





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

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 11 A.M. on Thursday, the 16th November, 1944.

At three minutes to 11 A.M. His Excellency, accompanied by his Military Secretary and Aid-de-Camp, drove up to main entrance on the west of the Assembly building, where His Excellency was received by the Hon'ble the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the Secretary of the Assembly. A procession was then formed in the following order:—

Secretary, Assembly  
The Deputy Speaker  
The Hon'ble the Speaker  
Aide-de-Camp to the Governor of Assam  
His Excellency  
Military Secretary to the Governor of Assam.

The procession proceeded and just at Eleven of the Clock entered the Assembly Chamber where the Hon'ble Ministers and the Members of the Assembly awaited His Excellency's arrival.

On His Excellency entering the Chamber all present rose and remained standing until His Excellency took his seat on the *Dais* on the left of the Hon'ble Speaker. After a few seconds His Excellency addressed the House as follows:—

**ADDRESS BY GOVERNOR**

Mr. Speaker and hon. Members,  
since your last session, we have passed through great and decisive events. Abroad these few months have seen immense campaigns. Allied Armies have liberated practically the whole of France and Belgium and most of the Balkan countries, they are looking down on the plains of Northern Italy, they stand both in the East and in the West within the frontiers of Germany herself. In the Eastern theatre of war the perimeter of Japanese aggression has been constantly contracting and Japan can now see the menace of Allied power close to her home land.

But on our own front Japan advanced and, for the first time since the invaders from Burma were driven out about 120 years ago, Assam had to face an enemy within her frontier. In the middle of March the Japanese army struck at our forces along a front of nearly 300 miles and in a few weeks they had isolated our force in the Chin Hills, had cut off Manipur from the rest of India, had penetrated a considerable part of the Naga Hills, had surrounded and almost captured Kohima and were threatening to break through to the vital lines of communication in the Assam Valley. The early days of April were critical ones, but with the relief of Kohima it became clear that the tide had been turned and the campaign in India, after a great deal of hard fighting, ended in the most costly defeat that, as yet, Japan has ever sustained on land.

All of you know how gallantly the troops of the Fourteenth Army and the men of the Air Force fought, and it is a matter of deep pride that none did better than the men of our own regiment, then in battle for the first time. I believe that the delaying action which they fought at Jessami and Kherasom saved Kohima, and the gallantry of the defenders of Kohima, in which they and some of the Assam Rifles were included, was a big factor in the failure of the Japanese operations. We feel a deep sense of gratitude to those who defended the Province and India. A number of them will never return, and we should not forget the sacrifices which were the means of sparing us and the millions in India from the terrible ordeal of invasion.

In paying tribute to the soldiers we should not forget the people of the invaded area. You know something of how the Nagas in particular acted when their lands were overrun, of the valuable services they gave to the Army, of their staunchness in the face of violence and threats and the blandishments of those traitors who accompanied the Japanese, of their tenderness to our own wounded, of the courage with which they faced loss of their homes and substance. When the full story can be written, it will be a great chapter in our history. They have deserved well of the Province and



of India and you will be glad to know that the Government of India have generously undertaken the financial burden of the relief of the sufferers and the rehabilitation of the devastated areas. With this generous backing the task is already in progress. All who need it are being supplied with food and other needs such as building materials, livestock, agricultural implements and household utensils are being distributed as widely and as rapidly as is possible in an area like this where transport is not easy and where the urgent needs of our Armies must clearly be carried along the same lines of communication.

In addition to providing the means of relief the Governor General in Council has decided to commemorate in a special way his appreciation of the staunchness of the Nagas and the assistance they gave. I am authorised to announce that it is intended to construct a modern hospital at Kohima with which will be provided suitable itinerant medical facilities for the interior of the area. This centre will serve as an abiding recognition of the heroism that was displayed and will at the same time, in place of the ravages of war, spread the blessing of healing throughout that part of Assam which faced the invasion. I know that I am speaking for all here when I express my appreciation of this generous and valuable gift. Construction will be deferred until more normal conditions are established; in the meantime the military authorities have kindly made available facilities for medical work in this area.

I would add a word of appreciation of the splendid morale shown throughout the Province in these testing days. Men of all communities and races united to secure a steady and tranquil spirit among the people. It meant much to the Army to feel that they had at their backs a province which was not merely undisturbed, but unperturbed, treating the astonishing claims of the Japanese radio and the bombastic proclamations of a few perverted Indians in Burma with equal contempt, and co-operating in manifold ways in the war effort. To you as representatives of the people, I would acknowledge gratefully the part the Province played in this important campaign.

In the field of administration, there have been constant difficulties, and I cannot promise that these will become lighter in the near future. Most of them are inseparable from our situation. Assam, with Manipur, has nine-tenths of the frontier between Burma and India; it is an inevitable base for operations against and in Burma; it contains important fighting forces and those large bodies which are essential for the support of those fighting in modern war; it is a focus for military works and has been the main passage to China. For all this it is not well equipped by geography for it is a bottle-neck surrounded on three sides and part of the fourth by high mountains with rather slender connections with the rest of India, and rather poor communications within the Province itself. This means that transport must be to a large extent monopolized by the military forces and that the flow of civil imports must, for the present, be small. With a high war expenditure in the Province it is thus peculiarly exposed to the perils of inflation. Government have endeavoured, by price controls, by a savings campaign and by efforts to bring in goods, to protect the people from the dire effects of inflation; but these endeavours have been only partially successful. I would again stress at this time the importance of saving all that is possible and of deferring all possible civil expenditure until conditions change. By so doing, people will help the war effort, will help themselves and help their neighbours. The time to spend will be when this great military activity in our midst is no longer necessary and when we face the serious but different problems involved in the return to a peace-time economy.

The end of the war is not in sight; it may come quickly or it may be delayed for a considerable time. But we have reached a stage at which we should be prepared for it to end at any time, and be ready with our plans for the campaigns of peace. Already considerable progress has been made with schemes of reconstruction and you, gentlemen, took an important step in starting a reconstruction fund last March. The Ministers have been busy in evolving schemes; and in various parts of India, great projects have been filling the minds of men. But just as the



wisest soldiers will tell you that wars are won in the end by morale, so in the campaigns of peace, we shall require very stout hearts if we are going to succeed. These great schemes all involve heavy expenditure and they cannot go through unless the people are prepared to face considerably higher taxation than has been customary in the past. Some of you know of the hardships endured by the Russian people to secure the success of their Five-Year Plans ; and it is idle to think of reconstruction unless we have the peoples ready to pay for it.

There is a tendency to believe that if payment can be secured from a different organ of Government, it will cease to be a burden. Local Bodies are apt to think that if their burdens were assumed by the Provincial Government, they would somehow press less heavily on the people, and are we not tempted to think of the Government of India as a great reservoir of wealth ? But the idea is, as I am sure you realise, erroneous. Local Bodies, the Provincial Governments, the Government of India, have no vaults full of money. They all maintain their activities by what they get out of the people's pockets, the pocket of the man in the street and the man on the field. I would urge upon you to do what you can to increase the readiness to bear taxation. There are many who say that people cannot afford it. That would be perfectly true if they were to be allowed to go on as at present, with such glaring gaps in education, in public health, in communications. But if they want these gaps filled, they must take up this burden in the firm faith that the transformation of conditions will enable them to bear it and to reap a rich reward from the sacrifice.

There is one obvious way in which we can increase our resources and provide means to pay for a good deal of our reconstruction programme. That is by doing our best to produce more food. The Grow More Food Campaign has met with a fair measure of success, although the results this year have been obscured by a poor monsoon. But we can do a great deal better and there is scarcely any activity which deserves your support more. The war, of course, gives this problem an added urgency, but more food has been one of India's greatest needs for years, and this is a need which will not disappear with the end of the war. It is a struggle which must go on long after the struggle with our enemies has reached its victorious conclusion. Assam, provided that her population does not rise too rapidly, should be able to contribute substantially to the food supply of other parts of India and thus to provide for the many needs which must be supplied from outside the Province, for the machinery we shall want to acquire, for the numerous foodstuffs for which the Province is not well-suited.

Moreover, the rest of India needs more food badly ; many of its people are constantly undernourished and you cannot hope to secure the advance we all desire in education, in health and in other directions until the people as a whole are assured of ample food. This is the very first and most elementary step in the task of nation-building. But what is the position ? Even with the large areas under cultivation and the areas that could be brought under the plough, we could not in pre-war years feel sure of having enough rice to feed even our own people. And in a year of deficient rainfall like this one, we have not only no surplus, but must depend on the carry-over from last year to see us through.

Every one with whom I have discussed this question agrees that the standard of production of the average Assamese cultivator is capable of being greatly increased. Government must help in every way they can by rebuilding and increasing the reserves of livestock, by the distribution of improved seed, by fostering irrigation, by improving communications, by assisting with marketing. Concentration on public health and a far wider diffusion of education will, I believe, have important effects : for a high rate of sickness and the tendency of the uneducated to take short views are enemies of sustained effort. But we cannot wait for the development of reconstruction programmes to secure more food, for we need this greater production to make our programmes a success. All the impartial experts whom I have consulted have assured me that the Mymensinghi immigrant, who has no advantage in education or health over the Assamese people, produces from two to three times the amount from the same acreage. You will know better than I whether this high estimate is reliable : but I am sure you will agree that the average cultivator could produce far more than he does at present.



The need for more effort may not, until recently, have been obvious to all. But it should be obvious now, and I would urge those of you who have influence in the matter to do all you can to encourage both more extensive and more intensive cultivation of the soil by children of the soil. Only people who make adequate use of their resources and opportunities can feel sure that they will not pass to others. You may regret the passing of the old and easy-going life: even in Britain those who, like myself, were born in Victorian times, are apt to look wistfully on what seemed more leisured and more gracious days. But those benefits belonged both in England and in Assam to comparatively few and we cannot hope that the masses of the country will secure the essentials for a healthy and vigorous life—for real life as opposed to existence—without a much greater output than many are giving today.

The question of the settlement of land is bound up with this and it is a subject of considerable controversy at present. In some quarters there is strong opposition to the opening of lands in three districts to immigrant cultivators; in other quarters there are loud assertions that the immigrants are not being given sufficiently liberal treatment. Many arguments have been adduced on both sides. Stress is laid on one side on the need of more food, on the increased prosperity and revenue that further settlement will yield, on the hardships of the landless labourers and on their capacity as cultivators. On the other side, emphasis is laid on the danger of over-population, on the importance of conserving the supply of cattle and milk, on the possibility that the indigenous peoples, particularly the tribal peoples, may by parting with land, jeopardize their livelihood, on dangers to public health and even on the possible effects on public peace.

