



The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 11 A.M. on Monday the 12th March 1945.

PRESENT

The Hon'ble Mr. Basanta Kumar Das, Speaker, in the Chair, the ten Hon'ble Ministers and sixty-one Members.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(To which oral answers were given).

Slaughter of cattle for Military consumption

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY asked :

*81. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The number of cattle slaughtered in the Province for Military consumption during the years 1943 and 1944 ?
- (b) Whether Government are aware that the price of plough cattle has gone so very high that cultivators are finding difficulty to purchase the same ?
- (c) Whether Government propose to stop the supply of cattle for Military consumption ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA replied :

81. (a) —From June to December 1943—33,090 cattle.
1944—50,368.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—Government have already placed an embargo on the slaughter of cattle of certain age, vide Government Notification No. C.176/43/93, dated the 31st May 1944.

† Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: What is that age ?

† The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: I am just reading out the Notification. "In exercise of the power conferred by clause (a) of sub-rule (2) of rule 81 of the Defence of India Rules, the Governor of Assam is pleased to direct that no person shall, as from the date of publication of this order, whether by himself or by his agent, slaughter or cause to be slaughtered for purposes of consumption civil or military, or sell or purchase or cause to be sold or purchased for purposes of such consumption :

(a) any cattle or buffaloes below the age of ten years ; or

(b) any cow in milk or pregnant, whether below the age of ten years or not ; or

(c) any sheep or goats under the age of 2½ or 2 years, respectively."

† Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Why figure has been supplied from June to December for the year 1943 ? What about January to May ?

† The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: We have got the figures from June 1943 to December, 1944.

† Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: What is the figure of January to May 1943 ?

† The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: That is not available, Sir.

Mr. F. W. BLENERHASSETT: Is it a fact, Sir, that the Military themselves have taken steps to sort out cattle which should or should not be slaughtered ?

†The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Yes, Sir.

Mr. F. W. BLENERHASSETT: Is it a fact that these cattle must eventually return to this Province for use as milk cattle and plough cattle ?

†The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Yes, Sir.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know who supplied the figures to the Hon'ble Minister ?

†The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: The District Officers.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Why the District Officers did not supply the figures from January to May ?

†The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: We did not call for those figures, Sir.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I understand that the figures from January to May were not supplied because there was no slaughter of cattle during that period ?

†The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: That may be known in the district offices.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know why Government did not call for the figures ?

†The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: We are expecting those figures, Sir.

Re Comrades Barendra Kumar Dutta and Ajay Bhattacharyya of Sylhet

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked:

*82. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Why it has been announced in the *Assam Gazette* of the 13th December 1944 that comrade Barendra Kumar Dutta should present himself before the District Magistrate of Sylhet or else he would stand charged for conviction for more than 7 years ?

(b) Whether Government propose to withdraw their order restoring his free movement after a thorough enquiry about his political activities during last year ?

(c) If not, why not ?

*83. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Why comrade Ajay Bhattacharyya is now detained in the Sylhet Jail ?

(b) Whether Government propose to release him after a thorough enquiry about his political activities during the last 4 years ?

(c) If not, why not ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

82. (a)—As he is evading service of an order passed for his detention, he was notified under the provisions of Section 3(b) of the Restriction and Detention Ordinance, 1944.

(b)—No.

(c)—If and when he is arrested or surrenders himself, Government will consider what should be done in his case.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Was he a Trade Union worker, Sir ?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am not aware of that.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

83. (a)—His activities were prejudicial and he evaded service of an order of detention in May 1941. He was consequently arrested and detained when he was found.

(b) & (c)—He has already been ordered to be released on scrutiny of his statements.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Has he been released on certain conditions ?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: He has made certain statements in his reply and we are scrutinising that. If that is found to be correct, he will be ordered to be released.

Controlled, price of thatch at Dibrugarh

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH asked :

*84. (a) Will Government be pleased to state what was the controlled price of thatch at Dibrugarh during the years 1943 and 1944 for 1,000 bundles of 2' girth ?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether the compensation awarded by the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, to villagers for thatch requisitioned by the Military during the aforesaid years was higher or lower than the controlled rate ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

84. (a)—Rs. 45 per thousand bundles of 2' girth and 3½' to 5' in length at the collecting point.

(b)—About Rs.20 per Bigha for good thatch was allowed where the growing crop was requisitioned. The rates for growing thatch and thatch bundled cannot, of course, be compared in the manner suggested.

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH : Will the Hon'ble Minister be in a position to say what is the rate of compensation for thatch requisitioned by the Military ?

† The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : An indication has been given in reply to Starred Question No. 84(b).

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH : My Question is whether the rates granted to the villagers were higher or lower than the controlled rate ?

† The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : I am not in a position, Sir, just now to supply the figure.

Mr. R. A. PALMER : Will Government take it from me that Rs. 140 is now being demanded per 1 thousand bundles ?

† The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : If that is the information of the hon. Member, Sir, I shall take it as such.

Mr. R. A. PALMER : In this case do Government consider it to be profiteering ?

† The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : That is a question of opinion, Sir. Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH : May I know, Sir, what is the rate of compensation for thatch requisitioned in Dibrugarh Subdivision ?

† The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : That I have already given in the reply, Sir.

(Starred Questions Nos.85 and 86 standing in the name of Maulavi Muhammad Amjad Ali were not put as the Questioner was absent.)

Export of fish to Bengal

Srijut KAMESWAR DAS asked :

*87. (a) Are Government aware that a large quantity of fish is now being exported from various places of the Province to Bengal ?

(b) Are Government aware that there has been acute scarcity of the same in many places in Assam ?

(c) Are Government aware that the present production of fish in this Province is not sufficient to satisfy the needs of its present population ?

(d) Do Government propose to take all necessary steps to stop export of fish to Bengal as early as possible ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

87. (a)—Yes. From the Habiganj and Sunamganj Subdivisions only.

(b)—Government have received reports of occasional scarcity of fish from certain areas.

(c)—Government have no such information.

(d)—No. The production of fish in the Habiganj and Sunamganj Subdivisions is more than the need of the civil population and the imposition of any ban is not considered necessary. Due to transport difficulties the only outlet for the surplus fish from these areas is to Bengal.

† Srijut KAMESWAR DAS: Is it a fact that fish from the lower districts of Assam Valley is also exported to Bengal?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: That is not to our knowledge, Sir.

(Starred Questions Nos. 88 and 89 standing respectively in the names of Srijut Purandar Sarma and Maulavi Muhammad Amjad Ali were not put as the Questioners were absent.)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(To which answers were laid on the table)

Wholesalers for imported and other commodities in Dhubri subdivision

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN asked:

57. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The total number of wholesalers for imported and other commodities appointed in the Dhubri subdivision?
- (b) Of them, how many are Muslims, Hindus and Tribals?
- (c) The number of Co-operative Stores in that Subdivision?
- (d) Of these, how many are allowed to take goods direct from the Syndicate and how many through wholesalers?
- (e) Whether it is a fact that in spite of repeated requests made from time to time by the Hamidabad Co-operative Stores to permit the said stores to take goods direct from the Syndicate, Government did not comply with their requests?
- (f) If so, why?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

57. (a)—Seventeen.
 (b)—Muslims 4, combined Muslim and Marwari 1, Hindus including Marwaris 11 (of which 7 are Marwaris), Tribal 1.
 (c)—Eighty.
 (d)—Sixteen are allowed to take goods direct from the Syndicate and the rest from the wholesalers concerned.
 (e) & (f)—Instructions have been issued to District Officers to allow such Co-operative Stores who are entitled to get 5 bags of any commodity at a time to get the supply at agency rates and there is no ground to treat Hamidabad Co-operative Stores contrary to Government policy.

Re Distribution of Sugar

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN asked:

58. (a) Is it a fact that Government have recently passed orders to the effect that with effect from 1st January 1945, no sugar will be allotted to rural areas and that the distribution of sugar will be confined only in towns?
 (b) If so, why?
 (c) Are Government aware that there has been strong resentment and protest from the rural population on this score?
 (d) If so, do Government propose to revise their decision on the point?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

58. (a) to (d)—The hon. Member is referred to the replies to Unstarred Question No.20 (a) to (d) asked by him at this Session.

Co-operative (distributive) Stores of Goalpara district

Srijut JOGENDRA NARAYAN MANDAL asked :

59. (a) Are Government aware that consumers within the Dhubri subdivision suffer greatly due to want of co-ordination between the Supply and Co-operative Offices ?

(b) Are Government aware that Co-operative (distributive) Stores in the district of Goalpara do not get the necessary help from the Supply Offices of that district ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

59. (a) & (b)—Government have no information.

Re Profiteering and blackmarketing in retail shops

Srijut JOGENDRA NARAYAN MANDAL asked :

60. (a) Are Government aware that profiteering and blackmarketing are still going on in retail shops in the interior villages of the district of Goalpara ?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to state whether they have taken any steps to stop such profiteering and blackmarketing ?

(c) Are Government aware that circle officers in charge of Civil Supply in the said district generally remain inactive in most cases and offenders always escape ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

60. (a), (b) & (c)—No such report has been received from District Officers. Government have no reason to hold that local officers are not doing their utmost to stop profiteering and blackmarketing.

Re Settlement of immigrants in Assam

Maulavi MATIOR RAHMAN MIA asked :

61. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) If the immigrants have actually settled in Assam ?

(b) If so, what is their number under each Thana in each district of the Assam Valley at present ?

(c) If they have come here with family to settle permanently ?

(d) If their main profession is cultivation ?

(e) If they have been given any land in the places where they have settled ?

(f) If so, how many of them have got settlement of land and at what proportion per head ?

(g) If it is a fact that most of them are allowed to settle in the low land on the banks of the river Brahmaputra and in its Chars ?

(h) If it is a fact that the land they have got settlement of was neglected jungle, low and waste land and once quite unfit for cultivation ?

(i) Whether those lands were full of wild beasts, unfit for human habitation and quite unhealthy due to malaria and black fever, etc.

(j) Whether the immigrants who settled on those lands had to make them fit for habitation and cultivation with their own money ?

62. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) If it is a fact that during the rainy season the lands on the banks of the Brahmaputra occupied by the immigrants become overflooded ?

(b) What crops the immigrants generally produce on the land they have been allowed settlement of ?

(c) If it is a fact that the immigrants produce both Ashu and Amon paddy, jute and all sorts of pulses, mustard seeds, etc., on those lands ?

- (d) If it is a fact that the immigrant Muslims are the only expert cultivators for jute production in the Assam Valley ?
- (e) What is the quantity of jute production on an average per year in the Assam Valley ?
- (f) What amount the Assam Government got as duty on jute crops from the Central Government per year on an average from 1940 to 1944 ?
- (g) For what purpose the Assam Government spent that amount ?
- (h) If it is a fact that in every district of the Assam Valley, large areas of land, fit for cultivation, are lying as waste land ?
- (i) If so, why no settlement of these waste lands is being made with the landless immigrants for cultivation ?
- (j) If so, do Government propose to give settlement of these waste lands to those immigrants at an early date ?
- (k) Why those flood stricken immigrants are not allowed any fresh settlement of land ?
- (l) If it is a fact that about 6 to 7 lakhs of landless immigrants are wandering throughout the Valley for settlement of land ?
- (m) If it is a fact that the lands of the immigrants on the banks of the rivers Brahmaputra, Chalkhoa, Beki, Manash, Ai, Bhulkadoba, Gadadhar, Gaurang, Tipkai, etc., are washed away almost every year ?
- (n) If it is a fact that the homesteads of the immigrants of the villages Marnairchar, Dubapara, Naktarchar, Degdhoa, Baladmari, Majherchar, Mohanpur, Tinkona, Latibari, Santoshpur, Kokila, Chakla, Japearchar, Nambarpara, Bargola, Ramnarirchar, Tiapara, Halangerchar, Kaldanga, Rankhaoa, Ballapuri, Dinabandu, Harjuarchar, Jamilabari, Bamueralga, Rajapurpara, Badua, Chandganj, Geramari, Kherdoba, Chunimari, Roychanderchar, Shialmarirchar, Bhangmari, Tulsibari, Batabari, Jhanpura, Poragaon, Nengrarbhita, Jamaderhat, Bandikhana, Thengpuri, Gotta, etc., in the Goalpara subdivision have recently been washed off by the river Brahmaputra.
- (o) If so whether Government propose to settle some other alternative land to those people in the interior of that subdivision ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

61. (a)—Yes.

(b)—The information is not available.

(c)—In many cases.

(d)—Yes.

(e)—In many cases.

(f)—The information is not available.

(g)—Yes, when possible as they prefer this.

(h)—In many cases.

(i)—Yes, in many cases.

(j)—Yes.

62. (a)—Partly, otherwise crops would not grow.

(b)—Paddy, jute, pulses, potatoes, peppers, onions, garlics, mustard, etc.

(c)—Yes.

(d)—They are more expert than others.

(e)—26 lakhs of maunds in 1943-44.

(f)—Rs.10,93,170.

(g)—The receipts go to the general revenues.

(h)—Yes.

(i), (j) & (k)—Land is being settled in accordance with the policy laid down by Government.

(l) Government have no statistics.

(m)—The banks of these rivers are eroded now and then.

(n)—Government have no information.

(o)—If applications are made by those people, local officers will dispose of them according to Government policy.

Re Line System

Maulavi MATIOR RAHMAN MIA asked :

63. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The meaning of the term 'Line System' Government act upon with regard to the settlement of lands in the Assam Valley districts ?
- (b) When, how and why this Line System was enforced in the Assam Valley ?
- (c) Where it was first enforced ?
- (d) Whether there are any provisions of law under which it was introduced and is being maintained ?
- (e) If Government are aware as to whether this Line System is enforced in any other Province ?
- (f) Whether it is a law or a System ?
- (g) Whether there is actually a line of demarcation in any area just like boundary line on a map ?
- (h) The name of the community affected for enforcing this System ?
- (i) If it is a fact that this Line System is intended for the Bengalee Muslim immigrants only ?
- (j) Why it is not applicable in the case of the non-Muslims ?
- (k) If it is a fact that the Bengalee Muslim immigrants are not allowed to go outside this Line ?
- (l) If it is a fact that the Bengalee Muslim immigrants will not get any further settlement of lands in the Assam Valley ?
- (m) If it is a fact that the Bengalee Muslim immigrants are not entitled to build a permanent house or to cultivate lands in the Assam Valley ?
- (n) If it is a fact that they are not allowed to purchase a plot of land there ?
- (o) If it is a fact that they will not get possession of land even if it is purchased under a registered document ?
- (p) If it is a fact that they are not entitled to take possession of or to cultivate the land belonging to their wives in case of intermarriage ?
- (q) If it is a fact that there is no such restriction on the part of the other communities to go, buy and take possession of land within the Bengalee Muslim Immigrant Blocks ?
- (r) Is it a fact that the late Advocate General of Assam gave his opinion to Government that the Line System is against the provisions of section 298 of the Government of India Act ?
- (s) If so, do Government propose to give effect to this opinion ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

63. (a)&(b)—'Line System' means the System adopted by district officers first about 1920 to control and regulate settlement of lands to immigrants by laying down lines on the maps and on the ground to demarcate the areas beyond which no immigrant could have settlement of waste land.

