

Proceedings of the Fourteenth Session of the First Assam Legislative Assembly, assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 11 A.M., on Tuesday, the 21st March, 1944.

PRESENT :

The Hon'ble Mr. Basanta Kumar Das, Speaker, in the Chair, the ten Hon'ble Ministers and forty-six hon. Members.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(To which oral answers were given)

Third-class Compartments of the A. B. Zone of the Bengal and Assam Railway

† Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

*81. Will Government be pleased to enquire and state—

- (a) Why there is no lighting arrangement in third-class compartments of A. B. Zone of the Bengal and Assam Railway ?
- (b) Whether frequent burglaries take place in dark compartments ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

81. (a)—The hon. Member is referred to the reply to the Questions (Starred Questions Nos. 4-6) asked by Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee, M. L. A., in the current Session of the Assam Legislative Assembly, 1944, on the same subject.

(b)—During the year 1943 there were 43 cases of running train thefts which are not considered high, in view of the heavy passenger traffic on the Railway.

†† Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Why kerosene lamps cannot be substituted ?

Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: There is dearth of kerosene also.

†† Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister whether he can move the Railway authority so that lighting can be arranged ?

Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Last time only a few days back the Agent of the Bengal and Assam Railway was here and I had a talk with him. He pointed out that there was a shortage of electric bulb and that is why the lighting arrangement has not been very satisfactory. He promised me to look into the matter.

†† Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I point out to the Hon'ble Minister that in other Railways there is sufficient arrangement of lights as before ?

Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Anyway, the Agent has already promised to look into this matter.

† Starred Question No.81 was put by Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri on authorisation.
†† Speech not corrected.

Deterioration of Assam cattle

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

*82. Are Government aware that chronic fodder shortage has resulted in the deterioration of Assam cattle and half of the prevalent cattle diseases are due to malnutrition ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA replied :

82.—The poor condition of Assam cattle is due to unrestricted breeding and insufficient feeding. The Assam cultivator is generally averse to growing any fodder for his cattle.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Did Government make any attempt to improve the feeding of the cattle ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: We have been running a number of fodder gardens in the Province from where we distribute seeds to the cultivators.

Requisition of Houses in the town of Shillong

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

*83. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The number of houses that have been requisitioned by the Deputy Commissioner of Khasi and Jaintia Hills in the town of Shillong upto 15th February 1944 ?
- (b) The number of cases where rents have not been paid even once since requisitioned and the reason therefor ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

83. (a)—Five in British India portions of the town.

(b)—One belonging to Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee. The Deputy Commissioner fixed the rate of rent on 24th July 1943 but the owner applied for reconsideration. There is also a dispute over the furniture between the owner and the Military which is still unsettled.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Is it a fact that the house belonging to Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee was taken possession of by force without making any reference to him.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: That is not insinuated in the Question itself, Sir, and that also does not follow as a supplementary Question.

Number of Distilleries in the Province

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT asked :

*84. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) How many distilleries have recently been established in the Province ?
- (b) How many are there already in the Province and where are they situated ?
- (c) From what materials is the product distilled ?
- (d) What is the prospective revenue from these sources ?
- (e) Whether they propose to arrange for adequate supplies of rectified and other spirits for hospitals, dispensaries, etc., at reasonable rates ?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY replied :

84. (a) and (b)—One. It is situated at Modarkhat near Dikom in the district of Lakhimpur.

(c)—Gur and molasses.

(d)—About 12 lakhs a year from foreign liquor for which the proprietor of the distillery has been granted necessary blending and bottling licences.

(The revenue would have been much more if sufficient Gur and molasses were available for manufacture of country spirit.)

(e)—Government are taking steps to arrange adequate quantities of molasses for the Assam Distillery for the purpose of manufacturing rectified and methylated spirit to meet the requirements of the Inspector General of Civil Hospitals, Assam.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: Will the Hon'ble Minister please tell me at what rate per gallon the tax is levied for the purpose of revenue?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: For foreign liquor?

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: Yes.

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: I am not sure about the rate, perhaps Rs.60 L.P.G.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: Rupees 60?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: Yes, Rs.60.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: Can the Hon'ble Minister please tell me the ratio of raw materials to distilled product?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: I cannot give the reply off-hand.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: Will he please take steps to find out the figure?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: Yes, Sir.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: What quantity of Gur is supplied to the distillery of Assam by the Government?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: Up till now we have not supplied any Gur, Sir, to the distillery. The distillery is buying its own Gur.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: Will Government please consider the advisability of restricting or controlling the supply of Gur to distilleries so that the civil population's needs may not be jeopardised?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: I think the hon. Member has heard a statement made by the Hon'ble Premier the other day that Government are indenting sufficient quantity of Gur from outside. I think there will be no dearth of Gur for the consumption of the civil population.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: In the meantime will Government take it from me that it would be advisable to restrict the supply of Gur so that the civil population may get sufficient quantity.

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: I think the only supply we will make will be for the purpose of methylated and rectified spirit for the hospital purposes and if for manufacturing country spirit or liquor any Gur is required I think this distillery will have to get the quantity from the Government agencies which have been employed to purchase molasses at the controlled rate of Government.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Who are the proprietors of the distillery and who are its partners?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: Only one man Nandeswar Chakravarty is the proprietor and he has no partner.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it a Limited Company?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: No, Sir.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the advisability of restricting the activities of the blending establishment at Gauhati in order that the hospitals may get sufficient quantities of methylated spirit. We heard yesterday from the Hon'ble Minister that in order that the hospitals may get sufficient rectified spirit the distillery will be provided with sufficient Gur.

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: As a matter of fact we have made arrangement for the supply of rectified spirit for the hospital purposes.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: My Question applies not to distilleries but to its blending establishment. We heard yesterday that a Gauhati man has been given a license. He should be made to get rectified spirit from outside the Province for blending purpose.

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: The Gauhati man is to get rectified spirit from outside. We have not taken any step to get spirit for blending and bottling at Gauhati.

Song Publicity Organiser

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked:

*85. Is it a fact that Government have recently appointed an officer as Song Publicity Organiser?

*86. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) What is the utility of this post?

(b) Whether applications were called for and the post was duly advertised?

*87. (a) Is it a fact that the present incumbent of the post had not applied for it?

(b) If so, why?

(c) Did Government receive applications from candidates for the said post?

(d) If so, was any interview allowed to all those applicants?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

85.—The appointment has been made by the Central Government in consultation with this Government.

86.—(a) It is intended to apply in Assam the method which has succeeded elsewhere of reacting the people and inspiring them to uplift and self-help by the medium of popular song.

(b)—Yes.

87. (a)—No.

(b)—Does not arise.

(c)—Yes.

(d)—Not all, as there were as many as a hundred and twenty; but 39 of them—the more likely applications were selected and the applicants interviewed by the Central Organiser, Khan Saheb Hafeez Jullundhari.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, with regard to No.85, may I know whether this Government has got any control over the officer appointed as Song Publicity Organiser?

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

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it not a fact, Sir, that the pay of this officer is borne from the Provincial revenue?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir. Funds are provided by the Central Government for this organisation.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Why were not the applications forwarded to the Central Government?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: As the Organiser of the Central Government came to Assam.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, does the Song Publicity Organiser belong to this Province?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The man appointed belongs to this Province.

†Speech not corrected.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Sir, in reply to a Question the Hon'ble Premier said that the appointment was made in consultation with this Government. Did this Government inform the appointing authority anything about the antecedents of this particular incumbent?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir, I was not aware of the antecedents of this gentleman. We received applications, as I have said, of about 120, and of this 120 applications, 39 were selected by the Assam Government and placed before the Central Organiser, Khan Saheb Hafeez Jullundhari when he arrived here and interviewed the 39 selected candidates. Since then, as I will be replying to the unstarred Question about this, to-day, it has been brought to our notice that the gentleman appointed was a Government servant in the Excise Department, but was removed from Government service in the year 1925. These facts are now being brought to the notice of the Central Organiser.

Improvement of Live-Stock and production of cattle-food

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked:

*88. Will Government be pleased to state how many improved stud-bulls, cocks and hens have been supplied by the Agriculture Department in 1943-44 for the improvement of live-stock in Assam?

*89. Are Government aware that due to acute scarcity of milk in Assam, even children and invalids are not getting the required milk?

*90. Will Government be pleased to state what quantity of seeds of fodder crops were distributed or other steps taken by the Agriculture Department in the year 1943-44 for increased production of cattle-food in the Province?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA replied:

88.—Approximately 44 bulls have been supplied for the improvement of live-stock in Assam. The number of cocks and hens that have been supplied is not readily obtainable. The information has been called for from the districts.

89.—There is presumably a shortage of milk. This is due to increased demand and inflation. There is no means of immediately increasing the supply.

90.—The Government have started 318 fodder gardens in 1943. Large quantities of fodder seeds are distributed annually to the cultivators from these gardens and Government farms. Information relating to the exact quantity of seeds of fodder crops distributed is not available.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, as regards No.88, will the information sought for be supplied afterwards?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: It will be supplied to the hon. Member as soon as received.

Present Director of Agriculture, Assam

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked:

*91. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The qualifications required for the post of the Director of Agriculture?

(b) The qualifications of the present Director of Agriculture, Assam?

*92. Are Government aware that the posts of Director of Agriculture in other Provinces in India are held by properly and highly qualified officers of the Indian Agriculture Service?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA replied:

91.(a)—According to the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Agriculture the Director of Agriculture should be an officer combining administrative capacity with high scientific qualifications. Greater stress is however put

on the first as decentralisation of technical works becomes necessary with the growth of the Department.

(b) —He is the holder of an Indian Dairy Diploma and possesses the practical experience and the proved ability to which the Royal Commission referred.

92.—Government have no information as to whether the posts of Directors of Agriculture in all the Provinces of India have been filled up by members of the Indian Agriculture Service only.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Sir, as regards Question No.92, will Government kindly enquire of other Provinces in India and try to appoint, if available, an I. A. S. officer as Director of Agriculture ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA : There is no vacancy at the present moment, Sir.

†Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT : Sir, is it not a fact that the present incumbent has very considerable experience in this Province ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA : It is so, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Experience in what—in live-stock, or agriculture ?

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

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Will the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge please say in which place he was in charge of Agricultural Department for a considerable time ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA : He was in charge of Live-Stock section for a long time.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : What about Agricultural section? It is a matter of shame. It is also a matter of shame that though he has experience only in Live-Stock and not in agriculture my Friend Mr. Blennerhassett wanted to defend him. Sir, it is a question of protection for this particular officer which prompted Mr. Blennerhassett to support an unqualified person at the cost of the Province.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : Sir, may I know since when the present incumbent got experience in agriculture ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA : Sir, the present incumbent was appointed on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission. When this post was vacant applications were called for and his case was fully considered and the Government under section 93 appointed him as Director of Agriculture.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(To which answers were laid on the table)

Posts of Textile Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors

Maulavi BADARUDDIN AHMED asked :

57. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The number of posts created and filled up in the cadre of Textile Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors for the Province during 1943-44 ?

(b) How these posts were filled up ?

(c) Whether communal ratio was observed ?

(d) The number of Moslems and Scheduled caste people appointed to these posts?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA replied :

57. (a)—The total number of posts created and filled up during 1943-44 for each cadre are as follows :—

| | No. of posts created | Number of posts filled up |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Textile Inspectors | 20 | 18 |
| Textile Sub-Inspectors | 40 | 26 |
| Textile Examiner | 1 | 1 |
| | 61 | 45 |

†Speech not corrected.

(b)—These posts were filled up under Regulation 25 (vii) of the Public Service Commission Regulations with the concurrence of the Governor acting in his individual judgment.

(c)—Yes.

(d)—The total number of posts held by Muslim and Scheduled caste communities of the Province as a whole are as follows:—

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Muslims | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 17 |
| Scheduled caste Hindus | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4 |

Maulavi BADARUDDIN AHMED: May I know whether this Government advertised the posts and applications were called for?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: As the appointments were to be made in a hurry they could not be advertised. A large number of applications immediately poured in as soon as the news of creation of the posts spread like wild fire.

Re Labourers (Bhagalus) coming from Bengal

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked:

58. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether they are aware that the labourers (Bhagalus) who came from Bengal districts in May 1943, to harvest Buro crops in the Sunamganj Subdivision, were oppressed by rice-control officers in Shanbari and Kandebrpur Ghatis?

(b) Whether they are aware that these labourers are very unwilling to come this year?

(c) Whether they propose to give guarantee that they will not be harassed this year?

(d) Whether they will allow each of them to take 10 maunds of paddy as the maximum quantity?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

58. (a)—Yes, there was some trouble due to misunderstanding.

(b)—No.

(c)—No guarantee is required, but the District Officers will be asked to see that they are not unnecessarily put to troubles.

(d)—The quantity allowed normally is 8 maunds per Bhagal, but the necessity for change, if necessary, will be considered.

Veterinary Field Assistants

Babu SHIBENDRA CHANDRA BISWAS asked:

59. (a) Is it a fact that the Veterinary Field Assistants in Assam were appointed temporarily on condition that they would be confirmed after a period of 3 years of service since the time of appointment?

(b) If so, is it a fact that nearly 5 years have elapsed since their appointment and none of them has been confirmed as yet?

(c) Do Government propose to confirm them in their posts now?

(d) What is their scale of pay?

(e) Do Government propose to increase the scale in view of the present economic distress and abnormally high prices of food commodities and other necessities of life.

60. (a) Are Government aware that the Veterinary Field Assistants serving within Habiganj and Sunamganj Subdivisions have to tour round their jurisdictions by boats during the rainy season?

(b) What is the rate of conveyance allowance allowed to each of them per month?

(c) Do Government propose to increase the conveyance allowance in view of the existing circumstances in respect of the said officers?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA replied :

59. (a)—The fact is that the Veterinary Field Assistants were appointed for three years only on purely temporary basis without any condition that they would be confirmed after a period of three years.

(b)—Does not arise.

(c)—The matter is under the consideration of the Government.

(d)—The scale of pay is Rs.25—5/5—40 plus the usual dearness allowance.

(e)—Yes, *vide* p. XIV of the Memorandum on the Budget Estimates for the year 1944-45.

60. (a)—Yes.

(b)—The Veterinary Field Assistants get a fixed travelling allowance of Rs.5 per mensem and this has lately been increased to Rs.7 per mensem.

(c)—Reply given under 59(e) above.

Babu SHIBENDRA CHANDRA BISWAS : Sir, as regards No.59(e), according to Memorandum of the Budget, the scale is fixed from Rs.20—50. Is it considered adequate for these hardworked Field Assistants ?