Although I have given a great deal of thought to all such arguments on both sides that have come to my notice, I do not propose to comment on any of them here. For, if I may speak frankly, I feel that, while the arguments I have cited are honestly held and are entitled to careful consideration, they are not the main consideration with those who feel most keenly on both sides. I suggest that what has tended to import anxiety and bitterness into this controversy is, in the main, another question, namely, the possible effect of the present policy, or of any other policy that may be framed upon this question, on the communal ratio in Assam. It is, if I am not mistaken, the fears and hopes centred round any alteration of the comparative strengths of the communities which have mainly stimulated the controversy, and it is to my mind perfectly natural that this should be so. The possible effects on the future life and welfare of the Province of alterations in the character of the population must be matters of deep concern to all who take any interest in public affairs.

I know that I am touching here on a controversial—perhaps the controversial—subject of Assam politics. You will not expect me to take sides in this matter, and in fact I find much on both sides to claim my sympathy. But I feel myself that much of the bitterness associated with this controversy is due to the fact that many people see the strong points on their own sides but ignore the strong points on the other side. Let me try to make this clear by analogies from abroad.

In Palestine there has recently been an influx of a large number of persons belonging to another race, professing a different religion and not speaking the language of the majority of the former inhabitants. The immigrants are, on the whole, men of a more energetic disposition; they have acquired lands held by the Arabs, and have also broken a lot of fresh ground. The parallel here seems a close one except in one respect, namely, that the Mymensinghis have not the historical connection with Assam that the Jews have with Palestine. I would urge those who wish to encourage this immigration to reflect on the reasons which have led so many Muslims to resent Jewish immigration into Palestine and to ask themselves whether those who object to Bengali settlement in the Assam Valley may not feel that they are on equally strong ground.

Let us turn to a very different country, South Africa. You are all aware of certain legislation designed to prevent an extension of the acquisition of land in certain areas by Indians. It has aroused resentment in India, and I imagine that a number of those who are now protesting against the settlement of immigrants in Assam share



that resentment to the full. But is there not another parallel here? If those who object to the grant of land to persons who, though not of Assamese stock, are fellow citizens and fellow Indians, will recall their feelings on the question of pegging legislation in South Africa, they will understand better the opposing point of view.

Similarly, the provisions of the Government of India Act are invoked by both sides. On one side stress tends to be laid on the protection of minorities. Here I have a special responsibility and I keep steadily in view the interests of the tribal peoples in this connection. I am glad to say that this special interest has been readily recognized both by the present Government and by all its predecessors who have attempted to deal with this subject. On the other hand, I and my Government have to bear in mind also the provisions of Section 298 of the Government of India Act; and some of the measures I have seen advocated would not be consistent with this provision.

I must rest content with stating, as I have attempted to do, what I regard as the more compelling arguments on either side. I would ask then that those who feel keenly on this subject, on either side, should endeavour to study and understand the attitude of those at the opposite poles of thought. It is always easy to find arguments for the side to which one belongs, and too many people in this world shut their mind to everything else. But statesmanship demands that one should understand, nay more, sympathise with opposing points of view even when one is forced by one's reason or by circumstances to make a choice between them.

As I have suggested, the issue is unfortunately linked with communal differences. Most of the immigrants are Muslims, although it is worth recalling that there has been a big immigration from other provinces of non-Muslims to the tea gardens, and that large numbers of these have been encouraged to settle in the Assam Valley without evoking, so far as I am aware, any such strong protests as have been made against the recent settlements. The great majority of the older residents in the Valley are not Muslims and their apprehensions that they may be submerged by an influx of persons who will not share their ideals and will lower their standard of living, is one with which every reasonable man should sympathise. But Assam has hitherto been as free from communal discord as any area in India; nowhere else in India has there been such a mixture of races as in the Assam Valley and nowhere have the peoples lived in more harmony. It must be the hope of all who wish the Province well that this friendly good-will will continue and that those who have come more recently will assimilate themselves to the atmosphere of tolerance which, for at least a century, has been such an honourable characteristic of the people of Assam. It has been a great source of strength and if we lose it, we shall be poor indeed. Over 500 years ago, the founder of a university in my own land of Scotland wrote: "Friendship is the stay of Kingdoms; without the fruits of friendship Kings cannot reign nor States hold together; nor can anyone in public or in private be of profit to himself, or his fatherland: it is that harmony by which, if it stands, small affairs increase, and if it be removed, great affairs will gradually decay."

I suggest that this has a bearing on the wider issue of India's constitutional future. There is, to my mind, no hope for India except in the idea of partnership between her peoples, whether you regard them as communities or as nations. And I regard this as equally true whether India remains united, or whether any areas are separated. There can be no peace if any important section in a united India feels that it is not a partner but is subject to another section. Equally there can be no peace in either part or any part of a divided India if such a situation prevails there. For without a hopeless fragmentation you cannot divide India into areas whose population will be homogeneous in religion and culture. You cannot have a peaceful and united India if you are thinking in



terms of the dominance of part of the people. Equally if India is divided, you cannot have peaceful separated States if these are founded on the same idea of dominance. You do not get away from this need of partnership either by dividing India or by keeping it united: it stands as the primary need of all peace and progress. (*Applause.*)

At the conclusion of his address at 11-28 A.M. His Excellency left the Chamber accompanied by the Military Secretary and the Aide-de-Camp. All within the Chamber rose from their seats and remained standing until His Excellency had left the Chamber.

The Hon'ble Speaker then adjourned the House till 11-45 A.M.



The House assembled again at 11-45 A.M. with the Hon'ble Mr. Basanta Kumar Das, Speaker, in the Chair, the ten Hon'ble Ministers and 69 Members.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(To which oral answers were given)

### STARRED QUESTIONS

#### Grant of compensation for acquiring lands on Military requisitions

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

\*59. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The rates of compensation granted to the villagers for acquiring their paddy lands and homestead lands on Military requisitions district by district separately ?
- (b) The rates of compensation granted to the tea garden owners for acquiring their lands with tea bushes and without tea bushes (but not forest) district by district separately ?
- (c) The rates of compensation granted to the owners of forest district by district ?
- (d) Who made the assessments in all the three cases mentioned above ?

\*60. (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether compensation has been paid in all cases of acquisition of land made up to 31st March, 1944, on Military requisition ?

(b) If not, will Government be pleased to state the cases where compensation has not yet been paid, showing the date of acquisition and the cause of the delay in payments in each case ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

59. (a)—There is no standard schedule of rates. Assessment is made by District Officers according to values prevailing in the locality.

(b)—For small areas of tea, compensation is usually calculated on a bush basis varying according to the productivity of the garden from annas 8 to Re.1-2-0 per bush. For large areas of tea a formula has been approved by the Assessment Committee and is awaiting approval of the Government of India which is expected shortly. For vacant land the rate prevailing in the locality is paid.

(c)—There is no standard schedule. Full value of trees is paid according to the rate prevailing in the locality at the time of requisitioning.

(d)—The District Officer makes the assessment assisted by the Sub-Deputy Collectors in case (a) and his Divisional Forest Officer in case (c).

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : May I know from the Hon'ble Minister who formed this Committee ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : Which Committee, Sir ?

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Hon'ble Minister will find it in his reply, Sir.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : The Assessment Committee was formed by the Provincial Government.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : When was it formed, Sir ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : Perhaps under the 93 regime, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : May I have a definite reply, Sir ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI : At least not in my time, so far as I can recollect.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : May we know who are the members of this Committee ?



The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Just now I cannot tell the hon. Member, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: When can I expect that, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: If desired, during this Session, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Next Question.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: No, Sir. There are many things which I want to ask. As regards tea nothing was discussed, Sir. I am interested in tea especially. So far as tea bushes are concerned, this is the first Question that has come before the House. May I know, so far as the price of tea bushes are concerned, who assess the price?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: The Government of India, I believe.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Who is the representative of the Government of India in this Province who makes the assessment so far as the tea bushes are concerned?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: The Provincial Assessment Committee itself.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: So far as trees are concerned, the Government reply is that the price is given on the basis of price which is prevailing in the locality. Are we to understand that in normal times also there were cases of this kind of requisitioning and cutting of trees and thereby Government could assess the price of a particular kind of tree in a particular locality?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: There was no requisitioning in the normal times, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Then how do Government assess the prevailing price in a particular locality, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: As regards that, there are trees in the locality, which are sold.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: But how the price is determined according to the price prevailing in the locality?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: My answer is that I cannot add to what I have already stated, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I enquire from the Hon'ble Minister whether I shall be wrong if I say that this is no answer at all? It is hopeless.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: This is the answer, Sir, which Government thought it proper to give as a full answer, and if the hon. Member will still hold the view he has suggested, he will be wholly wrong, Sir.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: May I know, Sir, why these rules are treated as confidential?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: I said that those of the rules which are not treated as confidential would be given to the hon. Members.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: May I know the reason why the rules have not been published in the Gazette?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: I have given the assurance that those rules which are not to be treated as confidential will be made available to the hon. Members as quickly as possible.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: May I know whether the rules will be published in the Gazette?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: It will be done if that is the desire of the House.

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROAH: That is the desire of the House.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied:

60. (a)—No.

(b)—Government consider that the collection of the information would not be commensurate with the labour involved in compiling it. The requisition offices of Deputy Commissioners are already overworked and this would only add to their



labours, although competent clerks for such offices are practically unobtainable in some districts. Government have repeatedly urged on District Officers the need for early payment of compensation. Government are aware that the local officers are sparing no pains to carry out their orders as speedily as possible but they are often hampered by the necessity to carry on protracted negotiations with the Government of India causing unavoidable delay. The necessary staff to deal with all cases more speedily is not forthcoming. There are also other causes of delay such as the reluctance of claimants to execute agreements in the prescribed form or appeals for arbitration.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Will Government be pleased to state the cause of reluctance of claimants to execute agreements in the prescribed form?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: That is known to them, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Have Government enquired about the reasons of reluctance on the part of the claimants to sign the agreement?

Mr. W. D. RUTHERFURD: Will Government take it from me, as I am personally aware, that in Karinganj Subdivision such land was acquired on Military requisition but no compensation has so far been paid after over two years?

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

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: In view of the very wide-spread dissatisfaction in this matter, will not Government consider recruiting a special staff whose sole job will be to give compensation which is now so long over-due?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: The whole question is under the serious consideration of Government and the suggestion given by the hon. Member will be taken into consideration along with it.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Some cases are pending for years. May I know when they will be taken under the serious consideration of Government?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: It is difficult to give the time limit, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: If I say that Government are not giving serious consideration to the matter, shall I be wrong?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: He will be wholly wrong.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I protest, Sir. The people are suffering, but the Hon'ble Minister is giving an unsatisfactory and evasive reply.

†Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: Have Government drawn their attention to the instructions given by the Government of India in May 1942 on the subject?

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

†Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: Have they conveyed those instructions to the District Officers?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Yes, they have been supplied with copies.

†Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: If there were any troubles on account of non-receipt of the instructions, have Government taken any action in the matter?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Yes, Sir, if there were any.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I have an approximate idea of the time when all the pending cases will be disposed of?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: The pending cases are already under considerations of Government and Government will lose no time to try to bring them to a finality.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Let the Hon'ble Minister take as much time as he likes, but I want to know the approximate time that may be required, at the most.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: What time does the hon. Member suggest, Sir?

