for applications from the Raiyats for settlement of lands in the Bongalmora Grazing Reserve?

(e) Whether it is a fact that the previous local Officer sent a proposal to Government to throw open the Bongalmora Grazing Reserve for settlement with the Raiyats and Government also approved of the said proposal?

(f) Whether it is a fact that the local officer again sent a proposal against the proposal of the previous officer not to throw open the grazing lands for settlement with Raiyats in defiance of the proposal approved of by Government?

(g) Whether it is a fact that some portion of the lands in the Bongalmora Grazing Reserve is quite unfit for grazing purposes, but quite fit for cultivation?

(h) If so, whether Government propose to throw open the Bongalmora Grazing Reserve for settlement with the landless *bonafide* Assamese of Majuli and other districts?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied:

28. (a) to (h)—The information was asked for but was not obtained from the Deputy Commissioner. As, however, since the Question was first asked, Government have decided to give up the policy of settling the surplus portions of Professional Grazing Reserves by their Resolution dated the 15th January, 1945, the question of throwing open to settlement the Bongalmora Professional Grazing Reserve in North Lakhimpur no longer arises and no further attempt to elicit the information asked for is considered necessary especially as the Deputy Commissioner reported in August, 1944, that this Reserve was one of the most important in the subdivision and was insufficient in size for the number of cattle grazing in it.

Endowed properties included in the Nisfikheraj Patta lands

Srijut SIDDHI NATH SARMA asked:

29. (a) Will the Hon'ble Minister for Revenue be pleased to state what steps, if any, are being taken to separate the endowed properties now remaining included in the Nisfikheraj patta lands in the Assam Valley?

(b) Is it a fact that Srijut Sibram Dutta of Baihata, Kamrup, recently submitted to Government a scheme on the subject?

(c) If so, whether the said scheme has been examined by Government?

(d) If so, what decision, if any, has been arrived at in the matter?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied:

29. (a)—The object of the Temple Resettlement at present proceeding in Kamrup is to compile a record-of-rights in respect of all Nisfikheraj lands specifically belonging to Temples, Satras and Mosques; as a result it may be possible to place the manage-

ment of these lands on a better footing so as to safeguard the incomes of the temples, etc., to which they belong. To examine all other Nisfikheraj lands, however, now standing in the names of individuals with a view to restoring them to temples in whose favour the original concessions may have been given, would necessitate a much more elaborate enquiry over a period of years, which Government cannot contemplate at the moment.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—It is under examination.

(d)—Does not arise.

*Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR : May we know, Sir, when the result of the proposed examination may be made known to the public ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : As soon as possible.

*Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR : Will it be within the course of this year, Sir ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : Yes, Sir.

Settlement of lands in Bardua-Barbheti Reserve

Khan Sahib Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMIRUDDIN asked :

30. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) When the Bardua-Barbheti Reserve was constituted ?
- (b) Whether the annual Pattas of immigrants were cancelled for the constitution of this reserve at the instance of Assamese people of Batadrava and Barbheti villages ?
- (c) Whether some immigrants were fined for not vacating the lands covered by Pattas so cancelled ?
- (d) Whether those immigrants so losing their lands on cancellation of their Pattas again applied for obtaining settlement in that reserve subsequently thrown open last year ?
- (e) Whether any of them has got settlement there ?
- (f) If not, why not ?
- (g) Who are those Assamese people that have got settlement there ?
- (h) Whether Government propose to place on the library table the list of allottees so obtaining lands there ?
- (i) Whether Government are aware that all of those allottees own and possess sufficient lands elsewhere and are speculators ?
- (j) If so, do Government propose to cancel those allotments and direct fresh allotments with deserving landless people and immigrants as well ?
- (k) Whether it is the policy of Government to give preference to those who lost their Patta lands at the time of the constitution of any reserve subsequently dereserved in pursuance of the present instructions on Land Settlement Policy ?
- (l) If so, why settlement was refused to the original Pattadars and their kinsmen long since living in the closest contiguity to the Reserve itself ?
- (m) Whether it is a fact that the said Reserve is very close to the immigrants of Bardua-Barbheti and about a mile off from the Assamese Basti of that village and whether some Assamese land owning people of that village have got settlement in that Reserve again ?
- (n) Whether it is a fact that in such dereserved areas within purely immigrant villages of (i) Hatijujua, Mouza Hatichung, (ii) Singiathar, Mouza Juria, (iii) Shingia, Mouza Juria and (iv) Laloongaon, Mouza Juria, the Assamese people have also been allowed settlement ?
- (o) If so, why and on what principle ?

*Speech not corrected.

- (p) If the reply to Question No. (n) above be in the affirmative, why the landless immigrants so applying for lands in Bardua-Barbheti were not allowed settlement there ?
- (q) Why in smaller areas of dereserved lands within purely immigrant villages, Assamese land owning speculators are allowed settlement ?
- (r) In how many villages grazing reserves subsequently dereserved within Assamese villages, the immigrants have been allowed settlement within the Sadar or Dhing circle and who are they ?
- (s) Whether Government propose to obtain a trace map of all those four Reserves together with the list of surrounding Pattadars contiguous to their boundaries only and state the names of Assamese allottees in each case together with the areas they previously held in other villages ?
- (t) Whether Government propose to issue fresh instructions to the Deputy Commissioner of Nowgong to cancel all new allotments made with the Assamese or immigrants who hold sufficient lands elsewhere either in their own names or in the names of their fathers and in case of dereservation, direct that in purely immigrant villages or in villages predominantly inhabited by immigrants no settlements be allowed with the Assamese as against the better and prior claims of just neighbouring landless immigrants ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

30.(a)—In 1929-30.

(b)—A few annual leases covering an area of 5B-3K-17L in all were cancelled as they were issued by mistake at the time of resettlement.

(c)—No.

(d)—Yes, but they did not apply till after the whole area had been settled.

(e)—No.

(f)—Because they did not apply in time. Their subsequent appeal to the Revenue Tribunal was also rejected.

(g) & (h)—The following persons got settlement :—

1. Dhani Ram Kalita, S/o Gender.
2. Padma Kanta Kalita, S/o Gender.
3. Sukon Koch, S/o Dhani.
4. Jitendra Deba Mohanta, S/o Laba Chandra.
5. Dehiram Koch, S/o Moni.
6. Bhogeswar Koch, S/o Habiram.
7. Kota Koch, S/o Rampuria.
8. Konpai Koch, S/o Beshoia.
9. Deopora Koch, S/o Bhodai.
10. Haranath Koch, S/o Poonaram.
11. Gambhir Koch, S/o Lachan.
12. Cheniram Koch, S/o Moni.
13. Lombhoram Koch, S/o Padram.
14. Bhalan Koch, S/o Dukhi.
15. Haladhor Koch, S/o Beshai.

(i)—Government's information is that the allottees were either landless or had insufficient land and they were not speculators.

(j)—Does not arise.

(k)—Not, if they do not apply in time.

(l)—Does not arise.

(m)—It is near the houses of immigrants of this village and one quarter of a mile from the Assamese houses

(n)—Government are prepared to accept the hon. Member's statement.

(o)—For the simple reason that they applied too late.

(p) & (q)—Government do not admit that settlement has been made with Assamese land owning speculators.

(r) & (s)—Government have no information and do not propose to ask the local Officers to undertake a task of which the results would be incommensurate with the labour involved.

(t)—Government do not propose to ask the Deputy Commissioner to cancel the settlements made by him. The power of settlement has been vested in Deputy Commissioners and appeal from their orders lies not to Government but to the Tribunal.

Re Supply of Food-stuffs in Rationed Areas

Srijut SIDDHI NATH SARMA asked :

31. (a) Is it a fact that only one 'powa' of sugar is given per adult per week in rationed areas ?

(b) If not, what is the ration per adult sanctioned ?

(c) Is it a fact that in the moffusil, sugar is almost unavailable ?

(d) Is it a fact that extra one 'powa' of Gur is also given in the rationed areas in lieu of sugar ?

(e) Are Government aware that Gur is not generally available in the Province and whatever is available is not fit for human consumption ?

(f) Do Government propose to take necessary steps so that the most essential foodstuffs for adult, and children particularly, are made available immediately ?

32. (a) Is it a fact that not even a 'powa' of salt has been made available in some of the moffusil areas although the ration of salt per head per month allowed is stated to be half seer ?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state what steps they propose to take to improve the position in this matter in the moffusil ?

33. (a) Are Government aware that the Dal supplied by the rationed shops in the Province are generally unfit for human consumption ?

(b) If so, what steps Government have taken or propose to take to supply better quality of Dal to the public at controlled rates ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

31. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Does not arise.

(c)—Sugar is supplied to Thana and Circle Headquarters, Trading Centres, etc., but in a limited quantity.

(d)—Not so ; there is no fixed unit value for Gur. It is issued to consumers according to the stock position at any particular time but usually it is double the quantity of Sugar ration allowed.

(e)—Government do not think so.

(f)—Yes ; Government are doing all that is possible.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : With regard to reply to Question No.31 (a), do not Government consider that allotment of one 'powa' of sugar is a very poor quantity ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Yes, I agree, Sir. Our issue of sugar is limited by the stock that we have been given.

Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN : Are Government aware that the quantity of sugar has been reduced to half a 'powa' at Gauhati ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : As I mentioned just now, the issue of sugar is dependent upon the stock. I am sorry to inform the House that the Government of India wanted to reduce our sugar quantity in view of the fact, that the sugarcane crop is less by 25 per cent. than last year. We made vigorous protests to the Government of India and as a result of which they had been pleased not to reduce our quota. Those hon. Members, who have gone through the press reports recently, will find that there has been a very big cut in the quota, given to our neighbouring Province of Bengal. But those factories from which our sugar comes are situated by the side of the Oudh and Tirhut Railway and it is very difficult to get proper transport by this railway. When I was in Delhi in January last, I was

told by no less a person than the Hon'ble Sir Edward Benthall, the Member in-charge of War Transport Department, that normally the number of wagons in the Oudh and Tirhut Railway was 16 thousand but at present it is only 13 thousand and therefore there has been very great difficulty in securing transport for our sugar.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Is it not a fact, Sir, that Government keep a stock of sugar for three months?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir, we have not preserved sugar for three months but we tried to keep as much sugar as is possible and at one time we had a stock for two months.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Do we understand that there is no sugar in stock at present?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No Sir, but a very small stock is in the Province.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Is it not possible, Sir, that our Government should try to import sugar from such factories as will be easily accessible by steamer or railway?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We have done our level best, Sir. Formerly we were allotted only one factory from which we had to bring our sugar. As I already mentioned, last year, that that factory was burnt down to ashes and the Province went without sugar. Then we approached the Government of India and they allotted seven factories from which to get our sugar. We have again requested the Government of India pointing out our difficulty about transport that only one factory is on the broad gauge line and the others on the narrow gauge line.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Is it not a fact, Sir, that the supply of sugar has been stopped in the rural areas?

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

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Does it not presuppose from the answer, that sugar is supplied to Thana and trading centre etc. on a very limited quantity?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The Question on this subject is coming up before the House. If I remember aright, this Question has been asked by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan and I will be replying to it in a day or two.

Speaking from memory, I can say that about 10,000 maunds are issued to the urban areas and about 16,000 maunds are issued to the rural areas per month.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it not a fact, Sir, that in all the subdivisions in the district of Sylhet, the supply of sugar has been very little from 1st of January, 1945?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir. This is not a fact. We issued, as I stated, about 3/5ths to the rural areas and only 2/5ths to the urban areas. If the local Officers have stopped issuing any to the interior villages, I am not aware of that, but as I have already replied that supply of sugar to Thanas and Circle headquarters and trading centres has been limited on account of serious shortage.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Is it not a fact that the Central Government have passed orders to the effect that no sugar would be supplied to rural areas from 1st of January, 1945?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir, not to my knowledge.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: In view of the reply given by the Hon'ble Premier, may I take it that Government will issue a general circular to each of the Subdivisional Authorities to distribute the fixed quota of sugar to rural areas?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If I am definitely told by the hon. Member that Subdivisional Authorities are not issuing any sugar to rural areas, then the question of issuing circular will arise.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Sir, in our Food Committee meeting, the Chairman told us that the Central Government issued instructions to the Provincial Government prohibiting supply of sugar to rural areas. Is this a fact, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have already stated that I am not aware that such a letter was issued by the Central Government to the Provincial Government.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

32. (a) & (b)—It was so some time back, but the salt position is now much improved and the *per capita* allotment has been increased to half a seer per month everywhere.

33. (a) & (b)—Government find the Dal supplied by them fit for human consumption. Strict instructions have been issued to Government agents to issue good stuffs only. Rates have all along been within control.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: May we know, Sir, when these instructions were issued to Government agencies?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Last year, Sir, notably in the Dibrugarh subdivision where I was present, my hon. Friend Srijut Lakshesvar Borooh represented the case to me and we ordered that all bad stuffs should be disqualified and not issued for human consumption.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: Did Government make any arrangement to see that only good stuffs are sold?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We have our officers to see that only good stuffs are sold.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: Are those officers also the agents who are responsible for selling inferior stuffs?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir. These are Government officials.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: Are Government aware that at least at Gauhati the licensed shops are selling two kinds of *dal*; the one of better quality, is sold at a higher rate than the other which is of inferior quality?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir, Government have no information.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: Will Government be pleased to make an enquiry into this matter?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Government are only issuing one quality of *dal*.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: Then how can those licensed shops of Gauhati, sell two kinds of *dal* at different prices?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: This is not seeking information from Government.

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: Will Government be pleased to verify my statement and to see that only one kind of *dal* is sold at controlled rate?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I know what my hon. Friend is referring to. I have drafted reply to some Questions on the report of the Deputy Commissioner, Gauhati. What happened in Gauhati is that some private dealers brought some good *dal* at a much higher rate than what is prevailing now about Government *dal*. The Deputy Commissioner, on receipt of petition, after looking into the invoices and the incidental expenses that were incurred by the party in bringing this *dal*, has allowed them to sell at a higher price, *i. e.*, Rs. 34 per maund, and some of the retail shopkeepers might have bought that good stuff at a much higher price and accordingly charged higher price.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Sir, is it a fact that the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet compelled people to take damaged *dal* when they came to take rice, sugar and salt?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir. A set of Questions has already been tabled and I am going to reply to them. I

also find it is stated that Mr. Puri, the then Deputy Commissioner, is supposed to have stated before a Press Conference in the same vein. In his report to Government he mentions that the orders he passed were to the effect that the purchasers should not be allowed to take only two qualities of *Dal* neglecting the other two qualities. Government have stocked *Masur*, *Mug*, *Arahar* and *Khesari*. Therefore, he ordered that anyone who came to purchase *Dal* should have to take all the four kinds of *Dal*.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Will Government be pleased to issue a circular letter to all the Subdivisional Officers that they should not compel any purchaser to purchase damaged *Dal* while he comes to purchase salt, sugar or rice?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The authority who is supposed to have passed that order denies the passing of such an order. All he circularised was that the customers should not be allowed to take only two kinds of *Dal*, i. e., *Mug* and *Masur* but the other two qualities as well, i. e., *Khesari* and *Arahar* should be also taken.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it not a fact that at Habiganj there was a big public meeting which adopted a resolution condemning Government for forcing the people to take damaged *Dal* which was not even fit for consumption by cattle, and to this effect Government have taken no action up till now?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: This is entirely a new Question, Sir.

Silting up of Juri River

Mr. W. D. RUTHERFURD asked:

34. (a) Are Government aware that the Juri River has now been silted up in its passage through the Hakaluki Haor?

(b) Are Government aware that in consequence thereof country boat traffic was brought to a standstill over long periods during the past cold weather months?

(c) If the replies to Questions Nos. 34 (a) and 34 (b) above are in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state what steps they have taken till now or propose to take to remove the silt?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied:

34. (a)—Yes.

(b)—They are prepared to accept the hon. Member's statement to this effect.

(c)—The problem is not a new one and the silting up has been going on for many years. It was hoped that the Embankment and Drainage Division would be able to take up a survey of the area with a view to suggest a solution but at present they have not got sufficient staff (which is difficult to recruit nowadays) to cope with a survey of the magnitude involved. It is therefore feared that the question will have to wait till the end of the War.

Mr. W. D. RUTHERFURD: Do Government realise that owing to the extreme difficulty in obtaining sufficient railway wagons for the movement of tea, food stuffs and other agricultural produce, Industry must now rely on country boat traffic to a larger extent than ever before? This matter is such that it cannot wait till the end of the war.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: The Government admit the insinuation stated in the hon. Member's Question but they are helpless.

Mr. W. D. RUTHERFURD: I am not satisfied with the answer and I do not think that the matter is receiving sufficient attention of Government. I would ask Government to examine this question and see that something is done.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: In this respect, Sir, I may state that an American erosion expert is being deputed by the Government of India who is shortly expected here and we shall then place all our erosion problems which are inter-linked with silting, before him and see what could be done. The Government have taken the problem of erosion as one of the most important post-war reconstruction schemes.

Land Revenue remission in the Assam Valley

Srijut BELIRAM DAS asked :

35. (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to a petition lately submitted by the Rayat Sabha of Kurua in Mangaldai subdivision for remission of land revenue this year ?

(b) Are Government aware that there has been 90 per cent. crop failure at Kurua this year ?