*The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA : Sir, as promised by me last year I have brought the scale of pay to the level of Agricultural Demonstrators.

Babu SHIBENDRA CHANDRA BISWAS : As regards No.60(b), Sir, travelling allowance was increased from Rs.5 to 7. Is it considered sufficient for the Field Assistants, especially of Sunamganj and Habiganj wherein they have got to travel by boats during the rainy season ?

*The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA : These Field Assistants have represented their case to Government in this respect and this is under consideration.

*Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK : Are Government aware that there is not a single Veterinary Field Assistant in the Garo Hills ?

*The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA : Might be so.

Temporary Postponement of Execution of Decrees Act, 1941

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

61. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The stage at which the Temporary Postponement of Execution of Decrees Act, 1941, now stands ?

(b) Whether Government proposes to extend further the term of the Act ?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA replied :

61.(a) & (b)—The operation of the Temporary Postponement of Execution of Decrees Act, 1941, was extended for one year, with effect from the 13th February 1943. In view of the proviso to section 1(3) of the Act, the operation of this Act cannot be extended further as the total period of extension cannot exceed one year. So this Act expired on the 12th February 1944.

Grant for education of Scheduled Caste people

Maulavi BADARUDDIN AHMED asked :

62. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether it is a fact that the Government of India have made a grant of rupees fifty thousand for the education of Scheduled Caste people in Assam ?

(b) If so, whether they propose to spend the money under heads of expenditure on education in consultation with the representatives of the Scheduled Castes in the Legislature ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

62. (a)—Government have no information.

(b)—Does not arise.

Song Publicity Organiser

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

63. (a) Is it a fact that the newly appointed Song Publicity Organiser, Srijut Kirtinath Sarma Bardoloi, is a dismissed Government servant ?

(b) Is it a fact that he was dismissed from Government service in 1923, while working as a Depôt Excise Inspector ?

(c) If so, what were the reasons of his dismissal ?

64. Is it a fact that the Song Publicity Organiser has to administer the disbursement of a budget of a big amount of about half-a-lac of rupees ?

65. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The present age of this newly appointed Organiser ?

(b) Whether the age now given agrees with the age given by him on the previous occasion as Excise Inspector ?

66. Will the Government be pleased to state whether they would consider the re-appointment of the Song Publicity Organiser through the Public Service Commission with the aid of experts ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

63. (a) & (b)—He was removed from service, not dismissed. The year was 1925.

(c)—The charges of which he was held guilty were giving false evidence in an Excise case and assisting the accused by suppressing the truths and concocting evidence in his favour. There was a further more general charge of bad record.

64.—Yes.

65.—(a) About 58 years of age.

(b)—Yes.

66.—The appointment was made by the Central Song Publicity Organiser, and it is a matter for him to consider.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKEJEE: Sir, as regards question No.63(c) the reply given here is:—"The charges of which he was held guilty were giving false evidence in an Excise case and assisting the accused by suppressing the truths and concocting evidence in his favour. There was a further more general charge of bad record."

May I ask the Hon'ble Minister whether for this disqualification which has been stated here, he has been appointed to make false propaganda of the Department ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: As I stated already in reply to the Starred Question of my Friend Mr. Rahman—these facts were not known to me personally or to the officer who presented the applications before the Central Song Publicity Organiser who came to Shillong for interviewing the candidates. Whatever the past records, the Central Song Publicity Organiser selected this gentleman because he is an expert in music and has written about 7 books on music in Assam. Now that the research capability of my Friend has come into full play and all these facts have been brought to light, I have asked the Chief Secretary to place all these facts before the Central Song Publicity Officer and it is for him to take any action he considers necessary.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Was any Minister of this Government present at the time of selection ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: None, as a member of Selection Board.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Is it a fact that the Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Nath Saikia was present at the time of selection ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The gentleman, *i.e.*, Khan Saheb Hafeez Jullundhari requested that some one from the Province interested in music should be present in order to help him, because he is innocent of Bengal and Assam music, and he said that as 6 districts of Assam Valley is a far bigger area than 2 districts in Surma Valley he wanted one from the Assam Valley to help him. So Dr. Saikia was deputed by me to sit with him, but he had absolutely no hand in the selection.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know whether the Hon'ble Dr. Saikia knew about the "qualifications" of this officer before he represented the Assam Valley people in that committee?

*The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I used to sit as a judge in various music competitions. Of course, it will not be too much when I say that I know something of music. He wanted help from me in the matter of translating the songs into English.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know whether the Hon'ble Minister was in the know of his antecedents?

*The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: That was not the matter for consideration at the time.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Whether he knew about the antecedents or not I want a definite reply.

*The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: I did not sit there to enquire into his antecedents.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Question is whether he knew the antecedents.

*The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: I had not been there to enquire about the antecedents and I did not know anything about that.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: That shows the Hon'ble Minister knew about that.

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I know from the Hon'ble Premier that a dismissed Government servant can be reappointed by the Government and his dismissal can be condoned?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: He was not "dismissed". A "dismissed" man is not eligible for Government service again. He was "removed" from service and he is eligible for Government service again.

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: How many years ago was he discharged?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: In 1925.

*Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Was there no other candidate who had no such brilliant antecedents?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: As I mentioned, the antecedents of this man was not personally known to me and as the Central Publicity Officer came and talked to me about him, I had no recollection of his being removed from Government service as early as 1925. So I could not tell him anything about this man. As these Questions came up, I could know all these things from the materials placed before me by Chief Secretary and I have asked him to send all these materials to Khan Sahib Hafeez for any action that he wants to take.

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I know how his past conduct of about 15 years ago can interfere with his duties of song organiser?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: His previous removal from office may not stand as a bar so far as mere duties of writing songs and putting them into music and propagating them before the masses are concerned, but the administration of about half a lac may devolve upon him—the Central Government have allocated about Rs.53,000 for this purpose to the Assam Government—and if he has got to handle this sum, I would personally object. If the sum is not handled by him but by the Finance Department of Assam, his music qualifications stand heads and shoulders above other candidates.

*Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it a fact that the two gentlemen, who, during the interview secured the highest marks had not been taken in view of the fact that some of the Hon'ble Ministers interfered and the officer authorised to make the appointment was impressed by the Hon'ble Ministers to take this gentleman?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No. I repudiate the insinuation of my Friend the last Questioner.

Song Publicity Organiser

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN asked :

67. (a) Is it a fact that the newly appointed Song Publicity Organiser, Sriju Kirtinath Sarma Bardioloi, is a dismissed Government servant ?

(b) Is it a fact that he was dismissed from Government service in 1923, while working as a Depôt Excise Inspector ?

(c) If so, what were the reasons of his dismissal ?

68. Is it a fact that the Song Publicity Organiser has to administer the disbursement of a budget of a big amount of about half-a-lac of rupees ?

69. Will Government be pleased to state whether they propose to consider the re-appointment of the Song Publicity Organiser through the Public Service Commission with the aid of experts ?

70. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The present age of this newly appointed Organiser ?

(b) Whether the age now given agrees with the age given by him on the previous occasion as Excise Inspector ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

67. (a), (b), (c), 68, 69 & 70 (a), (b)—The hon. Member is referred to the replies given to similar Questions (Unstarred Question Nos.63—66) asked by Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee during this Session of the Assembly.

Supply of Gur and price of Mustard oil in Sunamganj Subdivision

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

71. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether Gur is sold at 10 annas per seer in all markets in the Sunamganj Subdivision ?

(b) Whether any controlled rate has been fixed by them ?

(c) If not, why not ?

(d) Whether they have made any arrangement for purchasing Gur from Bihar Government ?

(e) Whether it is a fact that there is a ban on export of Gur from Bihar ?

(f) If so, whether they propose to correspond with Bihar Government for making arrangement for supply of Gur to this Province ?

72. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether mustard oil is sold at the rate of Rs.2 per seer in all markets in the Sunamganj Subdivision ?

(b) Whether any control rate has been fixed by Government for it ?

(c) If not, why not ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

71. (a)—Government have no information.

(b)—Yes, the controlled price of Gur (imported) up to 31st December 1943 was 7 annas and from 1st January 1944 the price has been revised and fixed at annas 6 6 a seer. The price of locally produced Gur has been fixed at 7 annas a seer from 1st February 1944 and annas 5-9 a seer from 1st March 1944.

(c)—Does not arise.

(d)—Yes, the purchase of 3,500 tons of Gur from Bihar as allotted to Assam by the Gur Controller has been arranged. Government have taken all possible steps to get the Gur as early as possible.

(e)—Yes.

(f)—Does not arise.

72. (a)—Mustard oil might be selling at the rate of Rs.2 a seer as is known to be the usual price of it in almost all the markets in the Province.

(b)—No, not yet.

(c)—Government have not got adequate control over supplies which are mainly obtained through private trade.

Supply of Kerosene to the villagers

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN asked :

73. Will Government be pleased to state whether it is a fact that an individual family in a village does not get more than one-fourth seer of kerosene in a month ?

74. (a) Are Government aware that for want of kerosene the cultivators cannot perform that part of their daily work that is always done after sun-set, and that the students in villages are in great difficulties in preparing their lessons ?

(b) Do Government propose to take steps to remove these difficulties ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

73.—No, the quantity available varies between places but is generally small.

74. (a)—Yes. Government are aware that the supply of kerosene oil to the cultivators is not quite adequate but there is no help as the reduction in the supply was imposed by the Government of India.

(b)—Government are trying their best to remove the difficulties. They have moved the Central Government for increasing the provincial quota of kerosene oil on the basis that the villagers of this Province are suffering greatly for inadequate supply of kerosene oil.

Pilgrimage to Mecca

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI asked :

75. Are Government aware that passage for pilgrimage to Mecca has not been opened for the intending pilgrims from Assam for some years.

76. Are Government aware that a large number of intending pilgrims from Assam are awaiting the opening of the passage, so that they may perform their incumbent duty of attending Haj in Mecca ?

77. Will Government be pleased to state what steps have been taken by them for re-opening the said passage ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

75.—Yes, for the last two years, *i.e.*, 1942 and 1943.

76.—Yes.

77.—This is a matter which must depend upon the decision of the Central Government, who have given sufficient public intimation that they have the question continually in mind.

*Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: My Question was—Will Government be pleased to state what steps have been taken by them for re-opening the said passage? The reply is quite different. My Question has not been replied.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: When the Government of India intimated that the Assam Government should publish closure of Haj pilgrimage last year, we replied that we would do as ordered, but that will be a great disappointment for the pilgrims of this Province and as soon as the war exigency is over, passages should be made open for the intending pilgrims.

Re Security Prisoners Maulavi Ibrahim Ali Chaudhury and Maulavi Mabarak Ali

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI asked :

78. (a) Are Government aware that Maulavi Ibrahim Ali Chaudhury and Maulavi Mabarak Ali, B.L. of Sylhet are security prisoners ?

(b) Are Government aware that their family members are passing their days with great difficulty for want of pecuniary help ?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state what allowance they have granted to the families of each of these gentlemen ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

78. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Government have no information, but have made enquiries.

(c)—No allowances have yet been sanctioned, as no applications for allowances have been received from the prisoners.

Statement re Starred Question No.54 put by Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee on 16th March, 1944.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Before you take up the next item, Sir, I would like to state one thing. The other day when certain Starred Questions were answered, Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee wanted that I should place before the House a copy of the new Rule that the Assam Government had adopted about withholding of applications from permanent Government servant for other posts. I caused the Rule sent to the Assembly Secretary and I understand that a copy of the Rule has been placed on the Library Table.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS

GRANT No.9

18B AND 68B.—NAVIGATION, ETC.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.7,31,700 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head "18B—Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Works".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The Motion moved :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.7,31,700 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head '18B.—Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Works'".

The hon. Members know that to-day is the last day for voting on the Demands for Grants, and all discussions must terminate just at 4 0' Clock. I would, therefore, ask the other Hon'ble Ministers to move their respective Demands now, so that just at 4, those Demands may be put to the vote of the House as Questions from the Chair.

GRANT No.29

56.—STATIONERY AND PRINTING

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA : On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.4,99,600 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head "56.—Stationery and Printing".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The Motion moved :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.4,99,600 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head '56.—Stationery and Printing'."

GRANT No.4

9.—STAMPS

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.47,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head "9.—Stamps."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.47,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head '9.—Stamps'."

GRANT No.23

43.—INDUSTRIES

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.3,41,200 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head "43.—Industries".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.3,41,200 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head '43.—Industries'."

GRANT No.12

28.—JAILS AND CONVICT SETTLEMENTS

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.11,40,100 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head "28.—Jails and Convict Settlements."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.11,40,100 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head '28.—Jails and Convict Settlements'."

GRANT No.22

42.—CO-OPERATION

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.2,53,200 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head "42.—Co-operation".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.2,53,200 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head '42.—Co-operation'."

GRANT No.25

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

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs.34,57,900 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head "50.—Civil Works—(excluding Establishment and Tools and Plant charges)".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.34,57,900 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for

the administration of the head '50.—Civil Works—(excluding Establishment and Tools and Plant charges)'."

Now, we shall take up Cut Motions under Grant No.9. I find that Mr. Mookerjee's Motion seeks to criticise the general policy. I would therefore ask him to move his Motion.

GRANT No.9

18B AND 68B —NAVIGATION, etc.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs.7,31,700 under Grant No.9, Major head—18B and 68B.—Navigation, Embankments and Drainage Works at page 45 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.7,31,700 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, I have tabled this Motion to criticise Government with regard to their Navigation, Embankment, and Drainage Works policy.

Sir, it is well-known that Assam is an agricultural Province. The improvement of the Province therefore means the improvement of cultivation, and the improvement of cultivation is on its part very closely related to the improvement of drainage and embankment in the Province. Sir, I admit that Government have taken up some works under the Embankment and Drainage heads, but the new projects that we find in the Budget are so few in number that I feel very much disappointed about the progress and improvement of agriculture in the Province. Sir, the other day the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Land Revenue stated that they were extending the area under cultivation. It was pointed out by my hon. Friend Mr. Nirendra Nath Deb as well as by myself that due to deforestation there was every chance of flood which is practically an annual affair in some part or other of this Province. Sir, I would request Government to take recourse to intensive cultivation by improving irrigation and erecting embankments, so that the crops may not be ruined by drought and flood. Drought and flood are the two main causes of the failure of crops in our Province.