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Two months, Sir.



The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Of course, unless there is insurmountable delay, we shall try to do that.

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: Will the Hon'ble Minister take it from me that the District Officer of Dibrugarh have not absolutely abided by the instructions?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: I cannot, Sir.

### Re Mustard oil

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked:

\*61. Will the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether mustard oil has disappeared from the markets of the Province since its price has been controlled?
- (b) Whether it was available easily and was selling at Re. 1-8-0 to Re. 1-12-0 per seer throughout the Province before its price was controlled?
- (c) Whether the Hon'ble Minister is aware that it is now sold to the intending purchasers in black markets at Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per seer?
- (d) Whether any action has since been taken by Government to make mustard oil openly available to the public?
- (e) If so, how far Government's attempt has been successful?
- (f) If not, why not?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

61. (a)—Yes, the stock went under ground.  
 (b)—Yes, but the price was very unsteady varying at the whims and convenience of traders.  
 (c)—Government have no information about this price but it is reported that there is black market.  
 (d)—Yes.  
 (e)—To some extent.  
 (f)—Does not arise.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: As regards (b), Sir, the reply is, if I remember aright, "Yes." But after that the Hon'ble Premier has said that the price varied according to the sweet will of the greedy traders. I could not exactly follow.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I will repeat the reply for the hon. Member's benefit. "Yes, but the price was very unsteady varying at the whims and convenience of traders."

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: But my Question was "Whether it was available easily and was selling at Re. 1-8-0 to Re. 1-12-0 per seer throughout the Province before its price was controlled." If the answer is "Yes", then how can the other part apply?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: It is said that the price was very unsteady.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: In that case, how can it be called unsteady and varying at the whims and convenience of the traders?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The Question falls into two parts. Firstly, whether it was available easily to which I replied



'Yes'; the next question was whether it was selling at Re.1-8-0 to Re.1-12-0 per seer throughout the Province before its price was controlled and I replied that the price was very unsteady varying at the whims and convenience of traders.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: In that case, it would have been better to put "No" before the last sentence, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Is Mr. Mookerjee satisfied with the answer given?

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: No, Sir. May I know from the Hon'ble Premier whether, so far as the second part of the answer to Question 61 (b) is concerned, "No" should be put before the sentence?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The hon. Questioner cannot dictate the form of the reply, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Then, there is no reply to my Question. I want a definite answer. The reply is rather contradictory.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have nothing to add to what I have already said.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I enquire of the reason why mustard oil disappeared from the market after its price was controlled?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have already replied to that, Sir. It went to the blackmarket.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Are Government aware that this unsatisfactory state of things is due to the refusal of a permit to a Soalkuchi trader?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: That is an entirely new Question.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: As regards (c), if I remember aright, the Hon'ble Prime Minister said that it is reported to be so. May I know from the Hon'ble Prime Minister what is his source of receiving the report?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I said "It is reported that there is a blackmarket."

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Reported by whom, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: By people who purchased in the blackmarket.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Is there any control over the price of mustard oil in the Surma Valley, Sir?

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

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Since when, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Since the beginning of this financial year.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: May I know, Sir, whether any arrangement has been made for the supply of mustard oil for the Surma Valley Districts?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, Sir. Nearly eight months ago, we ordered for 1 lakh maunds of mustard oil from the United Provinces for the Surma Valley. Unfortunately, for various reasons, principally for want of tank wagons on the railway lines concerned, the commodity did not arrive earlier. But now tank wagons are available and mustard oil is being imported into the Surma Valley.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: May I know, Sir, whether any such tank wagon has arrived in the Surma Valley?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The wagons did not reach Surma Valley but the tank wagons will reach Calcutta and the contents thereof will be put into containers and sent to Surma Valley. It has been reported by the Government Agent that some mustard oil has already been shipped to Surma Valley.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: But what arrangement has been made for the *ad-interim* period, Sir?



The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : We did our level best to impress upon the United Provinces Government to send the consignment speedily. We cannot force their hands, nor of the railway authorities.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI : Does it not follow from that, Sir, that Government control over mustard oil without making any adequate arrangement for its supply has encouraged the blackmarketing ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : I repudiate that suggestion, Sir.

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAIN : With regard to Question No. 61(d), Sir, may I know from the Hon'ble Prime Minister, the nature of measures taken by Government in this respect ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : For the entire Province or for a particular locality, Sir ?

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAIN : For the entire Province.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : I have been repeating the same answer on the floor of this House many times, but as the capacity of the hon. Members for getting information is unlimited, I think I must oblige. Mustard seeds in the Province are grown normally to the extent of 15 lakhs maunds annually. There are about 23 oil mills in the Province—a small one in the Surma Valley and the other 22 in the Assam Valley. The mustard seeds come from the Assam Valley. In order to protect the people of Assam, the Government set up an organisation to purchase all the available mustard seeds in the Assam Valley. In order to ensure that the prices of oil remain within a reasonable level, that is between Re. 1 8-0 to Re. 1-10-0, we fixed the control price for mustard seeds at Rs. 11-8 0 per maund. The Government agents could not purchase the entire production which was a very low one in the current year, that is, it was about 50 per cent. of the normal for two reasons. The price of mustard seeds in the neighbouring Province of Bengal, specially in the District of Rangpur, was over Rs. 18 per maund and therefore there was a big smuggling of mustard seeds from Assam by country boats into Bengal. We set up prohibition executives, *i.e.*, a preventive staff but they caught only a few boats while the majority went down the river at nights. Then again the oil mills, in order to make as much profit as they can, purchased as much seeds as they could get even at a higher rate than the controlled rate, with the result that the procurement by the agents in the Province went out of hands. I received a deputation of the oil mill owners of the Assam Valley and asked them to form an Association, like the one in Bengal and the United Provinces. Out of the 22 mills in the Assam Valley, one small mill remained outside and the other 21 have agreed to combine and place all their production into the hands of the Deputy Commissioners. As the bulk of the oil mills in the Assam Valley is at Gauhati, the production of the Gauhati oil mills has been taken charge of by the Deputy Commissioner at Gauhati and he is supplying other districts where there are no oil mills. In this way the Assam Valley public is being supplied with mustard oil.

Although a few permits were given to the oil mill owners to buy as much mustard seeds as they could both in and outside the Province they have now declared that there is no seed in the Province and therefore they cannot carry on without import from outside. We wired to the Government of the United Provinces to allow us, as a first measure, to import one lakh maunds of mustard seeds to be brought to Assam. But it is very unfortunate that the Regional Priority Committee, who have the biggest say in arranging transport, expressed their inability to provide transport ; so, there is no response from the United Provinces to our proposal. On a personal discussion with the Secretary, Supply Department, the Regional Priority Committee said that they would consider more favourably the question of importing mustard oil rather than mustard seeds.

The Surma Valley Oil Mill approached me for a permit to bring mustard seeds from the Bikanir State. They informed me that the Bikanir State Authorities themselves would arrange for transport to the destination and on that assurance I gave them a permit. But they have failed to bring the seeds because there is some prohibition



of direct booking between Assam and the outside world. Anything that comes in the name of Assam is booked up to Howrah and from there we have got to make separate arrangement. Permission from the Regional Priority Committee has not yet been received and at the end of this month we propose again to ask them to allow us to import mustard oil.

### Adjournment Motion re forcible occupation of grazing reserves by immigrants from Bengal

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Order, order. The other day I told the House that I would consider the question of fixing the date and time for taking up the \*Adjournment Motion of Srijut Beliram Das to-day. Considering the state of the scheduled business for to-day and to-morrow I fix 3 P.M. to-day as the time for discussing the Adjournment Motion of Srijut Beliram Das.

### Consideration of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee for 1942-43

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Sir, I beg to move that the Assembly do proceed to consider the Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Appropriation Accounts for 1942-43, and that the Assembly do approve and vote the expenditure of Rs.34,32,184 as recommended by the Public Accounts Committee on the accounts for 1942-43.

The Public Accounts Committee examined the accounts and found that in six grants there were excess expenditure. The Committee examined the controlling officers and recommended that the excesses should be regularised by the vote of the Assembly.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Motion moved:

"That the Assembly do proceed to consider the Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Appropriation Accounts for 1942-43 and that the Assembly do approve and vote the expenditure of Rs.34,32,184 as recommended by the Public Accounts Committee on the accounts for 1942-43."

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : On a point of order, Sir. Can a demand for grant be moved in the way in which it has been done by the Hon'ble Finance Minister ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Yes, it can be done in this way. The hon' Member will remember that this is the form in which such a Motion is to be moved ; it had been done on previous occasions. The Hon'ble Finance Minister would only ask for the vote of the Assembly on the expenditure as recommended by the Public Accounts Committee and the procedure is that it should be voted upon by the Assembly on Motion moved in this way.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is one point I would like to raise. Will the Hon'ble Minister please refer to page 15 of Finance Accounts, 1942-43, and the Audit Report, 1943—Ways and Means Advances. It is just a small point that I want to raise. It occurs to me that by means of borrowing in this manner you will always have large sums of money outstanding, and much larger than need be if my suggestion is adopted. I would like to suggest that instead of borrowing in this way at the rate of 2 per cent. per annum, Government might well extend the period of duration of Treasury Bills and raise money in that way instead of by Ways and Means Advances. Let us take for instance the sum of Rs. 22 lakhs borrowed on December 7th, 1942. Repayment of the amount, I admit, commenced about a month afterwards but the point is that it was not completed until practically 2 months after the date of borrowing.

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\*"This Assembly do now adjourn for the purpose of discussing an urgent matter of public importance and of recent occurrence, viz., forcible and unauthorised occupation of lands set apart for grazing purposes by immigrants from Bengal and acts of lawlessness and breach of peace committed by the trespassers, without any check or hindrance by the authorities".



Dr. C. G. TERRELL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, referring to page 38 of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Appropriation Accounts, it is rather disturbing to see a comment emanating from the Audit Report to the effect 'that accounts at some places where distribution was done by Government officials were not kept in the proper way' and a further comment to the effect 'that it was still the case.' I feel sure, however, that in view of these references Government will have taken appropriate steps in the matter.

Mr. C. W. MORLEY: On page 156 under the "Grain Storage Scheme" we have a profit of Rs.10 lakhs odd. Would Government inform us what use has been made of this money?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Mr. Blennerhassett has asked whether we could not raise money by cheaper method of Treasury Bills. I think, the suggestion he has made will be examined by the Finance Department.

Dr. Terrell has referred to the remark that the accounts kept by the Government servants were not in proper order. We admit, Sir, that when the food purchase scheme was started the accounts were not in proper order because that was the beginning and the accounts were to a certain extent in a chaotic condition. But since then a great deal of improvement has been effected in the procedure and accounting of the Supply Department. We have appointed one very senior officer as the Deputy Director of Supply in-charge of accounts and a large number of inspecting accountants have been appointed. I think, since Mr. Marar took over charge there has been a considerable improvement in the account branch of the Supply Department.