(c) Do Government propose to enquire into the matter and grant the necessary remission of land revenue as prayed for by that Sabha ?

36. (a) Are Government aware that there has been at least 50 per cent. failure of paddy crop this year in the Assam Valley districts ?

(b) If so, what are the reasons therefor ?

(c) Is it a fact that the price of paddy has gone down considerably this year in the Assam Valley ?

(d) If the reply to Question No. 36 (a) above is in the affirmative, do Government propose to grant land revenue remission to the cultivators of that Valley ?

(e) If so, to what extent ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

35. (a)—No such petition has been received by Government.

(b)—No.

(c)—Government will draw the attention of the Deputy Commissioner to the allegation, which, if true, will entitle the villagers to remission of land revenue under the ordinary rules. The sanction of Government is not required unless the figure exceeds Rs.10,000.

36. (a)—No. The latest forecast of the Director of Agriculture anticipates a crop of nearly 80 per cent. of normal in the Assam Valley.

(b)—Does not arise.

(c)—Yes, but it is still above the price (about Rs.3-8-0) prevalent at the Resettlement.

(d) & (e)—Do not arise.

Srijut KAMESWAR DAS : Is it a fact that the prices of other essential articles used by the cultivators were taken into consideration while making assessment of revenue at the time of resettlement ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : Yes, Sir.

Srijut KAMESWAR DAS : Is it not a fact that the prices of those very necessary articles now-a-days are much higher than what they were at the time of resettlement ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : Yes, Sir, they are proportionately higher.

Srijut BELIRAM DAS : With reference to reply to Question No. 36 (C), Sir, may I know from the Hon'ble Minister whether he admits or not that though there has been a little rise in the price of paddy over Rs. 3-8-0, which was the price at the time of resettlement, there has been considerable rise in the prices of the other necessities of the people, and that what little surplus they are getting from paddy, is not sufficient to meet their other demands ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : I have admitted that the prices of those articles have soared higher considerably in proportion to the rise in price of paddy.

Budget Discussion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : There may be some Members who may take part in the Budget discussion today. Moreover the Hon'ble Finance Minister and the Hon'ble Premier will require considerable time to reply to the points raised in the Budget discussion. Therefore, I do not propose to take up the consideration of the outstanding Adjournment Motions today. They will stand over for the next available day.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Budget as a whole furnishes one more reminder that a foreign Government is, at best, an expensive

luxury and, at worst, a system of semi-slavery. That is the real outstanding point that arises from the Budget whenever I pass through one page after another, I feel that I would have done vastly different things than are being done in this Budget. But that is only an ideal. Being a realist, I am prepared to forget for the time being these aspects of the case.

The financial situation, as revealed in the Budget, is somewhat more unfortunate than it was last year. The Province has reached the maximum limit of sacrifice which it could make. Think of what has happened; in spite of increased receipts, you still find the need for heavy borrowing and for carrying deficits to indebtedness. I have in my hand a statement which shows that between 1937 and the present (1944-45) Budget, our revenue has risen from Rs.2,84,74,000 to Rs.5,80,98,000. In spite of this heavy increase it has to face a deficit, and in order to make both ends meet, it has had to borrow, and it is largely due to inflation which has been allowed to run riot—that prices rose continuously and the market was all the time against it in making all the purchases that it has to make for the conduct of the war, etc. The India Government has sown the wind and we are reaping the whirlwind. Even now, it is not too late to mend. It is no use realising the inflation menace when week after week, the currency and the sterling balances are mounting up until the notes in circulation reached over 900 crores. While delivering my Budget speech last year, I dealt with the matter in detail; so I do not propose to dilate further on this point. The Central Government is taxing the people in various ways and except the income-tax the whole of the recent taxation is an indirect taxation, falling on the weak shoulders of the poorer classes, and you know, Sir, how retrograde indirect taxation is. The rich do not suffer much as still to-day in the sixth year of the War, I find frivolous, boisterous and wasteful extravagance against the background of the poverty, and wretchedness, disease, starvation and death among 95 per cent. of my people. This is not a good achievement. What a horrible thing it is to tax even tobacco, tea, and betelnut. All these have been foisted on those least able to bear them. The people are bleeding white. The position is well known to all concerned. So, the knowledge has come, but wisdom lingers, as their taxation policy seems to be based on the presumption that we were prosperous.

Now, Sir, I shall try to touch very briefly all the points raised by the Hon'ble Finance Minister in his Budget speech, and justify the remarks I have made.

Sir, at the very beginning of his speech, the Hon'ble Finance Minister apologised for the departure from the usual procedure of sending the Budget and the Budget Memorandum to us, approximately three weeks before the Budget Session begins. He had to choose between sending out an inadequately checked financial statement in which there might have been numerous printing or arithmetical errors, and waiting until we arrived in Shillong and were presented with a Budget with the normal adequate amount of checking, and he thought that it would be wiser to adopt the latter course. But, Sir, this explanation is self-condemned, because of the correction slip to Detailed Estimates and Demands for Grants which has been supplied to us along with the Budget. In about 30 pages there are 50 mistakes according to the Correction Slip.

Sir, the estimated figures vary so much with the actuals as seen in the past that it seems to me to be of very little use to discuss matters relying on these estimated figures and the items where the largest amounts have been spent and will be spent. I mean, Grants Nos.33 and 34 have been dealt with in the Budget in such big round figures that they leave no scope for any fair discussion.

The reason given is that the figures for these, however, were only available at much later date in the year and cannot well be incorporated in the Budget accounts.

It is really surprising that the hon. Members are satisfied with this explanation and do not raise a voice of protest against this high-handed action of the Government.

The Post-War Reconstruction Fund, which was inaugurated in the current year with great prospects, has been starved in the Budget, and I do not know whether it is due to over-feeding in the current year. Let us live in hopes. As compared with the revised estimates for the current year a drop of income to the extent of Rs.42,85,000

is anticipated in 1945-46 which is principally due to a fall of Rs.34,04,000 under the head income-tax alone. Since the Tea Industry is making poor profits, may I ask the Government in all seriousness whether they have ever raised their little finger to help this Industry in solving its problem? The difficulty of chests, coal, manure, transport, etc., is so very acute that some small concerns are being ruined. The price of export quota right has become practically nil in comparison with previous years, but no assistance has ever been rendered in any shape by this Government. The Government will enter into the accounts of the concerns with magnifying eye-glasses only to collect tax, but will not help them at the time of their difficulty. It is a matter of disgrace that the Government are not trying to help the Industry to make profits and thereby to augment their own resources. There will be a drop in the revenue from Forests as well, amounting to about Rs.3 00,000 ; but I am not at all sorry, Sir, for this fall, because I do not consider it as revenue, but I take it to be capital. Nothing practically has been provided for extension of forests.

Rupees 51 lakhs have been provided for Grow-More-Food Campaign. The food will not grow on paper only. Will Government be pleased to enlighten the House as to their scheme of this campaign, whether they have got sufficient qualified men to utilise the money in the right direction and to make the Campaign a real success? What arrangements they have made for manure and cattle and agricultural implements.

In General Administration of the Province, the Government are facing with new problems of meeting innumerable new needs in connection with food and other control. The difficult man-power problem is troubling the Government most. But thank God, our Government have found out the solution and have already begun to solve the problem by appointing Military men. Certainly how can our Government forget the services of those in the Military service. They have to bear in mind the need for granting adequate opportunity for permanent service to those who have joined the forces during the war, or who have done similar service in Civil Defence and the like. They are already in correspondence with the India Government regarding their future policy of recruitment to the Imperial and Provincial Services—by the grace of God, fifteen gallant warriors have already volunteered their services from the commissioned ranks and have been obtained to strengthen the administration.

How fortunate we are? The rejected men of the Army who are of no use to them are being thrown over our heads. Had these men been of use to the army certainly, they would not have been given to us.

I can anticipate that the cadre of Indian Civil Service and Indian Police will be increased, districts will be divided, there will be Additional Subdivisional Officers, both Executive and Police to provide the unfit and rejected men of the commissioned ranks. There should be a preparation from now for another big war, probably with Soviet Russia. So, there should be more Police control in the Province. To keep the people of this country under full control, Government should keep the control of everything in their hands even after the war, so that all the resources of India may be utilised during the future war which is inevitable. This is the post-war plan! The new officers from Military service will be employed to keep the existing Indian officers in the background along with the so-called Ministers. These Military men will be only of one use, namely of spying, when the war is still going on. Why these men should be discharged if they be of any real use to the Military Authorities? Sir, in this connection may I take the liberty of asking one pertinent question to the Hon'ble Prime Minister who is in charge of General Administration? How many of the ten officers so far allocated to duty in Assam are Indians?

Sir, the Budget speech of the Hon'ble Minister is most depressing. There is no sign of any encouragement any where. It is a completely flat one. For taking advantage from "good times" as in these recent years, such improvement scheme as a training class for the subordinate staff and the development of communications for the purpose of tapping the remoter areas of forests must be undertaken while the Province can afford them. The above, I have quoted from the speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister. Sir, he is eagerly waiting and wishing for good times as in these

recent years. Bravo, good times indeed, when people are fighting for their very existence, when food situation is grave when there is practically a cloth famine, and daily necessities of life are becoming scarce and going beyond the reach of 95 per cent. people and when medicines are not available! In one word, the situation is chaotic but our Government term it as 'good times'! Sir, I know that it is a very good time for hoarders and profiteers, burglars and freebooters; but how a popular Government can call the present years as good ones, I fail to understand. In my opinion these years are the most trying and difficult in the memory of the living generation.

Sir, only the Education Department has received some consideration at the hands of the Government. We expected much more in the way of redressing the grievances of the Assistant Lecturers and Lecturers and School Teachers. I shall purposely refrain from making any more remark in my present speech about the partial policy of the Government and I shall take my chance at the time of voting for Demands. Sir, I am sorry to remark that my confidence in the Education Minister, about whom I always speak very highly, has been shaken. So, before I think very deeply, I hesitate to pass any remark at present.

Now what about Industry and Co-operative Departments? They are where they were. No sign of any improvement—our Government do not feel the necessity of any more improvements in these departments, it seems.

Turn to the Medical, Public Health and Veterinary Departments. You will find the same stagnant position there also. Probably the answer will be 'War'. What will be the good of opening dispensaries, if there be no medicine to serve? What Government has done to improve the position of medicines in the Province? What Government dispensaries are going without medicines. Due to scarcity of quinine, Government of India have supplied quinine substitute which is quite satisfactory for making money and bluffing the dumb mass of the country but of very little use for the diseased millions. About the activities of the Public Works Department, so far the civil population is concerned, the less said, the better. The roads in the Surma Valley are as bad as ever. Many hon. Members have already spoken about the most disgraceful condition of the Municipal and Local Board roads not only this Session, but also on many other previous occasions; but to what effect, we all know. Sir, during the last eight years, we have given many suggestions but alas! who cares to hear them? Our Government will follow the same old route; they are determined not to budge an inch. We may cry but what does it matter? Many things will be there in the paper but not to the real benefit of the people. The winning of this war is our first task, but it must not exclude preparation for the future.

There are great economic possibilities in Assam. There are mineral resources still undeveloped, there is abundant labour. There are almost unlimited markets, internal and external, for her produce.

Such are her main economic assets. She has also many economic difficulties and disabilities—the small percentage of educated persons, the low standard of health services, the poor conditions in which the greater part both of agricultural and labouring population live, the flagrant contrast between wealth and poverty, the inadequacy of communications. Government's task is to use rightly and to the best advantage, of the Province's great economic assets, not to increase the wealth of the few, but to raise the many from poverty to a decent standard of comfort. A hard task indeed, but a noble task, which calls for all for a spirit of co-operation, a spirit of hope, a spirit of sacrifice. But what our Government is doing? Where is the great aim of planning for economic, political and social development which will raise our standard of living—where is the desire of lifting the poor men from poverty to security, from ill health to vigour, from ignorance to knowledge? On the other hand, what do we find? We find that we are still looking towards the bullock-cart for our speed when the whole world is aspiring at least for Jeeps. Assam has got great undeveloped resources in agriculture and industry. With improvement in methods of irrigation and in fertilization, we can increase our food supply greatly both in quality and in quantity. We can much improve the breed of cattle. But our Government has no time to spare for all these. They are busy otherwise. Sir, during the last November Session, I spoke about

the corruption prevailing in this Province but instead of checking it, it has been allowed to spread, like wild fire. Corruption is rampant in this unfortunate Province.

My hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker has very ably put this matter in his speech. I am afraid, I cannot certainly put it in a language as his, but my feeling is just the same.

Sir, the other day, the Hon'ble Prime Minister said that convenience is writ large in my social and political life, and, in support of his remark, he said that though I am the *de facto* leader of the Independent Group, it was convenient for me to remain *de facto* and not to claim *de jure* status. In my criticisms of Government and the persistent voting in the Opposition lobby, I have out-Congressed the Congress Leaders and yet it is convenient for me not to adopt the Congress label, and moreover he thought, at night, whether he would confer upon me the title of M.C. but he refrained from doing so because it would mean Military Cross, whereas he would desire to mean 'master of convenience'. Sir, you as well as other hon. Members of this House very well know whether the word convenience or consistency should be rightly used and is appropriate in my case. At heart, he meant 'master of consistency' but for his convenience he used the word 'convenience'. Sir, I am not going to touch his social life following his line as this is not the place for discussing social or private life of an hon. Member but I hope he will not mind if I touch his political life. Sir, as soon as I heard the Hon'ble Premier's good wishes of conferring on me the title of M.C. I thought, of course, not at night, but then and there, that how happy I would have been if I were in a position to confer upon the Hon'ble Prime Minister the title of V.C. Sir, after that discussion this is the first opportunity that I have got and I beg to offer the V.C. to him, but like his 'M.C', my 'V.C' also will not mean Victoria Cross, the highest decoration of the Military, but it will mean "Veteran Corrupter". What does it matter though he is not corrupted, but the whole administration has been termed corrupted by the leader of the European Group, who always support the Government; one can well understand how desperate Mr. Whittaker was when he uttered all these words. Sir, I sent notice of a Motion for forming an enquiry committee to enquire into the alleged corruption prevailing amongst the Government employees but the Hon'ble Premier refused his consent. Why? Why this shyness? Other Governments have engaged men for this purpose. I understand that men have been brought from Scotland Yard even by the Government of India. A veteran administrator like our Premier should not be afraid of all these. This is a demand of the country, and I hope, he will form a committee consisting of the Members of the Legislatures soon and prove his *bona fide* and keep his good name in tact. If he fails to do so, our H. P. M. even after he quits his office will be called H. P. M. which will then mean, not of course, the Hon'ble Prime Minister, but 'High Priest of Machiavellianism'; now it is up to him whether he would like to retain this title or shake it off.

Now, Sir, again turning to the Budget proper, I feel, I shall be failing in my duty, if I do not remark about the lump provisions made so far as the Civil Defence or Self-Defence Department, Motor Transport Organisation, Grain Storage Scheme, Standard Cloth Scheme, other miscellaneous schemes, Civil Canteen Stores and Rationing Scheme, are concerned. My hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker remarked that no balance sheet or profit and loss account has been published so far as the Grain Storage Scheme and the Motor Transport Organisation are concerned. But, Sir, I do not say that they have not been published; they have been published upto 31st March, 1943 and not after that. Now, though they have been published up to the 31st March, 1943, they are not in proper form and they are not the true picture of the situation. A few lines from the audit report will bear me out:—

"Motor Transport Organisation.—Towards the close of the year a personal ledger account was specially opened for his (Controller's) operations. During the period beginning from October, 1942 and ending 31st March, 1943, a total sum of Rs. 7,94,151 was disbursed to the Provincial Motor Transport Controller. In addition, a sum of Rs. 13,432 representing receipts and recoveries on various accounts was received and retained by him. The balance at the credit of the personal ledger account on the 31st March, 1943, was Rs.10,000 only. Besides, he has a balance on Rs. 40,297 in a current account with the Imperial Bank of India, Shillong Branch. The local audit of the

accounts has revealed that the net result of the working of the Scheme in the year 1942-43 was a loss of Rs. 23,735."

But, Sir, I understand that the loss is much more than that, which fact was revealed in the Public Accounts Committee meeting.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member has already spoken for more than 25 minutes.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: You will be pleased to give me some more time, Sir, because I am speaking on two principal subjects and I have already foregone my claim as regards discussion of the political situation. I shall try to finish as quickly as I can.

Sir, in this connection, I venture to challenge the statement of the Hon'ble Finance Minister that there will be a profit in the current year. The Organisation is on the verge of bankruptcy and I have got a shrewd suspicion in my mind that the Government will soon be compelled to inform the House that they are intending to liquidate the Organisation. Unless it is properly handled, they are sure to do so. If proper accounting is done, there will certainly be a loss. Sir, I understand that the Stores accounts are in arrear for a long time. The correctness of the balance-sheet has been challenged by the Comptroller's office so far as last year is concerned.

Out of 580 vehicles (all new) only about 250 are in running order, the rest are all shut down. And out of about 50 reconditioned vehicles about 20 are in running condition. The overhead expenditure is very heavy. A staff for about 600 vehicles is being maintained, when about half the vehicles are running. There is no well-equipped and well organised workshop in any area or even in the centre. Most of the vehicles are very badly damaged due to lack of maintenance and facilities for repairing. These ought to have been the first thing in an organisation like this. About Rs. 12 lakhs worth of spare parts were purchased in course of a year but still this is the state of affairs. Fat-salaried Army officers and B. O. R.s have been employed; what improvement have they made? It is alleged that parts and petrol have been sold in the blackmarket. We want to know what is the true state of things? What is the opinion of the present Director about the position of the Organisation? What is the Hon'ble Finance Minister will give a reply to my queries.