Sir, as regards Navigation, the less is said the better. There are steamer services throughout the Province ; in some places the services are seasonal, and in some places there are services throughout the year. But the people derive very little benefit now-a-days. Sir, here I would suggest that as we have got our representatives of this House in the Railway Advisory Committees we also should have our representatives in the Advisory Board of the steamer companies as well, so that the grievances and demands of the people of Assam may be ventilated in that committee and something useful may be done for the people.

Sir, as regards resuscitation of the dead rivers there is already a Cut Motion in the list. The Government is practically blind to this aspect of the matter. Sir, it is important and vital works done not by piecemeal but in a planned way and quickly too. It may be said that the cost will be very high. I admit that Sir, but still if we want to have the desired effect and if we are really serious to save our Province from ruin, we must take up this supplementary branch of cultivation immediately and in right earnest. If we can get the embankment and drainage works done according to our need at an early date I can assure the House that we shall get at least 25 per. cent. more crop from our present cultivated land. Unless we can protect the crops of the existing area it will be a folly on our part to extend the area any more by deforestation, causing permanent injury to the Province. With these words, Sir, I commend my Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The Motion moved :

"That the total provision of Rs.7,31,700 under Grant No.9, Major head—18B and 68B.—Navigation, Embankments and Drainage Works at page 45 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.7,31,700 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to take the indulgence of the House to bring in one specific instance of my district to show how his drainage and embankment scheme has produced disastrous effect. This was done

conjointly with the officers of the Agriculture Department. I have spoken to the Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture outside because I did not get an opportunity of speaking yesterday. But for this work the Public Works Department is also responsible. It was done with regard to Mora Pagladia River in village Gobradal within the jurisdiction of Tihu Thana. A ditch was cut with the result that a large area of land nearly 1,000 bighas had been entirely damaged and rendered useless on account of this drainage. I hope the Hon'ble Minister will have an enquiry made into the matter.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to make a few observations on the Motion moved by Mr. Mookerjee. According to me, Sir, the Drainage and Embankment Department is not doing its work to the satisfaction of the people. So far as my subdivision is concerned, I may say that due to the unsatisfactory working of the work of the Drainage Department a considerable area of Boro growing land remains uncultivated. The fact was brought to the notice of Government but I do not know why they did not take any action.

So far as the silting up of rivers is concerned, perhaps Sunamganj is the worst sufferer. Formerly, we used to travel by steamer from Sunamganj to Sylhet throughout the whole year but now steamer plies from Narainganj to Chhatak but that also not regularly. Khadirganj, better known as Markuli, is cut off from Sunamganj because the river Kalni is silted up. The police stations Dharmapasha, Derai and Tahirpur are also cut off from the subdivisional headquarters. There are no motorable roads from Sunamganj to these places. The rivers Kansha, Jadukata and Kalni have become so much silted that even boat service has become impossible. For these reasons the police stations mentioned are almost cut off from the subdivisional headquarters. I bring this matter to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister in charge so that he may take such action as might be necessary to enable him to remove the grievance of the people.

I know, Sir, the Bengal Government undertook a scheme known as Damodar Canal Scheme. I would request the Hon'ble Minister in charge to see his way to formulate such a scheme in our Province so that the difficulties not only of the subdivision of Sunamganj but of all other localities be removed without delay.

About the steamer service, Sir, the less is said the better. Last year, I discussed the matter threadbare on the floor of this House. Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahab Chaudhury will bear me out that due to the irregular steamer service between Narainganj and Chhatak people of Sunamganj are undergoing a very great difficulty. The Khan Sahib when he is required to go to Sunamganj or Chhatak he cannot do so because he cannot depend on the steamer service as it is never regular. Sometimes it comes in the morning, sometimes at night and sometimes it does not come at all. From last year the steamer service has become very irregular. Even in rainy season last year we had to experience very great difficulty. When on business we started for Shillong we could not depend on steamer. We had to take recourse to boat. During rainy days we cannot reach Sylhet timely by boat. All these have put the people of Sunamganj to a very great difficulty and I would request the Hon'ble Premier and the Hon'ble Minister in charge to look into this matter.

Mr. Mookerjee has spoken about the desirability of putting a Member in the management of the Steamer Company. (*A voice* :—in the management or you mean advisory committee !) I mean to look into the management of the company so far as steamer services are concerned. I am entirely at one with Mr. Mookerjee. I also request the Hon'ble Minister to see his way to place a Member for this work ; otherwise our grievances will not be removed.

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

*Khan Sahib Maulavi DEWAN MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have got a †Motion standing in my name and thereby I want to raise a discussion about closing down of some important steamer stations, between Sunamganj to Chhatak in the district of Sylhet, by the Steamer Company.

I am very grateful to my hon. Friend Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury for referring my name in his speech and also because of the fact that he mentioned the difficulties of the people of Sunamganj.

Only a year ago I moved an almost similar Motion about closing down of some important stations between Sunamganj and Chhatak in the district of Sylhet, by the Steamer Company. The hon. Members of this House may remember that my hon. Friend Maulavi Amjad Ali made a similar Motion about the irregularity of steamer service between Pandu and Amingaon.....

*Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Between Pandu and Dhubri.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member should not interrupt. There is the Hon'ble Minister to reply.

*Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: He also made serious allegations before the House against the Steamer Company. My hon. Friend is absent today and I do not know what is now going on in the Pandu-Amingaon line. My complaint is not a local one. With it is involved the comforts and hardships of thousands of people of our Province. As a Member of this Legislature, it is my duty to place before the Government the grievances of my constituency, however small they may be.

Like my Friend, Maulavi Amjad Ali, I do not like to go so far as to propose for withdrawing the licenses of the steamer companies. What I want, Sir, is this, that steamer companies should look in to the interests of the people of the Province from where they are earning lakhs of rupees annually. The system of Ghat Sarkar Station may be replaced by the flag station which will not cost them a single pie. Following the example of the Bengal and Assam Railway Advisory Board, I whole-heartedly support the proposal of my Friend, Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury and Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee. May I urge upon the Government to constitute an Assam Steamer Advisory Board, which will at least have some control over the activities of the steamer companies? May I again draw the kind attention of the Hon'ble Minister in-charge of Navigation to remove the grievances of the people of Sunamganj by opening a steamer station between Sunamganj and Chhatak, which has been closed by the steamer company?

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: Sir, the Cut Motion that I am to move is No. ‡3 in the Order Paper.

It is no doubt gratifying that some of the projects have been taken up by the Government this year. But there remains many important projects, such as, Mubarakpur Khal, Mirzapur Khal and the mouth of Lama-juar from Kushiara river to Anair Haor near Bhanga and one new Khal from the Longai river to Kaliganj Haor through Kanishail and Bhagishagi villages near Puamara. These are the long standing grievances of the people. In these localities lakhs of people live. Every year they cannot grow any paddy due to rise of water early in the year on account of the railway lines from Karimganj to Bhanga upwards on the North and the railway lines between Karimganj and Nilambazar on the West. These lands will be cultivable lands if these projects are taken up and the people will be also saved from famine almost every year. These low-lying areas will be silted up and water will not accumulate there to destroy the paddy.

*Speech not corrected.

†2. Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY to move:—

That the provision of Rs. 4,46,000 under Grant No. 9, Major head—18B. and 68B.—Navigation, Embankments and Drainage Works, Minor head—A.—Works at page 45 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 7, 1,700 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

‡3. Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI to move:—

That the provision of Rs.3,000 under Grant No. 9, Major head—18B. and 68B.—Navigation Embankments and Drainage Works, Minor head—B.—Extensions and improvements at page 45 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.7,31,700 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

The Hon'ble the Finance Minister, when he was in-charge of the Public Works Department and Maulavi Ali Haidar Khan when he was Minister in-charge of Agriculture were pleased to visit those localities. Both of them promised to take up at least some of these projects. The people of these localities submitted petitions after petitions for redress of their grievances at the time of Mr. Jarman and Mr. Sultan while they were Subdivisional Officers of Karimganj. All of them promised to take up these projects but did not do anything. So, Sir, I cannot understand why Government could not do anything for the relief of the people. I also cannot understand why they do not take up these small cases. These small projects, surely, will be managed by a small amount of money and will not require a big sum.

Sir, only one fact, I find as its cause. These projects fall in my constituency and in parts of the constituencies of Mr. Sen and Mr. Aditya. Except this, I do not find any reason why these Khals have not been taken up to this day.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Reference has already been made to the *Cut Motion standing in my name. By that Motion, I wanted to raise a discussion about the failure of the Government in taking up any scheme for resuscitation of the dead and dying rivers, especially, in the Surma Valley.

Sir, many of the navigable water channels are already dead and many of them are fast dying. As regards the river Surma, greater part of it has already been silted and closed down to all kinds of water traffic. Similar has been the condition with many of the rivers of the Surma Valley; as a result, communication and an important and easy mode of transport has been affected. Not only that,—the dying rivers are adversely affecting the health of the rural population. We are struggling desperately to secure transport facility for the movement of our food-grains and essential commodities. When accommodation in railways is so much limited, is it not the foremost duty of the Government to divert their attention in this direction? I suggest that immediate steps should be taken to examine the condition of these rivers and elaborate schemes should be drawn up to open up these channels. This will mean not only better wealth and resources to the Province, but also a surer and quicker communication.

As regards Embankment and Drainage projects, I want to speak a few words, Sir. Very slow progress has been made regarding the projects undertaken by the Department. These are not expected to be finished within the year, before the rains set in. This will mean a great impediment and waste of public money. Almost all of these projects are sure to go under water. The channels dug will be silted up in course of the rains and the bunds erected will be washed away. This state of affairs, surely, reflects on the efficiency of the Department. Of course, there was some difficulty in procuring labour but if the military projects can be finished so quickly, I think, Sir, sufficient steps should have been taken so that these projects could be finished within the year.

As regards the speech that has been delivered by Khan Sahib Dewan Ahbab Chaudhury, I would like to say that out of courtesy he did not mention the name of the station that had been closed between Sunamganj and Chhatak. I submit, this is Duhalia from which my Friend comes.

With these words, I support the Motion.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Sir, let me ventilate the grievances of the people of Habiganj subdivision through this Motion. At the outset, I point out to the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of this Department that up till now no definite project has been taken up by them. It is also not known whether any such scheme or any such project has been drawn up for the subdivision of Habiganj. Sir, from certain Questions which I put during this Session, I wanted to bring to the notice of the Government that the subdivisional town of Habiganj has been cut off from all sorts of

*1. Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY to move:—

That the provision of Rs. 4,46,000 under Grant No.9, Major head—18B. and 68B.—Navigation, Embankments and Drainage Works, Minor head—A.—Works at page 45 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 7,31,700 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

communications more particularly, for the reason that the river Barak has been silted up for some time past. The position of the Habiganj subdivisional town is that during the rains it becomes accessible to northern, western and eastern interior parts of the subdivision by boat but during the dry season it becomes absolutely cut off because it has no communication. If people want to go to Baniyachong side, the only communication now-a-days is motor service, but this is also not a very safe position as the motor service starts very late in the year and it does not continue for the whole dry season. Then, again, towards the Dinarpur side there is no communication except going on foot.

Sir, Habiganj was once a very famous trading centre but with the silting up of the river Barak it has lost all its business. When Mr. Khurshid, I.C.S., was the Subdivisional Officer at Habiganj, he took up the project in hand and he set apart a sum of Rs.5,000 from the Rural Uplift Fund for re-excavating some portions of the mouth of the river Khowai and a portion of the river Borak so as to join it to the Balikhal—a length of about a mile only. The question was examined by certain experts but probably with the transfer of Mr. Khurshid the matter was dropped. It is not a matter of huge expense; it is a question of re-excavating only a mile. There is already a silted Khal which can be re-excavated.

If the portion from the mouth of the river Khowai up to the Balikhal is re-excavated, communication of the subdivision becomes easier and the trade of the town of Habiganj will reappear. I would urge the Hon'ble Minister in-charge to take up this question very seriously.

Khan Sahib Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMIRUDDIN: Sir, in the district of Nowgong several projects under this head of the Embankment and Drainage works were undertaken as far back as in the month of December last and the projects have been in operation since January last. The district agricultural officers were deputed to execute the works with the help of the local villagers.

Now, Sir, I bring to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister in-charge one specific instance in which the local agricultural officers have been obstructed in the execution of a certain project. There was one project in operation since January last, I mean the project in the villages of Kandhulimari Barpaka and Ghehua-Chalchali where a canal had to be excavated in order to connect some four or five Beels with a river four or five miles apart from the said Beels on the slopes of which there are thousands of bighas of best paddy lands owned by the villagers. Now, in this particular case one Isab Moral with some two or three others as against about 200 Pattadars of that locality raised a frivolous objection with the result that all the labourers who were engaged for the excavation of that Khal had to be held up. The objection is still being enquired into and it has been urged by the opposite party that unless land acquisition proceedings are started for acquiring their lands through which the drain will pass they will neither part with their lands nor will they allow the Khal being excavated. Section 8 of the Embankment and Drainage Act provides that a Khal has to be excavated when it is so needed for the improvement of the low-lying areas owned by the Pattadars of the villages so as to afford an out-let through which the accumulation of waters of the Beels caused by heavy downpour can pass towards any other nearest streamlet or river in order to save the crops grown on the slopes of such Beels. This section is very defective. It does not empower the local agricultural officers to execute works undertaken by them so easily as is now contemplated by the Government. No project can be worked out either before or after the months of January, February, March or April of every year either on account of standing crops or inclement weather.

Sir, the intention of undertaking all these projects, I understand, is to augment the cultivation of paddy crops and if it is really so, it comes under the purview of the Grow-More-Food Campaign. This Grow-More-Food Campaign, Sir, is one of the biggest war measures and I would urge upon the Hon'ble Minister to see that these projects are executed, if possible, under the Defence of India Rules, so far as they relate to the acquisition of lands.

I would also urge that section 8 of the Embankment and Drainage Act be amended so as to give wider scope and power to the local agricultural officers to execute such works to be undertaken in future.

With these observations, I beg to retire, Sir.