(c)—Nowgong.

(d)—No, by executive order.

(e)—No.

(f)—A system.

(g)—Yes.

(h)—Immigrants ; for a definition, the hon. Member is referred to para-graph 11 at page 4 of the Line Committee's Report.

- (i)—No.
 (j)—Does not arise.
 (k)—The prohibition extends to all immigrants coming from Bengal.
 (l)—No.
 (m)—No.
 (n)—No.
 (o)—No.
 (p)—No.
 (q)—Yes.
 (r)—Yes.
 (s)—Government have always maintained that the Line System is a temporary

expedient designed to control settlement in waste land in the interest of peaceful relations between new and old settlers. It was not intended to maintain it permanently.

Settlement of waste lands with landless people

Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR asked :

64. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether settlement of waste lands with landless people under the Land Settlement Scheme enunciated in Government Resolution of the 15th January 1945 has commenced ?
 (b) If so, in which district or districts ?
 (c) Whether the quota of the cultivable waste lands meant to be reserved for future expansion as contemplated in paragraph 6 of the said Resolution has been worked out and set apart in the districts where the aforesaid Scheme is going to be applied ?

65. (a) If the answer to Question No. 64 (b) above be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state (i) the areas, (ii) localities and (iii) condition of the lands so reserved in each district ?

(b) Do Government propose to set apart lands for future expansion before giving settlement of lands under the said Scheme ?

66. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The procedure adopted for ascertaining whether a particular candidate for settlement of land is a landless person ?
 (b) The authority who decides the question ?
 (c) The procedure adopted for ascertaining whether an outside candidate for land had come into the Province before 1st January 1938 ?
 (d) The authority to decide the above question ?

67. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether the proposed Provincial Advisory Committee and the District Advisory Committees for settlement of waste lands have been constituted ?
 (b) What are the specific functions of the said Committees ?
 (c) Whether they will be consulted in deciding the matters referred to in Question No. 66 above ?
 (d) Whether these Committees will have a voice in selecting and setting apart lands for future expansion ?

68. (a) Are Government aware that there exists a large percentage of indigenous landless population in the thickly populous parts of Assam Valley such as Upper-Borbhag, Bahjani, Pokowa, Dharmapur, Hazo, Ramdia, Pub-Bangsar and Karara Mauzas in the Kamrup district ?

(b) Do Government propose to set apart some suitable blocks for those people in each district ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

64. (a)—Not yet.
(b)—Does not arise.
(c)—No.
65. (a)—Does not arise.
(b)—No, because such would be contrary to the recommendations of the Conference.
66. (a), (b), (c) and (d)—The matter is still under consideration as no executive instructions have yet been issued.
67. (a)—No Committee, Provincial or district, for settlement of waste lands was contemplated by the Conference. If, however, the hon. Member has in mind the Advisory Committees mentioned in paragraph 17 of the Government Resolution, then the Provincial Advisory Committee has been constituted and the District Advisory Committees have not yet been constituted.
(b)—Advisory.
(c)—The hon. Member is referred to paragraph 17 of the Government Resolution on land settlement dated the 15th January 1945.
(d)—No.
68. (a)—Government have no information.
(b)—The attention of the hon. Member is drawn to paragraph 3 of the Resolution.

Complaint regarding admitted Questions not being answered.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, may I rise on a point of privilege of the Members of the House? That is with regard to Questions. I submitted a set of Questions during the last November Session and they were duly admitted, but during that Session these Questions did not come up. Then again on the 18th December last, I submitted the same set of Questions with certain additions which were duly admitted, but up till now replies to those Questions have not come. Sir, these Questions were submitted for eliciting certain information and if we had, by now, before the voting on Demands for Grants are taken up, received the information, it would have been very valuable.

Another fact that I want to bring to your notice is this. Cannot Questions which were put in the previous Session and which lapsed be made available with replies in the subsequent Session?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Under the rules unanswered Questions lapse, but the hon. Members are within their rights to give fresh notices in regard to Questions that give replies to the Questions to which the hon. Member has drawn our attention. That is all I can do. I think Government will see that the Questions are replied to as early as possible and if possible before voting on Demands for Grants comes up before the House.

Statement by the Hon'ble Speaker *re* granting of permission for absence from Assembly meetings to certain M. L. As.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I am now to ask the Hon'ble House to consider the question of granting permission of absence from meetings of the Legislative Assembly as applied for by the following hon. Members:—

1. Rev. J. J. M. Nichols-Roy, Member representing the Shillong Constituency.
2. Srijut Haladhar Bhuyan, Member representing the Nowgong (West) General Constituency.
3. Srijut Siddhi Nath Sarma, Member representing the Kamrup (Sdr) General Constituency.
4. Srijut Mahadev Sarma, Member representing the Tezpur (East) General Constituency.

Hon. Members are aware that the question that I shall put before the House is to be voted upon without any debate.

Rev. J. J. M. Nichols-Roy after attending the Budget Session of the Assembly, 1943, went to America and landed there in June, 1943. He thought of coming back to India to attend to his duties here in September, 1944, but unfortunately he has not yet been able to secure passage for the purpose although he tried hard for it and is still trying. The total period of his absence for the last three Sessions (*i.e.*, from 18th November 1943 to the 23rd November 1944) is 51 days. The circumstances under which he is unable to attend the meetings of the Assembly are thus admittedly beyond his control. He has also sent greetings to all hon. Members of this House in the following terms :

“Greetings from California to all hon. Members Assam Legislature. May God grant you all Members and Government and people peace and prosperity. Regret my absence. Transportation unavailable. Request Hon’ble Assembly extend my leave.”

The circumstances under which Srijuts Haladhar Bhuyan, Siddhi Nath Sarma and Mahadev Sarma were unable to attend the past five Sessions of the Assembly are well-known to all the hon. Members of the House. These circumstances were admittedly beyond their control. All three of them were in detention under the Defence of India Rules respectively from the 13th August, 15th August and 21st September 1942, till the 10th February 1945, 29th November and 9th December 1944. Though they have now been released from prison, restrictions have been put on their movements.

The applications of all these four hon. Members are dated respectively the 23rd January, 17th February, 5th and 9th March, 1945. The reading of these applications would take a considerable time of the House. The requirements of Regulation 1 (d) of Appendix E to the Assembly Rules which is a Regulation framed by me is complied with by what I have stated before the House. I therefore dispense with the formalities of reading these applications.

Having regard to all these facts therefore, I put the questions before the House in the following terms :—

The question is :—

“That this Assembly do permit Rev. J. J. M. Nichols-Roy to be absent from the meetings of the Assembly (1) for the period from the 18th November 1943 until the date on which the March 1945 Session of the Assembly is prorogued and also (2) from all future meetings of the Assembly which may be held hereafter till he is in a position to return to India.”

The Question was adopted.

The Hon’ble the SPEAKER : Then I put the next question.

The question is—

“That this Assembly do also permit Srijuts Haladhar Bhuyan, Siddhi Nath Sarma and Mahadev Sarma to be absent from the meetings of the Assembly for the periods from the 12th day of November 1942 to the 23rd November 1944, 2nd March, 1945 and 8th March, 1945 respectively.”

The Question was adopted.

Adjournment Motion *re* paper scarcity in most of the schools and colleges of Assam

The Hon’ble the SPEAKER : Then I am taking up the consideration of the Adjournment Motions which are still pending for disposal.

The first Adjournment Motion* stands in the name of Srijut Kameswar Das. Does the hon. Member ask for leave to move the Motion ? It seems the purpose of the Motion has been sufficiently served by the Answers to the Questions the other day. Is there any urgency to move the Motion ?

Srijut KAMESWAR DAS : No, Sir.

Srijut KAMESWAR DAS : to move :

*That the Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance to wit, the situation arising out of failure of the Government to remove paper scarcity entailing stoppage of impending written promotion examinations in most of the schools and colleges of Assam.

Adjournment Motion re Failure of Government to advance 40 per cent. of price of paddy lying in the hands of cultivators of Sunamganj and Habiganj

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then comes the Adjournment Motions of Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury. His first Motion† has been practically disposed of in connection with another matter which came up the other day. Does he ask for leave to move his second Motion?

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Sir, as regards the second Motion, I would like to say something. I would therefore formally move for leave.

Sir, I beg leave of the House to move—

“That this Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance and of recent occurrence, *viz.*, the failure of the Government to advance 40 per cent. of the price of the marketable surplus of paddy lying in the hands of the cultivators of Sunamganj and Habiganj, as promised in the last Session of the Assembly”.

Sir, at the suggestion of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, the House arrived at the unanimous decision that 40 per cent. of the price of marketable surplus of *buvo* paddy lying in the hands of the cultivators of Sunamganj and Habiganj would be advanced by Government. This was intended for giving them relief from the acute distress in which they had fallen owing to their not being able to dispose of their paddy due to the procurement policy of the Government. I submit that Government did not fulfill their promise; the result has been disastrous for the cultivators of these two subdivisions. For want of funds almost half of the cultivable land will remain waste this year, and also, for want of money they could not procure the bullocks and seeds. I submit, Sir, by this action Government not only flouted the unanimous verdict of this House, but also crippled the agricultural economy of the subdivisions of Habiganj and Sunamganj. As such, I consider this an urgent matter of public importance.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is true that in January we could not advance money as arranged, for the new staff that was employed was busy in taking over charge and also in meeting current demands. But it has been reported to me that from February the advance is being made.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: May I inform the Hon'ble Premier that the time for advance is long past, and there is no more necessity for any advance now?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If there is no necessity then no advance will be made.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: As regards *buvo* paddy the time is long past.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then there remains no more cause for grievance. Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: But what about the loss suffered by the cultivators due to money not being advanced?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: There is no question of any loss, because they could sell to the private traders.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: How could they sell to the private traders? The Syndicate was stopped from purchasing any paddy from them.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: They could sell to the other traders in the field who have been supplying to Government.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Having heard the hon. Member, who has sought leave of the House to move this Motion, and the Hon'ble Premier in this connection, I do not think, this matter is an urgent one, and I therefore, do not give my consent to the Motion.

†Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY to move:

This Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance and of recent occurrence namely, the cloth famine in the Province of Assam.

The Motions† standing in the name of Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya stand barred in view of the discussions that were held on the same subject matters the other day. Mr. Mookerjee's first Motion†† also stands barred on similar grounds. Does he like to ask for leave in regard to his second Motion ?

Adjournment Motion re closure of certain Railway Stations in Sylhet District

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : I beg leave of the House to move—

“That this Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance namely, the situation arising out of the approval given by the Government of Assam to the closure of a number of Railway Stations in the district of Sylhet by the Bengal and Assam Railway Administration”.

Sir, 12 stations in the district of Sylhet have been closed altogether very recently. When the Railway Administration enquired of the Assam Government, the latter without consulting the elected representatives of this House, who are in the Local Railway Advisory Committee, or the other elected members of the Sylhet district, gave their approval to the closure of the Railway stations. Moreover, Sir, they did not make any enquiry whatsoever as to whether the closure of those stations would cause inconvenience to the general public. Sir, the matter is very urgent, and of recent occurrence, and the public in general are suffering a great deal for this high-handed action of the Government. I therefore think, Sir, that the House will kindly give me leave to move my Motion.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is no occasion for censuring Government in the matter. If I explain the Government's position, I think, my hon. Friend will be satisfied that everything possible was done in this matter.

Sir, the Railway Board by their letter dated the 8th June, 1944 asked the General Manager, Bengal and Assam Railway, to close certain less important flag or D-class stations with a view to economise consumption of coal by the Railway. The Coal Controller, on account of the critical situation of coal, pointed out that as the Railways are the largest individual consumers of coal, they must economise their consumption for the benefit of other consumers. It was estimated that for every halt of an average train that is eliminated at a roadside station the consumption of coal is 215 pounds. The Bengal and Assam Railway authorities accordingly, by their letter dated the 26th June, sent a list of stations—about 40 of them—proposed to be closed, and asked for the approval of Government. The Government addressed the Commissioner of Divisions, who had an enquiry made in each case by the Subdivisional Officers concerned. The Subdivisional Officers not only had the enquires made, but also consulted public opinion. In certain cases they consulted the Chairmen of Local Boards and the Chairman of the Indian Tea Association also, and they submitted their recommendations. They recommended that certain stations (I would confine myself to the Sylhet district as the Adjournment Motion deals with that district only), *viz.*, Langla and Sutang, should not be closed. On receipt of their recommendation the Government recommended that some of these stations should not be closed, and it is satisfactory to note that the Railway Authorities, after considering our recommendations, decided to close only 14 out of 40 stations, 10

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA to move :

†This Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance namely, the situation arising out of the continued denial of the right of the public to hold meetings and assemblies except with District Magistrates' permission in various districts of the Province.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA to move :

†This Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance namely, the cloth and yarn famine prevailing throughout the Province due to the failure of the Government Machinery of Supply.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE to move :

††This Assembly do now adjourn to discuss an urgent and definite matter of public importance and of recent occurrence to wit the refusal of permission to attend this Assembly to Srijut Gauri Kanta Talukdar, Srijut Siddhi Nath Sarma, Srijut Haladhar Bhuyyan and Srijut Mahadev Sarma, M.L.As.

of which are in the Sylhet district. Now, after the closure, the Government did not receive any more representations from the public except in the cases of three stations—one in the Cachar district, *viz.*, Rupashibari and the other two in the Sylhet district, *viz.*, Kayasthagram and Bhattapathak. Now, we again addressed the Railway authorities about these two stations and the last reply we received was this. About Bhattapathak we have received this reply that this station may be served by another station which is Baramchal, two and a half miles away. The question of re-opening stations generally will no doubt be reviewed as soon as any change of circumstances warrants. If any of the hon. Members has got to say anything about any particular station Government will be still prepared to represent the case of that particular station to the Railway authorities. I hope, as soon as the coal situation is improved it will be possible for the Railway authorities to restore these closed stations.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: In this connection may I refer to a letter which was addressed to me by the Government as a member of the Advisory Board? Since after the closure of Bhattapathak and Chakapan stations there was certain agitation in the 'Janasakti'. In quoting the comments of the 'Janasakti' the Secretary, Public Works Department wrote a letter to me saying, "In forwarding herewith an extract from the newspaper 'Janasakti' dated the 6th December 1944, I am directed to request you to place on the agenda of the next Local Advisory Committee meeting of the Bengal and Assam Railway (A. B. Zone) the grievances of the travelling public and bring this to the notice of the Railway authorities for redress as far as possible".