Grain Storage.—The accounts relating to the Scheme have been audited locally. It was noticed that in some places where distribution was done by Government officials, accounts were not maintained satisfactorily and stock-taking was not done. The closing stock has been based on book balances as it was not possible to make physical verification of stocks. It has not been possible for the Supply Secretary to compile any stores account for the period ending the 31st March, 1943. Now, it is up to the hon. Members to judge how things are going on.

As regards Civil Defence Department, I can boldly say that there is no justification for making any provision in the Budget. It will be simply a waste of money. The Finance Minister is the trustee of the rate-payers, and I hope, he would not betray the trust. The liabilities of this Government with regard to State Provident Fund will be Rs. 1,22,32,000 on the 1st of April, 1945, over and above the present deficit Budget, debts and liabilities.

Sir, now I shall touch two more points and finish my speech. I shall deal with transport first and then with the political situation. The transport difficulty is the main difficulty of this Province and I would urge upon Government to tackle this problem with more earnestness and boldness. The condition of railway transport, steamer transport, and motor transport should be improved without any further delay. The Motor Transport Organisation, which was started with the definite understanding of helping the civil population, should now be used for that purpose alone. The Government should implement their promises henceforth. The Central Government should be moved for increasing Assam's quota of wagons, not in a half-hearted way, but with a definite demand.

Sir, Friends from the European Group desired that the Members of the Local Advisory Committee of the Railway, should give some idea about their activities in the Committee meetings, and you also, Sir, opined that they might say something in their

Budget speeches. Accordingly, I am placing before the House some of the urgent and important proposals which I placed before the meetings. But before I do that, I think it will be wise on my part to enlighten the hon. Members about the scope of our activities in the meetings.

The Local Advisory Committee has been constituted with a view to assisting the Agent of the Bengal and Assam Railway to obtain fuller information as to the requirements of the Commerce of Calcutta and of the districts served by the Bengal and Assam Railway system, and generally to bring the Railway Administration and its constituents into closer touch with each other. It is hoped thus to assist the Railway in extending and improving the facilities and convenience offered to the public in overcoming the difficulties which may arise in connection with traffic, in avoiding delay and lengthy correspondence and in introducing prompt remedial measures.

The function of the Committee will be thoroughly advisory. The subjects which will be ordinarily placed before the Committee by the Agent are as follows:—

- (a) alterations of time tables and passenger services ;
- (b) alterations of rates and fares and changes of goods classifications ;
- (c) proposals in regard to new projects and extensions ;
- (d) proposals in regard to new rolling stock ; and
- (e) any matter affecting general public interest or convenience. Questions of personnels, discipline and appointments will not be brought before the Committee.

Subject to this condition, any member may suggest a subject for discussion, but the Agent may rule out any subject for reasons which will be explained at the first meeting after the ruling has been given.

Now, I am giving below a list of the important proposals that I brought before the Committee and which were admitted and discussed.

1. That no train should run without light in any compartment as this causes great inconvenience to the passengers and loss of property.
2. That through carriages should run between Sylhet and Jagannathganj Ghat.
3. That arrangement should be made to keep compartments and bath rooms properly cleaned and disinfected and that bath room reservoirs be always filled with good and sufficient water.
4. That arrangements should be made to provide all the bath room doors with bolts or locks from inside and outside.
5. That all Upper Class berths should be provided with cushions and that the condition of all outlet pipes of all washing basins as well as corks, in the bath rooms should be checked and put into working order at all terminal stations before the train starts.
6. That porters of all big and crowded stations should be provided with number plates for tying in arm so that they are easily visible.
7. That arrangement should be made so that the trains may run to time.
8. That arrangements should be made to start the evening train from Sylhet at 19 hours instead of at 18 hours to give some time to the passengers from Shillong at Sylhet.
9. That a Restaurant car be provided in the Surma Mail.
10. That electric fans in the E. B. Zone in Upper Class compartments be checked and put into working order at all terminal stations.
11. That a through carriage—Upper, Inter and Third combined—be provided for Sylhet-Chandpur section as before.
12. That arrangements be made to provide more telephone connections with extra staff to attend calls at the enquiry office at Calcutta.
13. That steps be taken to ensure that the reservation cards are not removed by unauthorised persons and that a list of reserved accommodation be kept by the guards in charge of the train and separate compartments should be reserved for civil and military passengers.
14. That arrangements be made to stop mail trains at Basugaon station and to provide waiting rooms for all classes of passengers there.

15. That steps be taken to lease out temporarily the surplus railway land for growing more food-stuffs in connection with the "Grow More-Food-Campaign".

16. That steps be taken to provide suitable accommodation in trains and steamers for those passengers who reserve their berths in time.

17. That more Inter and Third class accommodation be provided for ladies in the Surma Mail over the E. B. Zone.

18. That the conditions of lights be checked and put into working order at all terminal stations.

19. That number of carriages be increased for adequate accommodation of civil passengers, if number of trains cannot be increased.

I do not like to add to the number by citing any more, but I can say this much that about 50 per cent. of my proposals were not even included in the agenda and that about 70 per cent were not given effect to on the plea of war emergency; though it has been clearly stated in the objects that to avoid lengthy correspondence, the Committee has been formed, but still in a large number of cases I was informed that the Head of the Department concerned had been requested to deal with the particular subject in direct communication with me and hence the subjects were not being included in the agenda.

Now, Sir, our scope being limited and the position being advisory, the House can well understand, how a single representative in the Eastern Bengal Zone is handicapped. I think, it will be wise on the part of the Government to sincerely try to increase the number of representatives in the Eastern Bengal Zone.

Lastly, Sir, in this connection I beg to say that formerly there was a meeting in practically every month, but since 1944 meetings are held once in three months, and I have attended all the meetings except one, which I could not attend as I was engaged here in the Public Accounts Committee meeting.

Now, Sir, I shall deal with the political situation in the Province. According to the figures, supplied by the Hon'ble Finance Minister in his Budget speech, the number of security prisoners by the middle of February, 1945, is 95 and that of persons under restriction of any kind is 216. The allowances granted to the families of detainees despite (the word despite is underlined) the reduced numbers now amount to Rs. 1,575 per mensem and a total of Rs. 231 per mensem is also given to maintain those restrictees and their families in whose case it is shown that the restrictions interfere with their livelihood. The Japanese menace is no more in the Province. There is no agitation of any kind anywhere. There is no subversive movements of any nature. The Allied Army are re-occupying Burma gradually. Mahatma Gandhi has declared that he has no intention of launching any movement in the nature of civil disobedience. But still, we find that our Government have kept so many persons in jails and under restrictions. The Government know the feeling of the public in this respect. They have received dozens of telegrams, praying for the release of political prisoners even in the course of the last two or three days. I would request the Government with all sincerity and humbleness to release the political prisoners and remove all restrictions on them immediately and thus to respect the unanimous desire of the people of the Province. Sir, some of the political prisoners have already lost their health for ever; some are seriously ill in jails. In this connection, I feel it my duty to mention a few names who are groaning behind the prison bars due to ill health. They are:—

Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed,

Srijut Bishnuram Medhi,

Srijut Krishnanath Sarma,

Srijut Omeo Kumar Das,

Srijut Debeswar Sarma, and

Srijut Purna Ch. Sarma—all Members of this hon. House.

Babu Purnendu Sen,

Mr. Tayebullah,

Maulavi Mabarak Ali,

Maulavi Ibrahim Chatuli,

Babu Jatindranath Bhadra,

Babu Nani Gopal Swami,
 Babu Nikunja Behari Goswami,
 Srijut Bhadrakanta Gogoi,
 Srijut Nabakumar Bhattacharjee,
 Srijut Harinarayan Barua,
 Srijut Lila Kanta Bora,
 Srijut Kamal Chandra Mahanta,
 Sri Sri Pitambar Deb Goswami, Garamur Satradhikar,
 Srijut Sarveswar Bordoloi,
 Srijut Bijoy Ch. Bhagabati,
 Srijut Karuna Kanta Gogoi,
 Srijut Rabindra Kakati and several others.

Unless these gentlemen are released soon, they will be all useless and rather a burden on the Province for the rest of their lives. If it is the intention of the Government that everyone should be made permanently invalid in the jails and then released, then, of course, there are reasons for detaining them; otherwise there cannot be any earthly reason for their detention. Sir, I requested a little while ago, to underline the word "despite" used by the Hon'ble Finance Minister, because I would ask you all present here to give your verdict whether the amount of Rs. 1,575 per month as family allowance to 95 security prisoners goes to the credit or discredit of the Government. In my opinion, it adds insult to injury to these unfortunate victims who have been imprisoned for no fault of their own. Why should Government spend good money for nothing for those persons? Let them save it by releasing them. Remove the restrictions on those who are under restriction and save Rs. 231 per month. This money can better be utilised for other purposes? Why this mockery of allowance? Government may take advantage of their position and treat so many human beings in such an inhuman manner. But there is God over-head. Man should be treated like man. There is no credit in ill-treatment. Credit lies in good treatment.

Sir, I shall be failing in my duty, if I do not mention here that, several times, I approached the Hon'ble Prime Minister with some requests regarding the political prisoners and he always gave me a patient hearing and kept my requests to a great extent. Now, I hope he would kindly fulfil the desire of the people; otherwise he will be guilty of slowly and steadily killing these patriots, which position, I believe, he will never agree to accept. It is not that only the prisoners are suffering but their families are being ruined. When a man feels that he has committed no crime and no charge can be formulated against him and he is being detained and put in jail for a long time, the reaction that comes to this man is utter contempt of Government in power and contempt is not merely of the person who is detained but also of his relations and ultimately it affects the whole Province. The whole Province is eagerly looking at the Hon'ble Prime Minister only to see how their prayers for the release of the political prisoners are considered. Again, I appeal to him on behalf of the people of the Province, to release the political prisoners unconditionally and to remove all restrictions imposed on those who have already been released but are under most humiliating conditions, without any further delay. I fervently hope and trust that my prayer will not go in vain and he will surmount all the obstacles that are standing on his way, so long, in giving effect to this just and humanitarian cause.

With these words, Sir, I resume my seat.

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAIN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the year that has passed since we, in this House had the opportunity of discussing our last Budget, had been a year of some of the most portentous events that the people of this Province ever passed through.

My hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker had referred to the epic and successful resistance by the Assam Regiment and the British Troops to the onslaughts of the Japanese forces in the Naga Hills and the Imphal Plain and beyond, little less than a year ago. It is now left for me simply to refer to the tremendous sacrifices that the civilian population of these areas had had to make in casting their weight in battle against our enemies.

But what is going to be their reward of to-day for their trial of yesterday? The air is thick with the unwelcome rumour that the Hills in the border of Assam and Burma together with a portion of re-occupied Northern Burma adjoining these Hill tracts are to constitute a new Frontier Province with the constitutional status of a totally Excluded Area, perhaps as an earnest of a political post-war reconstruction plan. Sir, to me this piece of news seems to be too bad to be true and I hope that, in any case, these dumb tens of thousands, if not millions, of our people may not be driven or condemned into any such bondage in a post-war world of four or more freedoms.

In the event, however, of any such sinister plan materialising, I have no doubt in my mind that it will spread anything but contentment among these simple people who are looking forward to that measure of freedom and responsibility which we in the non-excluded areas are able to enjoy at present. I understand that in a recent conference of the Naga students, they had demanded that the Naga Hills should be brought under the reforms scheme under the Constitution Act.

Sir, so far as this House is concerned, such a dismemberment of this Province's large and strategically important border areas and consequent mutilation of its boundaries is bound to be looked upon with the utmost concern. Such a plan will even operate to prejudice the cause of full freedom which the British have promised us after the war. Besides, such an arrangement will militate against the political aspirations of the protagonists of Hindusthan, Pakistan or separate sovereign Assam, all alike.

Sir, the Hon'ble Finance Minister, in his speech, in idently referred to the definite likelihood of the war receding considerably from our borders. In such a context, I need hardly say that popular opinion in the Province is likely to look with ever greater disfavour any encroachments on the civil liberties of our people. In spite of the Hon'ble Prime Minister's statement, the other day, on the floor of the House, over the Adjournment Motion of my hon. Friend Mr Karuna Sindhu Roy, regarding the Government's gradual release of political prisoners, the glaring fact remains that half a dozen of our hon. Members of this House are still behind the prison bars. In the name of liberty and of fraternity, if I may say so, I strongly urge upon the Government to take up a bold and more liberal policy in this matter.

Sir, coming to another matter of policy hitherto pursued by this Government, I have to impress upon them the imperative necessity of rising up to the occasion by going a little further than what they had decided to do in last January to meet the view point of the indigenous population on the great land settlement problem of the lower districts of the Assam Valley. I do not, however, want to anticipate the discussion over this issue that may be initiated this week-end on the Congress Party's Resolution on Land Settlement. I appeal to the Government to bestow the attention that this question deserves and to see their way to revise and re-adjust their policy accordingly.

Coming now to the Budget itself, I will be failing in my duty, if I do not congratulate the Hon'ble Education Minister for being able to secure for his Department a major share of the total amount to be spent on new schemes for the coming year. I am indeed very happy to find that among other good things, the Government have been able to provide the provincialisation of the Radha Kanta Handique Girls' College at Gauhati. During the Budget Session, last year, I raised this question of provincialisation of this college and as far as I remember, my hon. Friend Mr. Mookerjee raised the question of raising the Lady Keane Girls' Middle English school at Shillong, to a High School status, presumably as a counterblast to my proposal. It is indeed very gratifying to find that the Hon'ble Education Minister could find it possible to accommodate both of us and earn our joint approbation. It is indeed very moderate of us and earn our joint approbation. In these achievements for the Department our new Director of Public Instruction-Lieutenant A. Lais, must have his share of our praise.

Sir, another Department that attracts me is the Agricultural Department. With victory and peace almost within sight, I feel that we, in a pastoral country like our own Province, must seriously take up the task of improved agriculture, intensive and scientific, if we are to survive the war-boom and the immediate post-war boom to be surely followed by post-war slump. To build up a prosperous peasantry, I would urge

upon the Government to establish without avoidable delay an agricultural institution for imparting scientific training and instruction so that we may be able to turn out men who will be able to build up a self-sufficient and rich Assam with the standard of living of her population raised to a reasonable level.

With these few words, Sir, I beg to resume my seat.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Does the Hon'ble the Leader of Opposition want to speak now?

Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: I will speak after the recess, Sir, if I am given time then.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I want that other Members should finish their speeches and the last speech on behalf of the Opposition should be from the hon. Leader of Opposition.

Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: That was exactly what I was thinking but I thought, if the Government was to be given the last two hours, I should take the opportunity now.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEB: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are all very much thankful to my hon. Friend, Mr. Whittaker, for the very able manner in which he has brought to task the Hon'ble Finance Minister for not submitting a proper Profit and Loss Account for the Supply transactions. Crores of rupees are being spent on this head and the Cabinet has no right not to take into its confidence the people's representatives about the actual profit or loss incurred, so far, by these transactions. I submit, Sir, the attitude of the Government in this respect cannot be too severely condemned. The country heard it very recently from Bengal's Finance Minister that the sister Province had to meet a loss of crores of rupees in connection with supply transactions. At page 53 of the Budget Memorandum, Sir, it is stated that the total lag at the end of 1945-46 will stand at Rs. 3,38,92,000. Finding as we have done, Sir, this year, what gulf of difference arises between the budgets and the revised estimates as prepared by this Government, will it be very wrong to suppose that the actual lag at the end of the year may be very much more than what the Hon'ble Finance Minister asks us to believe? And of that lag, who knows what crores we may not have to write off due to stocks being unfit for consumption and prices of commodities having fallen by that time? May we yet have an assurance from the Hon'ble Finance Minister that, in view of the anxiety shown by this hon. House over the actual state of affairs in supply transactions, he will have proper balance sheet prepared immediately for submission to the hon. House latest by the month of June or July?

Sir, the Hon'ble Premier told us, the other day, that the 6 per cent. cess realised on supply transactions had accumulated up till now up to 50 lakhs of rupees, but that the whole amount had to be kept separate from the General Revenues Account of the Province under instructions from the Central Government.

The excuse given was the probability of incurring losses in these transactions due to depreciation of stock and falling of prices. I have not been quite able to understand, Sir, why the Central Government should suppose that the cess, if included in the general revenues of the Province, would not be, later on, available for recovering losses in transactions. I confess, Sir, I suspect foul play on the part of the Central Government in this respect. If the Central Government can interfere in our accounts in this way, is there any guarantee. can the Hon'ble Premier assure us, that the Central Government would not issue an instruction some day, ordering transfer of any profit that may have accrued out of these transactions to their own accounts? If we have the least cause for any such suspicion, I submit, Sir, we should think twice before we let our Supply operations go on the Government's account any further for enabling the Central Government to drain some more wealth out of this Province for its own benefit. I want a clear answer from the Government on this very vital point.