Mr. Morley wants to know how the profit has been utilised. The profit has not yet been utilised. The business is still continuing and it is kept in the suspense account at present.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Question is:

"That the Assembly do approve and vote the expenditure of Rs.34,32,184 as recommended by the Public Accounts Committee on the accounts for 1942-43".

The Question was adopted.

#### Government decision about movement of oranges

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Sir, the Hon'ble Premier did not communicate the decision about the movement of oranges as he promised to do. Sir, I seek your permission to ask the Hon'ble Premier about that now.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: As promised, I immediately looked into the file at great personal inconvenience and passed orders that Mr. Marar, Supply Secretary, should at once contact with Mr. Puri, Deputy Commissioner and if the statement of facts made here is correct, *i. e.*, if there be a large surplus both at Latu and Chattak, then suitable people like previous dealers should be allowed to export the surplus oranges outside those areas. Mr. Marar contacted with Mr. Puri and the latter said that although he does not agree with the statement that there is a large surplus, there is some surplus which he has already allowed to be exported on the proviso that the military supply from Latu area is not jeopardised.

#### Motion re the Scheme for procurement and distribution of consumer goods

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I beg, Sir, to move that the †Scheme for the procurement and distribution of consumer goods as placed before the House be approved.

†See Appendix "D"



The Government scheme for distribution of consumer goods has been placed before each hon. Member. If they have gone through it, they would find how Government want to assist the traders in procuring the goods at controlled rates and securing transport for bringing them into the Province. Government's idea is not so much to interfere with the trader nor with the channel of trade but to help to secure the goods, some of which have become non-existent in the Assam market. This Scheme came into operation as the Government of India had published their Ordinance regarding the control of consumer goods. Assam with Bengal, Bihar and Orissa form the Eastern Zone, with a Government official in the person of Mr. Sobhan, I.P., as Deputy Controller General of consumer goods. He came to the Province and insisted that as he is an over-worked officer and as he has to travel in four provinces, it will not be possible for him to give his entire attention to Assam's needs and requirements, and for procuring the goods that are wanted by the people of Assam. It was at his suggestion that a partnership firm of two very big importers of consumer goods were appointed our procurement agents in Calcutta. The name and the terms of this partnership have been mentioned in the Scheme, and I need not reiterate them here. Originally our traders fought shy of utilising this firm, thinking that this was another means of adding to the cost of their goods. Therefore, Government themselves had to utilise their services, and bring in certain commodities for sale in the different districts of the Province. But laterly there has been a greater utilisation of the services of this firm—Civil Supply Agency, by the traders of Assam, who found that these people being in Calcutta, in the trade for a long time, were in a better position to know the market and fix the prices of goods. Moreover, the Regional Priority Committee informed us that it would not be possible to arrange transport for such traders, who may be sending a small consignment which would not fill a wagon, and that all the transport should be at the disposal of one permit holder—the Government agents, who had also been allotted space in the steamer services for bringing goods into Assam. While the Controller-General of consumer goods, Mr. G. C. Desai, I.C.S., whose headquarters are at Bombay and who was the principal officer of the Government of India's control scheme, came to Assam and discussed with us, both he and his Deputy, Mr. Sobhan, insisted upon the Assam Government that we should have a Government official in Calcutta who would be able to check the market prices, which are charged by the Civil Supply Agency, of goods that are bought on Government account or on account of the traders. They are of opinion that an officer who was in Assam for a long time, an officer who was accustomed to go through accounts kept either in English, Nagri or Bengali, would be a suitable Trade Agent for Assam.

We therefore appointed such an officer as our Trade Adviser about 3 months back, and this officer tried to secure certain goods for Assam, as he thought the stock of these goods was getting short even in the Calcutta market. The goods that he tried to supply Assam were woollen goods, blankets, utensils, agricultural implements like *daos* and *kudalis*, etc. As we discussed a few days ago, in reply to certain questions, I need not reiterate that in his zeal to furnish such consumer goods to the people of Assam, he was in a great haste to secure the goods, and in two cases his prices were much higher than those ruling in Calcutta. This matter has been brought to our notice only a week ago and we are still dealing with it. As a matter of fact, I asked his explanation why commodities which could be had at a lesser price were procured from certain firms by him who charged higher prices and whose *bona fides* are open to serious criticism. However, Government have checked the tendency of this officer to place orders without consulting the Government of Assam. He has been prohibited to place any further orders.

Now, as regards the distribution of these goods, those that come through the normal trade channel will be sold to the public in the usual method. There are certain goods which come under quota system to Government, and Government are trying to send these commodities to different parts of the Province for sale to the public. We were given by the Government of India a quota for 10,000 tins of Stafford Butter,



and we asked the Civil Supply Agency to buy and send it to the District Officers. The list of consumer goods is very long, as it contains all the drugs, all the oils that we use, soaps, toilet requisites, and everything that is necessary from umbrellas to hurricane lanterns used by our peasantry. All these, we are trying to procure. Although we placed an order for one lakh umbrellas, up till now about 13,000 have been procured in Calcutta and some of these have come to Assam. Every endeavour is being made to procure such goods of daily necessities of our peasantry and the public in general. But in spite of our best efforts, we could not secure the proper number of umbrellas for the simple reason that the steel ribs which go to the making of the umbrella are not manufactured in India, and therefore there is an acute shortage of umbrellas throughout India. The Government of India have induced many mills to produce water-proof cloth. I am told, Sir, that the Government of India are trying to interest big manufacturers to start manufacturing steel ribs also. If this materialises, we can have sufficiency of umbrellas. Similarly, we tried to get as many hurricane lanterns as we could. Up-till-now we have secured some thousands of them. Every endeavour is made by the Government and the Department of consumer goods with their Trade Adviser and procurement agents in Calcutta to secure such consumer goods as possible.

There is a great demand for sheet iron, sheet brass and bell-metal for their conversion into either implements or utensils for our domestic use. Arrangements have been made with the Government of India for release of certain quota of these articles for Assam. Our idea is to make utensils and instruments out of these metal sheets in some of the workshops both in the Assam Valley as well as the Surma Valley.

Though originally it was thought that the Supply Department will be able to look after this branch and to be generally in charge over the control, distribution and sale at a reasonable price to the civil population it was ultimately found that the Supply Department was very much overworked with the duties of procuring all food grains, rice and standard cloth, and therefore the charge over this branch of consumer goods has now been given to the Excise Department. The Government of India have placed in some important centres in Assam their own inspecting staff to see that Assam gets its proper quota of consumer goods and that they are sold at the controlled rates. I have got a personal letter from the Hon'ble the Commerce Member of the Government of India, stating that he wants to put in a Deputy Director for consumer goods in the Province. He is asking that a certain Assam Officer be relieved for this purpose. I am in touch with the Department concerned, but I have not been able to reply to the Hon'ble Commerce Member. So, Sir, in the scheme which we have provided, we have tried our level best to secure as much consumer goods for the Province of Assam as can be possible. We have also utilized the experienced Trade Agents at Calcutta as our procuring Agents who have vast knowledge in this business. We have also tried to see that whatever little it has been possible to receive is being properly distributed at controlled prices. I do hope that the hon. Members will approve of this scheme. There is an amendment from Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy and I hope, Sir, you will give me a right of reply when he moves the amendment.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Motion moved:

“That the Scheme for the procurement and distribution of consumer goods as placed before the House be approved.”

The hon. Members, I think, must have gone through the Scheme that has been placed before the House and must have also gone through the amendments which Mr. Karuna Sindhu Roy has tabled on it. I have gone through the Scheme and I have analysed it and I have found that it has been prepared in such a way as to make it difficult for hon. Members to understand what really the scheme is. Now it would appear that the Scheme for the procurement of consumer goods and for the distribution thereof has been formulated in such a way as to consist of several parts. It would have been better if this Scheme was formulated in a cut and dried way, specifically mentioning each part of the Scheme separately so that each part could form a question to be put to the House for its decision on its own merit. Now, the Motion is that the



Scheme be approved. This implies that this House has got the right to alter, add to and also to modify the Scheme in any way it would like to do. It appears from the Scheme as laid before the House that to implement it Government have adopted certain measures and steps, and that they have also achieved certain results. Analysing the Scheme it would further appear that firstly, Government want the approval of the House with regard to the appointment of the Agents and also with regard to the appointment of the Trade Adviser who have been functioning in Calcutta now. The Trade Adviser has got also a small office in Calcutta to carry on his work there. The approval of the House for the functions that have been allotted respectively to the Agents and the Trade Adviser is also being sought. Government also seek the approval of the House with regard to the procedure they want to adopt in the matter of the distribution of consumer goods. That would appear from the last paragraph of the Scheme. So with regard to all these matters the House has got the right, as I said, to alter, add to and also to modify the Scheme in any other way it would like to do. In the statement also Government have mentioned the remuneration that is paid to the Agents, and with regard to that also the House has to consider, whether the remuneration sanctioned is to be approved or not. So it is very difficult for me, as the Scheme has been formulated, to guide the House for a proper discussion of the Scheme and for securing its verdict on the various questions that stand mixed up, as I have just shown.

As I read the Amendments of Mr. Karuna Sindhu Roy, I find the Amendments also have been drawn up in the same way as the Government Scheme. Therefore, I am finding it very difficult how to guide the House, both in regard to the Scheme and the Amendments tabled.

\*Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Will it be better for you to split the Scheme into different items so that the House may get an opportunity to readjust the provision framed in each item, *e. g.*, appointment of Trade Agents and Trade Adviser, procurement by the Government on its own account, assistance to the private traders, the distribution of the articles, etc., in two separate parts, so that the hon. Members may be able to express their opinion on different points that are raised.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: May I know, Sir, how the finances of the Scheme come before the House? Is it proposed to bring forward a supplementary demand to meet the cost of the Trade Adviser *plus* any additional staff for the Excise Department to administer this new branch of service? Or are we asked to approve also the contingent expenditure of which we know nothing at the present stage?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Premier will indicate to the House some procedure with regard to the expenditure, to be adopted for securing the approval of the House in respect thereof.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Up till now no expenditure is involved. We levy a small cess on the consumer goods. The expenditure due to the establishment of the Trade Agents and Trade Adviser would be met from that source.

\*Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: May I know whether the Government have any authority to impose a tax without consulting the House?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It is a well-known principle of expenditure.

\*Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Will not that amount be credited to Government account and expenditure made from the Government account?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: This question of cess has been put before the House since 1942. In the rice procurement policy, we levied a cess of  $6\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. as explained a few minutes ago by my Hon'ble Colleague. This cess receipt forms a separate fund and is kept in suspense account. If the cess is able to meet the expenditure incurred, then there is no necessity for coming before the House for voting of supplies.