Another flag station named Shakir Muhammad was closed. Regarding the closure of these stations—Chakapan, Bhattapathak and Shakir Muhammad—I submitted proposal to the Railway Advisory Board for restoration of these stations. While these things were being discussed in a meeting of the Advisory Board, dated the 17th February, 1945, last, I was surprised to learn from the Railway authorities that these stations were closed down on the approval of the Government of Assam but by their letter I was asked by the Government to move in the matter. How can there be a consistency? The Secretary of the Board told me that we had been bluffed by this Government. May I ask the Hon'ble Minister whether the Subdivisional Officers took public opinion? The Hon'ble Muhammad it is a mile from my home. It is not a big station. As regards Shakir not to maintain any staff for the Railway Station. The authorities have house. Thus it would have been natural if we had been consulted at least for courtesy's sake. The Subdivisional Officer might have asked me. Even, I personally did not know that this station was going to be closed. So far as Bhattapathak and Chakapan are concerned it is a pity that the public were not consulted. However, as the Hon'ble Minister said, if we have got any grievance, Government will take up the matter very seriously and have the stations restored.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my hon. Friend Mr. Abdur Rahman is agreeable to accept the version of the Hon'ble Minister that the Subdivisional Officer of Habiganj might have given his views, but he did not consult the public. But I want to go a step further. Sir, the report of the Commissioner goes like this that he consulted the Subdivisional Officers concerned and the Subdivisional Officers, in their turn consulted public opinion and then they gave their opinion. I say, Sir, this is far from truth; it is false. As to the Subdivisional Officer of Karimganj, the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet gave me to understand, while I was going to attend a meeting of the Railway Advisory Committee, that due to this closure of stations the public would be seriously handicapped as stated by the Subdivisional Officer to him and the Deputy Commissioner enquired of me if I could be of any help in the matter. When I raised this point in the Time Table Sub-Committee meeting I was surprised to hear that it was our Government who gave their approval to the closing of the stations. The Government did it without considering the consequence. Now let them come forward with this assurance that they will move in the matter and see that the stations are re-opened. Then and then alone I can withdraw my Motion.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: The allegation made by Mr. Mookerjee is quite incorrect. I have got the Report of the Subdivisional Officer. This is in the file. I can read out from the report of the Subdivisional

Officer, Karimganj which runs thus :

"I beg to report after local enquiry that flag stations Suprakandi, Kayasthagram, Kanaibazar, Fakoagram and Rupashibari are mainly passenger booking stations. There is no objection to the closing down of these flag stations as desired by the Railway Board. Public, I think, will not be put to much inconvenience if these stations are closed down for the present.

As regards Chargola, I may mention that previously it was a tea booking station, but since the opening of the Dullavcherra branch line its importance has diminished to a certain extent. It is now mainly meant for passengers and there is no objection if it is closed down.

Eraligul.—It is mainly a tea booking station. Eraligul Tea Estate and two other side Gardens are just near the station. There may be some inconvenience for these Gardens if the station is closed. The next nearest station of the Garden is Baroigram, situated three miles off from the Garden. There is no other importance of this station.

Kathaltoli.—It is now purely a passenger booking station. It was previously an important station when oil mine was in operation at Patharia. But it has since been abandoned and the station has lost its importance. It may be closed.

Dhamai siding.—It is not a station. A siding has been prepared for facility of Dhamai Garden. It is a tea booking siding served by Dhakhinbhad station. No other importance. May be closed down. Dhamai siding is about two and a half miles away from Dakhinbhad station."

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: What about the local enquiry ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: After local enquiry he reported all these things.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then, what does the Hon'ble Minister say with regard to the request that the Hon'ble Minister should give an assurance ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Sir, I have already assured that if there be any particular grievance, the Government will refer the matter to the Railway authorities. In one case, I have already done it. It is the case of the Bhattapathak station. The question is that on account of serious coal position some of the stations must be closed. Among the 40 stations in the list 14 stations have been closed and about some of these 14 stations the matter may be represented, but all of these stations cannot be restored.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: If one station is mentioned by each Member what will the Government do ? Supposing 28 Members name 28 stations.....

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: We cannot accept that. It is on account of serious coal position that the measure was taken.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Now the hon. Member having tabled the Adjournment Motion, ought to have been more definite in his statement of all the facts. He says that a number of railway stations have been closed. He has not named the stations in the Motion itself. And if the Motion is permitted to be discussed it would be starting discussion of a very wide scope for bringing in the names of other Railway stations of which he may not mention. The hon. Member should have mentioned the names and the number of stations that have been closed.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, I have mentioned the name of the district and so the number cannot be increased beyond the number of stations closed in the district of Sylhet.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: But so far as the Motion stands it is a bit vague. What does the hon. Member propose to do now ?

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, when the Hon'ble Minister has given the assurance that if there is any grievance and if it is reported to him by any hon. Member of this House, he will try to do his best, I think, Sir, I ought to be satisfied and I do not like to beg leave of the House to move my Motion and I hope, in future, Government will consult the Members of the Local Advisory Committee.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: As the hon. Member does not press his Motion for leave, it is not necessary for me to decide its admissibility.

There remains only two other Motions. They will stand over for to-morrow.

The Shillong Civil Courts and Laws Bill, 1944

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move: "That the Shillong Civil Courts and Laws Bill, 1944 as passed by the Assam Legislative Council be taken into consideration."

Sir, it may interest the hon. Members to know that this identical Bill was brought forward in the Upper House by our hon. and learned Friend Mr. S. M. Lahiri and accepted by that House after a full consideration of all its aspects. This has considerably eased my position. There is another little fact which encouraged me to hope that this hon. House will readily lend its support to such a piece of legislation, for, as I look around me, I can see legal luminaries adorning the Benches not merely on the Government side but on the Opposition as well. So these hon. Friends can have no possible objection in the acceptance of a measure of this kind. It is calculated to extend the sphere and scope of law that they deal with themselves. This piece of legislation was called for in view of the fact that the Capital of the Province, being situated in the area known as the Partially Excluded Area which is beyond the pale of our legislation, got saddled with some of the disabilities, although according to the framers of the constitution, the Municipality and the Cantonment area of Shillong were not included in the Partially Excluded Area. But as I have said before, Sir, that the Capital happens to be situated in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Therefore, a disability of that district fell to the lot of the poor Capital of our Province which has made it necessary to introduce this Bill in the legislature. Now, Sir, in this connection I cannot help remarking that it was up to Government to initiate a legislation of this kind. We should, however, feel grateful to our hon. Friend who took this up for making up this omission on the part of Government.

By virtue of this Bill my hon. Friends will be able to see for themselves that a regularised Judiciary is contemplated for Shillong. Formerly, it was a jumbled up affair from Governor down to the Deputy Commissioner and their assistants. By this an appropriate judicial machinery has been suggested for Shillong and this is the best that could be done for Shillong in the present circumstances so far as the portion of the town is concerned. Provision has been made to introduce the British Procedure Code and the Civil Courts Act in place of the Scheduled Districts Acts which are in practice in Shillong so that the contemplated machinery may function satisfactorily. With these words, Sir, I hope that I shall get the support from all quarters of this House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved: "That the Shillong Civil Courts and Laws Bill, 1944 as passed by the Assam Legislative Council be taken into consideration."

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we cannot but support the principles underlying the present Bill. For many years there has been a persistent agitation over the subject-matter of the Bill. So long a great injustice was being done to the British subjects residing in Shillong and in other parts of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills as they were denied the elementary rights under the Civil Laws prevalent in the rest of British India. A well-conceived legislation can no doubt remove this great anomaly.

But, Sir, we cannot but take exception to certain provisions of the present Bill which militates against the basic principles of ordinary civil law. I am rather surprised that this did not receive due consideration in the hands of the hon. Members of the Upper House. I cannot but consider these clauses as crude and ill-conceived.

First of all, I would refer to clause 5, sub-clause (1) of the Bill. I cannot imagine how the appellate powers of the Hon'ble High Court can be vested in the Revenue Tribunal. Is it not too far trespassing on our common sense to ask us to agree to consider the Revenue Tribunal as the Final Court of Appeal and of Revision in all civil matters?

My objection rests on two fundamental grounds. The Member of the Revenue Tribunal is no Judicial Officer. Generally a high executive officer without any judicial experience adorns the Tribunal. Secondly, in the administration of civil laws very complicated matters are bound to crop up and these are finally decided by a bench of the High Court. Where is the scope for such a decision in the Tribunal?

Then again by sub-clause (1)(b) of clause 5, the Court of the District Judge, Assam Valley Districts, has been sought to be recognised as the Court of first appeal. Who will guarantee that this District Judge will not be an officer senior to the Member of the Revenue Tribunal? Would it be a good policy to submit the decisions of a Judicial Officer before the Executive Member of the Revenue Tribunal for revision? I submit, Sir, that it is an absurd proposition.

I am conscious that the present Bill, if passed into law, will give an additional status to the learned members of the Shillong Bar. But how many of them will be entitled to appear before this pseudo-High Court under the Bar Council Act? As a matter of fact, at present even Muktears with Revenue pass certificates are appearing before the Revenue Tribunal.

Now, I come to sub-clauses (3) and (4) of clause 5 of the Bill. These two clauses have an ingredient of retrospection. These seek to apply the provisions of the Bill to all appeals and applications pending before the Governor, the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner. This is rather pursuing things with vengeance. What about part-heard cases? Will *de-novo* trials be conducive to public interests?

I regret, that I do not find any plausible meaning to the proviso attached to sub-clause (5) of the said clause. It appears to me to be contrary to the substantive clauses mentioned before.

Sir, I have already stated that I am at one with the hon. Mover so far as the principles of the Bill are concerned. But the present Bill cannot ensure a safe piece of legislation. The defects that I have pointed out are too vital and inherent to be remedied by way of amendments.

I would ask the hon. Mover to allow an opportunity to the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge to come forward with a new Bill on the subject. The proposed new Bill may be introduced in the Upper House from where the present Bill emanated.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to put my share of tribute to the hon. Member of the Upper House, Mr. Satyendra Mohan Lahiri, for making up the deficiency not only of ours but of the Government of Sir Muhammad Saadulla. If I do not mistake, I can almost unhesitatingly say that this Bill will have his most whole-hearted support because he had for a long time been conceiving the idea of not only transferring the British portion of Shillong to the jurisdiction of the High Court but also the entire Shillong and other backward districts of the Province. Therefore, Sir, I hope the Hon'ble Minister, when he rises to speak on this Bill, will accord his whole-hearted support to the provisions of this Bill.

Sir, as to the objections raised by my Friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury, I am sorry to say that his objections so far as they relate to clause 5 have no substance, because nothing prevents the appointing authority of the Revenue Tribunal to appoint an experienced and retired Judge as President of the Tribunal.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: That is not so, now.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: It is said that the President of the Revenue Tribunal may be a person who has no idea of judicial duties. He may be quite inexperienced in the matter of dealing with civil cases but that can be said also of the officers who at present dispense justice. Let us, for instance, take the case of the Commissioner of Divisions who has been all along outside the Judicial Service. He cannot be competent to deal with cases arising out of civil appeals but that difficulty may very easily be overcome by allowing the District Judge as has been provided in this Bill to deal with civil cases that may arise in the court of Shillong.

At present what do we find here? The Political Officer, who deals with the civil cases in Shillong, has generally no experience in trying civil suits. But he is trying complicated civil cases. The highest Tribunal—His Excellency the Governor of Assam—may be a person who is quite innocent of the technicalities of civil law; but still we are to remain content with his administration of justice. So, this move envisaged in the Bill will certainly be an improvement and in that view of things it must be welcome.

Another objection raised by my Friend is that in the Revenue Tribunal the revenue agents also can appear. That is quite so. Revenue agents and muktears can appear in all revenue cases but, the very fact that they can appear in Revenue Tribunal, does not entitle them to appear in all civil cases. There is no difficulty in considering

the Bill now and whatever difficulties there may be, can be overcome, I think, by amendments which hon. Members can move in this House.

With these words, Sir, I whole-heartedly support the Motion of my Friend Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee.

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAIN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I take this opportunity to speak a few words in this connection?

Sir, I am sorry that I have not been able to subscribe to the views of my hon. Friends Mr. Chaudhuri and Mr. Mookerjee. On the other hand, Sir, I find myself in complete agreement with what has been said by my hon. Friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury. This Bill, though it has come from our Elders—and for that reason is entitled to our serious consideration—did not go to a Select Committee of that House.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Yes, it was sent to a Select Committee.

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAIN: I am sorry, Sir, for the mistake and I stand corrected. But in any case, certain provisions of this Bill, as it emanates from the Upper House, are not beyond question as has been pointed out by Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury. So, Sir, in that view of the matter, if the Government agrees to come forward with a comprehensive Bill without any loss of time, I should ask the hon. Mover of this Motion not to press forward with this Bill. As Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury has justly suggested, as a matter of courtesy any Government Bill that may be brought forward on the line of this Bill should be introduced in that very House and the hon. Mover of this Bill—Mr. Satyendra Mohan Lahiri—may be given a hand in the final shaping of provisions of such a Bill.

With these few words, Sir, I oppose the Motion that has been put before the House.

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, besides the difficulties which have been pointed out by two of our hon. Friends, there are other difficulties also. I think it will be good if I let the hon. Members know what attitude I took in the Upper House.

First of all, I must point out to the hon. Members that the subject-matter involved in this Bill is a very intricate and complicated one and it will certainly be unwise to have any hasty legislation over such an important matter. When the Bill was first moved by Mr. Satyendra Mohan Lahiri in the Upper House, I pointed out the difficulties to him very clearly and then I wanted to have the Bill circulated to elicit public opinion, especially the opinion of the people who are directly concerned; but the hon. Mover did not agree to that. Then the Upper House hurriedly got the Bill passed after referring it to a Select Committee. Even in that Select Committee I suggested to take advice of the local officers concerned but that was also not agreed to by the Members of the Committee.

Now, coming to the Bill, Sir, hon. Members will find that the Bill has got two distinct and separate purposes. Firstly, to extend to and enforce in British Shillong certain enactments which are in force in British India, and secondly, to remove appellate and revisional jurisdiction of the Commissioner and His Excellency the Governor and transfer it to the Judge of the Assam Valley Districts and the Revenue Tribunal.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: What is the fear?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: The Bill has two distinct and separate purposes so essentially diverse in nature, and for this very reason I cannot but invite the hon. Members to oppose it.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I know, Sir, what will be the effect if a Military Governor is appointed here?

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

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: Now, Sir, so far as the first purpose of extending certain enactments to the British portion is concerned, I shall deal one by one and about the extending of certain enactments which have been mentioned in the First Schedule I am giving the Government views. With regard to the Transfer of Pro-
 perty Act of 1882, we sought the opinion of the Deputy Commissioner of Khasi and Jaintia Hills, who was also consulted generally in connection with all the Acts proposed to be extended, and he considered that this Act should be excluded from consideration for the present, as the peculiar system of land tenure in British Shillong renders necessary

a more detailed examination of the possibility of extending it—an opinion which the Government consider entirely reasonable.

With regard to the Suits Valuation Act of 1887, this Act contains provisions which involve the High Court. For example, section 5 (1) prescribes that the Provincial Government must consult the High Court before making certain rules, and section 9 gives the High Court power to determine the value of certain suits. When there is no intention in the present Bill to bring the Courts in British Shillong under Judicial subordination to the High Court, Government consider it anomalous to apply an Act containing such provisions.