Sir, my hon. Friend, Mr. Whittaker, made some very caustic remarks, the other day, about the corruption prevalent among the Government officials. Sir, corruption is rampant to-day and it cannot be that the Government is not aware of all this. Very recently, Sir, we had it from the Press that an enquiry held by the Central Government revealed that corruption amongst Government officials, particularly in supply transactions

was prevalent in almost all the Provinces. And so far as this Province is concerned, we know, Sir, corruption is going on unchecked even before the very nose of the Hon'ble Ministers. It is a public talk in Shillong, Sir, that the office of the Supply Department is a veritable den of corruption and that in the Motor Transport Office corruption is simply scandalous.

Sir, before the present war came, in our country, corruption amongst Government officials was limited to one or two departments only. Police and the Public Works Departments were suspected of having corrupt officials. But how is it Sir, that all on a sudden, it appears that almost all the Government departments, almost everybody in any important Government position has become corrupt? What is the real cause of such wide spread corruption?

So far as I have been able to understand, the war is primarily responsible for this vice. When the British Government found that they had no support behind their war efforts from the people of India, they decided to purchase this country's support by distributing cheap money and that was the root of all this vice. When the people of India under the leadership of the Indian National Congress refused to lend their support to the cause of England's war, England determined to have that support by corrupting the people. Ministries were offered to minority parties, fat salaries were offered for petty jobs, money was made cheap beyond all imagination, people were impoverished and compelled them to accept jobs under the military. Open loot and corruption was indulged without any check in military projects and supplies. And the only prop of the Britishers in this country, the Government officials were pampered to keep them steady in their position. The Government officials have been allowed to think that the Government of the day exists for the officials only. When the whole country was suffering from shortage of food supply the Government officials had their ration cards promptly prepared and rations most regularly supplied. Now, when the whole country is passing through a cloth famine, the Government officials have already had their own ration cards for cloth. They are to have their canteens at Government cost. The taxpayer, high or low, is nowhere in the scene. Louis, XVI, King of France, used to proclaim "I am the State"—and here in India, the British Government has made its own officials believe that "they are the State". Louis had to pay the supreme penalty. Corrupt officials in India may yet beware.

In the context of this analysis, Sir, I find my hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker has very little cause for making any grievances of the situation obtaining to-day. But what is the remedy? My hon. Friend suggests special C. I. D. I am afraid, Sir, the remedy suggested, may only add one more corrupt section to the already heavy list. The ghost may easily lie within the mustard seed itself. To my mind, Sir, the remedy is a very drastic one, and I am afraid my hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker will not have the courage to agree with me on that solution. The remedy lies in a wholesale change of outlook on life and civilisation, to be accepted first by the Ministers themselves.

If we want to save our nation from the quagmire into which the West has drowned itself and is trying to drag us as well, if we want to get our soul back even at the risk of being laughed at by our Western Friends for the antiquated remedy suggested, we shall have to hold aloft our own ideal of plain living and high thinking, our own ideal of a spiritual order ruling above all man-made laws.

Sir, I am encouraged to speak in this strain to-day, by an observation which our Hon'ble Premier was pleased to make the other day, by an observation which our compulsory and free primary education, the other day, while calculating the cost of pleased to say that for our primary schools, we could do away with chairs and benches and use mats only. I submit, Sir, that was the real Indian way of looking at things and if our Hon'ble Premier will agree to go up to the logical conclusion of that way of looking at things, we could have our country regenerated sooner than many can imagine and save our soul from the clutches of the western civilisation, now doomed to destruction. I submit, Sir, salvation lies only that way. In the name of our civilisation, I appeal to the Hon'ble Premier and his Hon'ble Colleagues to disabuse their minds of all the nonsensical stuff they have been compelled to swallow as taught by the westerners. Let us look at our problems from our own angle of vision.

Sir, by some quarters we are being asked to believe that as soon as the war will stop, we shall find money falling like anything from heaven, and with that money we shall have all our post-war reconstruction plans, prepared in the meantime, put into immediate action, and the Kingdom of Heaven will be ours for the mere asking of that. I confess, Sir, I have found it very difficult to swallow that pill not knowing how money could be so overflowing all on a sudden.

I would appeal to our Hon'ble Ministers not to indulge any longer on that sort of mid-day reveries. Let us face realities—let us make our own humble beginnings even from now. It is a shame, Sir, that we have to remain naked if cloth will not come from Bombay—it is a shame, Sir, that we have to take any rotten stuff in the name of mustard oil if the United Provinces will not supply us with the same. The Central Legislative Assembly has passed a resolution recommending abolition of the National War Front. I wish, we could have done the same thing with the A. R. P. Organisation here. Even if we cannot altogether abolish the whole thing just now, can we not utilise this Civil Defence money and staff for some productive purposes? The Hon'ble Minister for Civil Defence can do a great service to this country, if he can persuade his Organisation to take to spread of spinning wheel and handloom industry and the introduction of *ghani* and a lot of other simple village industries. The money and energy, if utilised, in that way could do a lot for the Province, though our English Friends may not very much like the idea.

Sir, the Hon'ble Finance Minister tried to take some credit for providing a lot of money for the Grow-More-Food-Campaign. Without in any way minimising the need for improving our agriculture, I would like to submit, Sir, that we must not over emphasise Agriculture to the complete negligence of Industry. No nation, nor any Province, can thrive on agriculture alone; the balance between agriculture and industry shall have to be maintained if we want to save our peasantry from the slump that is sure to follow in the price of agricultural commodities with the cessation of the war.

Maulavi Syed ABDUR ROUF: Mr. Speaker, Sir, that I am one of the sincerest of supporters of the present Ministry is perhaps not unknown to any one. It has therefore become my duty, though unpleasant, to support the Budget which the Hon'ble Finance Minister has been reluctantly pleased to place before the House. On his own admission its opening is a myth and its closing is fictitious. Bad men will, therefore, naturally hold that the whole Budget is nothing but vicious—however much we may try to prove that from our point of view, it is so very ambitious. To me, Sir, the Budget is simply disappointing. The Budget Speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister also has not, this year, been in any way helpful in understanding the Budget. I had, however, the intention of going into the details, but I am afraid, I shall not get time to do so.

Unduly pessimistic, the Government have kept the revenue at an unreasonably low figure, and, at the same time, have proposed some most unnecessary expenditure at the cost of nation building departments. Government had not the courage of tapping independent sources of revenue nor had the foresight of stopping the wastage of public money. It is not possible to find out from the Budget the actual position of the big business which the Government have taken upon themselves to conduct.

If I have levelled the charges that the Government had not the courage, it is but fair that I should try to substantiate the charge with facts and figures.

The proof lies in their Land Settlement policy and in their general attitude towards the immigrants. Lakhs of acres of land are lying fallow in the country where lakhs of immigrant cultivators are being starved to death. Yet, they have neither the courage nor the foresight of settling lands with the immigrants. Even if a portion of this vast area of *Khas* land, and, along with it, the vast area in excess of actual grazing need, in the grazing reserves, would have been settled with the landless people of all classes including the immigrants, some 60 lakhs more of rupees annually, could have easily accrued to the Provincial Exchequer. But this step requires an amount of courage and foresight which the Government have been found to be wanting in.

When the Government heard that the Indian Marshal of non-violence permitted his Assam General to oppose the immigrant-settlement with violence, the Government became nervous and succumbed to the threat of the Opposition. The Government's own Resolution of 1943, which had aimed at doing some justice to the immigrants, worked smoothly for more than a year,—passed the ordeal of three Sessions of the Assembly, has been given the go-by—a most ignominious surrender.

The present Government has now become a puppet in the hands of Messrs. Bardoloi and Rohini Kumar Choudhuri. It has therefore taken up the task of destroying the immigrants by refusing settlement of land with them and by evicting them by force from the so called Reserves. The Assamese people have got much more land than their ploughs can bring under cultivation while the immigrants have got less than half the land they required for their livelihood and yet the immigrants won't get land; on the other hand, the so called Grazing Reserves cover far bigger areas than are necessary for the buffaloes yet the immigrants are going to be evicted and driven away therefrom. The inhuman and barbarous Line System is going to be permanently retained in Assam in another name and shape known as the block system. The intention of the Government has become crystal clear to the immigrants after publication of their January Resolution. The intention of the Government is to keep the immigrants content with $1\frac{1}{2}$ bighas of land per capita, just sufficient for the bare maintenance of 40 per cent. of them. The remaining 60 per cent. have got either to perish or to become so many serfs of the Assamese land-holders. The Line System will be there to remind them perpetually that they are outside the pale of civilised society.

As I am an immigrant myself and as I have studied them more intimately than anybody else, I think it my duty to tell the Government in the clearest possible terms that the immigrants are not prepared to accept the position and they will not certainly accept it. They will prefer to be shot to death than to die of starvation and before they die they will certainly see that their representatives and well-wishers withdraw their support from the present Ministry. The recent happenings in Barpeta have, I hope, been a sufficient eye-opener for all concerned. I will not discuss the situation as it is by now well-known to all in the country. I will like simply to bring home to all concerned that in future if such challenges are thrown out by whatever party that might be, the immigrants won't allow those to go unanswered.

I would be failing in my duty if I do not heartily thank the Hon'ble Minister of Education for his attempt—though poor, at doing a bit of justice to the immigrants. In consideration of the fact that the immigrants have been responsible for adding about a crore of rupees to the provincial revenues, he has proposed for adding a thousand rupees for their education. The provision, though ridiculously disproportionate to their legitimate demand and though hopelessly insufficient in consideration of their actual need, goes a great way in establishing a principle which is noble. His sincerity, however, has got yet to be tested by whether the Howly High English School, Kujarpitt, Majgaon, Bagudi and Tarabari Middle English Schools and Helapakari, Dhokua and Bhella Madrassas all in Barpeta subdivision, get adequate and substantial grants or not. If the institutions mentioned above and specially Kujarpitt and Bagudi Middle English Schools do not receive adequate grants this year, the Hon'ble Minister shall have to excuse the immigrants if they doubt his sincerity and come to the irresistible conclusion that he is unfair, unjust and anti-immigrant. I like to tell him that to receive education through the medium of one's mother tongue is one's birth right and immigrants' mother tongue is Bengali. At this stage, whatever might have happened in the past, the immigrants cannot now be persuaded to barter away their birth right for a mess of pottage. If anybody, even now, persuaded any false hope that he will be able to force a foreign tongue on the tongue of the immigrant children, he is certainly living in a fool's paradise. One Assamese teacher, up the word “মা” and use “আই” in addressing their mothers. One immigrant teacher, out in chorus; In reply the boys sang

যেখানেতেই রইনা কেন ডাকবো নাকে “মা” বলে,
ভয়ে নাকে “আই” বলব আমরা নই মার সেই ছেলে।

I hope the Hon'ble Minister of Education will do well to remember it and will formulate his educational policy accordingly in future.

The immigrants' suffering knows no bounds. They are being oppressed in many ways. As a result of the most inequitable distribution of Government favours in the field of trade and business, the immigrants have suffered most. The District and Subdivisional Officers have never considered their cases favourably and they have practically been ousted from the field of trade and commerce. The economical structure of the whole community has received the severest blow at the hands of the Hon'ble Supply Minister's officers. Taking advantage of the numerical strength of the immigrants, many gentlemen are making fortune—even the Hon'ble Sir Muhammad Saadulla's own department is not impartial—this is the immigrants' greatest misfortune. May I not most respectfully request him just to read the writings on the wall?

I now like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Medical and Public Health towards the vital statistics of the Province. We have been losing 27 per cent. of our population annually. Any civilised Government ought to be ashamed of this situation. A few lakhs of rupees spent on medicine could have easily brought this ratio to 1 per cent. Will she not see her way to come to the help of the Local Boards to bring down the figure of annual deaths? In my sub division nearly 50 thousand souls inhabit in the *chars* of Brahmaputra. These unfortunates do not get a drop of medicine during their illness. I suggest that a Government travelling Dispensary in a suitable boat be opened for these people forthwith.

I shall now try to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture towards the conditions of the agriculturists of the Province in general and of Assam Valley in particular. Here in Assam Valley, we produce most of the jute of the Province but unfortunately our jute is not generally of higher quality. The situation can be easily improved by supplying better kinds of seeds—both *olitorious* and *capsularis*. The Bihar seeds imported from Narayanganj side is not suitable for Assam and our Province should, therefore, try to produce seeds of improved varieties in selected places under the direct supervision of our Department. We shall have to give good retting facilities to our cultivators of higher lands. Instructions in Bengali and Assamese as to what fertilisers are suitable for different kinds of land, what are the best methods of retting, what are the easy means of destroying insects, how to make gradations, etc. should be published in booklets and distributed amongst them.

A Provincial Jute Committee should be set up to look after the interests of jute cultivators. The minimum and maximum prices of loose jute having been fixed in Calcutta, we shall have to regulate the different provincial markets accordingly. The Agricultural Advisory Committee's activities, if there be any, should be intensified. As regards paddy, the cultivators have been faced with a serious problem. The price of paddy has gone down abnormally. Paddy is now selling in Barpeta markets at Rs. 5-8-0 and rice at Rs. 9 to Rs. 10. Then again, there is no demand in the market. Over and above these, the agents of Messrs. Steel Brothers and Company, do not like to accept the rice of deep water paddy at Bao rice price. They want to purchase it at Ahu rice rates. I draw the attention of this House to all these difficulties. As regards paddy, Bengal is now self-sufficient and our Province is definitely a surplus Province. We should not therefore ask the cultivators to grow more paddy. The Grow More Food Campaign should be so conducted that the paddy acreage is not increased. Production of other foods should, of course, be increased but for that so much money should not be spent for the Campaign. In mustard seed, our Province is definitely deficit. Steps must be taken to see that mustard seed production is doubled next season. I would like to suggest that some honorary advisors of cultivators be selected in each sub-division. This will be of great help to the cultivators. The cultivators have been producing sufficient poultry and vegetables, etc., but in most of the places they are not getting reasonable price. The Marketing

Officer, and if necessary, even one Special Officer, should be asked to remain in constant touch with the Military authorities so that these rations as well as vegetables can be supplied to the military through contractors selected by our Department. The best thing, of course, would be for the Department to accept contract so that reasonable price can be paid to the producers. The Forest Department has executed such contracts most successfully and at the same time most honourably. The Forest Department has paid a heavy sum to the exchequer and if my suggestions are accepted, the Agriculture Department will be self-sufficient and at the same time public will derive much benefit.

Sir, let me give some more practical suggestions as to how the miserable condition of the poor cultivators can be improved. I like to suggest that no land revenue should be realised from the cultivators who cultivate the land themselves without engaging servants, etc. for the first 20 Bighas of land and the loss thus sustained by the Government should be compensated by proportionately increasing the land revenue of those lands which are not cultivated by the *pattadar* or members of his family. Those who hold more land, say one acre per capita in the family, should also be taxed to compensate the loss. This will tend towards the land passing out of the hands of the land speculators to the actual tillers of the soil. If such schemes are worked out, I am sure, the country as a whole will prosper materially. If necessary, I am prepared to submit an elaborate scheme.

If we have got to improve the economic condition of the country as a whole, if we have to improve our agricultural method, if we have got to think of any kind of reconstruction in the Province, we have got to know the actual area of land each individual *pattadar* possesses. This is a preliminary step towards economic reconstruction which cannot be deferred till the war is over. In order to get the information, the system of issuing *pattas* should be changed. One and only one *patta* should be issued to the *patta* holder for all lands he possesses in the district. This may seem to be difficult, but, in practical field, it will be seen that it is as easy as the present system. This will also improve the revenue collection as it will be very convenient to realise the revenue from persons living in a compact area. I have made this suggestion and I am prepared to help the Department if further details are at all necessary.

With these few words, Sir, I retire.

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I like to discuss the Budget with special reference to the needs and interests of the community, I represent, namely the Scheduled Castes community.

We compose a vast down-trodden mass of humanity, numbering about 7 lakhs in this Province. And how we were treated by all the Governments whether dominated by caste Hindus or Muslims? I am not one to accuse any one for that. It is indeed a matter of disgrace to us, the Scheduled Castes representatives, that we are not organised, that we have no one voice true to the interests of our brethren—the down-trodden Scheduled Castes people. But that does not mean that our brother communities, the caste Hindus and Muslims should not be true to their professions to treat us as their equals, as their common partners, in the shaping of the destiny of our common mother-land, of our common Province in its districts and subdivisions.

Sir, let me cite only one of the many examples to show how my community is being neglected by the League Ministry which boldly asserts to protect the interests of all other minority communities. When I look to the proposed grant for the Scheduled Castes education in the shape of fee remission in this Budget, I simply wonder, how such a negligible and inadequate amount would satisfy the aspiration of the vast Scheduled Castes population, yet I thank the Hon'ble Finance Minister for this small amount.

Now, I would come to show the plight of the Scheduled Castes candidates seeking Government jobs etc. The deputation vacancies caused by the Scheduled Castes teachers, sent for B. T. training, have been, in all cases, filled up by candidates other than the Scheduled Castes though candidates of Scheduled Castes community were available. Only, the other day it was advertised that one Extra Assistant Commissioner

and one Sub-Deputy Collector would be recruited in the permanent cadre from the Scheduled Castes. But no Extra Assistant Commissioner was taken in.