The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: These are matters which would come up in the course of discussion. I want to know how the Hon'ble Premier is going to help me in this matter. How am I to guide the House with regard to the different parts of the Scheme?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The scheme falls in three parts. One part is, there should be some Government machinery in the procurement centre and Calcutta being the closest market to us we have set up such a machinery. The next is as regards distribution here in the province, of goods that are brought in. That is made perfectly clear in the scheme that I have submitted Government goods consigned come in the name of Government officers—either Subdivisional Officers or Deputy Commissioners, as the case may be, who distribute them to selected, reputed and honest traders for sale in the market. In the last item, that these goods are to be sold at the controlled rates under the supervision of Government officers, I have also mentioned. The Excise Department is in charge of this duty and in addition to that, the Central Government themselves have kept a set of their staff for looking that the Control Ordinances are carried out in the Province. These are the three different parts which have been made plain in the scheme.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Now the difficulty about the amendments that may be tabled is not in what way they are to be tabled, but how to adjust them in the Scheme for the purpose of putting them to the vote of the House in relation to those parts of the scheme which they would seek to amend. Take for instance the Government procedure and machinery as laid down and described in the Scheme for the distribution of consumer goods. Amendments recommending a different procedure and an alternative machinery for distribution of consumer goods may be tabled. My difficulty in dealing with those amendments would arise from the fact that the different parts of the scheme dealing with different subject-matters have been stated in the Scheme in a mixed-up fashion, really in the form of a statement, and not in a cut and dried way as would show separately each part of the Scheme as a specific and definite question to be disposed of by the House, either with amendments or without amendments. So I must see if it is possible to do something to place before the House each single part of the Scheme as a distinct question on a distinct item of the Government plan for procurement and distribution of consumer goods, with a statement, if necessary, of what has been achieved by Government up till now on any particular item of the scheme.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Now, Sir, it remains for the House to approve the scheme or not *in toto*. In the scheme as it stands we have no opportunity of registering our verdict of giving expression of our opinion to a particular item of the scheme. The Hon'ble Premier has said that the scheme can be divided into three parts. First is about procurement. With regard to procurement it ought again to be divided into two sections, procurement by Government on its own account and procurement by the traders. On either of these two questions and also with regard to the question of distribution we should have the opportunity to register our verdict, separately.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I also see that the House is likely to get confused as to what are to be considered consumer goods and what are to be taken as sundry goods. The Hon'ble Premier has said that the list of consumer goods is very large. But in the scheme two different expressions, *viz.* "consumer goods" and "sundry goods" have been used without showing the distinction between these two kinds of goods. It is said that the consumer goods are to be procured directly from the manufacturers and importers on a provincial quota basis and other sundry goods are to be purchased in the open market in Calcutta. Therefore, the House is entitled to know what is meant by consumer goods and what is meant by sundry goods. Another difficult question is about the term "on provincial quota basis". That point has also not been explained to the House.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The "Provincial quota" means the quota that is granted by the Government of India to the provinces.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Sir, that is perhaps with regard to the articles ordered or imported by Government on its own account.



\*Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : We find that the scheme has not been formulated in a proper form— they have not stated what they are doing at present and what they propose to do in future. They have jumbled the facts altogether, Sir.

\*Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH : Will the Hon'ble Premier enlighten the House further by detailing the points that were suggested by the Hon'ble Speaker ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Yes, that will facilitate the business of the House; I think. I will then allow the amendments the hon. Members would like to table to the Scheme. After putting the amendments to the vote of the House I will put before the House the Scheme for procurement and distribution, as placed before the House, to be approved either as a whole or subject to the amendments that will be carried. But before doing that I would ask to know for which specific part of the Scheme the proposed amendments are directed.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Sir, may I request the Hon'ble Premier to redraft it according to the discussion that has already taken place and then come before the House on some future date ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : I can very well carry on with the Scheme without coming before the House. It is with the intention of getting further suggestion from the hon. Members, as representatives of the Province, that I have tabled this Motion, and during the discussion I would not object to any amendments whatsoever if they are to be incorporated in the Scheme, and after being incorporated there I would come forward if necessary on a later session with a cut-and-dry Scheme. Then it will be open to the hon. Members to vote on the specific issues. Just at the present moment only three branches of the Scheme are to be seen. There is no commitment on the financial issue whatsoever. We have to see whether we should not have some procurement machinery in various trade centres. Secondly, whether things brought should be distributed either through Government officers, as they are doing now, or whether, as my hon. Friend has just now suggested, these should not be done at all by Government, and the entire matter should be left to normal trade. And lastly, we must have an organization here in the Province to see that whatever goods are brought are sold at controlled rates and that someone should be in-charge in this respect. These are the three separate items on which discussion may proceed and any number of amendments can be brought or considered and if I am in a position to come to a decision that each and every one of the amendments can be entertained I will at once do it ; if not all, at least, some of them could be entertained. You suggest, Sir, that I should come with a cut-and-dry Scheme. That can be done only in March next and as a result I will go without any advice from the hon. Members of this House who would not take this opportunity or are not in a position to give me their opinion on the present scheme. In that case, all I can do is to withdraw this Motion and carry on without any suggestion from the individual members.

Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, whether for giving advice or for the determination on a particular issue the matters must be presented before the House in a specific form so that advice on that particular issue can be given. At present the discussion must in the very nature of things be digressive and possibly vague. Therefore it is better, as has been suggested by the Hon'ble Speaker, that we should have certain specific subjects over which the Hon'ble Premier will exercise his discretion and modify them in the manner he would like best.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER : Mr. Speaker, Sir, would it be possible for the Hon'ble Premier to split the Motion into three parts and for you to allot 20 minutes for each part instead of going through the whole business of moving amendments which will be very clumsy. The Hon'ble Premier said that he is prepared to



consider the suggestions and those suggestions may be taken as equivalent to amendments. I therefore suggest that 20 minutes may be allotted for each part and the whole Motion will be disposed of in just over an hour.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: What I would think is this. From what has been said by the Hon'ble Premier it appears that the business can be managed if the hon. Members will table amendments in the nature of distinct proposals. Now, if any amendment containing a definite proposal is carried then Government will take it to be modifying the Scheme in that respect. So, hon. Members may go on tabling amendments giving their proposals on the three parts of the scheme as placed before the House and if amendments are carried then the Government will judge how to adjust those amendments into the Scheme and to ascertain which part of the Scheme stands modified by the vote of the House.

Mr. Whittaker has suggested that in the discussion of the Scheme 20 minutes' time is to be given to each part. That suggestion is apparently based on the assumption that this business will have to be finished within an hour. Certainly it would facilitate the business if the House desire to finish the discussion within an hour. I wish to know how many amendments are going to be tabled. Mr. Karuna Sindhu Roy has tabled an amendment but his amendment has been worded in such a way that may make it difficult for the House to follow it. So I would ask the hon. Members to give their distinct proposals as distinct amendments to the Scheme. Take for instance, if the hon. Members do not like that the agency should be retained or they want that a Trade Adviser is to be appointed, then they may table amendments to that effect. In this way distinct proposals may be put forward as distinct amendments, to alter, add to or modify the entire Scheme.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, is there any necessity for going through all the technical procedure when it has been said by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, that a favour has been done to the hon. Members by putting it for their votes? It seems the Hon'ble Premier might as well afford to withdraw this Scheme and get on without the consent of this House as is done in other important questions, like food-grains procurement, etc. So I think we should not go through all these technical procedure. If the Hon'ble Premier wants to hear our advice we can give our informal advice without tabling any amendment and he can look to them at a leisurely hour.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then am I to take it that the House is not to take advantage of the right which has been given to it by placing the Scheme before the House?

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I want to know whether Mr. Aditya is speaking seriously or is bantering with Government.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I take it that my Friend is speaking in a serious mood which means that without taking the trouble of tabling amendments, hon. Members will put forward formal suggestions and I will take them as amendments if these are acceptable to the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then I think it would not be necessary for me also to put the Motion to the vote of the House. Hon'ble Premier has given a suggestion and the hon. Members have given their suggestions and the Government will consider what suggestions are to be accepted or what are to be rejected.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Sir, I think it is an impossible position. We cannot agree to what has been said by Mr. Aditya and we cannot refrain from giving amendments and votes thereon.

Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: I am afraid, Sir, Mr. Aditya has been assuming that our discussions will be of no avail and that things will be left entirely to the Hon'ble Premier. We do not yet know the financial implication of the whole thing and even if an anna is to be written on the books of account maintained by Government on this subject, the House must have a right to discuss it. I therefore think, Sir, that the House should have perfect right to discuss the matter and in that view of the matter I think that the suggestion that has been kindly thrown out by the Hon'ble Premier is a proper one.



The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : If the hon. Members want they may accept my suggestion and they can table Amendments on the floor of the House and the Hon'ble Premier is quite agreeable to that procedure, I think.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : When shall we move our Amendments, Sir ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Just at 2 P.M. when the matter will be taken up again. Hon. Members are given one hour's time.

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

(After lunch)

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy tabled some Amendments yesterday. Am I to take it that the Amendments which he has tabled today supersede those submitted yesterday ?

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY : The Amendments submitted to-day will be moved, and not those submitted by me yesterday, Sir.

I beg, Sir, to move that the Scheme for the procurement and distribution of consumer goods be amended as follows :

#### *Procurement Machinery*

Both the Trade Adviser and the Government Agents, Messrs. Civil Supply Agency be replaced with a Trade Commissioner with necessary staffs under the Provincial Civil Supply Department to fulfil the tasks of the both as narrated in paragraph 2 of the Motion. It will be one of the main duties of this officer to give utmost facility to the *bona fide* traders of the Province in procurement of Consumer goods and thus to try to keep the normal trade channel intact as far as possible.

#### *Distribution Scheme*

In the scheme of distribution preference should be given to the consumers' co-operative stores and other approved dealers. In between the Government agency for procurement and the actual consumers the middlemanship shall be curtailed to the minimum. The goods shall be distributed on ration basis.

#### *Vigilance over procurement and distribution*

1. A Committee of 9 Members be set up with Hon'ble Premier, the Secretary, Civil Supply Department and 7 other Members from this House to be elected forthwith, on the basis of proportional representation, for monthly review and check-up of the whole process of procurement and distribution of consumers' goods. This Committee may tender advice from time to time to the Government on all matters relating to procurement and distribution of all consumer goods, which will be binding on the Government.

2. For fighting black market, profiteering and corruption in the trade of consumer goods the effective help of public bodies, such as Food Committees and Consumers' Committees composed of all sections of the people of the localities shall be taken.

The whole Scheme is vague and hardly anything can be made out of it. The entire Motion is a fraud on the part of Government to hoodwink the House and get approval of their actions and carry it forward in the future. Sir, though it is titled "Scheme for distribution of consumer goods", there is no scheme whatsoever placed before the House towards that. What are we to give approval to ?