Babu BIPIN BEHARI DAS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the town of Habiganj has been practically disconnected with North Habiganj due to the silting up of the Barak river. In the rainy season the people of North Habiganj have to carry on their business by means of boat. But in the winter season there is no boat communication at all and the little boat communication that could be availed of has been stopped by putting a bund near a village called Rampur only half a mile from Habiganj town. If the Hon'ble Minister takes some steps to remove that bund from that place some sort of boat communication may be restored. So I request the Hon'ble Minister to take a special note of this and do the needful as early as possible.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I admit that this Department which was opened only a few years back has not been able to make a headway. The reasons are too many. In the first place, in 1941, due to the construction of the Indo-Burma road, the staff that was employed in this Department and the instruments and other equipage were all taken away to that road and the work had to be suspended. Then at the instance of the Legislature, this Department was again reopened last year. It commenced its work in July last. Now within a short space of time it was possible only to take up sixteen schemes this year. Our principal difficulty has been the shortage of staff. We have got only one Executive Engineer and two Assistant Engineers and two or three overseers. With this inadequate staff it is impossible to take up much work in hand. However, we are trying to finish the schemes that we have already taken up within this year.

My Friend Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury said that the works are being delayed and he has himself admitted that this is due to labour difficulty. He said that if the military projects could be expedited why this work cannot be expedited. I think the analogy will not apply to this Department. But I can assure the hon. Member that we shall take every step to expedite the work and complete them before the rains set in.

Now, for the next year we have taken up twenty-four more projects for carrying on the survey work and there are about 250 more schemes on the waiting list. If we get the necessary staff we will accelerate the progress of the work.

My hon. Friends Mr. Abdur Rahman and Mr. Bipin Behari Das have referred to certain schemes in their subdivision. We will have them examined as soon as the staff is available.

My hon. Friend Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri has referred to certain damages in the Kamrup district. I do not know whether that schemewhich he referred to was taken up by that Department or the Agriculture Department. In many cases it so happens that the Agriculture Department without taking the technical advice of our Department start work. To obviate this, Sir, I have proposed that there should be a co-ordination between the works of the Agriculture Department and the Public Works Department. I have already proposed a conference between the three Departments, viz., the Revenue, the Agriculture and this Department and I can assure the House that we will try our best to co-ordinate the work in such a way that there may not be loss in future so that the scheme may be selected in such a manner that it might be a success.

Now, another matter that has been referred to in course of this Cut Motion is that many of the rivers have got silted up and there should be a scheme to re-excavate them. I am of opinion, Sir, that this Department is not directly concerned with this measure. Our Department is mainly concerned with the construction, removal and upkeep of embankment, drainage and improvement of land in the Province. The question of freeing the river from silt and making it navigable, I think, is the main concern of the Steamer Companies. In this connection, many of the hon. Members have referred to the irregularity of the steamer services and the closure of certain stations and it has also been suggested that there should be some representation in an Advisory Committee to be formed by the Steamer Company. I do not know whether there is any Advisory Committee for any of the Steamer Companies. There is none probably. So, I can undertake

on behalf of the Government to represent all the grievances that have been mentioned here as well as the formation of an Advisory Committee for the Steamer Company. All these matters will be referred to them.

Mr. Dewan Ahab Choudhuri referred to the closure of Dultalia station. In pursuance of a representation made by him last year we wrote to the Steamer Company to open that station and it was done in December 1942. This station was re-opened but in June 1943 we were informed by the Steamer Company that the earnings of that particular station do not show any improvement and therefore they were compelled to close that station. In the circumstances, I think nothing further can be done in this matter.

Now, Khan Bahadur Mahmud Ali has referred to certain irrigation projects which were enquired into in previous years. As regards his two schemes, *viz.*, Mubarakpur Khal and Mirzapur Khal, these two schemes are still in the waiting list and as soon as circumstances permit we will take them up. But as regards the other projects we have had no representation from any quarter. So to sum up, Sir, this Department is still in its infancy. It has a great future before it and I am glad to be able to say that my Colleague the Finance Minister is very keen on expanding this Department. So there would be no dearth of finance for the execution of the projects. But our present difficulty is the question of staff, *i.e.*, availability of men with requisite technical qualifications to undertake the work.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my Motion.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.7,31,700 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head '18B. - Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Works'."

The question was adopted.

GRANT No.29

56.—STATIONERY AND PRINTING

*Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.1,77,703 under Grant No.29, Major head—56.—Stationery and Printing, Minor head—D.—Government Press (total) at page 143 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.4,99,600 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

The hon. Members of this House are not in a position to know the appropriate head to which the expenditure and profit of the Press should come in the Budget. So, it will be better if the printing charges and the earning thereby is shown in the Receipt side. In that way we can understand what is the expenditure on account of printing and what is the amount of earning and other expenditure. If this is not possible, the other way is to find out a cost sheet per unit of printing from the average cost of the year. Government may also in this connection find out the cost per unit of printing from outside presses and also cost per unit from the Government Press. This will enable the hon. Members of this House to judge the relative expenditure on account of profit in printing in the Government Press. So, unless these figures are available it is not possible for this House to judge whether the demand which is now being asked for is justified on the work done or not.

With these few words, Sir, I commend my Motion for the consideration of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"That the provision of Rs.1,77,703 under Grant No.29, Major head—56.—Stationery and Printing, Minor head—D.—Government Press (total) at page 143 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.4,99,600 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.1,95,000 under Grant No.29, Major head—56.—Stationery and Printing, Minor head—E.—Printing at Private Presses (total) at page 143 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.4,99,600 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

* Speech not corrected.

I have tabled this Motion just to bring to the notice of Government that those presses in the Province which entered into contracts with Government for doing their jobs, were given to understand that they would be supplied with papers by Government. I understand, Sir, that almost in all cases, Government has failed to supply papers to the presses and so, though there was such a contract or agreement between the Government and private presses, practically no work could be done in this respect by the private presses. I hope the Hon'ble Minister will see his way to supply those private presses with papers so that they may do some work of Government and may not sit idle in expectation that they would get papers and will be able to do the job some-time in future.

With these words, Sir, I take my seat.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The motion moved:

"That the provision of Rs.1,95,000 under Grant No.29, Major head—56.—Stationery and Printing, Minor head—E.—Printing at Private Presses (total) at page 143 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.4,99,600 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: So far as the Cut Motion No.1 is concerned, Sir, I want to say that details are shown in the Annual Administration Report of our Press. If the hon. Member desires, I can show him the figures in my office.

So far as Cut Motion No.2 is concerned, Sir, my hon. Friend has complained that private presses are not getting papers. But I can definitely inform the hon. Member that papers are being supplied. The procedure is that after receiving indents from different officers, all the private presses are asked to send us estimates of papers required and then we indent to the Central Stationery office. But delay is caused due to late submission of indents by the different officers and sometimes due to the late submission of estimates by the private presses also. Moreover, there is transport difficulty, as pointed out by the hon. Mover, over which we have no hand. Anyhow, Sir, so far as our Press is concerned, I will see that the matter is expedited and unnecessary delay is not caused.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: I beg leave of the House to withdraw my Motion.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I beg leave of the House to withdraw my Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Have the hon. Members got leave of the House to withdraw the Motions?

The Motions were, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I am then putting the main question.

The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs.4,99,600 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head '56.—Stationery and Printing'."

The question was adopted.

GRANT No.4

9.—STAMPS

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: There is one Cut Motion standing in the name of Maulavi Abdu Bari Chaudhury. Will he move?

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: I am not moving the *Motion, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I am then putting the Motion before the House, as a question.

*1. Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY to move:—
That the provision of Rs.13,250 under Grant No.4, Major head—9.—Stamps, Minor head—A.—Non-Judicial—Charges for the sale of stamps, Sub-head—1.—Contingencies, Detailed head—Discount of sale of stamps at page 37 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs.47,000 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

The question is :

“That a sum not exceeding Rs.47,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head ‘9.—Stamps’.”

The question was adopted.

GRANT No.23

43.—INDUSTRIES

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The last Cut Motion under this Grant is to raise a discussion about the question of policy. So, I allow Mr. Mookerjee to discuss the whole question of policy.

Mr. BA'DYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs. 3,41,200 under Grant No. 23, Major head—43.—Industries at page 125 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 3,41,200 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

I have tabled this Motion to criticise Government's policy with regard to Industries Department.

Sir, at the very outset I would admit that the development of industries, particularly heavy industries, depends to a large extent on the Central Government. The Provincial Government is to depend on the Central Government (Tariff and Railway I mean) and the Central Government in its turn is to depend on His Majesty's Government. So, in fact the industrial and commercial development of a people is inseparably connected with political freedom. We Indians are therefore looking forward to the day when India will attain an independent political status. We cannot expect to attain the desired effect, so far as industrial development is concerned, before we can attain our political freedom. But still, Sir, even under the present circumstances, I think, if the Ministry is serious and sincere in their effort we can make some headway. This is the time when a Ministry with imagination and drive could lay the foundation of a wealthier and happier Assam. Sir, what do we find in our Budget estimates? It will be seen that some more money has been provided in the next year's Budget than the current year but, Sir, if any hon. Member cares to scrutinise, he will find how and why this amount has been increased. Under “Direction” it will be found that the amount has been increased. There are several new posts such as Marketing officer; in 1943-44 there was one, in 1944-45 there are two. As regards demonstrators, one demonstrator has been increased and with regard to servants, in place of five we find there are 12 and there are also six more marketing workers. These are the new appointments that have been made under this head “Direction”. Over and above this, there is the increment in the scale of pay. So, Sir, this increment is for no real benefit of the people. So far as industrial development is concerned, it is quite clear that the increased provision in the Budget will be of very little use to the Province.

So far as industrial education is concerned, it will be found that about Rs.14,000 more has been provided in comparison with the current year. This is also due to the increased scale of pay and increased house-rent, etc. So this is also not a real increment. There is another striking thing. At page 126 of the Budget it will be seen that in place of 39 demonstrators the number has been increased by one, *i.e.*, 40; for the current year the expenditure will be Rs. 21,200, whereas only for one increment the expenditure will be Rs.30,503! Here is the increment of Rs. 10,000 in one head. Who will explain the trick? This is regular jugglery.

So far as other industrial education is concerned, particularly there has been no change. Under “Works” it will be seen that about Rs. 50,000 has been provided. So my point is that the increased provision in the next year's Budget is not a real improvement but it is due to the increment in the scale of pay and some new works and a few new bogus appointments. So far as fishery is concerned, it is really lamentable that the Government is callous to this branch. Even Government could not see their way to provide the same paltry amount which they are going to spend this year. Under the revised estimates of 1943-44 the figure is Rs. 3,074 for the improvement of fisheries in the Province and the provision for the next year is Rs. 2,928.

On several occasions on the floor of this House and from all quarters there was a demand and request that this Department should be taken up in right earnest, specially when the Government is pushing their Grow-More-Food Campaign but in vain as usual. I think, this Department should not be neglected any more. This Department may easily and rightly be included in their Grow-More-Food Campaign. Any way do something. Do not sleep over it.

As regards cottage industries the less is said the better. It may be that here and there Government have given some facilities to the weavers. But, Sir, according to their needs and according to the critical time under which the inhabitants of this Province are passing, Government has done nothing. It is high time that our Government should take up the cottage industries in right earnest.

As regards match factories, about four years back I gave some suggestions and at the time of reply the Hon'ble Premier said that he appreciated my suggestions and gave me the hope that he was already thinking on that line. But, Sir, up till now we do not know anything about that. The other day my Friend Mr. Blennerhassett gave detailed suggestion about hydro-electricity. There are various things which can be taken up at present and most profitably too.

This is the most opportune time when the Ministry can undertake some big projects, *e.g.*, the paper industry, leather, lac, sugar and cotton industries, hydro-electricity, etc. But to ask for any thing like that from the present ill-assorted and effete team that is playing drakes and ducks with the destiny of the people must be a cry in the wilderness. It has already been stated by the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Navigation and Embankment, at the time when he was replying to the debate on his subject, that there was no co-operation between the Agriculture Department and the Navigation and Embankment Department—a frank confession, Sir, and I admire him for his frankness. But at the same time I would appeal to the Hon'ble Prime Minister with all the sincerity that I possess that he should see that there is co-operation, so far as the important departments at least are concerned.

Sir, every Member of this hon. House knows how very hardpressed and overworked our Hon'ble Prime Minister is. Sir, as I said on a previous occasion, I repeat it again today that in place of ten cylinders if only one or two cylinders work, it puts a very great strain on the whole machinery and which may break down at any moment. I feel for the Hon'ble Premier, Sir. I am not flattering him; I say it from the very core of my heart that I feel for him for his works and his team. He is very much overworked though he has nine other Ministers to help him. But still when we see that nothing can be done without his assistance we have got no other alternative but to appeal to him and thereby put more strain on him. We cannot help it. I hope, Sir, he will try to implement the promises which they have made from time to time; at least, those made during the current Session by the Hon'ble Ministers and thereby try to improve the lots of the people of this Province who are helplessly looking to him for their very existence.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

“That the total provision of Rs. 3,41,200 under Grant No. 23, Major head—43.—Industries at page 125 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 3,41,200 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.”

There are some other Motions which seek to discuss particular points which are not covered by the general criticism of policy. I would therefore ask the hon. Members to move their respective Motions first, after which the speeches will continue.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.996 under Grant No. 23, Major head—43.—Industries, Minor head—A.—Industrial Development, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment, Detailed head—Travelling canvasser at page 125 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.10, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.3,41,200 do stand reduced by Rs. 10.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.47,664 under Grant No.23, Major head—43.—Industries, Minor head—A.—Industrial Development (total) at page 126 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.3,41,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.19,972 under grant No.23, Major head—43.—Industries, Minor head—A.—Industrial Development, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment (total) at page 125 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.3,41,200 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.3,991 under Grant No. 23, Major head—43.—Industries, Minor head—A.—Industrial Development, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment, Detailed head—Marketing Officer at page 125 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.3,41,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motions moved:

"That the provision of Rs.996 under Grant No.23, Major head—43.—Industries, Minor head—A.—Industrial Development, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment, Detailed head—Travelling canvasser at page 125 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.10, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.3,41,200 do stand reduced by Rs.10."

"That the provision of Rs.47,664 under Grant No.23, Major head—43.—Industries, Minor head—A.—Industrial Development (total) at page 126 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.3,41,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

"That the provision of Rs.19,972 under grant No.23, Major head—43.—Industries, Minor head—A.—Industrial Development, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment (total) at page 125 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.3,41,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

"That the provision of Rs.3 991 under Grant No 23, Major head—43.—Industries, Minor head—A.—Industrial Development, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Establishment, Detailed head—Marketing Officer at page 125 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 3,41,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100."

The speeches may now proceed.

*Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, first of all I shall discuss the point I sought to raise by my Cut Motion moved above. Here I would like to bring to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister in charge the fact that the pay which Government have provided for officers of subordinate grades, *viz.*, demonstrators, salesmen, travelling canvassers, etc., is not at all satisfactory. We can never expect efficient work from these people by giving them such scanty pay, especially in these hard days. These are the people upon whom industrial development to a large extent depends. These people are in charge of the Government Emporium at Gauhati. Before the war the Emporium was producing good cloths but owing to the war due to scarcity of materials the work of the Emporium is not going on in a satisfactory manner. I would urge upon the Hon'ble Minister to see whether the lot of these people cannot be improved.

Then, I would like to say a few words about the general policy of the Government with regard to this Department. My hon. Friend Mr. Mookerjee has spoken at great length on this subject. To add to his remarks, I would simply ask the Hon'ble Minister to be more cautious about the hard days which are ahead of the people of this Province. If this Department is taken up seriously it can provide more work to the people. Time and again severe criticisms have been made for Government's apathy in introducing cottage industries for those who have not got sufficient work to maintain themselves. Sir, it has also been urged that in famine areas, where people are not getting sufficient food for maintenance, Government should provide facilities for cottage industries as a subsidiary means of income and occupation. But up till now Government have done nothing in this direction. It

is known that our cultivators save and except the cultivating season remain absolutely idle ; just to supplement them with some sort of work it should be the look out of Government to provide them with some sort of industries.

While I was listening to the criticisms of Mr. Mookerjee he was giving excuse that the bigger question of industry is solely dependent on the attitude of the Central Government.....

*Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: No, no. I said, to some extent. Do not forget about tariff and revenue of these things.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: But, Sir, I do not find why this Government should not be in a position to chalk out some scheme by which small industries of the Province can be increased. I have heard in the past also the hon. Members from various quarters crying for some industry such as tanneries and things like that but I do not find that Government has taken up any new scheme in hand up till now. If we go through the provisions in the Budget, we find that most of the expenditure are meant for providing certain officers. Even then there is a complaint from Government that with the small number of officers in hand the Department has done its best. If the question of shortage of officers cannot be solved by the Department, I see no utility of this Department continuing at all.....

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

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: With these words, Sir, I urge upon the Hon'ble Minister to see whether in future he can take up new schemes in hand.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this morning we had the pleasure to know that our Hon'ble Minister for Industries was also a bit of a musician himself ; I wonder, Sir, why the music of the spinning wheels did not catch his ears so long. I submit, Sir, there is a vast field for work with spinning wheels and handlooms in this Province. Sir, I had a talk privately with the Hon'ble Minister during the last Session and he gave me to understand that he was corresponding with the Central Government to see if some yarn could not be got for this Province so that handloom industry could be supported by the Government ; but I am afraid, people have not as yet been able to know what this Provincial Government has been able to do in this line. In fact, nothing has been done by them. I will draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to one fact, Sir. The Madras Government, though it is now under the "93-Administration", has requisitioned or sought the help of the All-India Spinners Association and the Orissa Government, the present Government though it is not a Congress Government, has also sought the services of the All-India Spinners Association for the spread of spinning in those provinces. When these Governments are trying in their provinces to develop spinning with the help of this Association, I submit, Sir, our Government can also have some help from that organisation, if they like, in this direction. And as you yourself know, Sir, there is an institution in Sylhet known as Vidyasram whose workers have got at least 20 years' experience in this line and they can be of great help to Government if this Government only cares to ask for that help. I submit, Sir, spinning and weaving are most essentially necessary for this Province when people are not even getting clothes to wear and if it only liked and if it had some imagination in this matter, the Government could have done a lot in the line.

There are several other things also. We are being pressed under the circumstances to store huge quantities of foodstuffs for the people. There is the Supply Department which is storing up huge quantity of foodstuffs. Last year we had a sad experience of seeing large quantities of these foodstuffs wasted ; they were declared unfit for human consumption. And, I am afraid, Sir, as soon as rains will set in, huge quantities of foodstuffs will be found unfit for human consumption this year also unless in the meantime Government take special care to see that these foodstuffs are treated chemically and scientifically. I submit, Sir, that this Industries Department could do a lot in this matter by introducing scientific method in the matter of storage. If we could develop this, it would be of great help to the people in

these abnormal days and in normal time also that would help the people a great deal if knowledge of storing up fruits, vegetables and foodstuffs could have been disseminated through the experts.

Sir, during my general discussion of the Budget I referred to the necessity of asking for some help from the Central Government for Industrial Research and Industrial Training. They are spending a crore of rupees this year. They have budgeted more than a crore of rupees. Our Provincial Government should be up and doing even from now to get a decent share for the benefit of this Province for Industrial Research and for Industrial Training. There is a very urgent necessity for having an Industrial-Laboratory. The Industrial Research Council is doing great work under Sir S. S. Bhatnagar and practically this Province is getting no benefit out of that. There is not a single representative to that from our Province; nor is our Provincial Government taking any interest when other provinces are developing very speedily in these lines. Even some of the States, such as Mysore, Baroda and Travancore are making rapid progress whereas our Province is depending on the routine work, additional appointments and things like that. I am constrained to use this language, Sir, but I cannot help it. Our Ministers are absolutely doing nothing. They have absolutely no imagination, no initiative in these matters. They are taking the whole Province to ruin. They are not getting at all prepared for future. They have shown lamentable lack of imagination. It is very much regrettable to use this language but in view of the gloomy prospects of this Province I cannot resist the temptation to speak out my mind.

Sir, there are a lot of things which could have been done, for instance, water hyacinth. It is doing a lot of mischief to our cultivators. Even that water hyacinth could have been utilised as compost and other things. Card boards are being prepared from water-hyacinth fibres and they are being utilised in various ways. The military is slaughtering large number of cattle in the Province and what is our Government doing? With the hide a leather industry could have been started in our Province but the Government is doing nothing. So, Sir, I submit, in hundred and one ways the Government could have come to the rescue of the Province if they had some imagination. I would request Government to have some more imagination, to keep in touch with the Central Organisation, with other Provinces and States and see what they are doing.

What about Pyrethrum? It is very much regrettable, Sir, that the Hon'ble Minister came to say that we are going to have 100 acres of plantation during the next 12 months. But does he know, Sir, what Kashmere is doing? They have made a huge profit out of this. There is a very great prospect for this industry in this Province. The Industries and the Agricultural Departments ought to have taken this up by this time which would bring a lot of money for this Province, instead of looking up to private organisations to come forward and take this up. These are the most important points and I hope the Hon'ble Minister will be up and doing and see that these are done in our Province quickly. With these words, Sir, I beg to resume my seat.

Adjournment

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

After Lunch.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker was in the Chair)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The next Grant No.12 is to begin at 2.15. I am sorry, I cannot allow any further discussion in respect of this Grant. I would therefore call upon the Hon'ble Minister to reply.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: There were some Cut Motions moved. The Hon'ble Speaker assured us that we would be able to speak a few words with regard to my Cut Motion and that of Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the hon. Members will agree to finish up within five minutes, I will allow him and Mr. Aditya to speak and finish their speeches within five minutes.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, by my Cut Motion I wanted to raise a discussion about the necessity of establishing a proper co-ordination amongst the departments of Industry, Agriculture and Co-operation, so that all these departments could work in mutual co-operation and thus improve the departments in their respective spheres. All these three departments are known as nation-building departments. If genuine co-operation is established, I am sure, useful and modern development on co-operative basis can be started.

On a point of policy, Sir, I want to stress that the Director of Industries is so pre-occupied with industrial schemes and the heavy works of that Department, that Co-operation should be taken away from his charge. Also, Sir, I deplore that Government as yet has not been able to formulate schemes so as to enable them to take the opportunity created by the War for industrial development.

With these words, I beg to resume my seat.

***Babu RABINDRA NATH ADIYIA:** Sir, the Industrial Commission Report of 1918, concluded with the observation that since India's vast industrial potentialities and resources remain still untapped, it is necessary that the Government should play a more active role and therefore, they recommended improved departmental organisation for the encouragement of industries, improvement in technical training and education, reorganisation of scientific staff for Industrial development, giving technical and financial aid to the industries, encouragement of industrial co-operation and provision of improved transport facilities. The report was accepted by the Government of India and the Imperial Department of Industries was established in 1921; but the allocation of industry as a provincial subject after the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms increased the difficulty in giving effect to many of the recommendations. Assam had no Industries Department till 1918 but although the allocation of responsibilities between the provinces and Centre has ceased to exist, the Assam Industries Department has remained the self same cottage industries Department even in the year of grace—1944. It has, therefore, little history and less geography; so with bigger industries Government have no contact except in so far as is necessary for the exercise of the powers under the Factories' Act, Steam Boilers' Act, Workmen's Compensation Act and some more minor legislation.

When industrial planning has become the talk of the day, when rosy picture about post-war living conditions are alluring us almost to the Press-the-Button methods of life, is it not ludicrous that an I. C. S. Director of Industries is asked to content himself with handicrafts and handlooms? In Bengal and other provinces this Department has a contact with all industries and attempts to look to the various needs and grievances of the industries and takes up their cause if necessary to the other departments of the Government.

In Assam the Industries Department is an anachronism. Here people are more anxious for contracts than for building up industries. Here the knack is more for winning favours and favourable rates than for doing the job fairly and squarely. In such an atmosphere arts may develop but not the industry. Against this background and within this economic frame work there can be no industrial planning. But given the canvas to work on, I am sure, the Industries Department may play its proper role in building up of the Nation. When Agriculture is an uncertain factor in Assam, is it not desirable to switch over about 30 per cent. of the population to industries?

I have another suggestion and it is this that the Director of Industries should serve as a Secretary to the Government in the Department of Industries and Commerce.

With these suggestions, I commend it to the consideration of the House.

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am obliged to the hon. Members of the House who have put forward their constructive suggestions for consideration of the Government. But I find, while submitting suggestions for consideration of Government, they have not examined one aspect of the question. All know that our country has been passing through abnormal times due to war which has brought about difficulties of an unprecedented nature. With all the

emphasis I can command, I can tell the House that Government have not been sitting idle over the problems which should draw their attention at the present moment to the fullest extent. Sir, at the present moment, problems that have been confronting the country are: one of cloth and the other of food. About cloth we have been taking steps to see that there be no scarcity of cloth in the Province. At the same time, we have been trying to help the weavers of this Province in solving their economic problem, by engaging them for production of as much cloth as possible.

The activities of our Industries Department have so far remained confined mainly to the cottage industries alone; of course, I feel that we should exploit the resources of the Province for big scale industries; we have not ignored this aspect of the question. I may tell the House that we have already formed one Research Committee composed of experts as members to explore the possibilities of developing industries in this Province, cottage and large scale both. We have notified in the *Assam Gazette*, dated the 27th October, 1943, that the committee consists of the Director of Industries, as *Ex-officio* Chairman, the Economic Botanist, Assam, one Professor of Science, and three representatives of industries, two of them are highly qualified, who have got foreign qualifications, as members. Their duties will be to establish liaison with the Central Board of Research and also to function as the Provincial Research Committee to explore the possibilities of developing industries in this Province. But, we all know that whatever steps we may take at the present time to develop industries in this Province, the main difficulties are, in the first place, transport difficulties and in the second place, want of requisite materials.

Sir, as regards cloth problem, we have organised different centres and have appointed officers accordingly, one officer being in charge of one production centre. The Weaving Emporia, which used to give benefit to the weavers by placing orders on different designs that were very much in demand in the market, are collecting these fabrics for sale to the public. The two Emporia of the Province were run by one Marketing Officer and their sale went up gradually from year to year from Rs. 30,000 to about Rs. 2 lakhs. When the scarcity of cloth was looming large, we thought of extending the activities of the Marketing section to the best benefit of the weavers and also the consuming public, and we hope that we shall be able to produce more cloth for the people of the Province. Supply of Standard cloth by the Central Government will also go to a great extent to save the people from scarcity of cloth. Linked with it comes the question of having a spinning scheme for our Province. When the cloth problem is no longer there at the present moment, is it necessary to have a spinning scheme and to provide money for that purpose, which could be utilised in some other urgent schemes? About spinning, of course, we have not given up the idea entirely that there should be spinning scheme taken up in this Province, and we have linked it up with the National War Front activities which have included spinning in their programme. We have also instructed our Weaving Demonstrators to teach spinning in areas where they are posted.

Then, Sir, there are two weaving institutions in this Province, one is at Sylhet and the other at Gauhati. Training in weaving is imparted in these two institutions. It will be seen from the list of new schemes for the coming year that we have created 10 posts of demonstrators, some of which will be posted to some private weaving institutes which are being run on a commercial line. Besides giving them subsidies we are giving them Demonstrators from the Department to convert these private institutes into miniature form of Training Institutes. We have been giving these Institutes aid from the Williamson Endowment Fund and also from the provincial revenue. We have given much stress on weaving because of the fact that weaving is the industry which is so widely taken up in this Province by people and has got scope for further development. The Sericulture industry has not been touched by any of the hon. Members, though this is a very lucrative industry which is sure to thrive and benefit the sericulturists, specially during this abnormal time, as everybody knows that the price of silk has gone up from Rs. 15 to Rs. 95 per seer now. We have provided about Rs. 60,000 in the coming year's Budget for the development of sericulture industry and we hope we shall be able to spread the sericulture industry in this

Province to a great extent. We are going to start a Sericultural Training school in a miniature form at Titabor where students will be trained, and they will be better trained than the present sericultural Demonstrators, and will be able to give benefit of their better training to the industrialists who will come forward for such advices.

My Friend Mr. Mookerjee in his speech has mentioned about large scale industries, which, he says, depend upon the Central Government, to some extent. Of course, Sir, about them I have nothing to add to what I have said, at present, as these are matters to be included in the Post-War Reconstruction Schemes. Only the other day the Hon'ble Premier announced in this House that different committees have been formed and that possibilities of having big scale industries in this Province would be thoroughly examined by these committees.

Regarding the point raised by Mr. Mookerjee about the expansion of the marketing section I have already told that this section has been expanded for the benefit of the weavers in the Province and also for the public in general.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : What about fishery, Sir ?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA : I am coming to that.

Then, about the provision for Demonstrators Mr. Mookerjee has said that though there has been shown an increase by one over the existing staff of 39, the provision that has been shown in the Budget for the coming year is very much high. There is a little mistake in that. In place of 40, it should be 49 as the provision in the new scheme is for 10 Demonstrators for the coming year.