With regard to the Provincial Small Causes Courts Act of 1887, this Act also gives to the High Court certain powers, both of control and in revision. For example, section 25 gives the High Court powers of revision over any decision of a Small Causes Court constituted under the Act, and section 28 gives the High Court the function of superintendence over the Small Causes Courts, including the calling for returns. Government consider that the same objection therefore arises as in the case of the Suits Valuation Act. These are the difficulties with regard to these three Acts. But as regards the Indian Evidence Act, the Indian Contract Act and the Specific Relief Act, I may give the assurance to the hon. Members that as far as these three Acts are concerned I am prepared to bring in a legislation of our own after taking necessary opinions from the officers and the people concerned.

With regard to the second purpose, the Bill aims at taking out the Revisional and Appellate jurisdiction from the Governor, and the Commissioner and giving it to the Assam Valley Districts Judge and the Revenue Tribunal. The Bill purports to extend two Acts, the Civil Procedure Code and the Civil Courts Act, *in toto* to British Shillong, and at the same time has the effect of excluding from operation some of their most important provisions, by providing that it will be other authorities than the High Court which will exercise the appellate and revisional jurisdiction which those Acts confer. Sir, on the one hand the Mover wants to apply entire Civil Code and Civil Courts Act and on the other hand he wants to take out the revisional appellate jurisdiction from the High Court and give it to some other Court. So I do not find any consistency in his proposal. I will give example in each matter. By section 3 of the Code, the District Judge, as the District Court, would be, for the purposes of the Code, "Subordinate" to the High Court, but a confusing proposition arises when by the Bill the District Judge is put into judicial subordination to the Revenue Tribunal. Secondly, if the Code is applied *in toto*, appeal will lie from the Revenue Tribunal, in cases that satisfy section 110, to His Majesty in Council. This is a privilege which would be regarded with great jealousy by those subjects as regards the jurisdiction of the Courts in the Shillong Administered Areas. The Administered Areas will be much greater than the British portion. I think, Sir, I have sufficiently made the difficulties clear. As it is a very intricate matter, if I am given an opportunity. I will come before the House with a more comprehensive Bill in future. I agree, Sir, when the hon. Mover thinks that the people living within British Shillong should not be deprived of the benefit and advantages of the enactments which are in force in British India, but at the same time I see that the matter requires close and careful examination. I may point out that Government has recently brought into force the Attachment of Salaries Act which has given relief to judgment-debtors on the lines of Civil Procedure Code at Shillong. Sir, gradually in this way we shall be prepared to come forward with necessary Bills after considering the matter very carefully.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not a lawyer and so I cannot speak much on law points. But the principle of the Bill is a very simple one and a straightforward one, and this Motion concerns Garo Hills also.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: How does it concern Garo Hills?

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: It concerns in this way, Sir. Because the Motion is to extend the Civil Law in Shillong Courts it should extend outside Shillong in whole of Khasi Hills. But if I am not in a position to speak on Garo Hills in this Motion, I have nothing to say any more, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am really disappointed in the Upper House. Sir, the question is very simple. I am not going to give one thing by one hand and to take it away by the other. Yet for argument's sake of course he has

put those words. The question is, whether a Deputy Commissioner or a District Judge so far as Judicial administration is concerned is a better one and the other point is whether the Revenue Tribunal, the Chairman of which according to law must have the qualification of a High Court Judge, will be a better one than His Excellency the Governor of a Province for the same purpose. So far as the executive side is concerned, we have nothing to do but so far as the judicial side is concerned, Sir, I think that undoubtedly the District Judge and the Revenue Tribunal will be better and I hope that I shall get the support in this matter of this House and specially of those who are connected with legal profession. Sir, another point I like to bring before this House which has been advanced by the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge is that we should not take recourse to hasty legislation. Sir, in 1937 we heard about it. The point was first raised in 1937. Eight years have passed but Government has done nothing in this direction and yet they say that we are going to legislate hastily. As regards assurances, Sir, the less said, the better. I think you are the best judge in this House to say as to how much weight we can put on these assurances. Sir, I say best judge because hon. Members remain absent sometimes or other but you are sitting there all the time and you know the value of these assurances better than any one else.

Sir, there may be defects in the Bill. Let those defects be corrected by amendments. There is no harm in removing the defects. But I don't find any reason why the Bill should not be allowed to be considered and brought forward before this Hon'ble House in its next stage namely, consideration clause by clause. Sir, so I cannot agree and I press my Motion that the Bill be taken into consideration.

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir. I have called it a hasty legislation in the sense that even the people concerned could not get an opportunity to express their opinion in the matter.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I ask the Hon'ble Minister to remember that a conference was held in the year 1939 to discuss this whole question and some officials including the Commissioner of Divisions and the Member of the Revenue Tribunal were present and certain decisions were arrived at, at the time and even then can it be called a hasty legislation?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: I understand, in that conference most of the members who are concerned opposed bringing in such a legislation. Even then, Sir, I have already given an assurance that I shall be prepared to come forward with a more comprehensive Bill after careful consideration. Sir, I hope the hon. Member will give Government an opportunity to come forward with a comprehensive Bill instead of pressing for the present Bill which is defective.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the Shillong Civil Courts and Laws Bill, 1944 as passed by the Assam Legislative Council be taken into consideration."

The Assembly divided.

Ayes—29

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Babu Akshay Kumar Das. | 15. Srijut Mahi Chandra Bora. |
| 2. Mr. Arun Kumar Chanda. | 16. Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri. |
| 3. Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee. | 17. Babu Nirendra Nath Dev. |
| 4. Srijut Bepin Chandra Medhi. | 18. Babu Rabindra Nath Dev. |
| 5. Babu Dakshina Ranjan Chaudhuri. | 19. Srijut Ram Nath Das. |
| 6. Srijut Ghanashyam Das. | 20. Srijut Sarveswar Barua. |
| 7. Srijut Gaurikanta Talukdar. | 21. Babu Shibendra Chandra Biswas. |
| 8. Srijut Gopinath Bardoloi. | 22. Srijut Siddhi Nath Sarma. |
| 9. Srijut Haladhar Bhuyan. | 23. Maulavi Dewan Ali Raja. |
| 10. Srijut Jogendra Chandra Nath. | 24. Mr. F. W. Blennerhassett. |
| 11. Srijut Kameswar Das. | 25. Mr. E. H. S. Lewis. |
| 12. Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy. | 26. Mr. D. B. H. Moore. |
| 13. Srijut Lakshesvar Borooah. | 27. Mr. A. Whittaker. |
| 14. Srijut Mahadev Sarma. | 28. Mr. Jobang D. Marak. |
| | 29. Babu Sanat Kumar Ahir. |

Noes—26

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla. | 12. Rai Sahib Doulat Chandra Gohain. |
| 2. The Hon'ble Mr. Naba Kumar Dutta. | 13. Srijut Surendranath Buragohain. |
| 3. The Hon'ble Maulavi Munawwar Ali. | 14. Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury. |
| 4. The Hon'ble Srijut Hirendra Chandra Chakravarty. | 15. Khan Bahadur Hazi Abdul Majid Chaudhury. |
| 5. The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi Mudabbir Hussain Chaudhuri. | 16. Maulavi Abdur Rahman. |
| 6. The Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Nath Saikia. | 17. Maulavi Md. Abdus Salam. |
| 7. The Hon'ble Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri. | 18. Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahabab Chaudhury. |
| 8. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman. | 19. Khan Sahib Maulavi Muhammad Amiruddin. |
| 9. The Hon'ble Miss Mavis Dunn. | 20. Maulavi Badaruddin Ahmed. |
| 10. The Hon'ble Srijut Rupnath Brahma. | 21. Maulavi Ghyasuddin Ahmed. |
| 11. Srijut Ghana Kanta Gogoi. | 22. Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury. |
| | 23. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mufizur Rahman. |
| | 24. Maulavi Naziruddin Ahmed. |
| | 25. Srijut Bhairab Chandra Das. |
| | 26. Mr. C. Goldsmith. |

The Motion was adopted.

Presentation of the Report of the Select Committee on the Assam Land and Revenue (Amendment) Bill, 1944.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to present the Report of the Select Committee on the Assam Land and Revenue (Amendment) Bill, 1944. The Report is unanimous.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Bill as reported by the Select Committee be taken into consideration.

Sir, in making this Motion, I need only point out that the two principles which were embodied in the Bill were unanimously accepted by the Select Committee in which the different sections of the House were represented. The two principles were clearly stated in the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill. One of the principles was that any person whether he owned such estate or a part thereof shall be entitled to make the deposit of the land revenue.

There was a safeguard against any creation of title by reason of that deposit. In the Bill as it emerged from the Select Committee it has been clearly stated in clause 2(2) that "nothing in this section shall create any title or right to the land sold in favour of the person making a deposit as prescribed above by virtue alone of the deposit made by him".

Then the second principle is that instead of 30 days, the deposit will be made in 60 days. This period synchronises with the period which is given for filing an appeal under section 79 of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, and that also, Sir, had the acceptance of all the Members of the Select Committee. The Select Committee, Sir, had the advantage of a valuable note from Sir Keith Cantlie, the present Member of the Revenue Tribunal, and his note supported the principles of this Bill. Sir, at the time when this small Bill was referred to the Select Committee at the suggestion of the Hon'ble Revenue Minister, sincerely speaking I resented the idea of committing the Bill to a Select Committee because I thought that this Bill was so simple that it could have been very easily discussed in this House. But, Sir, having taken my seat in the Select Committee I saw the wisdom of the move made by the Hon'ble Revenue Minister because we had the opportunity of examining the various aspects of the Bill, and we also had the advantage of coming to a unanimous decision about it. Sir, I also thank you for giving me this opportunity of moving all the stages of the Bill to-day, because this will enable the poor raiyats, at least those who generally take advantage of this provision, to take benefit of the provisions of this law in course of this year. I understand, Sir, that the Upper House will sit towards the end of this month, and this Bill may be placed before them, and I expect it to be passed into

law soon and that will enable the defaulting raiyats to take advantage of this Bill in respect of land revenue payable this year, and this will also minimise a great deal of trouble both of the Revenue Tribunal as well as of the Government because it will put a stop to the fairly large number of sale appeals which now come before the Revenue Tribunal.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

‘That the Assam Land and Revenue (Amendment) Bill, 1944, as reported by the Select Committee be taken into consideration.’

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we on the Government side have no objection to the Bill, as reported by the Select Committee, being taken into consideration, as we think, Sir, it will confer some advantage on the public, and at the same time will add considerably to the conveniences of the Government.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Sir, the Hon'ble Revenue Minister has not replied to one point raised by Mr. Chaudhuri, who asked the Hon'ble Minister to place this Bill before the Upper House.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Minister is not to place this Bill in the Upper House; it is the business of a private Member of the Upper House to do so.

The question is:

‘That the Assam Land and Revenue (Amendment) Bill, 1944, as reported by the Select Committee be taken into consideration.’

The question was adopted.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, I beg to move that the Assam Land and Revenue (Amendment) Bill, 1944, be passed.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

‘That the Assam Land and Revenue (Amendment) Bill, 1944, be passed.’

I am putting the Motion as a question.

The question is:

‘That the Assam Land and Revenue (Amendment) Bill, 1944, be passed.’

The question was adopted.

Motion re Post-War Reconstruction Programme of Government of Assam.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move:

‘That this Assembly is of opinion that the Post-War Reconstruction programme of the Government of Assam be taken into consideration.’

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is both a privilege and a responsibility to open a debate on a subject as important as this. I was one of those who believed that reconstruction—of the Government of Assam. I thought this particular foundling was being taken from door to door with no one to take care of its feeding or its clothing. I even thought at one time that its only protection from the Secretariat weather was a pair of dark glasses because it could not stand the light of public criticism (*hear, hear*). It now appears however that the foundling is being given some care from a very large variety of persons, although it is still being carried from door to door in search of a permanent home. I understand at present Mr. Roy, the late Director of Public Instruction, is its adopted father. The foundling however is certainly anaemic and its limbs lack directions; in short, it lacks power, a fact which the report frankly admits. The report also admits, in its concluding paragraph, that it is only a rough outline, and a collection of aspirations without regard to Government's financial resources. We should applaud these aspirations, for in all our plans our reach should be higher than our grasp. It is good to know that Government wills the end even if we have some doubt whether Government wills the means to that end. Within the limits of a debate of this kind it is only possible for individual speakers to indicate certain principles which, in their opinion, should be applied. Like the Heads of Departments we too may mention our aspirations, the desire of the moth for the star, but at this stage the working principles are more important. My main fear in the matter of development is that other provinces which, by the accident of war or the accident of geography, have

been able to build up large funds from revenue surpluses and have the administrative personnel to engage in planning, will steal a march over all the smaller provinces including Assam. There is a real danger that Assam's role will be that of a hewer of wood, a drawer of water and a grower of tea for the large provinces like Bombay, the Punjab and the United Provinces.

This development race is like Alice's adventures in the Red Queen's land. We in Assam have to run quite fast to stay where we are and to run still faster to catch up.

Development is so important that it requires from all parties a measure of agreement and a determination that, once having embarked on a scheme, the broad principles of that scheme will not become the play-thing of party politics. I can imagine nothing more unfortunate than development being the subject, like the immigration policy of successive Governments, of periodical conferences in which each conference tries to modify the recommendations of its predecessor.

In searching for a measure of agreement amongst all parties I must refer to one significant phrase used by the hon. Mr. Bordoloi in his speech last Tuesday in which he advocated "self-sufficiency for villages". In my opinion, Sir, the way of self-sufficiency is the way of stagnation. I believe that the only hope for the cultivators of this Province is to increase their wants; to satisfy these wants by exchange with the outside world: to grow and to make the things we are best qualified to grow and to make: and to exchange these by trade for the things we cannot make locally or can only make with great difficulty. What our villagers require is more contacts with the outside world, more education by travel even if it is by a crowded Bengal and Assam Railway train or a broken down bus; and if we are to find a way out of the dilemma of the people of Assam increasing by two millions every ten years, the only way is so to increase the standard of life of the common man that he would rather have two children well clothed, well fed, well housed and educated than four children living in poor conditions. When the common man acquires a wide range of wants his standard of living will be such that he will not imperil that standard by greatly increasing the number of mouths to be fed and the number of bodies to be clothed. The life which parents will then confer on their children will be a boon instead of a burden.

At the risk of reiteration I suggest that the problem for Assam is how to increase the provincial income, namely the annual total of goods and services she can produce. In this Assembly we so often debate vigorously about the slices of the cake which should go to particular nation-building departments while the over-riding problem is how can we increase the size of the whole cake. If only we can increase the size of the cake quickly enough the division into slices will not be so difficult. In this Province, however, with so much leeway to make up, we have to move quickly. We need the way of the bull-dozer instead of the way of the Kodali; we need the three furrow metal plough instead of the wooden implement which scratches our soil. As a corollary to this argument that it is necessary to increase the provincial wealth quickly it is also equally necessary to waste nothing. Mistakes which waste resources can be borne by a major province but would cripple a small province like Assam.