My Amendments are a humble attempt to criticise the Scheme both for procurement and distribution. What these Amendments aim at is to cut out duplication in procurement in Calcutta and make it less expensive and more efficient. It aims at giving more scope to private Traders of the Province to carry on trade on consumer goods towards which the Provincial Government should help to the utmost.



Sir, the second part of the Amendment is an attempt to present a comprehensive scheme for distribution of consumer goods with the help of consumers themselves and the honest traders. It aims at preventing black market as far as possible. Sir, to prevent black market, the co-operation of the Government with the people is vitally necessary and this Amendment is meant for that.

Sir, the third part of the Amendment is conceived to keep a constant vigilance on the process of procurement and distribution through a popular committee elected by the Hon'ble House. In such a committee the services and co-operation of the Congress Party may also be obtained. It will save the Government from much of the errors and public criticism and will best serve the interests of the people. It is not meant to duplicate or substitute the Economic Advisory Board. It is meant for a limited purpose to keep a constant control and vigilance on the procurement and distribution of consumer goods only. I shall now bring before the House certain allegations against the Trade Adviser which I obtained from the Assam Chamber of Commerce.

From the start, the Trade Adviser bought in the Calcutta market a fairly large quantity of ropes, cocoanut hair oil (of some maker not generally known among the trade and public), washing soaps (of very inferior quality, not at all suitable for washing purposes, which many of the traders, when offered, refused to buy from the Government), shoe polish (also of some maker not known to the trade and not generally in demand) etc., etc. and sent for distribution in Assam. It is necessary to ask the Government (1) what considerations guided the Government Trade Adviser to select the particular item of unknown quality, also at what price, (2) why the merchant for whom such articles were purchased were not consulted before buying such unknown brands, (3) why the Government Soap Factory at Gauhati, which is manufacturing and supplying a much superior quality of soap was not asked first if they can supply the required soap for the Assam merchants, (4) why the Government Soap Expert was not consulted before selecting such rotten soap, buying same at Government money (wasting) and sending to Assam, (5) why the Government Soap Expert, who also teaches the manufacture of toilet products (including manufacture of cocoa ut hair oil, etc.) was not asked if he or any of his trained students in different parts of Assam, or any existing manufacturing firm in Assam, could supply the requirements of Assam merchants in the above line, which would help such industries to thrive in the Province?

Some of the raw materials required for soap manufacture, like caustic soda and oils, being under Government, the same cannot be procured by any of the persons who had taken training from the Soap Instructor of Government, unless Assam Government, recommends to the authorities concerned at New Delhi and at Calcutta, for release of such raw materials. So far as our information goes, the Government had rendered no help (rather refused) to some of the trained students in Assam who opened small soap factories but are handicapped for want of the raw materials, and approached the department concerned, for the necessary recommendation, whereas a Punjabi firm of soap manufacturers (Malik Soap Factory) at Gauhati, has been granted permit for use of much larger quantity of caustic soda and oils than they actually require for use of their manufacture of soap and has been selling the surplus at black market prices, sending regularly a fairly large quantity of the same to the Punjab.

This sort of scandal must be investigated. There is a firm of manufacturers (Stadco Laboratories) of Toilet products, including cocoanut hair oil, right in Shillong, whose work is handicapped for want of the controlled raw materials. The Government neither asked the manufacturers if they can supply the requirements of Assam of such articles, nor have they helped them in any way to procure any of the raw materials they require urgently for carrying on their manufacturing business, in the medicinal line also, which has seriously handicapped them in supplying the requirements of Hospitals, Dispensaries, private doctors and pharmacies all over Assam, which fact is known to the Government.

With these words, Sir, I move my Motion.



The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Mr. Chaudhuri will move his Amendment now.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move: "That this Scheme be operative only with regard to husbandry implements, building materials, brass and bell metal sheets."

My object in moving this Motion is that, Sir, it is no business of the Government to bother their head about the supply of luxuries. In these hard days we consider that procurement of hair oil as well as toilet soaps, face creams, powders, etc., and other things is unnecessary and of little value to our poor people. On the other hand, if we concentrate our attention to the husbandry implements, of which there is a great demand, building materials, such as corrugated iron sheets, etc., brass and bell metal sheets, our peasantry will be greatly benefited. I lay particular stress on brass and bell metal sheets, because our indigenous workmen also require these materials for their trade. I think, Sir, my Amendment will be accepted by the House as my intention is that we must intensify supply of these necessary articles.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the following Amendment:

"(i) The services of Messrs. Civil Supply Agency of 72, Canning Street, Calcutta; be dispensed with with effect from the 1st December, 1944 and the function of the said Messrs Civil Supply Agency as stated in the Scheme be allotted to the Trade Adviser appointed in Calcutta.

(ii) The Trade Adviser be allowed to have an office in Calcutta with a reasonable staff necessary for his assistance for the discharge of the duties allotted to him.

(iii) That Subdivisional Committees should be formed with officials and non-officials in each Subdivision and also District Committees consisting of both officials and non-officials in each District. The Subdivisional Committees will inform their requirements to the District Committees concerned who will inform the Trade Adviser accordingly and when articles are received they will be distributed to the Subdivisional Committees by the District Committees. The centres, quota and traders should be selected by the District Committees in consultation with the Subdivisional Committees. The supervision work should be entrusted to the Supply Department which should be provided with necessary additional staff."

Sir, as it was rightly pointed out by you, it is very difficult on our part to take part in the debate when we really do not understand what is really meant here in the Scheme by the terms the "consumer goods" and the "sundry goods". From the dictionary meaning it will be found that "consumer goods" are so very extensive that they may cover even food-stuff that we consume. Sir, when the food-grain purchasing scheme has been passed by this House, and there is a separate scheme, I think we can safely omit those commodities and include the rest that have not been included there.

Sir, at the beginning, it will be found in the Scheme that Government have been noticing for a long time the steady deterioration in the flow of consumer goods into Assam. Various control orders, difficulty in procurement and trouble in getting transport, etc., all contributed to these difficulties in the way of normal trade functioning. To solve these difficulties Government adopted a scheme during the month of May last. But, Sir, if you compare the present activities of the Government as stated in the Scheme and the activities that will be acted upon in the future you will find on page 2, it runs like this:—

"It is Government's intention to leave these things to normal trade which they will assist, confining their purchases only to articles like iron and steel, electric bulbs, etc." They are quite contrary. Iron and steel and the electric bulbs are the two things which have been mentioned definitely. Sir, what was the intention of the Government when this scheme was adopted. The scheme falls under the following heads, as stated in the Scheme.



It runs as follows :—

- “(i) Assistance to traders in procuring goods at controlled rates and transporting them ;
- (ii) Procurement and transport of consumer goods directly from the importers and the manufacturers on a provincial quota basis ;
- (iii) Procurement from the open markets in Calcutta or elsewhere of sundry goods at favourable prices and their transport into Assam.
- (iv) Controlled distribution of consumer goods within the Province.”

Now, Sir, if we look at the last sentence of the first page of this Scheme, we find it runs as follows : “The Agents have been precluded from doing any purchase operations for traders as this would lead to complaints from unsuccessful traders who may approach them.” Now it is quite evident that the idea which prompted Government to adopt this Scheme has been practically frustrated by this. What are the functions of the trade agents ? It is stated in the Scheme that—“(1) they will store and despatch goods procured by traders and left in their custody ; (2) they will take over and forward quotas of various goods allotted to this Province, by importers and producers and they should get a commission of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.” But what was the former idea, Sir ? It was that this agency will help the traders of this Province in procuring consumer goods. Now we find that our traders have to procure the goods for themselves. The only function that has been entrusted to this agency, as will be found in the scheme itself, is that they will act as this Government’s forwarding agent and also as the forwarding agent of all other private traders. Sir, we also find that there is a Trade Adviser who has got his office in Calcutta. It has, of course, been said that he has got a small office there. Let him have a few more helping hands so that he can easily do the work of forwarding Government’s goods which will be received by this Government from the Central Government according to the allotment made to this Province and help the private traders in all possible ways. Now, Sir, as I have already stated and as has been stated in the scheme as well, though the function of the said Civil Supply Agency was of some importance at the beginning, it is now practically of no use to the Province. As regards distribution, I think, if the Supply Department is provided with necessary staff, it will be better for this Government as also for the consumers. As we find in the scheme, Government want to employ Inspectors of consumer goods ; so they are going to appoint a few new hands. If these new hands can be given to the Supply Department, I think, the work may be done by them though not satisfactorily but still better than the Excise Department.

As regards the selection of traders and centres and so far as the quota is concerned for a particular Subdivision, all these should be left to the District Committee which should be a representative one consisting of both officials and non-officials like the present Food Committees.

Lastly, Sir, if I remember aright, the Hon’ble Premier said that Government was indenting *dao*, sickle, hoe and other agricultural implements. But, I think, as suggested by Mr. Chaudhuri, if iron is indented like bell-metal and other things, our blacksmiths in the Province who are now sitting practically idle for want of iron and steel will also be benefited. Sir, I hope the Hon’ble Prime Minister will kindly give due consideration to my suggestions and will accept my Amendments.

**Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAJIN :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move : “That the post of the Trade Adviser in the Scheme for procurement and distribution of consumer goods be abolished.”

Sir, much that has been laid before the House in the Scheme for procurement and distribution of consumer goods commends itself to me. It is only with regard to one aspect of the Scheme that my Amendment wants to lay emphasis on. It is with regard to the procurement part of the Scheme. With regard to this, I think, the Civil Supply Agency that is now functioning in Calcutta is quite competent to work



the procurement part of the entire Scheme and therefore I feel that the appointment of the Trade Adviser is entirely unnecessary. Sir, this post has been in existence for the past 4 or 5 months and the present incumbent has not been able to justify his existence. On the other hand, we found from the facts that have been elicited in answer to a Question asked by my hon. Friend Mr. Kamini Kumar Sen the other day, that certain things have cropped up which have become a public scandal already. Sir, all this we have got at a cost of nearly Rs. 30,000 for the expenses of his office and his pay. We have got other procurement agencies. For instance, we have got Government procurement agency for importation of food-stuffs and I believe there are other procurement agencies for textile supply and so on. If we can manage procurement in the matter of imported food-stuffs and cloth supply, I don't see why we cannot manage in the matter of consumer goods also. So, Sir, I insist that the post of Trade Adviser be abolished and I hope this proposal of mine will commend itself to the Government and also to this Hon'ble House.

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: Sir, I beg to move the following Amendment on the Motion of the Hon'ble Premier, regarding the procurement of consumer goods.

"That selection of the Agent at Calcutta for procurement, storage and transport, etc., for the Government of Assam be made by a Committee consisting of the Hon'ble Premier, and 4 other Members of this House elected for the purpose. Local enterprises should always have preference and the authority of the present agents be withdrawn but that they should be given the option of applying for the agency."