Then, Sir, when I took office more than a year back, I found that some classes such as hosiery and soap making, etc., were moving from place to place holding classes in the interior but I considered that the desired benefit would not be derived by holding such classes in the interior when there is so much dearth of materials and transport facilities. So immediately, for the benefit of the public and also to give more methodical training, by running on a commercial line, we ordered that these classes could better be located in certain district headquarters towns, making them equipped with better facilities for imparting training. The students could derive more benefit out of it, and at the same time it would go a good deal to help people when such classes would be run on commercial lines.

Sir, we have been giving facilities for industrial training to the students of the Province in different branches, but many of them have not been able to start industries for various difficulties arising out of the present abnormal time in spite of the assurance given by Government regarding help in the shape of loans or subsidies. There is a provision for subsidies of Rs. 6,000 to give aid to the needy and deserving industrialists, and this year we are going to give grants to the deserving industrialists to the extent of the whole amount.

*Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : On a point of information, Sir. Is it not a fact, Sir, that only 33 per cent. was recommended out of a number of applications ?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA : Probably my hon. Friend Mr. Chaudhuri has misunderstood me. I am speaking of subsidies. The provision for subsidies for this year will be fully utilised.

Then, Sir, I come to the classes of bell-metal and electro-plating. These are undoubtedly of great importance as everybody knows electro-plating is required for our various utensils, etc. These classes were started about three years back at Jorhat but what is the result ? For dearth of students the classes were about to be closed down. In spite of our repeated advertisements in the newspapers nobody was coming forward for admission. It was at the point of being closed down, when I took up the matter and ordered the classes to be shifted to some other important centres where students may be available.

Then, about the scheme for fisheries, Sir. Mr. Mookerjee pointed out that there is less provision made for the coming year. The scheme has not been curtailed. Only the provision for travelling allowance has been decreased a little on the basis of the revised estimates, this year.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Minister's time is up and he should now stop. I should like to know if any of the hon. Members would like to press his Motion. (*Voices—No, Sir.*)

I hope the hon. Members have got leave of the House to withdraw their Cut Motions.

The Motions were, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,41,200 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head '43.—Industries'".

The question was adopted.

GRANT No. 12.

28.—JAILS AND CONVICT SETTLEMENTS.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think there are eight Cut Motions. Motion No.1 stands in the name of Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury. So I call upon him to move his Motion.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 12,300 under Grant No. 12, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements, Minor head—A.—District Jails, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, Detailed head—Superintendent's allowances at page 68 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 11,40,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, the general outlook regarding crimes and criminals all over the world have recently undergone a drastic change. Now a prison is no longer considered as a place for punishment but it is regarded as a place for confinement for necessary reformation. All civilised Governments have revised their jail codes in consonance with these ideas but in this aspect we still lag behind. We are still living in the middle ages. The same idea and the same principle still permeates our Jail Manual. From time to time some little changes were made to improve the conditions of the convicts but these were not enough to meet the requirements and the spirit of the time. The Good Conduct Prisoners' Release Act was passed only a few years ago but this Act only related to the premature release of the prisoners on certain conditions. This particular Act did not contemplate to improve the conditions and mode of living of the convicts in jail. Time has come, Sir, when Government of Assam should take up in right earnest the work of reformation regarding the jail and the convicts.

As regards the Jail Manual, I beg to submit that the Manual was compiled in the year 1934. From time to time correction slips have been attached to it and now the volume has become so stuffed that it is very difficult to handle it. With a view to remove this difficulty and with a view to reform our jail administration I propose, Sir, that without further delay the Manual should be revised.

Sir, there are two more Cut Motions* in my name. I will speak a few words regarding both of them.

* . Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY to move:—

That the provision of Rs. 12,444 under Grant No. 12, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements, Minor head—A.—District Jails, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total) at page 68 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 11,40,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

(To raise a discussion about supply of tobacco to the prisoners which is the cause of 90 per cent. of the corruptions in jails.)

4. Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY to move:—

That the provision of Rs. 12,444 under Grant No. 12, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements, Minor head—A.—District Jails, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total) at page 68 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 11,40,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

(To raise a discussion about the necessity for making provision for the after-care of convicts with a view to maintain the industrial education they learn while in jail.)

Sir, by one Motion I wanted to raise a discussion about supply of tobacco to the prisoner which is the cause of 90 per cent. of the corruptions in jails. It is well known, that many of the convicts are habituated in their private life to smoke tobacco and as there is no possibility of its supply in jails, they try to smuggle tobacco inside the jail and this causes a good deal of complaints and punishment under the Jail Manual. So, I submit, Sir, that if a concession is made in this respect and the ban on tobacco smoking is lifted, a good many of the cases arising from this kind of offence will be minimised.

By yet another Motion I wanted to impress upon Government that some sort of a committee should be appointed for after-care of the convicts. Some of the convicts when in jail get some kind of industrial training, but as soon as they leave the jail this education is soon forgotten. Therefore, I submit, Sir, that some means should be devised so that the convicts, after their release from jails, may receive due help to carry on the particular branch of industry in which they have been trained.

With these words, Sir, I commend my Motion for the consideration of the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

“That the provision of Rs. 12,300 under Grant No. 12, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements, Minor head—A—District Jails, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, Detailed head—Superintendent’s allowances at page 68 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 11,40,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.”

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 12,300 under Grant No. 12, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements, Minor head—A.—District Jails, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, Detailed head—Superintendent’s allowances at page 68 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 11,40,100, do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, the political prisoners of the United Provinces get for their ration a daily allowance of Re.1-8 per head with which they are able to get their daily requirements as they please. But this is not the case in Assam. Here in Assam the security prisoners are treated as B Division prisoners, *i.e.*, security prisoners of Class I, and those who are of Class II are C Division prisoners. Sir, this is really very disgraceful that ordinary convicts and the security prisoners who have been detained on mere suspicion should be treated all alike, and the result is that even a Class I prisoner gets per day two chattaks of Ghee or in the alternative one powa of milk. As you know, Sir, all things are now-a-days sold at somewhat less in weight and at the same time some concession has got to be given to those who carry the ration to the political prisoners. Considering these factors, either the milk or the Ghee that is supplied is quite insufficient to meet their requirement. In the United Provinces’ jails, Sir, I know the ration of 3 powas of milk or 1½ powas of fish are supplied to each political prisoner. So, should we not be ambitious in Assam? We suggest that a provision of two powas of milk or one powa of fish for the two meals per day should be provided for each of Class I prisoners.

There are other difficulties which I need narrate here, for example, delay in passing of letters to the Class I prisoners by the jail authorities. Such letters might bring the news of sickness in the families, but they cannot reach them in time. To obviate this delay in delivery of letters the prisoners of this Class sometimes make representations but they are withheld and our prisoners go unresponded to this effect. None except those who are inside the prison bars is aware of the difficulties of this kind. So, grievances that are made to the Hon’ble Minister in charge do not reach even Shillong. Sir, unless, therefore, the Ministers themselves care to know their grievances, it is not possible to communicate them to the Ministers direct. In view of the great responsibility the Government has

taken in detaining these political prisoners, they must see that their grievances are redressed. The Ministers may be well advised to pay at least a quarterly or half yearly visit to ascertain such grievances personally. I think the Hon'ble Minister in charge of jails was required to visit the Sylhet jail where some Class I political prisoners are detained, but he has not yet done so. I hope he will do it very shortly.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : The Motion moved :

“That the provision of Rs. 12,300 under Grant No. 12, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements, Minor head—A.—District Jails, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers, Detailed head—Superintendent's allowances at page 68 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 11,40,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.”

I would ask Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri to move his Cut Motions Nos. 7 and 8.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I am much obliged, Sir. I beg to move—

- (i) that the total provision of Rs. 11,40,100 under Grant No. 12, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements at page 67 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 11,40,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 100 ; and
- (ii) that the total provision of Rs. 11,40,100 under Grant No. 12, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements at page 67 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 11,40,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

The first point that is in my mind relates to both political and non-political prisoners. First of all I will say a few words about the political prisoners. I wish to take this opportunity to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in-charge to the health of Mrs. Puspa Lata Das, wife of my hon. Friend Mr. Omeo Kumar Das, now a security prisoner in the Tezpur jail. My information from her medical attendant who was allowed to see her in jail is that she is gradually failing in her health. She happens to be the only female prisoner in Gauhati jail and practically living in a solitary cell. She requires treatment which cannot be made available inside the jail, not even in any town in Assam. Her visit to Calcutta for treatment is absolutely essential. I would ask the Hon'ble Minister to take note of her case and see whether she cannot be released on the ground of her health. I also draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to the case of Dr. Hare Krishna Das, a retired Civil Surgeon, who is intimately known to the Hon'ble Minister in-charge. He is of advanced age and is also failing in health. The treatment and the diet that are essentially necessary for him cannot be made available inside the jail. The Hon'ble Minister should consider whether he cannot release him or essential arrangements cannot be made for his treatment there. I have also, Sir, in this connection to bring to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister the conditions obtaining in Jorhat jail. Food cannot be supplied there regularly and the food prescribed under the provisions of the Jail Manual also cannot be supplied in that jail. There is absolute dearth of fuel ; no vegetables are given there and the water-supply is simply deplorable. The sanitary arrangements are not properly looked into, even phenyle is not given in the latrines. In that Jail there are only about 73 political prisoners of which 17 have been given allowance, others have not been given allowance. The result is that those other persons cannot supply themselves with the necessary toilets and other requisite things which they need. The case of Srijut Mohi Kanta Das has already been placed before the Hon'ble Premier and I again thank him for his kindness in passing orders now granting him an allowance. But the case of Srijut Rajani Kanta Chaudhury who stands in the same category and who has made an application for allowance has not been able to receive any attention from the Government. I would also in this connection draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to the dearth of clothing in the jail. According to rules the B Division prisoners or for the matter of that the security prisoners are entitled to have *dhoti* and *kurta*, but now that the jail authorities have refused to give them *dhoti*, and *kurta* they are being compelled to put on *Janjia* and

jail *kurta* which no Indian gentleman would like to put on. The result is that they have refused to put on these *Jangias* and jail *kurtas*. If the Hon'ble Minister makes an enquiry he will find that although they are putting on torn clothes they have not used *Jangias* because these *Jangias* are such that they cannot be used by a gentleman of the middle class or Bhadraklok class.

Then I come to the other Cut Motion which I have moved, namely, the last Motion about the necessity of releasing some non-political prisoners. Sir, I have also tabled a Resolution to that effect. The jails have been overcrowded and on account of the rise in prices of food-stuffs the jail authorities have not been able to give the prisoners prescribed diet. On account of this difficulty the prisoners in other provinces have been released. So I would suggest to the Hon'ble Minister to consider immediately whether he could not release such of the non-political prisoners who have not been convicted for any offence involving in moral turpitude. Such prisoners who have been convicted, say for an offence of sudden assault which was unpremeditated and whose antecedents are good, those prisoners can be released under the provision of the Good Conduct Prisoners Release Act; they can also be released unconditionally provided they have served a certain period of sentence and are not likely to commit any offence involving in moral turpitude. This is becoming all the more necessary on account of the fact that the jail authorities have not been able to cope with the situation and have not been able to give them proper diet. Although the Jail Manual prescribes that *dal* should be given, in some jails *dal* has entirely been done away with; only some sort of vegetables are given. So, if you cannot feed and clothe the prisoners properly, it is no use keeping them there and you should adopt the principle of release if you can release them without any menace to the society. And I submit that is the reason why we had enacted the Good Conduct Prisoners Release Act, but I regret to say that this is practically a dead letter in the statute book. Government has taken no action under that statute.

Again I would like to mention that a large number of under-trial prisoners are detained and not granted bail which has also resulted in over-crowding of the jails. Recently I know in Gauhati jail there was a visit by the Deputy Commissioner and others and it was found that under-trial prisoners have been detained there for more than three months for petty offences without trial. I think Government would do well to issue a circular to the different District Magistrates and jail authorities not to detain under-trial prisoners unnecessarily for a long time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Motions moved:

- (i) "That the total provision of Rs. 11,40,100 under Grant No. 12, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements at page 67 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 11,40,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 100." and
- (ii) "That the total provision of Rs. 11,40,100 under Grant No. 12, Major head—28.—Jails and Convict Settlements at page 67 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 11,40,100 do stand reduced by Rs. 100."

The Hon'ble Srijiit RUPNATH BRAHMA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, so far as the security prisoners and other political prisoners are concerned, I do not think I need further reply in view of the fact that the matter has already been sufficiently discussed in this House on various occasions and certain reply was given by the Hon'ble Premier. Mr. Aditya and Mr. Chaudhuri raised the question of release of some security prisoners and their allowances. On that point also I do not think I need further reply as the Hon'ble Premier has already sufficiently dealt with it. As regards the security prisoners, Mrs. Das and Dr. Das, I do not remember to have received any application or any sort of representation either from themselves or from their relatives. But when such representations will come up to us we shall see what can be done in the matter.

Regarding the allegations made by Mr. Chaudhuri that there has been no due supply of food and fuel and other things, we have not received any information regarding this. But I shall first enquire into the matter and see what can be done. The hon. Member, I think, is well aware of the abnormal situation prevailing now. Even outside the jail it is difficult to get food and other commodities.

He has also raised the question of dearth of clothes. This matter will also be looked into.

Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri has raised the question of releasing some of the non-political prisoners. In this matter, Sir, we have to go by the rules laid down in the Jail Manual. We appoint an Advisory Board to examine the cases of those non-political prisoners whose releases are due. All the cases are put up before this Advisory Board, and the Board send their recommendations to the Government. We on our part always give due consideration to the recommendations of the Board. Some two or three months ago a good number of prisoners have been released. Mr. Chaudhuri has sought to give reasons for this. He said that there had been much congestion in the jails. But I do not think there is any such congestion now. We have raised temporary houses in some of the big jails, and the military prisoners are now being transferred to their native jails. So, there is no congestion now.

Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhuri wants that certain reforms should be made in the jails. He admits that some small reforms have been made from time to time. Government are also alive to this matter. I admit that there should be some reforms, but in order to introduce reforms, we need construction of new buildings on modern lines, and have better-trained Superintendents of jail, etc., and for these we have to wait till better times come.

Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhuri has also said that tobacco should be allowed to the prisoners to stop corruption. Sir, the expert opinion on this subject is not very favourable. The experts say that tobacco should not be allowed to all the prisoners. But still then we allow some concession to higher class prisoners. Recently I have got a report from the Deputy Inspector General of Prisons, that some tobacco-smokers represented to him at Gauhati and the Superintendent's opinion is that tobacco may be allowed to all smokers at a certain time of the day and if that can be allowed there may not be any further clamour for tobacco. As soon as this proposal comes to us, we shall give due consideration to it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I want to know if any of the hon. Movers want to press his Motion?