Now, I shall speak a few words about the land settlement policy of the Government. The overwhelming majority of the untouchables, *i. e.*, the so called Scheduled Castes people, possess no land. This made them dependant on the touchables and perpetuated their status as untouchables. Their extreme poverty made it impossible for them to educate themselves and their children and secure any share in the services, independant professions, trade or industry. Unless a conscious and special attempt is made to break through this, the prospect before the Scheduled Castes is of perpetuation of their old status. It is the duty of every Government to lead a crusade by demanding such specific rights and legislative measures as would enable the Scheduled Castes to outgrow their status as untouchables. The problem is one of guaranteeing equality in every sphere of life—education, services, administration and adopting immediate measures which would secure such equality. The Scheduled Castes cannot be brought to the same status unless they are given sufficient land, special educational facilities and adequate share in services and administration.

Sir, I would like to cite one other example, as regards the allotment of seats to the Local Boards. Without going to the details, I might assert that the number of seats allotted to us is below our population strength. According to 1941 Census figures, out of the total elected seats in the Local Boards, the Scheduled Castes should get about 34 seats in this Province. But the present Cabinet has, by one stroke of pen, brought the number down to 28. Even these 28 seats are not proportionately distributed between the two valleys. The population of the Scheduled Castes of the Surma Valley is 4,16,000 and they have been given only 15 seats in place of 17. Whereas, the population of the Scheduled Castes of the Assam Valley is 2,55,000 and they have got 13 seats in place of 11. Why this discrimination between the two valleys? Of course, I do not seriously mind it. Sir, I have stated all these not for setting one community against the other, not to split one valley for the benefit of the other valley; on the contrary, I think, I have sufficiently exposed the policy of the present Cabinet which can never help any one and my community being weak and backward will suffer ever more.

I know full well, Sir, that any Cabine—Congress or League—can play such tricks upon us only because we, the Scheduled Castes members, do not stand united. Let me announce to-day on the floor of the House with all the emphasis at my command that I shall leave no stone unturned to unite my community to frustrate such tricks. Before I finish my speech, Sir, I would like to sound a note of warning to all. I mean to tell them, as long as the present outlook of the Congress, Muslim League and all other patriotic parties regarding the problem of Scheduled Castes communities and their genuine and just aspirations, does not undergo a thorough change, if they do not recognise our rights and liberties, the fate of Assam is doomed for all time to come. I know, I shall be confronted with many questions as to why I boldly demand the distinct right of Scheduled Castes. Possibly some of my hon. Friends would even question my sincerity of purpose itself. But truth will remain a truth. The growing conscience and dignity of my community cannot be suppressed by any body and our just demand can no longer be withheld. We are still suppressed educationally, economically, socially and politically. But we have, by this time, developed our sense of dignity; we are all determined to live like human beings and grow like a full-fledged community. When to-day we demand the right of separate electorate and proportionate representation in services, administration, Legislatures, etc., some of the caste Hindu or Muslim brothers might characterise this as the separatist move of a section of self-seekers. But no, we are not self-seekers; we, like everybody else, want to exercise the fullest democratic rights for our upliftment and thus for the emancipation of all.

With these few words, Sir, I resume my seat with high hopes that my compatriots will all appreciate our stand and thus create condition where we shall no longer face such an unsatisfactory Budget. Let us ardently hope that an united and fully representative Cabinet will come out of our combined efforts and a real popular Budget,

incorporating the just allotment for all will be placed before us, and the expenditure for the upliftment of the Scheduled Castes should be the first charge on the Government revenue.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as usual, the Budget estimate of the coming financial year is the continuance of the tale of its sorrows and it is not immune from the stereotyped character which it had assumed during the past years. Although there are a few departures from its customary character, the Budget as a whole cannot receive our sincere appreciation. If we are left to judge it independently and make a careful consideration of the expenditure that is proposed to be spent next year, we not only feel discouraged, but we find no substance in it which can justify the Hon'ble Ministers' anxieties for the millions of people whose destiny is in their hands. One of the hon. Members of the House, the other day, was charging the Hon'ble Ministers for their apathy and callousness towards the views expressed by the Members of this House—that they carry on their works in total disregard of the demands of this constitutional House.

If the Hon'ble Ministers are really conscious of their responsibilities they owe this House, I should consider that they cannot ignore the wishes expressed within these four walls which is the voice of the whole country. It is naturally to be expected that while political consciousness is uppermost in the minds of the people, the Ministry should be careful to ignore them. But if the Ministry on this or that plea wants to deceive the people they can do so for one time but they cannot do so for all time to come.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order. The hon. Member will continue after lunch.

Adjournment

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

After lunch

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, if we look to the speech which the Hon'ble Finance Minister delivered in presenting the Budget, we find that he has said in one place that civil works expenditure shows the largest single increase of Rs.20,19,000. This is, according to him, accounted for by the construction of new offices, heavy expenditure for repairs of roads and smaller recoveries from the Defence Department. May I ask the Hon'ble Minister, why the Government did not make an attempt for recoveries of the entire amount which they anticipated would be required for the purpose of repairs of roads and other things for Defence purposes?

Then, again we find that in the General Administration of the Province, the expenditure side has been increased and the Government have sanctioned additional posts at top-heavy expenses. Are we bound, Sir, to absorb each and every person now serving in the war measure?

Then coming to the Forest Department, although it is a relieving feature to know that income in forest revenue has increased manifold, we cannot really insist on paying a sum of Rs.50,00,000 either in the form of depreciation or sinking fund for Post-War Reconstruction Scheme of the Department in the absence of any detailed scheme for such purpose. I do not for myself appreciate the attitude which Government want to take.

Turning to the Education Budget, I for myself forget, whether we are living in the 20th century or have gone back to the bureaucratic age. While there is country-wide agitation for deprovincialisation of the educational institutions, while we are agitating for introduction of free compulsory primary education in the Province, our Government are taking on their shoulders the heavy financial responsibility by taking some institutions under their direct control. The non-Government secondary schools and Art Colleges, although they are making good progress and although they are financially hard-pressed, we cannot help them with adequate aid. The provisions sought to be made for the so-called Tibbia College, the Intermediate Islamia Madrassa, and the Ayurvedic Classes, I am afraid, the money provided for these expenditures, may not be a legitimate demand. In spite of my humble representations to the

authority, and in spite of the brilliant annual results shown by the Shaistaganj I. A. Madrassa and the Habiganj Brindaban College, no consideration has been given to increase their monthly grant. May I ask the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Education why there has been a disparity in dealing with the cases of all non-Government Art Colleges? From a perusal of the records, it will be seen that although the Habiganj Brindaban College stands first in its annual results up to the B. A. Examination, this college, in spite of our earnest request and in spite of the personal visit of the Hon'ble Minister in charge, has been deprived of getting an equal share of grant in comparison with the Jorhat College or the Silchar Gurucharan College. While I compare the cases of other Colleges, I do not for a moment want to grudge their fortune, but I should simply charge the Government that, while they make provision for similar institutions, why should they not make it on an equal basis. Sir, so far as I remember, while the Hon'ble Minister was at my sub-division and while he had the goodness of inspecting the College, we pointed out to him that for want of finance, the College—though it is a first grade non-Government College in the Province—could not provide for an Arabic Professor. I would point out to the Hon'ble Minister to make it a point to provide money in the next year's Budget for the appointment of an Arabic professor, to remove the grievances of the four lakhs Muslims of this sub-division. This is a college which not only imparts education to the people of the Habiganj sub-division, but also to a good number of people coming from Brahmanbaria, part of Mymensingh and the other sub-divisions of the Sylhet district.

Next, Sir, comes the most important question, *viz.*, the question of the Civil Supplies Department. This is the most vital and urgent question of the day; this concerns every citizen of the Province, rich or poor, high or low. First of all, I shall deal with the procurement scheme. On previous occasions, I made definite demands to the Government that if they want to save the peasant class of the Province, they must fix bottom prices for rice and paddy before they launch on any procurement scheme whether by them direct, or through any agency. As decided in this House, in the Surma Valley, Government have invited tenders for purchase of rice, and tenders have been accepted at Rs.12-6 per maund. But the report which we are receiving goes to show that the contractors are purchasing rice at a very low rate.

Moreover, besides this measure, Government up till now, have not been able to purchase a grain of paddy from any of the producers. This is also the grievance of the poor cultivators.

In the countryside, there is a shortage of salt, there is a shortage of kerosene, there is a shortage of sugar, there is a shortage of mustard oil. I mean, there is a shortage of everything which are required by the common people. We, every day, hear from the Government that they are doing this and that, and that they are making all possible efforts to get their quota. Is this at all any consideration? Can the starving millions be satisfied with this kind of bluffing? Can the Government vouchsafe that they have been able to make any improvement in the harrowing situation that is prevailing in the countryside? The other day, the Hon'ble the Prime Minister, in reply to a Question, denied that there was any order to take *dal* compulsorily along with other commodities. This morning also, he reiterated that Government had issued no such instruction to the district or subdivisional authorities that there would be any compulsion on the part of the consumers to take *dal* along with some other commodities. But from the volleys of Questions which came from the different quarters of the House, it was found that the Subdivisional Authorities were insisting in a persistent manner that people must take *dal* which is unfit for human consumption. The Local Board Chairman, Habiganj, the other day, in the Subdivisional Officer's bungalow, during discussions in the food committee meeting, said that even his milch cows refused to take this kind of *dal*. I have personally seen in my *basha* that this rotten kind of *dal* have accumulated in a big quantity. This the people have been forced to take.

Sir, in this connection, I would like to mention one fact which is only responsible for the contradictory state of affairs. I would submit that the officers, who have the

authority to distribute controlled goods, do not care to follow the Government policy or scheme. We find that Government adopt one kind of policy—they adopt one scheme but the officers do not strictly follow the advice of the Government. If things are allowed to go on like this a time will come when officers may turn a deaf-ear even to the instructions which might be issued from the highest authorities at Shillong.

Again let me discuss the policy of price control of all necessary foodstuffs and other things. Sir, the price control policy of Government, as a principle, justifies the control of prices of essential consumer goods and foodstuffs but it is a very delicate and responsible task that requires thoughtful planning and resourceful administration.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member should finish now.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I am finishing, Sir.

Sir, it is an admitted fact that the price control measures have been a failure. I appreciate the difficulty of the Government that in this matter Provincial Government have no hand while they say that the matter entirely lies with the Central Government. In that case, I say, is it not a fact that the final decision regarding price control and other things rests with the Provincial Government? If so, why should this Provincial Government play the role of a "Yes man" in the hands of the Central Government? We find that the Government are very much reluctant to take the public into their confidence and also they deny the public co-operation for the problem of supply and distribution of food stuffs and controlled goods. This problem of scarcity of foodstuffs certainly and undoubtedly concerns public life. In this connection, I would urge upon the Government to shake off their bureaucratic arrogance and take the public into confidence, because public confidence is much needed at a critical time like this.

Lastly, I shall deal with the question of the Textile Department. At the very beginning of this Session there have been several Adjournment Motions in the names of some hon. Members of this House regarding the cloth famine which is prevailing in the country-side. So far as mill-made cloth is concerned, it has become so scarce that in many families, to my knowledge, it has brought disaster. They have been deprived of getting any kind of good cloth. So long people could save themselves by taking shelter under Standard Cloth, but, very recently, the abundance of Standard Cloth has disappeared and this has brought calamity to the countryside. The reply which we have received from the Hon. Prime Minister in regard to mill-made cloth is not satisfactory. The arrangement which the Government has made for getting mill-made cloth is anything but satisfactory. The present arrangement, which has been made, is as follows. They have appointed three agencies to procure cloth from Bombay. One probably has been given in the name of Messrs. H. K. Dada and Company— a big firm of Bombay which has got the lion's share—they alone have got 2/3rd of the total quantity of Assam quota. Then again the other two agencies have been given to two firms, one firm of Sylhet and the other in the name of a Textile Association which was formed under the name of Textile Co-operative Association in this town. Sir, how far these agents have been able to secure Assam's quota in this town. from the fact that for Habiganj town where 4,000 people live, it was reported last month that only 150 pairs of *dhuties* appeared there. The reason, on enquiry, was learnt that adequate quantity did not arrive. Not to speak of the sub-division as a whole, Sir, are these 150 pairs of *dhuties* sufficient to meet the needs of the town alone? Is it not a drop in the ocean, Sir? There is absolute scarcity of *dhuties* and *saries*. It is extremely difficult to get the bare minimum number of *dhuties* and *saries* should receive our immediate attention. The stories revealed in Bengal, it may so happen, may be repeated in Assam. In this respect, I may tell the Hon'ble Prime Minister not to say that Government have done this and that and they are doing this and that. If we do not see the result of their action, we cannot be satisfied. We want work but not that they have adopted this measure or that. We want that the people should not be deprived from getting the bare necessities—*dhuties* and *saries*.

With these words, Sir, I beg to resume my seat.

Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will speak only a few words on the debate that is going on for the last three days. Sir, often times, I question myself about the utility of speeches, at least from our side of the House, when I find that Government are paying so little attention to them. If words cannot produce the necessary results in action, the lesser we say the better for us. But, Sir, duty is duty and I must discharge it irrespective of the results.

The first and the foremost thing that I mention—and I think, I am borne out in my attitude by the bundle of telegrams that I have got in my hand—is the suppression of civil liberty in this Province. I am thankful to my hon. Friend Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee and also to the hon. Srijut Buragohain for the manner in which they have advocated the cause of civil liberty and particularly about our Member Friends in jail. But I am equally surprised at the absence of any reference to it from the speeches of the Members of the other sections of the House. The Muslim League Press, particularly in the Punjab and Bengal, seem to make me believe that the Muslim League, as a body, stands for civil liberty. But in this House, which is being led by a Muslim League Premier, not only is there no mention about it, but even the Members have demonstrated their opposition to it by recording their votes against the Adjournment Motion on one phase of this question before this House. From a reading of the British History and from conversation with individual Britishers, I can never believe that an average Britisher do, under any circumstances, favour the curtailment of civil liberty of individuals. But when we come to this House, a different atmosphere chills us. Hon. Mr. Blennerhassett could indeed be angry when his letter was delivered after thirteen days when it might have been done in three days and a portion of it was clipped by the Censor; but when the country is groaning under the operation of the Defence of India Act, the Restriction and Detention Ordinance and so many other Ordinances and Acts, and when hundreds of our friends are being detained in jails without trial with their health completely broken down, when our Colleagues responsible to their constituencies cannot move beyond their home towns, when five people cannot legally meet together in the streets of the small towns of Assam and discuss the politics of the day, when the committees of an organisation whose only fault is that they believe in the independence of their country are held illegal, and when people cannot hold any meetings and give free expression of their opinions in the Press to ventilate their grievances brought about by an inefficient and corrupt machinery, hon. Mr. Blennerhassett and his party sit quiet and have not even one word to say against this most deplorable state of things. The feeling that is driven home to me, Sir, is that every rightful instinct and just impulse seem to undergo a change simply because of the attitude of these parties towards the Congress. But I desire to point out to them, and to Government also, that while you may be party to imposing all kinds of physical sufferings on Congressmen, by denying to them what they are entitled to get as human beings, you cannot remove from the heart of men the spirit of freedom. This spirit can never be crushed by repression, even if particular congressmen could cease to exist and even particular organisations do not function for the time being. The history of the world through all ages has taught us this undisputed lesson.

But my Friends do not seem to realise, possibly as clearly as I do, the relationship of freedom with all the affairs of our daily life. Freedom is as much a force of life as its repression is a force of death; the one is open and bright, as much as the other is secret and dark. I will illustrate this remark with a reference to what I felt to be the strongest point in hon. Whittaker's speech, *viz.*, that relating to corruption. The extent of corruption about which he complained, he knows, can grow only in an atmosphere where freedom has been stifled and freedom of speech, freedom of meeting and movement have been curtailed. The continuance of the misery of the poor man in the village regarding the essential articles of food and agricultural implements about which reference has been made by many hon. Members, can be possible only so long as human liberty will remain under repression. If free will, free associ-

ation and free movement are allowed full play, not only avoidance of wrongs will be possible through public criticism, but people's initiative will try to find remedies for much of the evil. But Government by preventing any kind of freedom any play and by regimenting every activity in their own way, have driven the people to complete helplessness and despair. Other evils in other spheres of our daily life can be traced to the same cause. It is only truism to say that corruption, vice and other dark forces that threaten to destroy the body politic of the Province and which we are given to identify with Fascism, can flourish in places where freedom has lost its potency. I feel that such parties and individuals who are supporting such a policy of Government, are directly or indirectly supporting these dark forces of evil; and our cry against corruption and other evils, however sincere and strong it might be, will not be of much avail so long as we shall not be prepared to hail the spirit of freedom in the land, and begin to value our liberties as the most cherished objects of our life. I appeal to all sections of the House to rise equal to the occasion and demand the immediate restoration of civil liberty by releasing the political prisoners, removing all restrictions on movement of persons, by allowing freedom of meeting, association, speech and of the Press immediately. Let it not be said any more that Assam is a vast concentration camp which it is verily so today.

Sir, I shall be leaving an important aspect of this question untouched if I did not hold up for examination some of the pleas put forward by this Government in favour of this "Concentration Camp" policy. The inner mind of the British Government we do not see; we are left only to surmise. I gave my own surmise in the last Session of the Assembly. It is unwillingness of the British to part with power which goads them to stifle the voice of anybody who would propagate the truth about India's case for freedom during the pendency of the war. Sir Richard Tottenham might prepare the Government brief in any manner he likes, and Sir Reginald Maxwell might speak out any pattern of truth he wishes; I for one, cannot get rid of my own notion about the inner meaning of repression. But this is a history of events of two years back. What is the position today?