Sir, the necessity for maintaining an agency for procurement, storage and distribution of consumer goods for the Province of Assam is recognised by us all owing to the present difficulty of transport. The agency, as stated by the Hon'ble Premier in his Motion, that is functioning is, so far as Assam is concerned, a dark horse; I have some experience of the performances of this agency. This agency sent a certain amount of washing soap to Dibrugarh, and a large amount of the soap was not at all good and there is no demand for it. As a matter of fact, there is a fear that Government will lose a large sum of money on account of commission to be granted to this agency besides the capital invested for its purchase.

Sir, if a Committee, as suggested in my Amendment is elected, that body will have the opportunity of examining the rates given by the various applicants, and it will also be able to consider the selection of the candidate after taking into consideration our local needs. If the selection of the agency is entrusted to a committee, room for corruption will be eliminated. With these few words, Sir, I beg to commend my Amendment for the acceptance of the House.

Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move:

(1) That in paragraph 2 of the scheme delete the sentence beginning from "The Agents selected.....general traders" and add "The Agents will be appointed from among the *bonafide* merchants of Assam who have to keep an office in Calcutta";

(2) Delete the sentences beginning from "For the first two services..... whether for traders or for the Government" and insert "They will get a flat rate of commission of Rs. 4 per cent. on all the goods handled by them";

(3) And delete the sentence beginning from "But to assist..... Bengal Government authorities" and add "and the Agent shall engage such trade Adviser or expert and whom they think fit and proper after due consultation with the Government";

(4) In paragraph 4 delete the first sentence and insert "In the matter of distribution the Deputy Commissioner with the advice of the local Food Advisory Committee assisted by the Inspectors of consumer goods will be responsible and will see that such goods are sold through the *bonafide* dealers".



Sir, the Civil Supply Agency consists of two firms ; this is illegal, there cannot be a firm consisting of two firms. They are also strangers to Assam ; they do not know the needs of Assam. There is a general grievance about the goods supplied by them. I have heard from Messrs. Kalicharan Booksellers, a big firm of Gauhati, that the goods supplied to them were rotten and there was no demand for them.

Sir, there are many merchants in Assam with their branch offices in Calcutta. Some of them may combine into a firm which may be approved by Government. They will know the conditions of Assam better, and if they supply rotten goods or goods not in demand, these may be returned to them. But, Sir, we cannot do anything now. I have also heard from Messrs. Dhanuka Mills of Gauhati that they placed an order for goods worth Rs. 4,000 about four months ago, but the goods have not been booked as yet.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : What commodity ?

Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN : Groundnuts, Sir. I have got several letters in my pocket from merchants, who do not like their names to be mentioned, that they deposited Rs. 5,000 about four months ago, but have not received any goods yet. So, Sir, I feel that this Civil Supply Agency should be disbanded and a new Agency, if at all required, should be appointed in its place.

I have also suggested that the Trade Adviser should not be appointed by Government. He should be appointed by the Company, if at all required by them. They will pay him. I have suggested an increased commission of 4 per cent. ; there will be a difference of 14 annas, but we will save Rs. 900 per month apart from the office expenditure of the Trade Adviser.

Sir, some of my Friends have suggested that the consumer goods should be limited to some articles. My suggestion is that we should not put any limit in deciding our requirements.

As regards distribution, we have seen that the Excise Department is not doing well in the matter. There is corruption everywhere. I have heard that a Deputy Commissioner entrusted an Excise Officer to select the names of dealers, and the names of some *bonafide* dealers were not included in the list. So, I suggest that the Deputy Commissioner assisted by the Food Advisory Committee should be responsible for the distribution of these goods.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I am now placing the Amendments before the House.

Amendments moved :—

Amendment of Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy :—

Procurement Machinery

"1. Both the Trade Adviser and the Government Agents, Messrs. Civil Supply Agency be replaced with a Trade Commissioner with necessary staff under the Provincial Civil Supply Department to fulfil the task of the both as narrated in paragraph 2 of the Motion. It will be one of the main duties of this officer to give the utmost facility to the *bonafide* traders of the Province in procurement of consumer goods and thus try to keep the normal trade channel in tact as far as possible.

### Distribution Scheme

"In the scheme of distribution preference should be given to the consumers' co-operative stores and other approved dealers. In between the Government agency for procurement and the actual consumers the middlemanship shall be curtailed to the minimum. The goods shall be distributed on ration basis."

### Vigilance over procurement and distribution

(1) "A Committee of 9 Members be set up with Hon'ble Premier, the Secretary, Civil Supply Department and 7 other Members from this House to be elected forthwith, on the basis of proportional representation, for monthly review and check-up



of the whole process of procurement and distribution of consumer goods. This Committee may tender advice from time to time to the Government on all matters relating to procurement and distribution of all consumer goods, which will be binding on the Government.

(2) For fighting blackmarket, profiteering and corruption in the trade of consumer goods the effective help of public bodies, such as Food Committees and Consumers' Committees composed of all sections of the people of the localities shall be taken.

Then comes the Amendment of Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri:

Amendment moved :

"That the Scheme be operative only with regard to husbandry implements, building materials, brass and bell-metal sheets."

Then comes the Amendments of Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee :

Amendments moved :

"1. The services of Messrs. Civil Supply Agency of 72, Canning Street, Calcutta be dispensed with with effect from the 1st December, 1944 and the function of the said Messrs. Civil Supply Agency as stated in the Scheme be allotted to the Trade Adviser appointed in Calcutta.

2. The Trade Adviser be allowed to have an office in Calcutta with reasonable staff necessary for his assistance for the discharge of the duties allotted to him.

3. Subdivisional Committees should be formed with official and non-official in each Subdivision and also District Committees consisting of both official and non-official in each District. The Subdivisional Committees will inform their requirements to the District Committees concerned who will inform the Trade Adviser accordingly and when articles are received they will be distributed to the Subdivisional Committees by the District Committees. The centres, quota and traders should be selected by the District Committees in consultation with the Subdivisional Committees. The supervision work should be entrusted to the Supply Department which should be provided with necessary additional staff."

Then comes the Amendment of Srijut Surendra Nath Buragohain :

Amendment moved :

"That the post of the Trade Adviser in the Scheme for the procurement and distribution of consumer goods be abolished."

Then comes the Amendment of Srijut Lakshesvar Borooah :

Amendment moved :

"That selection of the agent at Calcutta for procurement, storage and transport, etc., for Government of Assam be made by a Committee consisting of Hon'ble the Premier, and 4 other Members of this House elected for the purpose. Local enterprises should always have preference and that authority of the present agents be withdrawn but that they should be given the option of applying for the agency."

Then comes the Amendment of Mr. Kedarnal Brahmin :

Amendments moved :

"That in paragraph 2 of the Scheme, delete the sentence beginning from "The Agents selected.....general traders" and add "The Agents will be appointed from among the *bonafide* merchants of Assam who have to keep an office in Calcutta."

Delete the sentences beginning from "For the first two services..... whether for traders or for the Government" and insert "They will get a flat rate of commission of Rs. 4 per cent. on all the goods handled by them."

And delete the sentence beginning from "But to assist.....Bengal Government authorities" and add "and the Agent shall engage such trade Adviser or expert and whom they think fit and proper after due consultation with the Government".

In paragraph 4 delete the first sentence and insert "In the matter of distribution the Deputy Commissioner with the advice of the local Food Advisory Committee assisted by the Inspectors of consumers' goods will be responsible and will see that such goods are sold through the *bonafide* dealers."

These are all the Amendments. Now a debate will proceed.



Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Amendment moved by my Friend Mr. Buragohain. I am at one with him in feeling that this post could well be abolished. A procurement agency in Calcutta is quite unnecessary. I say that because it is within ordinary knowledge that there are traders outside this Province, who have, in fact, refused the trade with Government agents in this Province, and my feeling is that if a Government agency for the purpose of trading in this Province, at Calcutta is established, it will stultify rather than improve the procurement of consumer goods. At the present juncture nothing can be said against all possible steps being taken to encourage the flow of consumer goods into the Province at the present moment.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Does the hon. Member want to retain the services of the Civil Supply Agency?

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: I am coming to that. My point is this: When ordinary trade channels are allowed to function in Calcutta, there is room for only one agent who shall be entrusted with the office of obtaining transport for such goods as may be procured by normal traders in this Province. If you call him a Trade Agent or what you will, I do not mind as long as his functions are confined only to the question of transport and obtaining necessary transport to move consumer goods into the Province. There can be nothing said against the desirability of the increase of supply of consumer goods into the Province at the present moment, because, apart from many other considerations, we know there are certain elements in the Province at the moment whose spending powers are adding enormously to inflation and need mopping up. The import of consumer goods is one of the ways of doing it. Those goods are not confined to one line of goods, e.g., building materials or articles of luxury (or whatever else) I do not mind. But personally I should like to see as wide a range as possible of consumer goods brought into the Province. But I should certainly include luxuries amongst them.

Another aspect of the case is this that at the present time the morale of the people needs a boost. I was very much struck while visiting various sites of recent pujahs held in this Province to notice the pathetic absence of trinkets and bangles, little knick-knacks that people buy for their children at that time. I believe, Sir, if they are brought into the Province, it will do a lot of good.

There are various suggestions made with regard to establishing committees. Some people seem to imagine that the establishment of a committee is at once a panacea for all the ills. I do not think there is room in this organisation for committees.

There is one aspect of the case which I suggest, Government would well give its attention to. That is this: having procured its goods in Calcutta by agents other than Government agents, the Booking agent will see those goods on the train. I suggest that Government might see to it that the goods arrive safely at their destination. That is one way in which Government could really function usefully. At the moment pilferage still continues on the railways. Finally, Sir, at the end of the Hon'ble Premier's proposal—in the last paragraph—it is proposed to entrust the Excise Department staff with the duty of distribution of consumers' goods district by district in the Province. Well, Sir, there is a suggestion in that paragraph that this Department should be suitably reinforced. I think there is room for more than reinforcement in that Department, more particularly if it is to be entrusted with an important duty of this sort. I cite as a case to support my argument that they should be entrusted with very little, a notification which appeared in the *Assam Gazette* of the 26th July last. It said that control should be exercised, and the instruction was issued by the Commissioner of Excise, Assam. Control should be exercised over the sale of clocks, watches, torch lights, torch-light batteries, fountain-pens, eversharp-pens, pencils and such other important goods the supply of which is very limited. You will note, Sir, that in that notification there is no direction, no procedure, and no indication whether the control is one of supply, rationing or price. And finally, Sir, you will notice the hallmark of