Voices:—No, Sir.

The Motions were, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs.11,40,100 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head ‘28.—Jails and Convict Settlements.”

The question was adopted.

GRANT No. 22

42—CO-OPERATION

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: We now come to “Co-operation”. I find that there are as many as six Cut Motions; Motion No.5 seems to me to be a comprehensive one. I would therefore ask Mr. Mookerjee to move his Motion.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs.2,53,200 under Grant No.22, Major head—42.—Co-operation at page 123 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.2,53,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, I have tabled this Motion to criticise Government's policy with regard to Co-operative Department.

Sir, when this movement was started in the Province it was thought that the aims of this movement would be to promote the welfare of the rural population, that the Co-operative Department would educate the people in the art of thrift, that it would be their guide, their friend, their adviser, that it would teach people in such a manner that they would be able to free themselves from the clutches of the crafty money-lenders and that they would gradually be able to stand on their own legs. But, Sir, this

movement has utterly failed. I am glad that the Hon'ble Finance Minister in his Budget speech has admitted it, but at the same time he has tried to hoodwink the present position. He has said "it is encouraging to find that the co-operative movement is emerging from stupor and stagnation to virility." Sir, I say that the movement is still where it was. Sir, on a perusal of the Budget figures it will be found that practically nothing has been done to improve the condition of this movement except that a few officers and a large number of servants have been appointed; of course the Government has tried to justify those appointments by their explanation as will be found in the Budget Memorandum. Now, Sir, the first appointment has been that of a Deputy Registrar of Co-operative Societies; next comes the appointment of the Assistant Director of Industries; then comes a Special Officer, and after that you will find that the number of servants has been raised from 22 to 41. As in the case of industries here also you will find two or three officers have been appointed but the number of servants is seven or eight times the number of officers. Nothing has been explained in the Budget Memorandum so far as the servants are concerned and so one is left in dark about the reasons for this big increase. What are the duties of these servants?

Sir, Government have appointed a few Inspectors, and the reason given is that as the economic position of the people has improved, and as they are in a position now to pay their debts, these Inspectors will help the Societies to realise their money from the debtors. But how this can be done has not been explained. Sir, what is the condition of the rural Societies at present? The Central Co-operative Banks are in a moribund condition, rural credit has practically vanished, the Government in their zeal were very eager to lend their support and got the Money Lenders' Bill passed into law; the Dadans Bill has also been passed. This is all very well.

I hear a humming noise of protest from my hon. Friend the Muktear General—I mean Maulavi Abdur Rahman, Sir. He was going to protest against my mentioning the Money Lenders' Act. I am not against the passing of such Acts. I have no objection if they take all possible stringent measures against the money lenders but at the same time it is their duty and I boldly assert that Government should see that the cultivators may get loans at the time of their needs on easy terms. We should not look to one side of the picture but we must look to all sides of the picture. It is high time that the Government should come out to help the cultivators at the time of their needs. You are blocking their only door and at the same time you are not opening some other new door for them where they can find loans. Sir, the rural credit is gone and the rural Societies are practically dead though we are hearing that the Government's intention at present is to rehabilitate this movement. Sir, Government has taken so many years to understand what should be the aim of this movement in this Province. Sir, the failure of Government to improve the working of the co-operative banks in the province is really a shameful affair. If I remember aright, two years back a lac of rupees was provided in the Budget for giving loan on easy terms to the cultivators. When the Budget for the next year was placed before us we saw that the money could not be spent—the reason—not explained. After that when the Government was criticised for such a callous action they have altogether avoided to provide anything under that head. Sir, so far as grant-in-aid is concerned, the amount that has been provided in the Budget is only Rs.9,000. If Government take this Department so lightly, I think, it is high time that they should get rid of this Department altogether. If Government want to keep this Department, they must feed this Department and should not spend money for nothing. It is their moral duty to see that the money spent from the Provincial Exchequer is properly utilised, that it is utilised for the purpose for which it is intended and explained before this House, and thereby to the general public who pays the revenue to this Province, at time of demand.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

42.—Co-operation at page 123 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, Major head—of the whole grant of Rs.2,53,200 do stand reduced by Rs.100." No one is going to speak?

*Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : No, Sir, everybody has non co-operated.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : The Hon'ble Minister may give the reply.

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir....

*Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : We have got our Motions, Sir....

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : I was waiting for such a long time but no one came forward to speak. The Hon'ble Minister may reply.

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA : The Co-operative Movement in this Province, from the year 1929 had been running in a moribund condition because of the fact that there was financial crisis due to the trade depression. The former practice of financing the Rural Credit Societies was through the Provincial Co-operative Banks which used to issue loans to the Central Banks and the Central Banks issued loans to the Rural Credit Societies. But there came a time when money invested in the Rural Credit Societies was blocked up and could not be recovered by the Central Banks, and for that Government had to take steps by taking up a rehabilitating scheme which has been working now for the last two years, and I can tell for the information of the hon. Members of the House that the result so far achieved has been satisfactory. The matured deposits which were to be paid back, could not be paid because of poor collection of the over-due arrears. But now, so far as my information goes, some of the Central Banks have been able to pay back the deposit liabilities to the extent of 40 per cent.

As regards the need of rural credit by the agriculturists, I can tell the House that so far as my knowledge goes, in two Central Banks, *viz.*, Mangaldai and Sibsagar, money is lying locked up in the Central Banks because of no demand from the agriculturists. It may be due to the fact of inflation and high price of agricultural produce, probably, they do not require any monetary help now from the Central Banks or other financing agencies. If however there be any demand for starting Rural Credit Societies, certainly that question will be examined and Government will try to do as best as possible to help the agriculturists in that direction.

About the provision that has been referred to, *i.e.*, provision of one lac of rupees that was provided in the Budget sometime back and was withdrawn in the succeeding years. I have to say that some time after that, there was a proposal from the Provincial Co-operative Bank that they would float debentures for fluid resources and that Government should give guarantee either for the principal or the interest or for both. At that time when it was found that money that was advanced by the Central Banks was locked up in the Rural Credit Societies because of poor collection due to trade depression, it was thought fit by Government to start the rehabilitation scheme which is in operation for the last two years.

Sir, we have taken all steps to make the people realise the principle of co-operation, and this is the essential point on which we should give so much stress. Now, a time has come when the principle of co-operation has been better realised by the public, because the war came as a blessing in disguise with all the disadvantages and difficulties. Now, in the matter of food supply we have been able to start more than 1,000 Co-operative Stores during the last 12 months nearly. In the month of February alone the number of Co-operative Stores that have been established came upto 209 and these Co-operative Stores have been able to check black-marketing, which has been so much discussed on the floor of this House to a great extent, and to help in the matter of equitable distribution and selling things to the public at controlled rates, at a time when this matter of equitable distribution and checking of black marketing should receive so much attention of the Government. At the same time, we have not been lacking in our efforts to improve the Co-operative Movement in its credit side in the matter of realisation of the arrears of the different Societies and Banks, to bring them to a better footing, so that the lost confidence in the Co-operative Banks can be restored. Sir, we have been doing our level best, and as the Co-operative Movement will have to play a great part in the matter of post-war reconstruction, certainly, all aspects of the co-operative problems in various directions will be

examined in the Post War-Reconstruction Committee's meetings. There is a proposal from the Central Government to hold a Conference of the different provincial representatives to this effect in Bombay. They will discuss matters threadbare there to utilise the Co-operative Movement to the best benefit of the people, which our Province also is sure to share.

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

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, before the Chair puts the matter to the vote, I want to raise a point of order to clarify matters.

Sir, during the early part of the day, that is, before lunch the Hon'ble Speaker used to call each of the Members by name no matter how their names stand on the Order Paper. The Hon'ble Speaker called them mostly by names whether any of these gentlemen wanted to speak on the Motions standing in their names, and I was expecting this time also that in this particular Motion, I would be asked by the hon. Deputy Speaker by name whether I wanted to take part in this debate, as I have a Motion in my name. In the past I have been so treated by the hon. Deputy Speaker that when I wanted to speak I found that instead of allowing me to speak he called the names of some other Members and thus I had to sit down. I had this sort of experience before. This time I was expecting that he would call the name of Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury whose name appears before me and then I would be given a chance to speak on the Motion, but all on a sudden he called the Hon'ble Minister for reply. I then rose to speak but I was not allowed. My point is whether the House should be guided according to the rulings or decisions which the Hon'ble Speaker makes in the first part of the day or whether we should be guided by the decision which is made by the hon. Deputy Speaker during the latter part of the day while he occupies the Chair.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, before you reply to this point of order raised before the House by my hon. Friend, Mr. Abdur Rahman, I need hardly say that the House is to be guided by the Chair whoever occupies it at the time. If Mr. Abdur Rahman did not get a chance on earlier demands to speak, it was for a reason that is, that today being the last day for moving Demands for Grants, the guillotine shall have to be applied by 4 O'clock. Therefore, the Chair did not allow not only Maulavi Abdur Rahman who is the Chief Whip to speak, but no less a person than the Leader of the Opposition was also denied the same facility. There are seven Cut Motions in the next Demand. If the time is divided between these two grants the Demand for Co-operation may be carried till 3-30. Therefore, Sir, if you allow the debate to continue on this grant till 3-30 P.M., you can very well allow Mr. Abdur Rahman as well as another hon. Member who wants to speak on his Cut Motion, 5 minutes each. If 5 minutes be allowed to the Hon'ble Minister this will suffice.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: In view of what the Hon'ble Prime Minister has said, I am very much obliged to him for the light he has thrown on the matter. But after Mr. Mookerjee had finished, I called upon any hon. Member to take part in any further discussion. It was after waiting for some time, that I had to call upon the Hon'ble Minister to reply as nobody rose up. As Mr. Abdur Rahman has raised this point of order after the Hon'ble Minister has given his reply, to my mind, it appears that it would be not only irregular but out of order to allow him now to speak at this stage. Hon. Mr. Rahman also noticed yesterday how I had to disallow hon. Mr. Chaudhuri, the Leader of the Opposition, to speak. In matters of such a serious importance I found it my most painful duty to disallow Mr. Chaudhuri yesterday in the same manner, and I am therefore forced to disallow hon. Mr. Rahman today. As he has raised his point of order at a belated time, I do not feel inclined to allow any further discussion on this point at this stage of the proceedings on that motion.

(After a pause.)

Does the hon. Mover, Mr. Mookerjee, press his Motion?

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Yes, Sir.

The Deputy SPEAKER : The question is :

“That the total provision of Rs. 2,53,200 under Grant No.22, Major head—42.—Co-operation at page 123 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 2,53,200 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.”

The question was negatived.

The Deputy SPEAKER : The question is :

“I hat a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,53,200 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head ‘42.—Co-operation.’ ”

GRANT No. 25.

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

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : There are as many as seven Cut Motions with respect to Grant No. 25. Motion No. 7, standing in the name of Maulavi Badaruddin Ahmed is very comprehensive and I call upon him to move his Cut Motion.

Maulavi BADARUDDIN AHMED : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs. 34,57,900 under Grant No. 25, Major head—50.—Civil Works at page 135 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 34,57,900 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.

The object of my Cut Motion is to draw the attention of the Government to the hopeless condition of the bridges and culverts on the North Trunk Road, particularly in the district of Darrang. There are some bridges in the road which are constantly found under repairs every year in winter with a sub-way for ordinary traffic. As soon as rain sets in, or sometime after the rain sets in, allowing the ordinary traffic to run over water by the sub-way for some days, the traffic is allowed to run over the bridges. Again, as soon as the winter season arrives, the traffic is closed over the bridges. The reason for this state of affairs is this : that one Executive Engineer comes and makes the width of the channel narrow and puts a bridge over it and in rains the current of water washes away approaches of the bridges and in addition makes some more breaches over the road. Then, another Executive Engineer comes and fills up the breaches and keeps the bridges over the narrow span of the channel. The result is that there is no end of breaches over the road and there is no end of repairs to the bridges. Sir, inefficiency is the surname of the Darrang Public Works Department. This is due to the frequent change of the officers from the district. So far as I know, within the course of two years as many as six Executive Engineers and almost equal number of Subdivisional Officers at Mangaldai came and went away on transfer.

Sir, as to the distribution of contract works, we have been crying in vain. All the important contracts under the Public Works Department have gone to outsiders. Although the local people submit their tenders the authorities concerned find some fault with the local tenders and they are rejected. In this way all the important contracts have been given to outsiders.

With these observations, Sir, I commend my Motion for the acceptance of the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : The Motion moved :

“That the total provision of Rs. 34,57,900 under Grant No. 25, Major head—50.—Civil Works at page 135 of the Budget be reduced by Rs. 100, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 34,57,900 do stand reduced by Rs. 100.”

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Sir, I rise to support this Motion and I shall deal with a few figures only. There is a Cut Motion No. 6† standing in my name to the same effect where it has been stated that I have tabled that Motion to criticise Government's policy with regard to Public Works Department and Local-Self Government Departments.

†6. Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE to move :—

That the total provision of Rs. 34,57,900 under Grant No.25, Major head—50.—Civil Works at page 135 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100. *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.34,57,900 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, it will be seen in the Budget that the expenditure is being gradually decreased under this department. In 1940-41, a sum of Rs.45,18,000 was spent; that is the actual of that year. The actual of 1941-42 is Rs.43,22,000. In 1942-43, it came to Rs.37,23,000. Last year there was some-improvement but again this year the Budget estimate is 39 lakhs and some odd.

Sir, if we go through only the main heads of expenditure under this department, we shall find that so far as the original works are concerned, the amount that has been provided in the Budget is less than the amount that will be spent even during the current year. So far as the communication branch of the original work is concerned, Sir, you will find how rapidly this is being decreased. Even in 1942-43, the amount spent was Rs.5,15,096. In the current year though the amount has been reduced under the revised estimate, you will find, Sir, that Rs.3,93,586, practically 4 laks, will be spent but in the next year's Budget, with which we are dealing at present, the provision is Rs.1,50,000 only.

So far as the repairs of the communication section is concerned, you will find, Sir, that the provision here also is to some extent less than that of the current year. While all the Members are crying on the floor of this House to improve the existing road condition, so as to maintain the roads in proper order, our popular Government, instead of increasing the amount, has decreased it though they themselves admit that the cost of labour and materials has greatly increased. Why this negligence? Will not the supporters of the present Government lodge their mild protest for this callousness?