In so far as the Members of the Provincial Assemblies are concerned, the Home Member of the Government of India says that he has no interest in the continued incarceration of the Provincial Members of Legislative Assembly. The Hon'ble Premier, who were arrested before he undertook the reins of office lay with the Government of India, now says that they are detained on grounds of security. The question that I ask is: "Security to whom?" Mahatma Gandhi is out and a number of Indian leaders are also out. In our Province many of us are out and the Hon'ble Premier has claimed credit for it. A few of us are even moving as free beings. Heaven above has not come down and the Earth below has not rent asunder on account of their activities. The security of the people has not in the least diminished. On the other hand, to many, a sense of relief seems to have come on account of their releases, wherever these are unconditional. If our friends in jail are being detained for the security of the profiteers and hoarders and those who countenance them, if this security is required for safeguarding the Fascistic forces in the country by the rule of Ordinances and abolition of liberty, then I could understand the meaning of that word 'security'. But if it means security to freedom and well-being of the Province and the people, the political prisoners have got to be released immediately. What sense there can be in detaining Members of the Legislative Assembly who should by now have partaken their share in alleviating the distress of the people in their constituencies and heartening them with their advice and guidance?

But Government is not prepared to order unconditional release even in unavoidable cases of release. Some restriction order, always humiliating in nature, must follow the release making the release nugatory. What is the good of being out of jail when you cannot move out of the place of restriction even for your treatment, you cannot look after your family affairs, much less be able to do your public duties? I cannot believe that Government do not know that they are not saboteurs and

nothing else, but well-wishers of the country. Why then, people against whom Government cannot bring any charge, are made to die inch by inch in jail and kept under restrictions, without proper facilities for food and treatment to the diseased and the suffering, and without adequate allowance being paid to their families? Sir, the war for a fact has receded beyond our frontiers; and therefore even the plea for their detention in any form is gone. Why then continue this cruelty? Why not try to review the whole situation from the standpoint of justice, humanity and fair play? Sir, the Budget before the House has brought before many of our hon. Friends visions of prosperity and to some of adversity. But what is prosperity to a country which is denied the freedom of judging what that prosperity means? To a man in bondage, all the wealth of the world has no meaning; but a free man can not only face adversity but can transform it to his benefit and progress.

Sir, before passing on to another subject, I cannot but refer to the manner in which brutal assaults on the innocent political prisoners in the Jorhat Jail was dealt with by this Government. More than a hundred and forty young and aged men were assaulted, some 50 seriously. There was absolutely no justification for this. The only apparent cause was the insistence of these prisoners in demanding food which the Jail people would not give till late at night, in demanding cloth for want of which they were suffering unbearable cold at night, in demanding proper housing when rains used to splutter through holes in the roofs and the walls in cold wintry nights of Upper Assam. But what became of the so-called enquiry and how were the delinquents dealt with is not known to anybody. That some were delinquents was admitted by the Deputy Commissioner, who conducted a part of the enquiry, when we were there. But the whole thing has passed off as if nothing had happened. I would not take the time of the House over a by-gone incident. But I should like to tell the House that the manner in which the Government let the matter drop seems to us as nothing short of a scandal. If I had not been there at the scene of occurrence, I might have believed many things the Hon'ble Premier said here, but as I know facts, he should not have let the matter drop, particularly, when so many of his friends were concerned.

It is only for these reasons that I said in the last Assembly that if this Government had not such callous disregard for human suffering, the Premier could not have allowed things to go on as he had done and he has been doing.

Unconcerned as I am with the figures of the Budget which has been so ably dealt with by the hon. Leader of the European Group, I must yet say that the Budget does not bring hope to the man in the village, nor the man in the street whom I claim to represent. As regards the distribution of supplies, scarcity in salt remains, while acute scarcity of oil is not only there but according to the Hon'ble Premier is likely to aggravate. We are yet forced to eat uneatable *dal*, *atta*, etc. Cloth and yarn have become completely unavailable. About mustard oil, his speech the other day was one of complete helplessness. What is Government going to do to meet the deficit in this essential article of food to the villagers? How are they going to supply the necessary calories to the man who cannot get animal fat for his consumption? We have been told also that another energy-giving article namely, sugar, will not be available to the people, particularly to the villagers. All these go to show that no attempt whatsoever is made by Government to see that dietary of the villagers is such as can give them sustenance and energy not only to produce their own food but also for us all. On the other hand, what Government is doing is to deny the villagers even the little that they are giving to the townsmen. If the quota given to the Province is short, Government must try to get it increased. But they can do this only by showing that the nourishing properties of the food that people are getting are much below the level of absolute necessity. A civilised Government must find a proper dietary for the people but Government do not seem to consider that this is a subject worth bothering about at all. The result is that on account of depletion of food-stuffs due to military needs, the vitality of the people is completely sapped, and they are being subjected to diseases and deaths in overwhelming numbers.

On the economic side, the consumers are hard hit and this is due not only to the creation of as many as six intermediaries, with opportunities for corruption, black-marketing and deterioration of food-stuff in the process of storage, but also to the prevalence of a strange order of things brought about by Government, where capitalists and rich men are allowed to flourish often overnight, always at the expense of the poor consumers. In *Laisser-faire*, the consumers get the benefit of competition between the rich ; in a State like Russia where Government alone do the job for the people, the people are more fully benefited. But here in India, it seems Government and the rich ally themselves to rob the poor man in the village. One way of meeting this evil will be to minimise the employment of any such capitalistic agency for the purpose. I do not see, Sir, why many of the intermediate agencies could not altogether be abolished. Government have only to see to the upkeep of the godowns properly and to the distribution of food-stuffs and cloths to the retailers direct. And then why could it not be possible for all the agencies organised on a co-operative basis ? This, however, would require co-operation of the people as a whole ; and in this connection, I may be permitted to add that if co-operation has failed to do any good to the people till now it is simply because the whole food and cloth policy has formed part of the same outlook of regimentation which is the Government outlook in reference to the political situation in the country. Absence of responsibility for public good has been and will be the character of every administration which has not a popular backing, and poor people will continue to be exploited as before in spite of all professions of great men to the contrary. That is the reason why co-operation does not find any encouragement in the hands of officers and Government.

As regards the sale of his produces, the villager is equally at a disadvantage. Hon. Mr. Kameswar Das has referred to some of them. The failure of Government to fix a bottom price is exposing the agriculturists to the mercy of the unscrupulous agents of the Government Procuring Agencies. In Surma Valley, as you know, Sir, it grew into a scandal and the wishes of the House in this regard remain yet unfulfilled ; but in the Assam Valley, the same tactics are appearing. Paddy is now selling at Rs. 4 to Rs. 4-8-0 per maund when the Government price is Rs. 6-8-0. With the inflation of prices of articles required by the cultivator, such as his plough bullocks which are mostly unavailable, his agricultural implements and his daily articles of food, a part of which he has to purchase in the blackmarket, even this Rs. 6-8-0 is not an adequate bottom price ; but now through the machinations of the procuring agents, he is not getting even two-thirds of that price. If Government have any good of the cultivator at heart, they must fix the bottom price and that also in consonance with the requirement of the agriculturists in every phase of their daily life.

The talk of Post-War Reconstruction schemes is in the air. Plans and schemes are appearing in plethora in the Press. Its echo finds a loud place in our Budget also, although we have not yet been let to know what they are and how they are going to be worked for fulfilment. We do not even know whether they are result of big thinking on existing inflation to share the same fate as the inflation itself may face after the war. Till now Government have not thought fit to take the House into their confidence, but I am hoping for an academic discussion of the matter on the 12th through the good services of hon. Mr. Whittaker. Sir, I am always afraid of big schemes which generally do not touch the daily life of the villagers. We have not till now demonstrated any tangible sympathy for the villager in tackling his problems from his standpoint, taking into full account his susceptibilities and his knowledge of things. Big changes cannot be made acceptable to the villagers in a day. In a big scheme of private industrialisation, they cannot be expected to be any better than labourers. But even then if it is to come at all, it will come gradually. The question is, what have we done to meet the need of the hour, to help them to be self-sufficient and self-reliant ? The National War Front, the Budget of which has rightly been turned down by the Central Legislature, have been spending crores of rupees in the pretext of teaching the villagers. The Grow-More-Food drive has been similarly financed and possibly even more money is proposed to be given. Since August

1942, I have seen only a few villages ; but I have not seen much of self-reliance and self-sufficiency about them. They are in want worse than before. Why then is this farce of an expenditure ? Cannot a new perspective and a new outlook be infused in the villagers ? Cannot reliance and sufficiency be taught in work rather than in speeches ? To my mind, if any reconstruction is urgent and immediate, it is reconstruction of villages into self-sufficient economic units so that they may not have to go to the capitalists for their protection. I warn the Government that all talk of reconstruction will be meaningless if it is not possible to do this. All future planning therefore must devote a large part of it to this most important subject.

In reference to the Land Settlement question, hon. Srijut Sarveswar Barua has said almost all that is necessary to be said on the subject. A Resolution is also before the House, although we do not know whether it will come up for discussion in this Session. I want to add only this much just now that all actions that have hitherto been taken by Government have gone to favour the immigrants and to throw out the graziers and the local people out of the soil. Some Grazing Reserves are being settled on the plea that the decision in this regard had been made previous to the present land policy of the Government was announced. This is distinctly against the letter and spirit of the All-Party Conference on Land Settlement as explained in our joint Memorandum to Government. As the Adjournment Motion tabled by hon. Mr. Buragohain shows, local people are being driven out from possession of lands although according to the decisions of the aforesaid Conference they are entitled to stay at least for six months in the Reserves where they settled. On the other hand, new aggressions on almost all these Reserves have been taking place every day and the Hon'ble Minister of Revenue, instead of taking measures to prevent these aggressions, are in effect encouraging the same. The proceedings of the Conference itself were not recorded according as the discussion took place and when it was pointed out by an explanatory note by all the representatives of all the parties, except the Muslim League, the Government Resolution on it, instead of taking note of the same, went beyond the scope of the agreement in order to accommodate intruders and trespassers. Government have thus thrown to the winds all we could hold up as a reasonable compromise between the parties concerned on this question. Time has therefore come for us to say that we cannot be a party to the Government Resolution or to any agreement which does not safeguard the interests of the local people-indigenous people including the Scheduled castes, the Tribals and the graziers. Government want to carry out a communal policy of complete aggressiveness, and our position is that if they want to do so, let them alone take the consequences of their actions.

In reference to the reported Constitutional reconstruction of the Province by the creation of a frontier with some of the hill tribes, my fears are as serious as that of hon. Mr. Buragohain and I do associate myself with all that he has said about our friends of the hills. I will never agree to my friends in the hills to be cut away from me and we shall resist any attempt to do so by anybody.

I cannot surely improve upon the restrained language and the high level from which the hon. Leader of the European Group spoke on the corruption that is now prevailing in the administration and every sphere of its activity. I do not however agree with him that it is a subject alien to the Budget when many figures in it may have its taint. But I am not as suré of his remedy ; and although I have no objection to a trial for the eradication of corruption by some special branch of the C. I. D., I do not know how far they will be successful. I hear, Sir, that at least one case exonerated by the local Government has been directed by Government of India for prosecution. How are we to know that such exonerations have not been allowed or will not be allowed in other cases as well ? I suggested that one way of putting an end to this deplorable state of affairs is to restore civil liberties ; another way of achieving it is by organising co-operative societies and giving them wider scope of their activities. A lot of corruption may also be prevented if business by Government is done openly just as is done in normal times,

i. e., by advertising and calling of tenders for all works. But it is for Government to see to these.

It is sad and very distressing for men who look for moral values in this world to find themselves in such a plight. Sir, the inordinate greed for wealth and riches which is another name for corruption is not confined to Government machinery alone. In Milton's Pandemonium, Moloch, the God of War and Mammon, the God of Wealth, are found to associate together. It seems that in the middle of the twentieth century Milton's picture is moving in a factual world. It will continue to be the dream with some men, to look forward to the time, when the just God will arise among us and will stop both Moloch and Mammon from creating the mischief they are doing to this distracted world.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the lot of the replier to the general discussions of the Budget is not very enviable. Although in a general discussion of the Budget wide limits of discussion are allowed, it has been found that this time the discussions embraced wildest limits and no reference whatsoever, excepting two notable cases—reference to the estimates of the Budget, has been made. Hon. Members who have thought fit to table as many as 92 Resolutions for discussion in the Budget Session which is normally devoted to Government business, have taken this opportunity, on the plea of a general discussion of the Budget, to discuss their Resolutions in this discussion. I have, therefore, to meet criticisms on those Resolutions rather than of discussion. I have, therefore, proper and hon. Members who dilated upon facts or discussed matters which have already been debated on the earlier days of this session—some had already stated what they spoke on those occasions—add to the difficulty, Sir, when I find that out of 3 days meant for the general discussion of the Budget, just 70 minutes are available for Government to reply. There was a salutary convention in earlier years that all private members' speeches will close before the recess for lunch period so that Government may be prepared to reply to all the matters which come in the last day's discussion. I find, Sir, that two Members—one from my party and the hon. Leader of the Opposition were allowed to speak after lunch, today; a Ministry, however experienced, is not supposed to be omniscient and if any matter in questions, however experienced, placed before the House it will be difficult, in the reply on behalf of Government, to meet those criticisms with facts and figures, for there is hardly any time to consult the Secretariat for any information. I therefore request you, Sir, to see whether we could not go back to the earlier system that all private Members' speeches should end before the lunch period of the last day allowing Government one hour's time to collect facts and figures which may have to be placed before the House on the last day.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: This time also I tried to have all the private Members' speeches finished before lunch, but I was helpless.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, some hon. Members did not write out their speeches to be finished within the 15 minutes you fixed as the time limit and when any party Member exceeds a time limit you are compelled to give more than 15 minutes to Members of the opposite party. It is not your fault. I hope that hon. Members will come prepared with such speeches or written notes and see that their main points are finished within the time limit set up by the Hon'ble the Speaker.

I have summarised the points that have been raised by various speakers and I have also analysed the subjects touched upon by them. I will give my reply in a general way and if do not mention any names, hon. Members will not go with the idea that I have neglected to take note of their points of view. I may assure all the hon. Members that the suggestions or recommendations which have been made by them will be given due weight by Government.

I find, Sir, that the subject-matter of the first Resolution tabled this Session in the names of various Members of the Congress group including my hon. Friend, the Leader of the Opposition, loomed large in the discussion and there are as many as 7 speeches simply confining to the land settlement policy of Government. If any more fact

are needed to bear my contention I can give references with the serial numbers of the different Resolutions tabled on this subject on the land settlement policy. We have had the Congress views. We have had the immigrants' views. There has been a special plea on behalf of the Tribal people as well. Government, whichever party rules, have got to go by the demands of every section and try to arrive at a compromise. It is with a view to arrive at such a settlement that Government took the trouble of having conferences and enquiry committees. If unfortunately for the Province and the people living therein no satisfactory settlement is possible, yet the fact remains that the last conference was representative of all groups of people who are vitally interested in the land settlement policy in Assam. It will take a very long time to go into the details of the land settlement policy, but the result aimed at recently can be summarised by this bold assertion on my part that it was a victory for all parties concerned.

To my Muslim friends, the immigrants, I would say that whereas previously the majority of the Hindu community was out and out against recognising immigrants as entitled to settlement of any land, through this conference they got the admission that those who came earlier than 1938 would be treated as indigenous people entitled to settlement of Government waste lands in the Province. That was a very great concession made to those friends who have come from the neighbouring Province. To the great Hindu community, I would say that whereas Government had already started delimitation of the professional grazing reserves on the advice of their agricultural experts that 5 Bighas of land are sufficient for a buffalo and only one-third of this for a cow, Government did not pursue that policy with a view to come to an amicable arrangement with all the parties. They backed out of their conclusions and withdrew their dereservation plans. But for the sake of humanity or rather on humanitarian consideration which was even accepted by the leaders of the Hindu and other communities, those encroachers who had settled on professional grazing reserves before 1938 and had converted barren waste land into smiling fields, should be allowed to remain and anyone who had taken shelter there on account of erosion of rivers or on account of Military requisition of their land but who held settlement of land from Government, should be allowed a period of grace so that Government may find suitable land elsewhere for these people before they are evicted from the professional grazing reserves. This was a concession which Government gladly gave to the popular opinion. Otherwise if the policy which was laid down by my Hon'ble Friend the Revenue Minister—that any people who have encroached on professional grazing reserves before 1943, should be allowed to remain—if Government had continued that policy there may have been a great setback to the milk industry and working against popular opinion. Government made every possible attempt to come to a settlement between parties with separate interests. We had the evidence of the Colonization Officer of Nowgong and from his evidence we learnt that in Nowgong he had no difficulty in settling 12,000 Bighas of land with immigrants who have been in the Province from 10 to 15 years before. Every one will agree with the policy 'that first come first served' and even in the case of land settlement this ought to be the guiding policy. No one who had come recently would be preferred to those who have been waiting to get settlement of land here, say, from 7 to 10 years earlier. I can dilate upon the facts which the different parties gave. On behalf of the Tribal people special concessions were sought in that Conference and Government as well as all the parties agreed to give those concessions. Whereas in case of other people no more annual settlement was to be given, but annual pattas will be issued to the Tribal people for their protection and they are assured that the submontane area will be reserved for them. That was a concession which the tribal people got at the hands not merely of Government but also representatives of the other interests that were present in the conference. These Tribal people want that there should be a Special Officer to look after their interests and who will survey the landless amongst them and reserve sufficient lands for them. They were given that officer and an officer of their own choice. All these things gave the Tribal people the concessions that they wanted as regards land settlement policy.