I now put forward certain principles for consideration. With so many competing schemes, I suggest that those schemes which are directly and quickly productive of income should be given precedence over either the culturally productive scheme or schemes whose material productivity is a long term consideration. This is not to say that simultaneously there should be no cultural progress for obviously education is an essential and an immediate need. But the resources we can devote to education are limited and I would suggest that the technical education would pay quicker dividends and produce those resources which later could be ploughed back into providing academic education. Holding this view, I approve of the order of priority given in the scheme, *viz.*—

- (1) Agricultural and Forestry.
- (2) Communications.
- (3) Hygiene.
- (4) Industrialization.
- (5) Social Services and Education.

Increasing productivity, however, by direct schemes is only one method. Another aspect is how can a man's working days be increased. Productivity is a function of tools and man-hours. If only we could approach the question of Malaria

in terms of man days lost per year, Malaria would be banished from this Province in five years, because each of us would then know what an enormous burden Malaria places on the Province. Mechanical tools to a man ridden with Malaria are more useless than antiquated tools used by an able-bodied man. To increase productivity by increasing the number of man days through ridding the province of Malaria is a scheme which produces immediate increase in wealth and one which should be financed from revenue. A start has been made but the approach is altogether too timid.

The second question one must ask is the ratio of schemes to be financed from capital and from revenue. The report throws little light on this important problem but I suggest for consideration that in a Province where at present our revenues are small and inelastic there is a case for a very high ratio of capital schemes to schemes financed from revenue. This means heavy borrowing and it means also that a considerable portion of our future revenue must be mortgaged in interest charges. But if the House accepts the view that development must come quickly to be effective, there is no choice but to invest large capital in the people of the Province in the belief that this capital investment will produce income which in turn will become, by taxation and internal borrowing, revenue for schemes in the distant future. We cannot make posterity pay for schemes which increase our current wealth: we shall have to aim, as other countries have had to aim, *at paying as we go*, in the belief that such debts as we now incur on productive schemes will not loom large compared with our increased Provincial income.

The next question I wish to ask is, should power be provided before industries, or should Government invest immediately large sums in financing industries such as spinning mills, jute mills, etc., with no relation to power? To answer this question I must ask another—In Assam what have we got that other provinces have not got? Clearly our big advantage is the large resources of hydro-electric power and cheap coal. It is the experience of all developing countries that once electric power is running in your transmission line, industries will naturally follow. For my own part, I regard the main inducements which Government can give to private industries such as Cotton Mills, Jute Mills, Paper Mills and Cement factories, as the provision of cheap power and assistance in the acquisition of convenient factory sites.

Sir, I am opposed, and, I hope the House will agree, to direct Government investment in companies manufacturing commodities, like, cotton, jute and cement. I want Assam to be a Province, Sir, in which the industrialist is free not only to invest his money but also to lose his money without affecting the individual tax-payers. I want time, I consider that as in all progressive countries there is an over-whelming case for the State providing electric power and here I would suggest that the unit should not be the province but should be the region. If we are going to have electric power distributed widely for the benefit of the common man, we require to increase quickly the number of customers. It is of no importance where our customers live so long as they pay their bills.

My next question is should the Assembly favour private enterprise or State enterprise? I have already almost answered this question, namely, that I think the only assistance private enterprise should be given is cheap power, sites, and, in certain cases a guaranteed consumption by Government. For example, if an efficient spinning mill were to be set up by a private person in this Province, I should regard it as fair for Government to agree to take a fixed quantity of yarn for the first 3 years say, for sale and distribution to the handloom industry. I do not regard it as a sound scheme for Government to run a spinning mill much less a weaving factory.

Another point on which I hope the House will agree is the predominance of Agricultural results and for years to come agriculture will be the dominant industry. The agriculturist is a notorious conservative and it will be necessary for Government to function aggressively to overcome this conservatism, particularly to overcome the belief that if you introduce machines you will displace labour. The truth is the more horsepower per man the greater his output and the greater his consumption. No one can say what is the limit for the absorption by India's millions of better food, and a better choice of food, particularly, the protective foods like milk, eggs and vegetables. If we cannot industrialise ourselves as quickly as we should like, the next best thing is for us

to feed the industrial populations of other Provinces and ourselves with better foods grown on our land. I, therefore, like the emphasis in the agricultural schemes on improved marketing and would merely mention modern developments such as refrigeration which would enable milk, eggs, butter, vegetables, meat, etc. to be taken to the wage earning populations of other provinces. Mechanization will enable 2 crops to be grown where one is now grown; 3 to be grown where 2 are now grown, and fodder crops for the improved cattle which will supply these protective foods.

My next plea is for the technician. I hope this Government will agree to free trade in brains. The really qualified technician—the expert—is one of the cheapest investments in the world. Brains can move more easily than any other commodity across oceans and frontiers provided Governments allow them to move. I approve of the proposal to send students abroad for technical training, but I do suggest that this method is too slow. If we are to make quick progress, let us import technicians for a period of years on contract and let them teach persons already engaged in the industry as well as students. I care not from where these technicians are imported. I merely quote that successful industries in this Province have for long adopted this view. When Chhattak wished to build one of the best Cement factories in Eastern India, it brought in Swedes from Sweden for its electrical engineering and Germans for its structural engineering. When the Assam Oil Company drilled for oil, it imported American drillers to teach Indian drillers. When Russia built factories and steel works, which have carried its armies to within 30 miles of Berlin, it imported technicians from England and America. When in England we required in war time to produce more fodder crops for cattle, England imported a grass expert from New Zealand. It may well be that France could provide the best expert for sericulture; it may even be desirable to import technician from Japan in the post-war world. I do not think it is possible to import technicians from other provinces in India as other Provinces are already as hungry as we are for technical staff. I suggest, therefore, that in order of priority, our needs for technicians should be met by—

(1) Importing technicians;

(2) Sending men already engaged in industry for further advanced technical training;

(3) Sending students abroad for technical training. But in any case, Sir, let us have free trade in brains as brains are the most easily transportable commodity. And amongst these technicians I hope there will be a Cost Accountant so that we shall know what Government's various adventures will cost them and if any concern asks for assistance, we shall know just what assistance, if any, is really needed.

My next principle needs little argument. I hope this Assembly will agree not only to maintain its existing wealth but to increase it. I refer particularly to Forests. The Forest Department proposes to spend only 66 lakhs or 0.8 per cent. of a total of 83 crores. I suggest that the Forest Department could justify greater expenditure and that this Assembly would approve of such a proposal for building up a revenue earning asset.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member is exceeding the time-limit.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: I will take another five minutes, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Very well, the hon. Member may go on.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: My next point deals with communications, in which the Public Works Department have put up a formidable programme of 54 crores for roads, as well as a building programme of 1½ crores. It is quite certain that the Public Works Department as at present designed could not possibly spend this amount in 5 years or even in 10 years, and it is not possible, therefore, to say what the total cost of schemes in a 5-year plan will be. We can, however, approve of the Public Works Department spending on roads to their maximum capacity during the next 10 years, knowing that this is far short of 54 crores. Roads seem to me one of those items of capital expenditure which will pay both short term and long term dividends. Since, however, roads figure so prominently and take such a large slice of the cake, I suggest that the possibility of taxing immediately some of this improvement should be investigated. In...

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

Adjournment

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

(After lunch)

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, when we broke off for lunch I was mentioning Public Works Department programme estimated to cost 54 crores. It is quite certain that the Public Works Department as at present designed could not possibly spend 54 crores in five years, ten years or perhaps even in 20 years. Roads seem to me one of those items of capital expenditure which will pay both short term and long term dividends. Since roads figure so prominently and take such a large slice of the cake, I suggest that the possibility of taxing immediately some of this improvement should be investigated. In England where large areas have been wiped out by bombing, road and housing development is an immediate problem. In that country it has been decided that where a development programme takes over agricultural land, the great increase in the value of all the neighbouring land shall belong largely to the State. This is what has been called taxation of "betterment values." Let me illustrate. Suppose you run a 50 ft. waterproof, dustless road through an area. On both sides of that road landed property will become more valuable, as building land and possible factory sites. Hitherto in India this increment of value has been dealt with by the settlements at intervals of 30 to 40 years. I suggest that this unearned increment should be taxed at far shorter intervals than the present long period settlements. It is a difficult question but one which is not entirely foreign to Indian conceptions of land revenue administration.

Another principle which I hope hon. Members will debate is the best method of spreading new ventures. Members will find that under the Head 'Co-operation' it is proposed to cover the whole Province with a network of various societies which will be federated into a Provincial Society. Similarly, certain big agricultural schemes are proposed to be spread evenly throughout the Province. I would suggest respectfully for the consideration of Government that where Government are propagating new ideas and new schemes, it would be far better and far more economical to concentrate on, say, one thana in each Subdivision rather than attempting to cover the whole Province thinly. It would make for ease of supervision; it would reduce the number of Inspectors; if the experiment is a failure we should lose a great deal less money by making this experiment in compact blocks rather than covering the whole Province. If communications are going to be developed as extensively as I think they are, people in every Subdivision will be able to see how these experiments work in the selected areas, and will be able to say from first hand observation whether they would like the experiments extended to their own districts. I have, perhaps naturally, a great mistrust of ambitious new schemes which seek to deal equally with large and unwieldy areas or territories. These schemes usually end in failure: the only people who profit by them are the large army of Inspectors drawing travelling allowances. On the other hand, I approve whole-heartedly of a proposal like the travelling dispensaries mentioned at page 18. As we cannot build sufficient fixed dispensaries for the people, the next best thing is to take a mobile dispensary to the people.

Finally, Sir, there is a word of warning. There are at least two important omissions. First, the Scheme gives no indication of the size of contributions from Central Funds. Secondly, all these schemes have been drawn up without a very reliable idea of the future price level. In Assam; as the Hon'ble Prime Minister regularly reminds us, we have suffered more from inflationary price levels than any other Province in India and it seems to me that it will take us longer to get back to stable prices than in most other areas, and secondly, we do not yet know what the Central Government, with its control over currency, have decided about the pitch of post-war prices. Therefore I suggest that we proceed cautiously with large schemes involving expenditure on goods supplied at inflated Indian prices. This is an additional reason for suggesting that the first capital scheme should be hydro-electric power, in which equipment will be imported from countries whose price level is not more than 40 per cent. to 50 per cent. above the pre-war level. This does not alter my view in any way that we need to make speedy development, but we need to make it with full regard to economy. We cannot afford with our straitened resources to waste a single rupee. The race is not only to the strong, but to the wise. And wisdom in Assam must consist of getting the best value for our money.

Summarised the points which I have put forward for consideration are—

- (1) Private enterprise is preferable to State enterprise, except in the field of Hydro-electric or generating electric power by coal.
- (2) Agriculture must continue to occupy a high place in the list.
- (3) Power should precede industrialization.
- (4) Our need is not only to train technicians by exporting students but to use technicians by importing highly qualified men.
- (5) When Government is adventuring in new fields, these adventures ought to be concentrated in selected areas so that the results can be more easily measured and the case for extension more easily examined.

I would like to add a word about Government's procedure. The Hon'ble Prime Minister in placing this Scheme two days ago before the Assembly proved once more that he is a true Parliamentarian. In giving the Assembly its heart's desire he has given some of us who have spent the week-end poring over this document an acute attack of mental indigestion. We are grateful for the announcement of a meeting on the 21st to discuss the policy. We hope however that Government will remember that the products of 2 days' mental indigestion are not the final word on plans for 5 years development work.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

“That this Assembly is of opinion that the Post-War Reconstruction Scheme be taken into consideration.”

Babu RABINDRANATH ADITYA: Sir, we wish to hear the Government opinion first.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would have much liked to hear some of the hon. Members before placing the Government views. But, as some hon. Members have expressed a desire that I should intervene in the debate at this stage, I propose to describe to them briefly the outlines of our planning. As I mentioned in the earlier days, we are lagging behind in formulating a scheme for variety of reasons. I had to send instruction from distant Delhi to the Secretariat in Shillong—to expedite the matter and take extra staff if needed. Mr. S. C. Roy was put on the job but I am sorry to hear from my hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker that the pamphlet which Mr. Roy produced in a hurry has given mental indigestion. I must thank Mr. Roy, who was entrusted with the work of drawing up this new scheme in a pamphlet form, has been able to produce this brochure which gives the House some idea of the scheme of developments that the different departments are thinking of as Post-war Reconstruction Scheme. It is true, Sir, that the pamphlet does not disclose what will be the share of Central contribution. This is a matter of confidential correspondence between the Centre and the Provincial Government and I am not in a position to lay down before the House what is going on. But I will be giving no secret away when I say that, so far as improvement in our road communication is concerned, we have prepared for an expenditure of about Rs.55 crores. My hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker has rightly characterised that the scheme of Public Works Department of spending 54 crores of rupees is rather ambitious. Whether ambitious or not, if hon. Members will go through the list of schemes, they will find that most of them are desirable. I quite agree with the hon. Mover of this Motion that it would not be possible for the Public Works Department, constituted as it is in Assam at present, to spend a large sum within 5 or 10 or even 20 years. But we have got to take this matter into consideration that the Public Works Department most probably will be entrusted in either constructing or developing the national high ways the expenditure of which will be borne by the Centre. We hope, Sir, to get about 8 or 11 crores of rupees for Post-war planning from the Centre. I can not say at this juncture whether they will accept all the schemes for national high ways. But I am perfectly sure that at least three of the roads of the national high ways scheme will be undertaken by the Central Government, *i. e.* they will bear the expenditure. My hon. Friend has very briefly placed before the House his own suggestions. Nobody, I think, will quarrel with the first principle which he has enunciated, that is, in matters of commercial venture, private enterprise is preferable to State management. For everyone knows that State venture always proves costlier than private organisation. He has also rightly stressed that we should devote our entire energy in improving the lot of the agriculturists. But the method of approach

which he has suggested may not be the same as that of most of the hon. Members of this House. He wants to increase the wants of the agriculturists so that he would strive to get the money to pay for his necessary wants. In other words, he thinks that unless there be an incentive in the mind of the agriculturists, he would not try or strive to increase his production. He has stated the truth in another way: The common way to express the same idea is to improve the standard of living; and there will be greater endeavour on the part of the people to rise to the height of the occasion and do their utmost to live on that higher standard. The result is the same. And therefore, we have devoted considerable part of our scheme to improvement of the agriculturists. He has very rightly stressed, Sir, that in agriculture, like other things, the question of man-power or rather man-hour that could be given for agriculture, is a very important factor. Indians need not be told, or our cultivating class need not be told, that the period of their labour is restricted. I told the House in the last November Session that, on account of a drought, the cultivating season in Assam Valley this year was very much limited and the sowing was very late, the result being that there will be very short crop this year. So, if a cultivator suffers from any disease and is not able to utilise the cultivating season, for doing his field work, he is sure to suffer. Therefore, we propose to start as much anti-malarial work as is possible. I hope no hon. Member will quarrel on the scheme for anti-malarial measures, in Public Health, that we want to have in our future development scheme. My Hon'ble Colleague the Minister-in-Charge has just now handed over to me a note on the principle laid down by the hon. leader of the European Group who has moved this Motion. The head of the Department, Major Ahmed, agrees with the principle and he says in his note:—

“It is always best to concentrate on any one area at a time rather than spread it out all over the Province—which would entail insurmountable problems of construction and supervision. Besides one has to co-ordinate the work with other factors, *e. g.*, development of communications, methods of agriculture, water supplies, riverine areas, sub-montane areas, etc., etc. It took over 5 years and many millions sterling (20 or more) to make the greater part of Singapore island free from malaria. Eradication of malaria from the Province is not as easy a task as it may seem to the lay person, and we can make a start by concentrating on selected projects each year. If engineering resources and technical supervision would be forthcoming I would welcome a bigger sum each year. I may mention that Public Health Schemes are all very modest in monetary demands—the reason being that we would like to make a beginning in the right direction and I would urge that all of these get special priority.”