Sir, so far as grants-in-aid to Municipalities and Local Boards, for communication is concerned you will be surprised to note that even the actual of 1942-43 was Rs.4,78,453. The revised estimate for 1943-44 is Rs.3,82,500. But for the next year they have decreased the amount. Why? Is it because that all-round costs have been increased many times? Curious indeed!

Sir, so far as the grant to the economic development of the rural areas is concerned, you will find that for village roads the Government will spend Rs.14,000 for the current year, that is the year which is going to be over by the 31st March 1944, but for the next year they have made provision of Rs.7,000 only.

Sir, these show how seriously we are tackling and dealing with the communication problem of our Province.

In this connection I like to draw the attention of the hon. Members to one fact which will be found at page 45 of the Budget Memorandum. Under (b) Communications it has been explained as follows: "The decrease of Rs.1,42,000 in the revised is due to smaller expenditure for Tea Rates Works (Rs.56,000.) This money is not paid from the general revenue of the Province but there is a separate source for it. Our Government is unwilling even to spend this amount which does not concern the general revenues of this Province. Then, Sir, petrol tax projects. Government has said that Rs.2 lakhs, were saved owing to projects either not being ready in time or the staff being employed on works of military importance. So far as the latter part is concerned, if really the officers are employed on military projects I have got nothing to say because nobody will hear me as war's is the first claim, but why the money was taken before the projects were ready? It looks rather tarning that money has been sanctioned for the projects which were not ready while on the other hand we very often hear that due to want of fund many ready projects could not be taken up. Then, Sir, you will find in the last part of the same note that the above mentioned amount has been partly counterbalanced by a larger expenditure on ordinary roads such as (please note carefully this explanation) the strengthening of bridges on the North Bank, the improvement of North Trunk Road in the Mangaldai subdivision and the reconstruction of a number of inspection bungalows burnt by saboteurs. How these reconstruction of inspection bungalows can come under the head communications? I fail to understand this, Sir. I hope the Hon'ble Minister will enlighten me how the reconstruction of inspection bungalows can be included in communication expenditure. This is the kind of explanation we receive. Sir, I am sorry to say that so far as the communication of this Province is concerned, I don't know what the Central Government is doing which is quite secret and private to us and specially

to the people of the Surma Valley ; but so far as the Provincial Government is concerned, if we keep aside the new projects we are entitled to say that they are callous to maintain the existing roads in proper order. All the roads are being constantly used by heavy traffic, the wear and tear are far greater than before and instead of spending much more money our Government is gradually decreasing the amount. I did not expect this apathy from the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Public Works Department who is always praised by me for his works.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs.1,50,000 under Grant No.25, Major head 50.—Civil Works, Minor head—A.—Original Works, Sub-head—(b).—Communications (total), at page 135 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.34,57,900 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

Sir, by this Motion I want to raise a discussion about failure of Government to complete the Sylhet-Sunamganj Road.

You know, Sir, that the project was taken up in the year 1937. A sum of Rs.8 lacs had been sanctioned from the Road Development Fund for construction of the road. But after two years' progress, the work was stopped all on a sudden. The Sylhet-Sunamganj road is the only road connecting the town of Sunamganj with Sylhet. Sir, a motor service runs from Sylhet to Sunamganj from the 15th of May to the 1st of December and for the rest of the year Sunamganj is virtually cut off from Sylhet and the rest of the civilised world. We don't know why all on a sudden the work of this very important road was stopped. Of course, the Government might say that due to war conditions materials for the bridges could not be obtained but the urgency of this road is so pressing that in spite of these difficulties materials should have been procured. I was told on another occasion, Sir, that the work was stopped under the direction of the Government of India. I think the Hon'ble Minister will enlighten the House on this particular point.

In conclusion, Sir, I urge upon the Hon'ble Minister in-charge to see that immediately the work of the road is undertaken and completed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : The Motion moved :

“ That the provision of Rs.1,50,000 under Grant No.25, Major head—50.—Civil Works, Minor head—A.—Original Works, Sub-head—(b).—Communications (total), at page 134 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.34,57,900 do stand reduced by Rs.100.”

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to criticise the Government policy with regard to the Local Self-Government Department. Sir, there were twenty Municipalities in this Province ; of these one has an official Chairman, one is being directly managed by the Government and the others are in charge of non-official Chairmen. Now, Gauhati Municipality is being directly managed by the Government since 1942. We have in this House representatives hailing from the different municipal towns of this Province and because all of them come from an area which is being managed by the non-official bodies I would ask them to judge whether their Municipalities are less efficiently managed than the Municipality of Gauhati which is being directly managed by the Government.

Now, it is the first duty of a Municipality to ensure the supply of good drinking water. Gauhati Municipality has not been able to supply any good drinking water in the town. There has been a general scarcity of water not only in ward No 7 for which I drew the attention of the Hon'ble Minister the other day by an Adjournment Motion but also throughout the town. I can quite see, Sir, that for better attention of the Military it is necessary that bulk of the water should go to the Military Department. But ever since August 1942, have Government given any sort of substitution to the ordinary rate-payer? If Government had allotted any money for the tube wells or ordinary wells, the suffering of the people would have been mitigated to some extent.

Then, it is another primary duty of the Municipality to see that the latrines are cleansed daily. Is this done in the town of Gauhati? Not to speak of daily cleaning, a regular instruction has been given by the authorities that cleaning should be done once in three days but even that is not done. This is due to the fact that most of the

sweepers have got to work in the Military camps also. Of course the Military Department have their own sweepers but they want that their work should be supplemented by the sweepers of the Municipality.

Sir, another duty which I find every Municipality is performing is that roads are swept, if not daily, but at regular interval. But this is not done now in the town of Gauhati except in certain streets, and it can be said that the Gauhati Municipality has almost abandoned this work. Roads are not repaired and as a result they are full of holes and are a menace to the pedestrians at night. There is practically no supply of electricity in the town of Gauhati. Government have allowed the Electric Supply Company to cut off connection from the private houses and to supply current to the Military Department only and to those buildings which are utilised for essential services. All the same the rate-payers are to pay their municipal tax although they do not get any service from the Municipality and to those who protest and do not pay such tax distress warrants are issued for realisation of this tax. Sir, I do not know why the tax which is being utilised for war purposes is not called a war tax. In that case, we would have satisfaction that we are contributing some money for war purpose in this shape. But Government should not in that way deceive the rate-payers of Gauhati by realising money from them as municipal tax when the rate-payers are given no benefit from the Municipality. So, I suggest that Government at least should order the Municipality not to realise municipal tax or at least not to realise the tax for water and latrine. Sir, it is all very well to take care of the Military people. But does not Government realise that if epidemic breaks out in the town of Gauhati amongst the civil population of want for good drinking water and on account of the neglect to take sanitary measures, that will ultimately affect the Military people as well? Is there any reason to suppose that the Military people are not affected by epidemic? I say all people suffer from epidemic diseases for want of good drinking water and proper cleaning of the latrine, etc. The Government are in their anxiety to be in the good books of the Army Department giving their attention to the Military people only. But they should remember that if epidemic happens to break out it will touch all the people—civil or Military.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would like to call upon the Hon'ble Minister to see that only the salient points that have been raised in the Cut Motions are kindly touched in the course of his reply.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will first of all begin to reply to what has been stated by my Friend Maulavi Badaruddin Ahmed. He has raised three points: first about the bridges on the North Trunk Road. These bridges were damaged more than once by the floods in 1942 and later. So, temporary arrangements had to be made. For permanent construction we took the work in December 1942, and in January 1943. But the construction of the bridges was greatly held up owing to our difficulty in getting timber supply, as from Palashbari the contractors could not transport their timber because they had a very low priority in transport. So, all the timber had to be carted from Palashbari to the site of these bridges. That is why there was much delay in the completion of those bridges. Now the work has been taken up in right earnest and I can assure the hon. Members that this work will be completed by the end of April next. The second point he has raised is about the frequent transfers of the Executive Engineers and the Subdivisional Officers of the Central Assam Division. I admit that these frequent transfers are unfortunate and affect efficiency of work in the Division. But these transfers, I can assure him, were due to circumstances over which we had no control. Mr. Abdul Goffar who was in charge of that Division had to go on leave on 9th July 1942. Then his place was taken by Mr. D. C. Datta who had again to go on leave on 9th July 1943, and the present Executive Engineer had to be transferred in the interest of Defence work to some other Division. Similarly, the frequent transfers of Public Works Department officers are due to their going on leave. The third point that my Friend has raised is that contract work is generally given to outsiders. We had issued circular after circular that contract work in the Public Works Department should be given to the native or domiciled of the Province, and we have definitely

asked the Divisional Officers not to give any contract to outsiders. If this principle has been departed from and if my Friend brings any specific case to my notice, I will certainly make an enquiry into this.

My Friend Mr. Mookerjee has complained that the expenditure on this Department has been decreasing in a way. There are several reasons for this. Our expenditure on establishment has gone down on account of the fact that we are employing our staff on Defence work and are recovering the cost from the Central Government.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: On a point of personal information, Sir, this is a cost on establishment and cannot be shown under this Department. This has been discussed long before. But this is "Excluding Establishment and Tools and Plants".

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: The Central Government, in order to retard inflationary tendency and to conserve constructional resources for important Military projects, had directed us in their letter dated the 9th January 1943, to restrict our activities. The Central Government decided that in respect of Central Government work the Capital work programme should be curtailed as far as possible, and the Provincial Government also were requested to apply this criterion as a matter of urgency to all Capital work proposed to be undertaken by them, and to defer taking such Capital work. So we are now taking inescapable works only. This is why the expenditure from communication has gone down.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: What about "Repairs", Sir?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Under "Repairs", Sir, there is difficulty of getting labour and materials now. On "Buildings" also we had to curtail our programme on account of the difficulty in obtaining necessary materials.

So, these are the reasons why the expenditure has gone down not only on communications but also on buildings.

As regards the question relating to Local Self-Government, my Hon'ble Colleague the Minister for Local Self-Government will reply.

Now I come to the question of Sylhet-Sunamganj Road. The Sylhet-Sunamganj Road has been divided for the purpose of work into three sections. Section A is from Sylhet to Gobindganj—12 miles. The work on this section has been completed and the road has been opened. Section B is from Gobindganj to Pagla—16 miles and Section C is from Pagla to Sunamganj—11 miles. Unfortunately Section B is not above the normal flood level and Section C passes through a very low lying country and gets submerged during big floods and most part of it remains under water even during normal floods. In Sections A and B the road was very narrow: so the road had to be widened and there are many bamboo bridges in Section B. In framing the original estimate they did not provide for any money for the construction of bridges. They wanted to see how far after the earth work was done for two rainy seasons, they were required to provide for water ways. The work was going on till 1942, when the Executive Engineer reported that there was great difficulty in obtaining gravel because there was other Military works going on. When the matter was reported, the Chief Engineer asked him to slacken the work. Immediately after this a letter from the Government of India was received and this work was considered as escapable. Therefore the work has been stopped. The earth work has been completed and the gravels that were collected have been laid. But the construction of bridges cannot be taken up because steel is not available. Moreover the original estimate will be increased now owing to the difficulty of getting labour and other materials. So we have decided not to take up the work during the duration of the war. But there is a post-war scheme and we have included this road in the provincial high ways. I can assure the hon. Member that we realise the importance of this road because it leads to the subdivision and we will take up this work immediately after the war.

Then there is another Cut Motion which is intended for urging upon the Government the necessity of attaching a separate gangway for the pedestrians to the Keane Bridge at Sylhet for saving them from motor accidents. This fact was not known to us before, but after the receipt of this Motion we made an enquiry into the matter and we have learnt to our regret that on account of very heavy Military traffic there have been

as many as 12 accidents during the last 12 months. Of course, it is not possible to provide a separate gangway because there is the difficulty of obtaining steel. But there is another alternative of posting traffic constables at midway or at either ends of the bridge so that the traffic may be regulated. We shall examine this matter and see if it is possible to place any refuges at separate intervals.

As regards other points Hon'ble Mr. Chakravarty will reply.

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my hon. Friend Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury must have been worried to see as I find from his Cut Motion No.5*, that the current year's grant to the Local Bodies has been reduced by about Rs.4,753. This grant is made for a particular purpose *i.e.* for the maintenance of certain Public Works Department roads which are transferred to the Local Boards. This year two of the roads have been retransferred to the Public Works Department—one at Dhubri and the other at Sylhet, and therefore proportionate amounts have been deducted from the total grant—Rs.2,315 in the case of Dhubri and Rs.1,938 in the case of Sylhet. So, when we sum up these amounts this makes up the actual figure of the previous year. Hence there is no reduction of the amount at all.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : We want that the grant should be increased.

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY : Many of the Local Board Chairmen have pressed for more money as it is not possible for them to put up proper bridges and maintain the roads. We are considering that matter and we are trying in what way we can help the Local Boards. This matter is under consideration.

Then about the point raised by Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri regarding insufficient water-supply in the Gauhati Municipality. He moved an Adjournment Motion the other day and the Hon'ble Premier replied to that. What I can further say is that soon after that we called for a report from the Deputy Commissioner giving him the details of the complaints of my hon. Friend. Also we asked the Deputy Commissioner to suggest what may be the possible means of improving the situation, whether he would suggest sinking of a few tube wells and things of that sort. This shows that we have already taken action in the matter. So far as the water problem at Gauhati is concerned, I must say that due to the perpetual negligence of the previous Boards the machinery there in the water works have become very weak. One is practically out of order and had to be sent for repair. But thanks to the Military authorities, they have given us two machines which are now working. But even that is not sufficient to give us plenty of water even though they are working for 24 hours regularly. One is going to be repaired very soon and as soon as it is fitted the situation will automatically improve.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : I take it that the hon. Members do not press their Motions.

The Motions were, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : The question before the House is :

“That a sum not exceeding Rs.34,57,900 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending the 31st March 1945, for the administration of the head “50.—Civil Works—(excluding Establishment and Tools and Plant charges).”

The question was adopted.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 11 A. M., of the clock on Thursday, the 23rd March 1944.

Shillong :

1 he 10th May 1944.

A. K. BARUA,

Secretary, Legislative Assembly, Assam.

*Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY to move :

That the provision of Rs.54,979 under Grant No.25, Major head—50.—Civil Works, Minor head—D.—Grants-in-aid for communications, Sub-head—2.—Grants to Local Boards, Detailed head—Recurring at page 135 of the Budget be reduced by Rs.100, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.34,57,900 do stand reduced by Rs.100.

(To raise a discussion about the inadequacy of the grant.)