It is a great pity that the labour which the representatives of all the groups undertook during those three days is going to be wasted. I say 'wasted' deliberately, for if the present attitude of the different parties who sat in the conference continues or if the present agitation against the conclusions of Government as a result of that conference continues, Government will have to go back to their original policy. They will have to wash out the Resolution based on that conference and go back to where they were before December 1944. The result will be that there will be more trouble brewing amongst the different sections of the people, and I am sorry to notice ugly tone and wild thoughts in the minds of both the parties. I refer to Srijut Beliram Das on one side who must have been an aggressor and my Friend Maulavi Abdur Rouf on the other, when they warn Government and through Government the people in general, that in this matter if Government do not act according to their wishes, they would take law in their own hands. If human blood is to be shed for the obstinacy of these parties and if there be miseries, by their following that line, Government will not be responsible for their action. But I request both sides to think very calmly on the lines that I have laid before the House. I am sorry, I have not enough time to dilate upon the activities of the Conference of December 1944 where some decisions were arrived at for the benefit of every section of the people. But I have given them sufficient indication that if we have to go back upon the Resolution of 1944, the opposition of the great Hindu community against throwing open more lands for settlement with immigrants and allowing encroachers to remain in the professional grazing reserves will continue to grow in volume. On the other hand Government will be compelled to pursue the policy over which they put Mr. Desai on the question of grazing reserve. The result will be that any one who has encroached on these reserves up to 1943 will be at liberty to remain there much to the annoyance of the graziers and to the great detriment to the milk industry.

I am constrained to say that some Members have given their tongue in a most wild manner. One hon. Member whom I see absent from his seat today went to the length of saying that this is an unprincipled Cabinet. If that gentleman is really true to his creed and sincere in his action, he would make such a statement outside this House as anything that is said here is privileged and no action for libel or slander can be taken.

While I condemn such unlicensed terms to be used on the floor of this House, I cannot but condemn the sweeping generalities made by representatives of other parties. For example, on behalf of the immigrants, one gentleman went to the length of saying that the immigrants have been denied the ordinary civic rights, that they have not been treated as citizens of the Province, that they have got no room in the services, that they have got no contracts and that there has been discrimination even in the issue of rationed articles, like salt. In contradicting such wild statements, and also to controvert that there is no veterinary dispensary or any relief amenities in their locality, I can say that the same hon. speaker spared no pains in approaching me and the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the Public Works Department and secured our recommendations by means of which he obtained vast contracts not only from the Public Works Department but also from the Military! And to contradict the fact that no veterinary dispensary has been established, my Friend the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the Veterinary Department has opened a veterinary dispensary in a house which one of the immigrants, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan, M.L.A., had provided in his native village of Ghagmari which he wants to be called Hamidabad. Now, if I have got to reply to such wild statements there will be no time to touch upon the more important subjects which were discussed by various other Friends in course of this debate. While I am at this land settlement policy, I was rather taken aback by a criticism levelled just now by my hon. Friend, Srijut Bar-doloi, who said that the settlement which Government gave in professional grazing reserves, in 1944, has not yet been undone, on the plea that the land has already been settled. Instead of being ashamed of that attitude or that position, I am rather proud to say that we came to the rescue of the graziers of that locality. In the conference which was attended by my hon. Friend Mr. Bardoloi as well as Mr. Rohini

Kumar Chaudhuri, Mr. Rabi Chandra Kachari and a representative of the Scheduled Castes in my colleague Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Nath Saikia, it was decided that in order to relieve the distress of the graziers of those grazing reserves which had been de-reserved in Nowgong, and had already been settled, had been ploughed and had smiling crop in the field, we would allow those graziers' cattle to be grazed at Laokhowa Forest Reserve at half the usual forest charges. I think, Sir, that doing everything that was possible to relieve the difficulty of the graziers and at the same time not to disturb settlers who had already grown crop in the professional grazing reserves in the Nowgong district was the right policy.

Srijut MAHI CHANDRA BORA: On a point of information. Does the Hon'ble Premier say that land has been ploughed in the Laokhowa Reserve.....

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am not giving way to Srijut Mahi Chandra Bora. In the conference the Colonisation Officer definitely said that not only has land been settled, but it has been cultivated and crop has come out. That was in December last....

Srijut MAHI CHANDRA BORA: In the Laokhowa Reserve?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I did not mention anything about Laokhowa. If my hon. Friend did not follow me let him not disturb me. I said those graziers who have been in any way put in difficulty by the de-reservation of Barguli and other reserves, the cattle of these graziers would be allowed to graze in the Laokhowa reserve at half the usual forest charges for cattle.

The next subject which I need touch is the subject of political prisoners. We have discussed this subject on the floor of the House for the last seven days, and it would have been quite proper on the part of certain hon. Members to raise the subject of the Jorhat jail incident or the alleged statement of Srijut Purna Chandra Sarma. But to come again on the same ground on the plea of civil liberties being curtailed is rather taking the time of the House, in spite of the fact that the subject is very important. Here too, I find, Sir, that this subject is to have been discussed in the House by Resolution No. 15 of my hon. Friend, Mr. Mookerjee. Nobody deplotes more than myself that many of our hon. Members of the House and many youngmen, who with a sincere belief had adopted a certain line of politics, are behind the jails. My Friends will say "no need of shedding crocodile tears," but let figures speak on my behalf. From the start of the sabotage movement, from August 1942 up to 15th February 1945 orders for the detention of 464 persons were passed. Out of these 464 cases after review by me orders against 369 persons were withdrawn in that period, leaving 95 in detention. With the promulgation of the Restriction and Detention Ordinance of 1944 on the 15th January 1944, the case of each security prisoner had to be reviewed every six months. But I review the cases almost every month. Within this period, *i.e.*, after the promulgation of the Ordinance and up to 15th February 1945, 203 persons were detained of whom 108 have been released. I have passed orders of releasing three more people out of these 95 who were detained up to 15th February. So we will have only 92 in our hands.

Then again, as regards restrictees, in the period from 1st January 1944 to 15th February 1945, restriction orders on the movement and residence of 185 persons were passed. After review, orders against 55 were withdrawn up to 15th February, leaving 130 persons still under restriction. Their cases are being reviewed by me, and even in spite of the pre-occupation with this Session and the heavy work that it entails, I have reviewed the cases of two more and in one case I had allowed the restriction order to be withdrawn. As regards the others there was adverse report from the Deputy Commissioner against withdrawing the restriction. In the same period, that is, from the 1st January, 1944 to the 15th February, 1945 orders for externment from Assam or from certain districts have been issued against 77 persons. Out of these, orders against 6 have been withdrawn. Out of 95 persons at present in detention, 63 applied for family allowance and 39 persons were given family allowance ranging from Rs.10 to Rs.75 per month. In all, 24 applications were rejected. Out of 131 persons under restriction, 12 are in receipt of allowance ranging from Rs.12 to Rs.35

per mensem. As regards persons in detention, the Government of Assam have allowed from Rs.7 up to Rs.20 to be paid for buying personal requisites to those persons who cannot provide their own. For the edification of hon. Members, I may state, not in self appreciation but as a realisation of the stern facts that the Central Government have laid down certain principle for the treatment of political prisoners. They have given very strict orders as regards family allowance and other concessions. I can say without challenge that the Assam Government under my advice has gone the furthest limit beyond the limits prescribed by the Government of India in concessions and in granting family allowance to our security prisoners. The all-India personal allowance grant is limited to Rs.5 only. I have given in one case upto Rs.20 and the minimum that is given here is Rs.7-8-0. Then again the all-India instructions are to grant parole in only extreme circumstances of the sickness of the person detained or the sickness of his wife. I had to fight very hard with the Government of India to grant parole to people to perform the Adyasradh of their parents or near and dear ones. Even now, the Government of India is demurring to this policy adopted by me. Although being a Muslim, I have quoted Hindu scripture to establish that the Adyasradh is one of the principal religious ceremony to be observed by certain persons of the Hindu faith on the death of a certain member of his family and unless the Government of India definitely debar me I shall follow this policy. I say that the treatment to political prisoners so far as regards family allowance or personal allowance or other concessions has been on the liberal side than in any other province in India. (Maulavi Abdur Rouf—*Hear, hear*).

Two hon. Members specially my Friend, Mr. Bordoloi, has referred to the indiscreet and unfortunate jail incident at Jorhat about a year ago. My hon. Friend has said that he was an eye witness to the occurrence and therefore he could not believe the story which the Government reports had furnished to me and which I placed before the House. There were three distinct enquiries on that subject—first by Magistrate and then by Mr. Humphrey, the Deputy Commissioner and ultimately by the Commissioner, Mr. Gunning. From the reports which reached us, of their conclusions, we took action against the jail staff in the light of the evidence that came out in these enquiries. Three Assistant Jailors have been punished. Of course, according to my Friend in the opposite, their punishments may not be commensurate with the enormity of their dereliction from duty. But we had had the expert opinion of the General of Prisons on the subject and we had the advice of two Inspectors well and we have degraded two of the officers who were principally responsible and have reduced the salary by Rs.20 in one case for five years and in another case for one year. Thus it cannot be said the Government slept over the matter and did not do anything.

I cannot but refer to what my hon. Friend, Srijut Haladhar Bhuyan, spoke about the alleged statement of Srijut Purna Chandra Sarmah. I have received a challenging letter from Mr. Sarmah himself addressed to me. It is all a case of misunderstanding. While I visited Tezpur in company with the Hon'ble Miss Mavis Dunn, we met Mr. Sarmah and Mr. Bhuyan in the Tezpur Jail. A request was made to me by Mr. Sarmah that he should be transferred to the Nowgong Jail because his people were finding very great difficulty in interviewing him at Tezpur and he was also not keeping good health in that Jail. I told them that Government was bound by a policy of not keeping leaders, who have been incarcerated, in their own district Jails. On that principle it will be difficult for me to transfer Mr. Sarmah from there. Then there was a graver objection which I have found in the reports of the Police against Mr. Sarmah. In the Police report, I am giving out no official secret, it was stated that just prior to his arrest, Mr. Sarmah is alleged to have said that he had five hundred guns at his command and that he could have raged the Nowgong town to the ground. Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: Has not Mr. Sarmah refuted this and sent a letter to the Hon'ble Prime Minister?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : But later, the matter has been placed in the light that I stated in the House that Mr. Sarmah has himself stated like that. It is not so. It is I who stated to Mr. Sarmah that from police reports I found that this statement has been made by him and which precludes me from transferring him to Nowgong Jail. I hope it will satisfy Mr. Purna Sarmah. Any way, Sir, I am sorry that five hon. Colleagues are still behind the prison bars. Some Members spoke that they have all been in shattered health. I have received reports as regards the health of some of these people and barring the fact that one gentleman has lost 3 lbs. in 3 months there is no other sign of deterioration in their health. Sir, some of my hon. Friends whom I have released on grounds of ill-health show as good health, if not better than myself. They are all looking fit and in good-health, strong, energetic and as vocal as before. May they live long to carry their patriotic work in the best method they believe. Therefore, Sir, I can bid good-bye to the political side of the discussion we had here.

Then I will come to the communication issue. There were at least 8 Resolutions on the subject which have been debated in this House on the plea of Budget discussion. On this, I find that mention has been made of the bad condition of very many roads. Then I find that criticisms have been levelled against this Government for not objecting to the closure of certain railway stations and various honourable Members have referred to the discomfort of railway travel and scandalous and filthy condition of rolling stocks. We have had long list of subjects raised by our representative in the E. B. Zone and my Friend Mr. Mookerjee has given us a list of subjects which he raised or which he wanted to raise. Suffice it for me to say that we can at best place these matters either with the Railway Administration or before the Central Government, War Transport Department. We ourselves are handicapped by the Constitution Act itself from dealing with this subject. Everyone who has travelled in the trains recently knows that all the criticisms levelled are true. I can only say that my Friend, the Member of the Railway Board, Sir Lakshmiapati Misra will be visiting Shillong on the 21st of this month and I will request him to look into the matter personally for redress.

As regards bad condition of roads, I have been at pains to explain before the House that during this war period materials are unavailable and so long as Assam continues to be in forefront and is described by the military as an operational area we cannot hope to improve our roads. While I was at Dibrugarh in 1943, I personally suffered from the very big pot-holes in the road near the centre of the town, also near the Circuit Bungalow. Although my car could travel all the way from Shillong to Dibrugarh town, a distance of 250 miles, my car failed to cross a big hole near the Circuit Bungalow and I was stuck up here (*A voice* :—still there). Still there ! I took up the subject not only with the military but with the Deputy Commissioner and the Executive Engineer and I was told that every single boulder has been requisitioned by the military for purpose of their aerodromes and no metal was available to repair those pot-holes. I suggested to the local authorities that they may use bricks if soling materials were not available. Bricks have also gone high in price and therefore I have heard Mr. Moore saying that brickbats and earth may be mixed to fill those holes. We have taken up this matter with the military, not only with regard to Dibrugarh alone, but with regard to other roads as well ; but as usual they do not want to take up responsibility for any roads except those which are of vital necessity to them. Anyone who has travelled by the Trunk Road from Goalpara to Numalighar knows that the road has been made as good as Pandu-Shillong Road but beyond that they do not want to help the Provincial Government in any way. However, Sir, we have placed our case with the higher Military Authorities and we hope to get some change out of them later on.

The Supply Department has come in for a good deal of criticism. I will touch only the most important items. The principal criticism has been that although recommended by the House, there has been no fixation of a minimum price of paddy and rice throughout the Province. We were almost on the point of fixing a minimum price, as I had on an earlier occasion mentioned that Government will fix

a minimum price as soon as the price of rice falls below Rs. 10 ; but for some reason or other, not only here but in Bengal also, the price of paddy went up by Rs. 2 during December and January. Therefore, the limit of Rs. 10 which I had fixed in my own mind and in office notes was not reached. Some hon. Friend has said that this is flouting public opinion. As explained by me various times, the minimum fixed by Government will always be construed as a maximum for the cultivators by unscrupulous traders or even by some corrupt Government official of the Supply Department.

So, the fixation of a bottom price of rice and paddy under the present circumstance will not ensure the benefit of the producer and therefore I have stayed my hand from fixing such a price. I will lose no time in fixing proper floor prices for these two commodities whenever the occasion arises. It has also been said that procurement direct from the producer has not yet been started. It is true, the Supply Staff recently employed are busy taking over charge from the previous Syndicates who have got quite a big quantity in their godowns and also they had to meet current demand for supply. So, without waiting to procure it from the cultivators themselves, they had called for tenders and had supplied the current demand from traders holding licenses from Deputy Commissioner and Government.

The question of sugar, salt, mustard oil and cloth has been placed before the House many times. As regards sugar, all I can say is that instead of carping at the Ministry, the hon. Members should have given them a little thanks and praised the Central Government for not reducing our sugar quota. When everywhere else, sugar quota has been reduced by 15 per cent., our quota remained the same. It is on account of our personal efforts—I spoke personally to Mr. B. Sahay, I.C.S., who is the present Sugar Controller, I also made representation to the previous Sugar Controller, Mr. N. C. Mehta—that there has been no reduction in the sugar quota for our Province. My hon. Friends have complained about reduction in the issue of sugar in the villages. That has been necessitated by rationing of 9 towns in Assam and probably due to the probable extension of the rationing scheme in five more towns. Rationing presupposes a steady and regular issue of rationed quantities of commodities and therefore Government, on account of poor stock arriving in the Province, had to make a reduction by a little. We have not deprived the village people of the rural areas of any issue of sugar, but we have distributed the sugar between the urban and the rural population in the proportion of 2/5th to the urban and 3/5th to the rural areas. I am surprised to hear that in many interior villages sugar has not been issued at all. I will take up this matter with the Supply Department and see whether some relief could not be provided to the village people.

As regards salt, I would not say anything excepting that although our reserve stock is between 2 to 3 lakhs maunds, we are trying to increase it further and we have given definite orders to issue at the rate of 1/2 seer per adult throughout the Province.