It is needless for me to say, Sir, that we should give all the Public Health Department Schemes leading to eradication of disease like malaria or prevention of disease like cholera, special priority.

There is one principle which my hon. Friend has elaborately placed before the House and which may raise a little controversy. He refers to hydro-electric schemes which according to him, should receive attention for industrialisation of the Province. Now, the cost of the hydro-electric schemes would be enormous compared with our Provincial income. We will have to go in for large scale borrowing in the open market and as everyone knows that borrowing may be easy but it is the provision of the Sinking Fund that creates trouble. Such a recurring liability for many years will mean hypothecation of the future for present needs. Supposing we spend an enormous sum and get the energy to run various different kinds of industries but if no industry develops what then? All our money and time will be spent in vain. Therefore many people are of the opinion “first concentrate on the industries and then bring in your electric power which will develop your industries.” In my opinion, Sir, the two things must go hand in hand. There will be no industrialist so foolish as to start when he learns that in a few years we will have the advantage of electricity. Therefore his cotton mill or jute mill with any other power, say with steam or coal or oil engines fore it will be duplication of expenditure so far as the generating power of his commercial venture is concerned. If we again induce some capitalists to invest their money in Assam and in particular line, we at the same time can go on with our hydro-electric scheme. However, Sir, this is a matter which should be left to experts and we are trying to get, as hon. Members know, help from the Centre in this matter. I quite agree and I think the House will also agree with what Mr. Whittaker had said that

we should not wait till the moment when the few batches of students from Assam we will be sending out to the United Kingdom or the United States of America for specialised training, returns but we should import experts from outside on a contract basis so that after a period our own students will be able to take up from these pioneers who have started some kind of industry.

I am sorry, Sir, that in the pamphlet which was handed over to hon. Members on Saturday last, there were very many printing mistakes. These we have corrected by handing over to hon. Members a slip just showing where the variations are from estimates. But I think that is not very important at the present moment. Still all these schemes have been scrutinised but Government up till now awaits, as I said the other day, to discuss these schemes and put other schemes which may be suggested by any hon. Member on the floor of the House to-day, in the Post-War Reconstruction Committee on the 21st and after getting their advice I will go through the scheme again to place it finally before Government. I am told by Mr. Roy that if the schemes are properly detailed then the whole book will be of 250 to 300 pages.

As regards finances we must remember that our normal Provincial income is in the neighbourhood of 4 crores. On account of the inflation engendered by war time economy which we discussed these days, the Provincial income now stands at a higher figure than in previous years. To supplement Central contribution, we will have to provide some 2½ crores of rupees from Provincial revenues set apart for 5 years but we will have to go in, for financing bigger schemes, to the open market and borrow. Therefore we will have to cut our schemes according to the means which will be available to us. We are not in a position to say just now what will be the exact amount of Central monetary aid. So looking into all these things, if we cannot carry all the schemes through in such a way as we would have liked, hon. Members should not carry the impression that we are half-hearted.

As regards transport, Sir, we will do our level best with the meagre resources at our disposal. Hon. Members must remember that His Excellency the Viceroy in addressing the Transport Advisory Board which I represented on behalf of Assam, mentioned that the priority in any post-war developments will be given to communication, next to health and thirdly to education.

Communication, as has been stated by my hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker, may yield short term dividends as areas which are undeveloped at the present moment, will at once be developed if we can bring communication to those areas. In Assam it has always been the other way, *i. e.*, people have settled in areas where there are no communication and the result is that the agricultural produce of those areas are sold at a much lower price on account of this difficulty of transport. If communication is established earlier and then these lands are opened up for cultivation, the result will be that cultivators will be able to reach the markets easily and therefore they will get a better price.

Then communication is necessary even for the health of people. People who are acquainted with village life know perfectly well that the village paths which go by the name of Go-path, are full of slush and quagmire and no paths exist at all during the rainy season. People using these paths cannot but get diseases of various kinds, notably malaria, and if we can improve these village roads, it would be a great benefit to the people. In the scheme of improved plan for communication, there is a provision for about 5,000 miles of village roads to be improved or newly constructed.

Having made these provisions for good communication, we must look to the health of the people. If the people cannot take advantage of their lives on account of various diseases prevalent, it is no use investing our money in education or even in communication. Therefore we have followed the same system, that is we give preference to all schemes of curative and preventive measures. Hon. friends will find the schemes that we have tentatively placed as development schemes for Medical and Public Health Departments in the printed booklet, which is before them.

Education plays a very great part in maintaining higher standard of life, in developing a higher standard of hygiene, which will greatly lessen the difficulties of our public and also greatly decrease the incidence of diseases. Education will also give better ideas to the cultivator and his family how to produce more, how to market his produce and how to utilise the income to his greatest advantage. Therefore we want as a post-war reconstruction measure to spend in education as far as possible.

Some of my hon. Friends will probably demur that in certain part of the pamphlet there have been shown certain items as starting by Government jute mill and cotton mill. It is not intended that Government will themselves start these mills or go into these commercial ventures of their own. Our idea is to give certain concessions to some industrialists who will invest their capital in the Province and start these ventures.

Lastly, my hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker has been quite correct that the Forest Department schemes are most modest. It cannot but be so when we realise that the effect of our regeneration scheme will bear fruit in certain cases after 80 years, for a Sal tree matures at that age whereas a teak tree takes 120 years to mature. So we want to start slowly but at the same time agree with Mr. Whittaker that it should be the endeavour of every well-wisher of the country that more attention is given to our forestry wealth than it has been done in the past. We have not in the past utilised our unclassified forests to the same great extent as we did our Sal forests. The war deour Forest Department. We know that in our second class and third class forests there is valuable timber waiting to be exploited by industrialists and if the industrialists do not come to take advantage of it, the State itself ought to utilise them to best advantage.

My hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker uttered a truism, when he said that our agriculture is primitive, that our agriculturist are extremely conservative, that Government should take aggressive measures and try to remove the Kodali for mechanical implements. This is more often said but it is difficult to translate it into action. We want to proceed step by step, we cannot all at once convert our primitive method of cultivation into highly scientific method of America, viz. to start ploughing with tractors rather than go on with our ordinary plough cattle. I do not know—I may be wrong, but I speak from experience that this practice of ploughing with tractors is not suitable for our methods of cultivation and the staple food crop that we grow. In the first place, unless the fields are circumscribed by small raised boundaries for holding water, called "ails" the crops will not be good or big. If we start ploughing by tractors all these 'ails' will have to be abandoned. First, we shall have to start collective farming before we can use tractors. Again it has been found that tractors are not very useful in muddy land and all our rice cultivation is on muddy water logged land. However, these are matters for our agricultural engineer whom we want to bring to help us in developing this scheme. Again it has been is to assure the cultivators a better yield by issuing to them improved high-yielding seeds, by bringing cheap manure to their doors and advising them how to use them. We want to help them by starting irrigation projects which have already shown better results in the matter of yield of our main crop, paddy. We want to utilise better irrigation pumps to drain out water from marshy lands where winter crops can be grown. We want to bring water by irrigation canal where water is necessary. When this process of starting all the progressive methods of cultivation is completed, then we hope to mechanise, as soon as possible, all the implements that are now being used by our cultivators.

I do not think that I need dilate upon any other subject at present. Our tentative schemes are before the hon. Members. I will close by requesting them to give their valuable and considered suggestions so that I can place them before the Committee that is meeting on the 21st and thereafter consider them in the Cabinet.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank Mr. A. Whittaker for initiating the debate on Post-War development of Assam, on an economic planned basis.....

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: On a point of information, Sir. Will any Member be allowed to move any amendment on this Motion?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member knows his rights. He can do it, but a question may arise why he did not give notice of his Amendment in the proper time prescribed by the rules. Any way, I shall allow amendments if any hon. Members want to do so.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Whittaker has put up a bold case, and has presented a nice picture of future Assam. His delineations are based on a

robust idealistic background. Sir, this is a matter on which the Provincial Government should have sought our advice, guidance and co-operation. But as a matter of fact we are forcing our opinion on them. On this vital matter of utmost importance, I am sure, the Government of Assam will give due weight to the suggestions expressed by the hon. Members of this House.

Sir, it is no gainsaying the fact that of all the self-governing provinces of India, Assam is the least developed country. Its provincial revenues are limited to a few crores of rupees. Its people cannot eke out a bare livelihood even at the sweat of their brow. But her potentialities are immense, her natural resources beyond imagination. Her glorious forests, her mineral wealth and her raw materials are the richest in the whole of India. We are waiting for the day when all these possibilities will be properly tapped and ours would be the most prosperous of the provinces of India. The war has meant too much to Assam. It has devastated many of its fair parts. But the shadow of war is receding; let post-war confer all its blessings on Assam. Let the future citizens of Assam live in plenty,—with a well-balanced diet, with clothes sufficient to keep them in comfort, and in houses fit for human habitation.

The present world war is a total war of ideas. It has revolutionised the human mind. It has effected a dramatic change in our conception of life and economic living. Our efforts in the way of post-war reconstruction should reflect these new ideas and novel conceptions. We are grateful to the authors of the Bombay Plan. No doubt it raised many controversial issues, but nevertheless it focussed the attention of the best minds of India to the question of an economic and industrial planning. At a later stage, we have seen the Peoples' plan, the Gandhian plan and the plans as envisaged by the Congress and the Muslim League Committees. Last of all, we have the plan formulated by the Government of India. There are conflicts of ideology, perspective and *modus operandi* in these reports. But they are unanimous on the ultimate objective of a post-war reconstruction. All these plans prescribe a basic minimum standard for the ordinary man to live in. All of them are unanimous that in a post-war India, an average man should be ensured of a well-balanced diet, of clothing sufficient to protect the body from the inclemencies of weather; and an element of education should be imparted to them. He must be well-housed, physically well cared for and live in peace and prosperity. The provincial schemes, small or big, should have all these fundamentals in view.

The ultimate object of all planning must be to raise the standard of living of the people at large. To this end in view their purchasing power should be raised. This can only be done by raising the national income, by reorganisation and development of agriculture and industries.

In spite of the spectacular show that is sought to be made out of the planning efforts of the Government of India, a critical survey would reveal how the problem of re-settlement and re-employment of Defence Service personnel and of labour displaced by war industries has occupied the foremost corner of their mind in the domain of economic planning. This attitude on the part of the Central Government shall have no doubt repercussions on the Provincial Governments. But, nevertheless, the long term projects, such as improvement of agriculture, development of industries, with special reference to the production of capital and consumer goods, the development of electric power as the basis of industrial and agricultural development and the improvement of communications and transport services should come foremost in the programme of a Provincial Government.

Speaking of programme, I come to the booklet that has been circulated to the hon. Members, containing the list of schemes for future reconstruction of Assam. No doubt some of these schemes are ambitious. But as a whole, the schemes do not inspire us with confidence. The programme reveals no endeavour to utilise the latent undeveloped provincial resources of the country. It carries no message of hope, no assurance to the future inhabitants of Assam. The schemes as they stand have been jumbled together. Some of them are of doubtful utility. The priorities, I am afraid, have been arbitrarily allotted.

Sir, ours is mainly an agricultural country, and our prosperity to a great extent will depend on agricultural development. The two main means of greater production are land and human labour. We lack in none. Without entering into a political controversy, I may safely say that though other parts of India, under the growing pressure

of increasing population, have reached the maximum potential of land resources, we can profitably use our vast cultivable wastes for greater quantities of crop yields. It is in this direction that our salvation lies and our efforts and energies should be concentrated in this direction. Our cultivators are sturdy; give them the lead, they will work wonders. To achieve the highest figure of maximum production, the importance of an irrigation programme cannot be over-estimated. A well-planned and intensified irrigation system can increase production from 50 per cent. to 100 per cent. In this respect we may benefit by the details as outlined by Sir William Stampe in his broadcast speech on "Planning for Plenty". The vast power resources should be examined and exploited for expanding our irrigation and drainage system. We should also divert our attention to the various preparations of fertilisers and manures.

But no amount of planning however ambitious is going to achieve the largest in agricultural production, on the present basis of small holdings. From now, schemes should be prepared for nationalisation of land. There should not be any middlemen between the tiller and the State.

The crushing burden of rural indebtedness should engage the serious consideration of our planners. In spite of the buoyancy in agricultural prices, this menace of indebtedness continues. The Debt Conciliation Boards and other beneficial provincial Acts have only touched the fringe of the problem. A well-thought out moratorium should be conceived to relieve them of this burden, so that they may start life anew.

The provincial schemes in agriculture contain a proposal for starting agricultural schools. But an elementary education in agriculture cannot satisfy the aspiration of the people of Assam. A full-fledged Agricultural College shall be her minimum demand.

We have some bold schemes under Animal Husbandry. If we succeed in executing them all, the cattle population will no doubt improve and it will ensure a steady agricultural advancement. In this connection I would suggest the establishment of a Veterinary College in Assam.

I am glad to find that provision has been made to utilise the by-products of the animal wealth by starting subsidiary industries such as dairy farming, tanning, leather works and bone manufacture.

An agricultural insurance scheme which has proved so much successful in the United States of America and the Soviet Republic may be tried in this country as well. This will protect the cultivator against famine, flood, water shortage and other calamities.

In the field of industrial development, we have got unlimited possibilities; Assam abounds in raw materials. With imagination and foresight, we can convert these materials into profitable concerns. We have got a list of useful schemes under the Department. I do not know why bee-keeping, match manufacture and Gur-making from sugarcane did not receive consideration in the hands of the Government. The water power resources should be exploited for more economic development of these industries.

While we advocate the starting of key industries by Government, we do not for a moment minimise the value of cottage industry. With State aid these industries are bound to flourish. This aid should be in the shape of cheap and long term credit facilities. The State also should impart suitable technical education and arrange for collection and purchase of raw materials. A large sum has been provided for starting a weaving mill. I would suggest to double this figure so that two cotton mills may be started one in each Valley.