About cloth, probably this matter has been discussed on the floor of this House in the shape of Questions and supplementary Questions and the matter was thoroughly discussed yesterday in the Upper House and I was pleased to find many hon. Members from this House listening to that discussion in the Council. After finishing all the preliminaries in reaching a satisfactory settlement, cloth has started coming in the rate of 3,000 bales per month. Our total quota is 4,600 bales and we hope henceforward all these bales will come in time and will be distributed by means of co-operative societies. Our Provincial Textile Commissioner, Mr. Hadi Hussain, who is also the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, is a great believer in the co-operative principle and he wants to start or rather he has already started Co-operative Textile Traders' Associations in every Subdivision. We hope now that the black marketing of mill-made cloths will be a thing of the past as soon as these co-operative societies in the Subdivisions begin to function properly. While on this subject, I am constrained to find that various hon. Members have taken trouble in criticising Government for treating Co-operative Consumers' Stores in a step-motherly way. But the facts are otherwise. When essential commodities become very scarce, people think of starting Co-operative Stores—Consumers' Stores—with very little capital. From about 100 stores

in the earlier part of 1944 by the end of this year we have as many as 1,600 stores and applications for 800 more are under scrutiny. Wherever I went, I received this complaint from the co-operative people that they were not getting sufficient stores from the Supply Department. When I took up this matter with the Supply Department as well as with the local officers—the Deputy Commissioners—I was confronted with two difficulties, firstly, that to be true to the co-operative principle, the societies could only cater for their own members and not for the general public who have got no concern with these stores, but members of these stores wanted to replace village retailers to sell goods not only to their members but also to non-members. Secondly, there was another practical difficulty—the difficulty of finance. I started by saying that some of these stores had not sufficient capital to buy stores in larger quantities than one bag and so these stores had to buy from wholesalers whose commission they had to pay. Government had followed the principle that any co-operative store who takes 5 bags of any commodity at a lot, can buy it straight from the Government distributing agency operating in the two valleys. By buying direct from the Government distributing agencies the stores save a lot, by avoiding middleman's profit. When commodities are distributed by agencies to wholesalers, they are given Re. 1 as margin of profit which covers cost of transit as well. From the wholesalers, it comes to the retailers who also get a commission and smaller societies have to buy from the retailers and they have very nearly to add Re. 1-8-0 to cost of their goods. When I found that in any particular area, the majority of the people had joined the co-operative stores as members I allowed those stores to cater for the entire population. I also allowed that those co-operative stores who could buy only 5 bags at a lot should be allowed to buy direct from the agencies or wholesalers. So instead of meting out step-motherly treatment to the co-operative consumers' stores I have allowed them sufficient concessions.

Srijut BELIRAM DAS: On a point of information, Sir. As we are also connected with co-operative societies, our allegations are.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Premier should not be interrupted in this way.

Srijut BELIRAM DAS: I am giving information.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I do not want any information; I know more than my Friend.

Then in this general discussion, I come to the Education Department. I must congratulate our new colleague, Srijut Ghana Kanta Gogoi, for his good maiden speech. If, as an elder, I give him a bit of advice I hope he will not take it amiss. As a maiden speech he has done quite well, but he has to broaden his outlook. He should start with a discussion on general matters before concentrating on matters of local interests. He raised a very big question when he started by saying, that in order to give much needed relief to the aided school teachers, all the high schools in the Province should be deprovincialised. Did he take into consideration what this will mean? This will mean that some 500 Government servants, for no fault of their own, would be thrown out of employment. Those officers who were recruited before 1937 are protected by law and they cannot be deprived of their services, and although there may not be any Government schools they will continue to enjoy their pay and other emoluments which have accrued to them. This question is not new. I know it was once debated as early as in 1928 and for the last 17 years this subject has been constantly before the Government. But, in my own opinion, it will be a bad business on the part of Government to deprovincialise all Government High Schools. Government, at my instance, while I was Education Minister, accepted a policy of maintaining at least one Government High School in every subdivisional headquarters as a model institution. The last of the schools to be provincialised or the last subdivision to get a Government high school is the Jowai subdivision where a high school was opened in 1942 only. Now, after completing in 16 years the policy adopted by Government in 1926 of giving a model school in every subdivision, it will surely be a bad policy to go against that and deprovincialise all the Government high schools. My Friend's other alternative, *viz.*, to provincialise all the existing schools, will also be neither acceptable nor

practicable. Government have got 22 high schools in 22 subdivisions, but the number of private schools will be in the neighbourhood of 200. To provincialise all these 200 schools it will require another colossal amount of money which is otherwise necessary for the spread of primary education. I hope the House will bear with me when I say that our first endeavour is to utilise every available penny in spreading general education, even of elementary standard, among the total population of the Province rather than giving higher education to only 10 per cent. of them.

The next point that was raised was that special treatment should be given to the Ahoms, Scheduled Castes and Tribal people. So far as Scheduled Castes and Tribal people are concerned, we have been giving special treatment as far as funds allow and we will consider whether the Ahom community, which is equally backward as those two communities, needs any separate and special treatment.

A question about giving technical training was raised. We are also as much cognisant of the necessity of giving technical training to our boys and so we are proposing to take advantage of the Government of India policy of sending 1,500 students for higher technical training in England and America and we are proposing to send 10 students as a first batch from this Province and probably by now our recommendations have been wired to the Central Government.

Various questions of local interests have been placed before the House and I will touch one or two points and if my Friends will take my assurance that all their grievances, I mean local grievances, concerning the Education Department, will be duly considered not only by my Colleague, the Education Minister, but by the other Ministers as well, as there is a joint responsibility, and if I do not mention the names of those schools, they would not take me amiss. Some mention was made of a high school near Doom Dooma and another at Digboi. Then there was mention of the Dangri Middle English School. This school is getting Rs. 75 per mensem as a grant. But this school is in the process of development to a high school and when all the classes are developed properly, we will see if better grant could not be given. Then as regards the Digboi school, as soon as this school is raised to the proper standard, we will see that this school is recognised and receives Government aid. My Friend, Mr. Marak, spoke about vacancy of a teacher of the Tura High School and complained that this teacher was brought by transfer to the Garo Hills though he was not a Garo. This man was brought from Kohima when the Kohima School was closed but since a substitute has been taken from the first of March in Tura School, the place is not vacant. There was a question about the grant of an insufficient sum of Rs. 900 for the purpose of repairing a school building. This question will be enquired into. My Friend, Mr. Abdur Rahman, was very vehement about the treatment which has been meted out to the Brindaban College. It is unfortunate that this being the second oldest private college in the Province receives a monthly Government aid of Rs. 300 whereas new institutions with lesser enrollment have been receiving Rs. 400 and in some cases Rs. 500—Barpeta is receiving only Rs. 400, but we have not neglected this Barpeta college. We propose to give a small non-recurring grant of Rs. 1,500 this year and the question of increase of the monthly grants to Barpeta as well as Habiganj colleges will be taken up when funds permit. The question as regards other colleges will remain in our consideration.

The subject of requisitioning some of the educational buildings by the Military has been very ably put by Mr. Gaurikanta Talukdar who said that education had become the first casualty in this war, so far as Assam was concerned. While he was in jail we did our level best to save our colleges and we made every possible arrangement to keep the colleges going. Now that war has receded from the boundaries of Assam, there are prospects of release of many of our educational buildings. Only this morning, in our War Measure Committee, it was decided to ask the Education Department to give a list of buildings in order of preference which could be released at the earliest possible opportunity (*applause*).

One hon. Member spoke that in our Post-War Reconstruction scheme military training should form a part, but he need not wait till the Post-War Reconstruction. Military training could be had in our Assam Regiment if our local indigenous people—

Hindus and Muslims—would come forward. One battalion was raised with a small section of our hill people and a 2nd battalion was raised which is composed of both Hills and plains people. Various Hindus and Muslims wanted to take advantage of the scheme. Hon. Members have heard more than once that this newly created Assam Regiment has done a great deal to save Assam. Therefore all credit goes to the people of Assam who have not only brought Assam to a very high standard among the martial races, but also have saved the Province of Assam from enemy onslaught.

I have practically finished with those speeches which were not very relevant to the Budget Estimates which have been placed by my Hon'ble Friend, Hon'ble Mr. Abdul Matin Chaudhury. One Opposition party speaker said that the Budget reflected only low mentality of the Cabinet. I omit the word 'low' and say that Budget reflects the mentalities and activities of the Cabinet and we are not ashamed of it in any way.

As regards those speakers who have taken the trouble of analysing the Budget and given before the House their considered opinion both destructive and constructive on the different items, the general complaint has been that the vast difference between Estimates as laid before the House and the Revised as shown in the later Budget should be avoided ; but as explained by the Hon'ble Finance Minister this is inevitable in a war-time Budget. This year Budget making was very difficult on account of the delay in getting the figures from the Comptroller.

There has been various constructive suggestions notably that of taxing all commodities by way of sales tax. We, Government, have been taking all these into account. We want to go up to the Government of India again for allowing us to levy a terminal tax, a subject which was taken up by me when I was Finance Member in 1931, but the Government of India refused to impose the tax in those days.

The learned Leader of the European Group suggested increasing the Court and Stamp Fees. The Court and Stamp Fees, from our past experience, do not yield much to the provincial exchequer. At the peak, the increase was at the limit of 3 lakhs of rupees. As we propose to seriously consider and submit to the Government of India the levying of a terminal tax which even in 1931 was expected to bring a total revenue of about 40 lacs and in these days must bring more we are concerned with this big item. From the same source, we had suggestions that even if necessary we should borrow and borrow at a large scale for constructive schemes. This suggestion is not new. Those gentlemen who take interest in going through every item of news have seen in the Calcutta Press recently within the last fortnight, that the Assam Government have gone to Calcutta money market for borrowing one crore of rupees by means of treasury bills. Treasury bills, as every hon. Member knows, are short term loan repayable within 6 months and carry a very low rate of interest.

The only item on the general Budget which has been criticised is the question of Post-War Reconstruction. Various hon. Members have thought fit to ventilate their wrath on this very important item in the Budget. With them, I agree that no provision has been made in the next year's Budget for any sum to this fund. But as hon. Members have already noticed that we want to take time by the forelock and propose, with the vote of this House, to place another 25 lakhs of rupees in the current year to this fund ; if during the course of the next year, it appears that like this year our apprehension of a deficit Budget passes away and we achieve a surplus Budget, we will see whether a sufficient sum, at least equivalent to Rs. 25 lakhs cannot be credited to the fund.

Like my Friends, I am also at the present moment in the dark as to what schemes will be placed in the Post-War Reconstruction Plan. But as I mentioned the other day that I will discuss this matter with the Heads of the Departments and some hon. representatives of this House on the 21st of this month and that I will formulate my scheme to be submitted to the Cabinet.

Hon. Members will rest assured that the development of the natural resources of Assam will be my primary concern. The Hydro-electric schemes, the availability of power for industrial purpose, the improvement of our agriculture, the introduction of new industries to this Province and the training of sufficient personnel in these

matters of development will be very earnestly considered and, if possible, put in the scheme by me.

My hon. Friend, Mr. Moore, started the general discussion of the Budget by specially referring to poultry and goat rearing. These subjects were to have been dealt with in Resolutions No. 19, 43 and perhaps some others. With him, we agree that these things which form the daily item of diet of many people need to be fostered. Two schemes have already been prepared in order to arrest the rapid depletion of the stock. One is the basic scheme and the other is the village subsidised scheme. Under the basic scheme, stock of improved breed of ducks and fowls will be maintained in different centres to meet the needs of the people. The expenditure for this will be at the neighbourhood of Rs. 8,000. Under the village subsidised scheme 50 fowl and duck centres will be conducted,—the total expenditure for this is estimated at Rs. 1,38,906. Mr. Moore's suggestion about the free distribution of pamphlets regarding poultry diseases will be taken up by the Department concerned.

There has been a suggestion for starting of an agricultural school in the Province. We cannot boast of having started an agricultural school, but we may say that a foundation has already been laid because we are going to start 3 schools in different centres for the training of Demonstrators. Complaints have been made about the serious depletion of plough cattle, but I may say that negotiations have been going on with Bihar and the Punjab Governments on the subject and I hope some plough cattle will be arriving in the Province very soon. But more than this, what I want to emphasise before the hon. Members of this House is that our Agriculture Department Province by subsidising the Khutis where there is a good stock of stud bulls. I had a talk with Mr. Woodford, the Director of Agriculture, who assured me that within the course of 12 months more than one thousand bullocks he will be able to produce, if not more.

Sir, I now come to the objection which was raised by the learned Leader of the European group. Of course he did not use the word 'suppress' but he criticised vehemently that Government has omitted to supply details of expenditure before the House which has been shabbily treated, "by producing nice round figures"—to quote his words, for the very high spending department of the Government. He assured the House, that talking like a shareholder to the Directors, he did not get sufficient materials to place his view on the subject. He said that it is customary in all commercial departments to produce a balance sheet at the end of the year which is placed before the shareholders, or to use our financier, Mr. R. N. Aditya's language, "before the Directors by the Managing Directors". In the first place there are two big assumptions on this. Although Government wanted to start the Assam Transport on a commercial basis, they were compelled to add the word 'semi-commercial' later. Government cannot run an organisation on commercial line because their officers and staff clamour for all the privileges of Government services and for the concessions given to Government servants. In the second place, it is not quite correct to say that no balance sheet was produced before the Members of the House. If my hon. Friend had said 'an up-to-date balance sheet' it would have been more correct. Mr. Mookerjee has already mentioned that in the Appropriation Accounts and Audit Report, 1942-43, sufficient details of the nature of a balance sheet were given about these two subjects. They are to be found on pages 154 to 156 of the Appropriation Accounts under heading "Motor Transport Organisation etc". The balance sheet was signed by the Accountant of the Assam Motor Transport and its Controller, Mr. Adamson, and ultimately said to be correct by the Comptroller of Assam, Mr. Rama Ayyar. The same procedure was followed as regards other commercial venture of the Government, namely, the Grain Storage Scheme. But what my hon. Friend may legitimately criticise is that on page 154 of the Detailed Estimates and Demands for grants for 1945-46 under "Miscellaneous Contingencies" the very flat figure of 30 lakhs has not been detailed. Similarly on page 155 under Motor Transport Organisation there is a very big

figure of Rs.45 lakhs under "Other itmes". Both these itmes relate to miscellaneous contingencies and one is definitely mentioned as contingencies and it is difficult to give all details of contingent expenditure. In no part of the Budget Estimates, details of contingent expenditure are given. But this being a very big amount, it is natural that it has arrested the attention of the hon. Members. For every item of expenditure there is proper accounts in both these Departments as these have got to be accepted by the Government of India Audit Officer, namely the Comptroller. So far as Miscellaneous contingencies of 1945-46 are concerned, I think I can give the actual figures to my hon. Friend. The first item is 2,30,000. The next is handling charges—Rs.10,21,000 and odd; godown rent—Rs.1,14,000 and odd; pay of civil agency staff and Chowkidars—Rs.39,000 and odd; miscellaneous expenses including gunny bags—Rs.1,98,000 and odd; payment of sugar excise duty—Rs.1,91,000 and odd; commission shrinkage, etc.—Rs.4,01,000 and odd; tees, expenses miscellaneous—Rs.12,000 and odd; the total is over—Rs.22,00,000; these are the actuals of 1944-45. For the revised figure of estimated expenditure under contingencies given by the Deputy Commissioners and Subdivisional Officers in a lump, they say that there will be 25 per cent. increase on this expenditure. In the next year they have raised it by another Rs.5,25,000 and odd. So, the figures come up to over Rs.27,00,000. Improving on this figure, a sum of Rs.30 lakhs has been shown as miscellaneous contingencies as asked for by the Department.

So far as the Motor Transport Organisation is concerned, the figure of Rs.45 lakhs consists of three different items. The first is a sum of 35 lakhs shown as payment to contract carriers, Messrs. Dullip Singh and J. C. Datta; the other expense is Rs.3 lakhs and the third item is Rs 7 lakhs for the depreciation fund, thus making a total of Rs.45 lakhs. I think a little explanation is necessary about the contract-carriers. This item is recoverable from the Military. What happens is this: the Military Department have a large number of projects for which they want transport which they have not got with them. They asked the Assam Transport to do this work. The Assam Transport in the normal course would have accepted the responsibility had there been no chance of its failure at any time. But considering the circumstances, the Assam Transport instead of taking up the work gave certain lend-lease lorries to the two contractors, Sirdar Dullip Singh, a big Military contractor who has been imported from the Punjab ever since military started contract work here—he was given 60 vehicles—and Mr. J. C. Datta, a Surma Valley gentleman, who was given 40 vehicles. They were asked to work under the orders of the Garrison Engineer for transport of military goods. They are to submit their bills to the Assam Transport, who will charge a small commission for realising the money from the Military. So, although the Assam Transport are not handling these Military goods of a very heavy nature in out of the way and very bad roads resulting in breakage of many vehicles, they threw the responsibility upon these contractors who work on a mile-tonnage basis, while the Assam Transport realise a small commission and make some earning. The item of Rs.7 lakhs is accounted for by the depreciation and renovation fund. Everyone knows, the life of the present vehicles, which are popularly known as war-quality vehicles, has been limited to 45 thousand miles of run. Some of these vehicles have gone out of the road and in order to renovate them a depreciation fund is in view and Rs.7,00,000 has been put on that account. There are sundry other items of expenditure for which a sum of Rs.3,00,000 has been provided. I have not been able to find out for what purpose this amount of rupees three lakhs has been provided, but as voucher will be kept for every expenditure and placed before the Comptroller, the hon. Members may rest assured that nothing will be allowed to be mis-spent or mis-appropriated.

I hope, Sir, I have given sufficient explanation to my share-holder Friend, Mr. Whittaker. I agree that he is a very new share-holder for he having come in contact with the Scotchman has rushed to find out the real state of affairs, although he himself is—what he politely termed us—a bureaucrat, not a trained bureaucrat like myself, but a sun-dried bureaucrat. I use the adjective "sun-dried" because only yesterday in opening a tin of fruits I found that it was advertised as "sun kissed" fruit. I cannot use the term "sun-kissed" in respect of an hon. Member of this House