The Co-operative movement is almost a failure in our country. It should receive a greater impetus in the Post-War programme. It will help not only the agriculturists in collective farming but it will also infuse new life into the growth of diverse industries.

Unfortunately, from the leaflet, we do not get an insight into our educational programme. Needless to say, universal Primary education should be the first charge on any education plans. Is it too much to hope that we will have a fully equipped university of our own, with all technical branches?

Improvement of public health should form an integral part of our Post-War Reconstruction programme. The line that divides health from disease is very thin in this country. I regret that no bold scheme has been undertaken for rural sanitation.

One word more on the financial aspect of the problem and I have done. We fully recognise that if development is to be effected on a large scale, large sums are bound to be involved. But we should not be afraid; the magnitude of war-time finance has taught us to think in terms of figures, which could not even be conceived in pre-war days.

I submit that we need not depend on the doles from Delhi. Assam can afford to borrow. With our natural resources to back it up we can borrow not eight lakhs but eighty crores of rupees.

The Provincial Resources Committee has submitted certain recommendations for taxation. But I doubt whether any or all of these taxation measures will raise enough money for an ambitious Post-War programme. We shall have to depend on private hoarded wealth and created money against *ad hoc* security. With these few words I support the Motion.

Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I must thank the hon. Mover of the Motion, for giving us an opportunity to discuss the Post-War Reconstruction programme of our Province. Humanity is passing through a great travail, which is going to give birth to a new world order. We see in these horrible calamities, the harbinger of a mighty revolution. Just at this critical turning point of the history of mankind, we cannot confine our programme only within the territorial jurisdiction of the Province of Assam. Modern science has eliminated time, space, territorial barrier. The age of geographical nationalism and exclusive isolationism is gone. The Reconstruction programme of our Province should be regarded as a part and parcel of the British Commonwealth of Nations and of the world. We cannot isolate ourselves from the current of the world thoughts which will mould the future constitution and economic programme of our country.

The present territorial boundaries of the provinces of India shall not exist as it is to-day. It should and must be changed. Circumstances change, Nations and Governments come and go, and the maps of the world are changing at every moment. So unless Government of to-day looks ahead and prepares for development in the post-war period, valuable time will be wasted and great opportunities lost. The Commissioner of Post-War Reconstruction, Assam, has not defined any policy or principle on which his programme will be based. It appears to be an appendix of an annual budget estimate. The author of the Reconstruction, as we all know, is the renowned founder of the Recreation Club scheme and it appears that he has not forgotten his favourite subject. In the name of Basic Schools and Basic education, he wants to thrust upon our shoulder the Gandhian system of education which has been condemned unanimously by Muslims of India. He further says, Sir, in page 37—"The scheme of Compulsory Primary education, adult-education, etc. as well as cultural and spiritual reconstruction schemes which are very urgent and important aspects of educational development, cannot be financed with less than 9 crores as envisaged in the Central Advisory Board's Recommendation." May, I ask, Sir, what is this spiritual reconstruction? Does the author want to Gandhi-ise the whole reconstruction which we resist with all emphasis at our command?

Sir, I am glad to find that the hon. Mover of the Motion has kept the term—the Post-War Reconstruction, quite wide and open and has not limited it only to the economic development of the Province. The word 'Reconstruction' will include both political and economic programme of the country. So, I crave the indulgence of the Hon'ble Speaker, if I make a passing reference to the present political and economic planning of our country.

Now, Sir, before we enter into details of the programme, let us examine the basis and fundamental principles on which the planning and programme of our Reconstruction will be established. "When the stage has been set," says Dr. Pant, "for the Post-War Reconstruction and the cease fire order is being anxiously awaited, it is essential that we should not get ourselves lost in the jungles of problems, confronting us in the immediate post-war period, but constantly keep before our vision the ultimate and future ideals by following which the basis of economic propriety and durable peace can be laid down."

The present war is called as a war of ideas. The Atlantic Charter, the four-freedom of Mr. Roosevelt, the Yalta talks and San-Francisco Conference will give testimony to the fact that the Peace Charter will be based on ideological principles, Nazis must be crushed and the ideal of democracy be established.

The contagion of this ideology has also influenced the political and economic development of India. Beveridge planning is a purely economic solution which promises to give social security and insurance against unemployment and want, and sickness. But, Sir, our economic problem has been given in India by the Bombay Capitalists a political colour. There are at present two plannings which have earned for themselves an all-India reputation—one is initiated by the capitalist leaders of India popularly known as Bombay Planning and the other is the peoples planning published by the General Secretary of Indian Federation of Labour. The author of the Bombay planning clearly says in page 2,—“Underlying our whole scheme is the assumption that on the termination of the war or shortly thereafter a National Government will come into existence at the Centre which will be vested with full freedom in economic matters. The maintenance of the economic unity of India being in our view an essential condition of any effective planning, we have assured for the purpose of our plan that the future Government of India will be constituted on a federal basis and that the jurisdiction of the Central Government in economic matters will extend over the whole of India”. The author of the Peoples Plan in his introduction says—“The implementation of the plan cannot take place unless labour has an effective voice in the Government of the country. This conference, therefore, urges upon the Indian Labour the necessity of striving for the attainment of political power and re-affirms its resolve to help all such public, that the author of the Peoples Plan wants to contradict the planning as envisaged by industrial capitalists of Bombay. But both of them advocate for the economic unity of India and a National Government at the Centre which will be vested with full freedom in economic matters.

The term “Economic Unity of India” and formation of a National Government at the Centre are very significant and will prove very disastrous for Muslims and other minorities in India. In the name of so-called geographical and economic unity, both capital and labour have made an unholy conspiracy among themselves and thereby want to set up a permanent political and capitalistic Hindu domination at the Centre from which it will be impossible for us to escape.

The Hon'ble Finance Member of the Government of India bitterly criticised the Bombay Planning in his last year's Budget speech. But, Sir, we are surprised to find that one of the ‘Jabardast’ authors of the Bombay Planning happens now to adorn the membership for Post-War Reconstruction at the Centre and I presume, Sir, he has converted them to his theory of economic unity and formation of a National Government at the Centre.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member is going too far.
Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: I am coming to the point, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: It should be relevant to the subject.
Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: Yes, Sir, I am referring to reconstruction scheme.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Assam Reconstruction scheme?
Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: Assam is a part of India, Sir, (Laughter).

I presume, Sir, he has converted them to his theory of economic unity and formation of National Government at the Centre. It will be bad day for the poor and the future of our Provincial Autonomy in India. We cannot sign with our own hand the death warrant of Muslims and other minorities. We cannot allow ourselves to be a nation of economic *Pariahs* and a race of hewers of wood and drawers of water of the Caste-Hindu capitalists in India. We want not only self-determination in our politics but we also demand our self-determination in trade, commerce, industry, education and culture of the Province. We demand our legitimate share and quota which have been long overdue. We want, that just and equitable distribution be done to all communities, irrespective of caste and creed.

Now, Sir, I beg to conclude in the words of Mr. T.T.S. Hayley—“The war has brought Assam into prominence and given her for the moment an importance that is not her own. But will she return after the war in her former obscurity or will she blossom forth as a prince among the provinces of India? The potentialities of this little known province are enormous. The grow-more-food campaign has shown to what extent agricul-

tural production can be increased by planning. The physical nature of the country with its two large navigable rivers surrounded by hills down flow great volumes of water which could be harnessed to give Assam the cheapest hydro-electricity in the world, make it a land eminently suitable for industrial development. The modern world is run by electricity and not only can this clean form of power be used in paper mills, gun powder works, silk-mills, cement manufacture, rice-mills, tea factories, plastic works, match factories and timber mills and many other industries, all the raw materials of which are available in Assam, but above all it can be used as for the direct benefit of the agriculturists, both in manufacturing fertilisers for him and irrigating dry land and expelling water from inundated areas. The problem of war has forced Assam to pay more heed to the present than the future. Cinderella at the ball is destined to be a princess. She must not be allowed to revert to her humble place by the kitchen fire".

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

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the scheme before us in a pamphlet form is given the name "Post-War Reconstruction". Reconstruction means.....

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: We do not hear him, Sir.

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: I am loud enough.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member may please come to the microphone.

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: The scheme before us in a pamphlet form is given the name "Post-War Reconstruction". "Reconstruction" means constructing something that has broken down. But it seems to me that the scheme ought to deal with things that are destroyed, that are destroyed in the world, rather certain devastation caused by bombing and by army of occupation. As far as we know Assam as a whole has not been destroyed excepting Kohima and Manipur. Assam has not been destroyed. Instead of destruction, new fine roads and buildings have been constructed. Therefore, the word "Reconstruction" is a misnomer.

In the scheme there are certain things as buildings have been broken down—Dak-bunglows or something of the kind and they will be re-constructed. That is not the aim of the scheme. The name should have been given as "Post-War Development Scheme or Post-War Nation-Building Planning of Assam". But let us look carefully if anything is found broken down in this war. I mention certain things which are of vital importance and far more important than the material losses that Assam has endured. The first thing that war has destroyed is mutual trust and faith in one another. We have learnt not to trust one another. The second thing the war has destroyed in Assam and in many parts of the world is trust in public officers and trust of men in responsibility. Because people distrust one another, things cannot be developed or nothing good can be done. One cannot trust another. How can we depend on a man whom we do not trust and expect some thing good out of him. War has broken down public morality and decency. Foreign people have come and from them our children and men and women have learnt things detrimental to moral life of the people. There is a breakdown in man's dependence on moral and spritual values and emphasised dependence on material things. War has taught us that. Then again it has broken down the normal price-level that we saw before the war. The prices have gone up abnormally. There is inflation. Then again there is break-down of normal relation between labour and domestic life. The wages of labour have gone 10 times high. In post-war period, one will find that many people have money who ought not to have. Contractors and businessmen have earned fabulous wealth with little labour but men of acumen, enlightenment, ability and imagination could not earn anything, and in the post-war days to come, these men will suffer the most.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Hon. Member will please remember the Motion before the House. It is the Post-War Reconstruction Programme of Government.

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: Yes, Sir.

Now, the scheme as a whole. The significant portions are the two paragraphs on the first and the last pages. The first paragraph runs thus:—

"The position now reached is that the committees appear to feel that they will require a further directive before the schemes can be fairly elaborated and set in order. They required instruction both on matters of policy and on financial prospects."

Certainly, they are justified in saying so. Because instructions on matters of policy and financial prospects depend on the Provincial Legislature and the present Government. They are not concerned with the financial prospect. The Legislature should give instructions in this matter.

Then, the last paragraph on the last page runs as follows :—

“They may be treated as reflecting the aspirations of the officers responsible for the different nation-building Departments, subject to such restraints as the leaders of the public opinion and the administrative authorities in the Centre and in the Province, may choose to put on the scheme.”

This clearly indicates that all these high hopes and aspirations entertained by the different Departments are subject to the restraint and directions and we are here to give such directions through the Legislature. They want this direction from us and the public whose representatives we are in this House.

Then again, coming to priority of scheme, I find that Education comes at the bottom of the list. The other day in this House while discussion on Compulsory Primary Education was going on I said that it was not opportune to start it now. The House agreed that it must be taken up now. But here we see that Education has got the last place. This shows how we do not think on the right lines. I suggested that without deciding on the content of education, compulsory education should not be started. My hon. Friend Mr. Rahman also said the other day that Hygiene and Public Health might be kept in abeyance in order to give priority to education of the children. The other day the same Member of the Assembly agitated and much heat was generated over the question of malaria causing havoc in Baniachong and they wanted as if the whole Assembly to go over there to see the condition. But I ask whether it is advisable to send these sick children to school or attend to their sickness before sending to school. Which is more important? Therefore I say Hygiene should not be neglected. It is also an important factor that goes to make a healthy nation. In my judgment, Hygiene should not be given the third place but the second. First comes food and clothing and second Public Health and Hygiene and Sanitation. For, unless we are healthy we cannot live; we won't be able to enjoy other benefits unless we are in good health. Then, comes mass enlightenment. What I mean by mass enlightenment is not education. Education in the broadest sense of the term is mass enlightenment. There are certain things in the scheme which can easily give this enlightenment by means of propaganda and true publicity of social welfare. This is absolutely necessary to educate the mass before they can understand and take advantage of whatever is done to them for Agriculture, Sanitation, Model village, etc. This is education in its broadest sense, not in the strict sense.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I hope the hon. Member will finish soon.

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: Yes, Sir, I am finishing. I hope I am relevant, Sir.

Next I come to Communication, which has got the third place but the biggest financial allotment of Rs.54½ crores. I do not want to minimise the importance of good highway roads constructed in Assam, mostly by the Military people, but my submission is that we do not want the foreigners—the foreign dealers and businessmen—to take advantage of our improved communication and rob the indigenous Assamese people of their wealth by carrying on business and exploit the people.

Then comes industrialisation. It is also a very important item. There are various things to be discussed before industrialisation is launched upon. Whether our industries should be first class industries competing in world markets or cottage industries that must be decided upon. What I mean to say is that we should see that our indigenous industries get sufficient protection and safeguards to thrive. Thereby I do not mean that Assam does not need foreign experts; as a matter of fact we need experts, but the restriction should be placed on foreign capital and indigenous investment should be encouraged.

Then, comes protective provincial tariff legislation. It is also necessary to protect the interests of our indigenous people, for if they are not helped in this matter then this scheme will not be helpful to Assam.

The planners have not been handicapped in suggesting their aspirations, for, they have done that without reference to financial prospect. This is quite right and they have given their free opinion.

Departmental views are expressed and we can gauge their capacity in collecting materials, their vision and foresight and thirdly their view-point as to the relation between what is practical and what is ideal. So, details can be studied later carefully and at convenience. We are simply going into the general scheme as a whole.

Now, as regards the matter of policy. This is very important, because the future of the country is dependent on this and deals with the lives of men, women and children—millions of them depend on it. It also deals with the material, moral and spiritual lives of the people as a whole. All these are very vital matters to us all. So attention must be directed to this.

Now I come to one point and that is on corruption. We find Mr. Whittaker's Budget speech in the Press with headlines that he has condemned corruption among the Government officials. Amongst all the things that Mr. Whittaker said, the Press could get that headline. That shows what the people or the public are thinking of the Government of Assam and how things are going on in the Province. In this Assembly at one time a talk on corruption was one of the subjects. Some of the Members say that this corruption will go on. But I may say here, Sir, that while 84 crores of rupees is going to be spent, people will see what prospects they will have. There will be speculators, prospective officers, hungry graduates, syndicates and the rest, and all will think what share do we get from this amount? When things will come into practice there will be clamour for posts. And then communal question will come up. What communities are first going to get benefit out of it? Now, are the people ready for a unified move? If not now, is there any movement whereby all will get together to pool their resources and see that this enormous amount be utilized properly and corruption in all forms reduced to the minimum?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member want to make this an item in the Programme?

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: Sir, these are very important matters which should come up into the whole scheme.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then the hon. Member suggests that removal of corruption should form an item in the scheme?

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: I want, Sir, that the scheme is formed in such a way that corruption can be removed as far as possible. We find, Sir, the communal question looms very large. Some communities quarrel over this question—some try to get their own seats and some try to see that other communities do not get seats. Every community thinks only of itself and not of Assam as a whole. With the same view each wants a seat in the Cabinet, and when the communities get it, they are satisfied. We know there is a lady-Member in the Cabinet, and she also thinks she must have a seat in the Cabinet because other communities are getting their seats. If things like this shall go on Government cannot run the administration smoothly.

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

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: Very well, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, I beg to move an Amendment:—

Omit the "fullstop" after the word "consideration" and *add* "and a standing committee consisting of elected representatives of both the Houses be formed to advise the Government from time to time on the steps to be taken to carry out an effective programme of reconstruction works".

Now, Sir, I am one with my hon. Friend Mr. Goldsmith that it is very difficult for us to take part in this debate when the scheme is called "Post-War Reconstruction". He has very rightly said that instead of calling it "Reconstruction" it would have been better had it been called either "Reorganisation" or "Construction". However, Sir, as the things stand I think it will be better for me to take it as it is. It has already been pointed out by some of the hon. Members who have spoken before me that the scheme that has been laid before us is only a rough one and it indicates only the aspiration of the Departments concerned. The Hon'ble Premier also took part in the debate and I hoped that so far as the schemes embodied in the pamphlet are concerned he would give his opinion whether the Government would accept them *in toto* or the

majority of them will be accepted. We did not hear anything about it. There is another point, Sir, which is troubling me and that is that while considering only the economic side of it we are forgetting about the political side. Unless we know what change will take place in the political side of the Province it is very difficult to take part in this debate which is only concerning the economic side of the Province. Sir, the policy and programme of the present Government may not be liked or accepted by a future Government which is bound to be formed soon after the war if not earlier. I venture to say this, because on the floor of this House even the Hon'ble Premier gave us a hint that as soon as the war will be over, there was every possibility of the constitution being changed. So, Sir, the schemes which have not yet been approved by the Government are under our consideration. Moreover, it has been said in the scheme that, without paying any heed to the financial aspect of the question, these schemes were formulated even though they were not completed.

So far as the Education Department is concerned it has been clearly stated in so many words that the programme is not yet complete and they were trying to formulate and to expand the scheme.

As regards priority, Sir, my Friend Mr. Goldsmith has challenged the mentality of this House that they are of the opinion that Education should get the first place. He challenged it, but at the same time from his speech it was quite clear, that in every matter Education comes first. But I think, so far as priority is concerned, Education which has been placed last of all should be placed first of all (*Hear, hear.*) First Education, second Communication, then Public Health and Medical and Agriculture which should go hand in hand with Industry.

As regards the different branches it has been stated that the schemes are according to the aspirations of the Heads of the Departments and other officers who could impart their advice and suggestions to the Heads of Departments but so far as priority is concerned I don't know who gave this priority. There was a conference and it was then decided that, on a broad view, it would be desirable to place the aspirations and reconstruction problems on a basis of priority and then the following order could be arrived at. I am sorry, Sir, for the people of the Education Department who represented the Department in this committee and was satisfied to have the last place that Education should go first because we are much behind in this matter.

Sir, as regards qualified men, in reply to a question of mine, we heard that some students will be sent abroad and to other provinces for qualifying them for particular subjects and as far as we could gather they are 10 in number and for 10 different subjects. Now, Sir, if we want to spend this money we must have properly qualified men in sufficient numbers.

So far as Communication Department is concerned, my hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker the Mover of this Motion, has made it clear that even if the Province gets money they will not be in a position to spend it. It applies to all other Departments. Sir, not only in Communication but in other Departments also if Government say that they have got qualified men in all the other Departments to spend the money that has been allotted in this programme, I think, Sir, they will be far from truth. In the body of the scheme where there are several general remarks, it has been clearly manifested that though during debate hours Government tried to justify that so far the Agriculture Department was concerned, they have got sufficient number of men and the Department where they admit that the administration is inefficient and they have not got sufficient number of qualified men who can be of real use to the general public.

Now, Sir, why only 54 crores? Even 10 times of this amount can be spent. But that will not be spending in the proper sense of the term for the benefit of the public. The money can be wasted but it cannot properly be utilised. So, in other Departments also, Government should get properly qualified men in sufficient numbers and should be careful to see that not a single pie is wasted of this poor Province.

Sir, as regards manure and improved variety of seeds, there are references in the scheme but whether these will be accepted by the Government or not is still a matter of doubt to me because, Sir, so far as the intensive cultivation is concerned and supplying of improved seeds and use of proper manure, I gave suggestions on several occasions on the floor of this House, but who cares to hear them?

Sir, I won't take much time of the House and I shall suggest that Government should constitute a Central Standing Committee as suggested by me in my amendment and they should consult the Committee from time to time when the expert opinion also will be taken and Government should run all the schemes very carefully and all the money should be spent through experts so that no money is wasted for the sake of experiments and whims of individuals.

Sir, with these words, I move my Amendment.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Amendment moved:

"Omit the 'fullstop' after the word 'consideration' and add 'and a standing committee consisting of elected representatives of both the Houses be formed to advise the Government from time to time on the steps to be taken to carry out an effective programme of reconstruction works'."

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker has rightly been praised by Members of the different Groups for his bringing this debate in the House. When I heard it I myself could not refrain from uttering an expression of admiration. But one fundamental fact my hon. Friend has altogether missed, that is a question which I have been asking myself, since I heard his speech and that is: Is he proposing this reconstruction work for a Province of a free India or is he contemplating this on the idea that we shall remain as before a subject nation and therefore he has made his particular suggestion? If, Sir, these have been made on assumption that we shall remain as before, *i.e.*, as subjects of the British people, will his programme be reoriented if as a result of the war we shall be declared free after the war? What is the idea behind his mind? Is he making this programme for an India which shall be perpetually in subjection of the British Empire? My hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker can think of a reconstruction programme in a very equable mood. Because judging by the progress which the war is making in Europe and Asia, certainly we are entitled to hope that the British Empire, of which Mr. Whittaker is an important member, will not remain intact—but his empire may get slices added to it. But what is in store for us? Are we going to get rid of the British yoke or are we going to continue as we are? The indications are that we may either remain as subject of British rule or we may be sold by our British masters to America. Sir, the way in which the Americans are behaving in this land must have dispelled the illusion from our mind; the signs which we see in the streets have compelled us to revise our opinion about the American civilisation; the way in which the American tyranny and hooliganism are going unchecked has convinced us that there must be a secret understanding to barter us to America. Can we with this frame of mind seriously think of a reconstruction programme? In any case I should like to know from my hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker, under what basis he is making this reconstruction programme—whether according to him, India will be free after this War or whether India will remain a part of the British Empire or whether India will be given to America? All this, I should like to know, from his reply.

The other thing for which I always quarrel with my esteemed Friend is that he has not a word to say about the political prisoners. He knows my Friend Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed—he is well-known as an intellectual and patriotic man and he might have made a very valuable contribution to the framing of reconstruction programme. But he is still inside the prison bars. Does Mr. Whittaker agree that it will be proper for the Government to release those prisoners so that we may get all the best intellectuals of the Province to sit together and frame a reconstruction programme? Why does not Mr. Whittaker think of a man like Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and other Friends like Mr. Debeswar Sarma and Srijut Krishna Sarma and others now confined within the prison bars? Why does he not think of them? I do not know whether he was happy at the time when this bench (pointing to the Opposition bench) was depleted, while my hon. friends Messrs. Bardoloi and Chanda were within the prison bars. But to-day I find my Friend Mr. Whittaker talking very freely and happily with those people, he does not fear them, he does not say that all these Friends should go to the jail again. During all these last three years I had not heard him saying a word in favour of these gentlemen but now he wants them to collaborate and frame the reconstruction programme. Why this mentality, why does he not join with me even now in asking for their release?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Conceding that Mr. Whittaker is really at fault in all these respects what has the hon. Member got to say on the scheme before the House? (*Loud laughter.*)

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: To a great extent he is at fault because he supports the detention. The whole idea of my speech is this. If he wants to frame a reconstruction programme, first of all we must know our position; we must know whether we shall live in a free India or an American India or a British India. The first condition that this House should impose upon Hon'ble Premier and His Excellency the Governor is that they agree to release all the political prisoners—at least those hon. Members of this House who are still in detention so that we may put our heads together and find out a reconstruction programme. I perfectly agree with Mr. Whittaker that the reconstruction programme should not be devised just as the land revenue programme. If we want to have a good reconstruction programme we must try to have an all-parties Government—by all parties Government I do not mean that every one of us should be a Member of the Cabinet—I do not want that every one representing every group should be there. What I mean is that such a Government should be formed as may have the support of the different sections of this House. We must put our heads together and try to have an all-parties Government. We have had enough of bickerings. I feel great pity for Sir Muhammad. All his talents have been wasted—Provincial Autonomy has not been given a fair trial in Assam. Either Sir Muhammad was being opposed by the Congress or the Congress was being opposed by Sir Muhammad. That was the position so long. My hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker is smiling that I was a party in that state of things. He has every right to do so really. We never tried so seriously to have an all-parties Government. Even now it is not too late, because we do not know how long the present constitution will last. I shall appeal to my Congress Friends to seriously consider this position. They have been Members of this House for the last seven years but what achievements have they made? They have failed to do their duty. On the other hand Sir Muhammad has failed in his mission. Of course, he may have done something for his own community but that is not enough. He has not done anything for the upliftment of his Province. There is still time. I appeal to both Sir Muhammad and Mr. Bardoloi—let them sit together and even now try to do something for the real upliftment of this country.

Mr. E. H. S. LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is very tempting in a debate on such a subject to let one's imagination run riot and discuss all sorts of schemes which one would expect to find in a Utopia, but I propose to comment on one aspect only of the proposals before us.

It is good to see that the proposals in this booklet include a number of industrial schemes, thus recognising the fact that no country or province can prosper on agriculture alone. A country or province must industrialise to some extent if it has to hold its own and raise the standard of living, and I propose therefore to confine my comments to this industrial aspect.

Now, Sir, industry is not a question for amateurs unless they have more money than sense; industry and business form a hard school in which the weakest go under. That may be considered an unfortunate aspect of modern civilization, but it is a fact. Industry is a matter for experts who have been trained up in a hard school. The authors of this booklet, I know, will not claim to be experts, nor do I claim to be one, but I happen to have been in industry long enough to have absorbed a little industrial experience, and I feel it my duty to pass on some of it.

The first point I had intended to deal with is the question of whether industry should be run by Government or private enterprise. The Hon'ble Prime Minister has already said, his Government recognise that it should be a matter for private enterprise and it is most gratifying to hear that, Sir. The second point, which I particularly want to mention, has also been mentioned by the Hon'ble Prime Minister and also by Mr. Goldsmith, *i.e.*, the question whether small factories should be started up or whether these should be branches of large established industries. Mr. Goldsmith pleaded for the small industries. The Hon'ble Prime Minister mentioned two industries, spinning and weaving and jute and said that it was his Government's intention to approach the large industrialists. If he will permit me, Sir, I would like to endorse that. But when Government approach these large industrialists, they must remember

that they will meet hard-headed businessmen who will say "what inducements have you got to offer". "Why should we start up such and such factories in Assam?" And this is where Government come in. They should be in a position to offer two powerful inducements, *viz.*, cheap power and cheap land. It has already been said on many occasions, including to-day, that Assam is potentially in the position of being able to offer cheaper power than any other province in India, and it has also been said that hydro-electricity is the one and the only industry in which Government should interest themselves. And furthermore Government is the only right and proper body to tackle this. Although two and half pages in this booklet are devoted to discussing hydro-electricity, no expenditure is shown and allotted for it in the estimates, and the Hon'ble Prime Minister said that he thought hydro-electricity should wait until industry is started. (The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla :—I did not say that, Sir.) I am sorry if I have misunderstood him. In any case, Sir, I hope the Prime Minister will accept the slogan "produce the power and the rest follows".

There is another point, Sir. If the big industrialists agree to accept the invitation to open up factories in this Province, they will provide all or most of the capital required and the operation of these factories will help to bring prosperity to the people of this Province in the form of the relatively high wages which efficient industry can pay; but they must have these inducements of cheap power and land. It can be assumed that if the big industrialists after receiving invitations and in spite of these inducements do not consider it worth while starting factories here, then it most certainly will not be worth while for Government or the small man to try to do so. The small industries, such as canning and preservation of fruits, tanneries, etc., also will want some inducements, they are the same, cheap power and cheap land.

Another matter, Sir, on which I would just like to comment briefly is the proposed size of the industrial schemes. Is, for instance, the proposed spinning and weaving mill of 5,140 spindles and 100 looms an economical size? How much of Assam's requirements will it supply? Or take for instance, the proposed soap factory. Can it turn out goods at a competitive price? For, we cannot expect any one in this Province, however patriotic he may be, to pay, say, six annas for a cake of Assam soap, if he can buy soap made elsewhere in India at three annas a cake.

There is another thing which deserves notice, *viz.*, a recurring cost has been shown against these industrial schemes. If industry is successful it should make money and not require it. No prospectus would ever be put out by any firm asking capital for a scheme which expected to lose money and did not show any expected return to the share-holders. Apparently Government expects that these schemes will run at a loss from the start. I for one could not vote for any scheme which expects to run at a loss.

Sir, before I finish I would just like to repeat two points. This Province does require some industrial development, but it is a job for experts and not amateurs, and to encourage this development, Government must provide cheap power. Experts not Amateurs. Cheap Power.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER; : Is it the desire of the House that the sitting of the House should be extended? Should not the debate be finished to-day? There is no other day on which the debate can be again taken up.

Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: We cannot expect to finish the debate to-day. So, it is better to adjourn.

The Hon'le the SPEAKER: So, it will stand over. (*Voice*—Surely we can get time on the 23rd). I doubt very much.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: This is a very big question on which the hon. Members will like to take part (*A voice*—Moreover we are discussing an anonymous publication and there is no name of the publisher even on the publication.)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: This is a Government publication. I should rather inform the House that it cannot stand over for the next Session. It is only a Resolution that is moved and cannot be disposed of in a Session that can stand over under certain circumstances for the next Session.

I think having regard to the Amendment which has been moved by Mr. Mookerjee the discussion may be shortened.

Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: The whole discussion would have been fair and proper if Government had come forward with a complete scheme before the House. This has been more or less an academical discussion up till now and, therefore, I would feel, Sir, it would be improper to continue the subject now as it is. If Government consider necessary they may come forward with a complete scheme in the next Session.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Are there many Members to speak on this Motion?
(Voices—There are many, Sir.)

Mr. A. K. CHANDA: This is the only occasion when imagination can run riot. We have no money but we have been given opportunity to speak. So let us be at it.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 11 A. M. on Tuesday, the 13th March, 1945.

SHILLONG:

The 11th May 1945.

A. K. BARUA,

Secretary, Legislative Assembly, Assam.

A. G. P. (L.A.) No. 4-125+2-16-5-1945.