inefficiency, that phrase "such other important goods", and I suggest that the Department which is guilty of sending out that notification should not be entrusted with any duty within the purview of this Scheme.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Sir, first of all we must thank the Hon'ble Premier for the courtesy he has shown in asking for advice of the House which it seems he might have very well avoided. Any way, Sir, the Scheme is vague and is not complete. The whole question of procurement of consumers' goods has been stated in such a way that it is indeed very difficult for us to confine ourselves to any specific issues and I for one could not find out any proper Amendment that I could put forward to this Motion. Already you have observed rightly, Sir, there are so many complications in it. So I will like to summarise our point of view with regard to this matter. Our view is that the procurement of consumers' goods should be limited to goods which are essentially necessary for the agricultural people. Otherwise, we know, whatever Government touches, as if with the wand of magicians, the things vanish from the market. We have bitter experience of Government handling the Trade Machinery. We are fully aware of the difficulties of the agriculturist in getting ordinary household materials. Therefore, we should desire that the normal trade channel should be maintained as far as possible and at the same time the essential commodities meant for the agriculturist should be distributed on the planned basis by the Government. So, the consumers' goods that are to be handled by Government should be limited to the primary needs of the agriculturist. Other of the primary needs of our peasants are also medicines and diet which are meant for the sick. My second point is that one of the two machineries now maintained in Calcutta should be dispensed with. We do not mind whether it is the Trade Adviser or it is the Civil Supply Agency, but only one should remain. I do not think there is any possibility of co-ordination between these two agencies. So to maintain both of them seems superfluous. If any trade agents are to be maintained in Calcutta, they should be appointed by Government on tender basis. The very method of giving contract to parties without inviting any tenders and without letting the public of Assam know anything about it, leaves room for suspicion. That is why we should submit to Government that if an agency is to be maintained, then they should invite tenders and if it is done, we are sure, the rate of commission which is now being offered to the Civil Supply Agency, could be much minimised. My impression is that such parties may be available from the people of Assam who would be readily agreeable to do the job at lesser cost. Sir, commission of Rs.3-2-0 per Rs.100 is not a trifling matter. Why should we pay such a price for securing transport only which is allotted already for Assam? Most of the consumers' goods now available in Calcutta are quoted by the suppliers by F.O.R., F.O.B. rates. Generally, Calcutta merchants take the trouble of arranging booking facilities. There are certain articles for which suppliers refuse to take the responsibility of arranging freight. For such goods there should be a certain agency in Calcutta which should do this job on behalf of the people of Assam. For such a purpose, namely, to distribute the allotted quota of transport, it is not worthwhile to pay Rs.3-2-0. Sir, formerly annas 8 per cent. was used to be charged for this business by the commission agents in Calcutta and in comparison, our present rate of commission is too high. In respect of this agency the people of our Province should get the first preference. When the supply of goods is thus restricted to essential commodities for the agriculturist, I think, one agency will be capable to handle the traffic from Calcutta. Again, as regards distribution in the villages, the Co-operative Societies should be commissioned as far as possible and in the absence of Co-operative Societies, the normal trade channel should be utilised under the control and supervision of an expert staff of Government. Here the Excise Department has been entrusted with the duties of supervising the distribution of consumer goods. In Bengal we have seen, in respect of various goods, officers have been taken from the trades concerned, and Chambers of Commerce have supplied many of the officers in different departments of Supply. Excise officers who are mainly busy detecting opium and liquor smuggling cases, are not supposed to know about the different varieties of consumer goods and the technique of their distribution,



testing of quality, etc. They are not supposed to know everything. Therefore, some people from various lines of trade should be taken so that they may effectively control and supervise the distribution of those goods. With these comments, Sir, I would leave this matter to the consideration of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order. Now, it is 3. P. M. and we are to take up the Adjournment Motion of Srijut Beliram Das.

### Adjournment Motion *re forcible occupation of Grazing Reserves by Immigrants from Bengal*

Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: With your permission, Sir, I am going to make an appeal to the Hon'ble Premier to consider this matter from the aspect that was put to him by me the other day in regard to the procedure of discussion. I am to-day putting this matter from the point of view of the matter of Motion of the House. What I now intend to say is that on account of the present policy of Government, a civil war has already been brought about in the Province and it is our desire, a strong desire, that this sort of thing should not continue any longer. Whatever the Government may think, we on our side, must do our best to avoid such a calamity to the country. I appeal that he will agree to a talk between the parties concerned before his policy is put into execution by the District officers.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I would like to tell the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition that the appeal he has just now made to the Hon'ble Leader of the House would not be in order at this stage. The Adjournment Motion has been timed to be moved at 3 P.M. Therefore the Motion must be moved now. In the course of the discussion the Hon'ble Leader of the House would certainly say what he has to say on the suggestion just thrown out by the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition. On hearing the Leader of the House, the hon. Member moving the Motion may decide if he would press his Motion or withdraw it.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: The House may not give leave to withdraw the Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: That would be quite immaterial, so far as the ultimate result is concerned.

Srijut BELIRAM DAS: I beg to move, Sir:

"That this Assembly do now adjourn for the purpose of discussing an urgent matter of public importance and of recent occurrence, *viz.*, forcible and unauthorised occupation of lands set apart for grazing purposes by immigrants from Bengal and acts of lawlessness and breach of peace committed by the trespassers, without any check or hindrance by the authorities."

The intention of bringing in this Adjournment Motion is to put a stop to the policy of Government of throwing open the grazing reserves for settlement with the immigrants from Bengal. This is the burning question of the day specially for the Assam Valley people. The present policy of the Government is leading the country to civil war and all sort of ill-will among the people. The immigrants have become desperate and they have been occupying all the grazing reserves right and left and thereby creating panic among the people specially in the Districts of Kamrup, Darrang and Nowgong. That the situation has been very tense and acute will be evident from the passage from Mr. Desai's Report which runs as follows.—

"The Assam Land and Revenue Regulation is, so far as the immigrant encroachers are concerned, virtually non-existent. The immigrants openly claim to have short-circuited the local staff and officers. With the publication of the Government Resolution on Land Settlement Policy of August last, Dewanias are said to have been busy and brought in men even from Kamrup and Goalpara. Every day new bamboo sheds and temporary huts are springing up in the reserves. I found that the immigrants absolutely ignored the local officers (from the Subdivisional Officer downwards), so much so that they did not even answer questions put to them. The few Nepali graziers and Assamese *Pamuas* finding no protection from anywhere give "dohai" in the name of the King-Emperor. To this, some of the thoughtless



among the immigrants are said to have replied that the immigrants themselves are the King. Verily, the cup of humiliation for the Assamese is full. They feel that the law is meant for them and not for the immigrants; that the Government which is the custodian and trustee of their interest has failed them. All sections of the local population are greatly perturbed and their talk exhibits deep-seated bitterness.

Let me examine the question of the professional grazing reserves in the Mangaldai Subdivision. Here the area of grazing reserves when first constituted has been vastly reduced due to erosion and other factors. The number of buffaloes besides suppressed ones is 9,152 and that of cows 14,198 according to the figures of 1942-43. This figure excludes the buffaloes and cows of neighbouring villages. Thus the area of grazing grounds actually available in the professional grazing reserves is thus far less than even a sixth of the actual requirements. The grass grazing fees is over Rs.33,000.

Before I came to this Assembly I went to see some of the grazing reserves of this Subdivision. I saw a group of reserves just near the Mangaldai town, viz., Baghpori, Karpori, Haripori, Missamari and Koreikhoa. There have been indiscriminate encroachments in these reserves.

The immigrants have occupied lands round these reserves and also in the middle, with the result that the graziers cannot graze their cattle in these reserves as the immigrants either maim the animals or impound them. There has been an assault case in this connection and the case is pending before the Mangaldai Court. The day I went there, there was another clash between the immigrants and the Assamese inhabitants at Charing Chapari. This case is also pending. During the last flood, the immigrants forcibly occupied lands round one of the *Khutis* of the Nepali graziers and being unable to remain there the graziers had to leave their hearths and homes and these Nepalee houses are in the occupation of the immigrants still now. Thus the situation in the Subdivision has been most acute and desperate. About these reserves there have been three eviction orders but evictions are not actually taking place.

Same is the case of the Tezpur Subdivision. It will be sufficient if I refer to a passage from Mr. Desai's report which runs as follows:

"The recent Government resolution regarding the Land Settlement Policy and paragraph 4 of their letter to the Commissioner which forms its pendant has, so to say, opened the flood-gate. The immigrants have during the last few days or weeks invaded reserve areas west of Suaguri, namely, Bhojmari, Kumaliã and Siporial. I myself saw new sheds—as yet unoccupied and untenanted—in the southern portion of Siporial. Not a soul was in the vicinity. I was told that they operate from a distant base in Suaguri, come in numbers, raise sheds and later begin to cultivate. The few graziers in the neighbourhood are incapable of doing anything apart from protesting and appealing to Local Officers. The Local Officers find their hands tied by Government orders and are unable to help. The immigrants do not listen to protests. The only alternative for the grazier is to shift himself bag and baggage. But where is he to go? What is to happen to his animals? How is public health and vitality, which so long depended on the supply of milk and milk produce by graziers, going to be maintained? How will cultivators get on without this important source of draught animals for the plough or the cart?"

Even the village grazing ground called Bandia Chapari has been opened out for the immigrants and the Tribal people who took settlement numbering about 60 families have been forcibly ousted by the immigrants and an arson case is pending in this connection.

In the Barpeta and Gauhati Subdivisions the professional grazing reserves have all been encroached upon with a few exceptions. In the southern half of the Barpeta Subdivision there have been cases of encroachments by immigrants for the last four or five years. These encroachments are going on increasing daily. In spite of graziers' complaints and the reports of the local Land Records staff and officers, no effective action against the encroachments has been taken. Evictions were at first resorted to in some places but were followed by a policy of indecision and inaction by Government. Generally speaking, the encroachers have been left undisturbed with the assurance that they would not be asked to vacate till lands are found elsewhere. Fulara is one of the biggest reserves of the southernmost corner in the Subdivision. The graziers from



Goalpara and Kamrup graze their buffaloes and cattle in this reserve. In winter, the number of buffaloes actually grazing in this reserve rises to about 5,000. Goalpara town gets its milk supply from this reserve. I have seen that about 300 immigrant families have encroached upon this reserve. The result has been that there has been scarcity of fodder and that the graziers have to remove their buffaloes elsewhere. The original area of reserve lands in Barpeta was 1,21,086 bighas but at present not even half the area remains as grazing reserves. Recently, there have been assault cases in the Pudca reserve in the Barpeta Subdivision also.

In the Gauhati Subdivision most of the reserves have been encroached upon. According to my information and personal enquiry, Bhangonmari, Lotoria, Dokania, Kurihamari, Makelipathar, Mandira, Naitara, and other reserves have also been encroached upon by the immigrants. Champupara and Phukhuripar reserves are situated near Tribal people and there has been indiscriminate encroachment in these reserves also. There has been encroachment upon reserve lands meant for the protection of the Samoria Satra thereby wounding the religious sentiment of the Hindus. In Dokania, Bhangonmari and Lotoria there have been cases of breach of the peace.

From all these it will appear, Sir, that people have lost all hopes of security at the hands of the present Government. And unless these encroachments are properly dealt with, the Assamese people will have to take shelter in hills and jungles.

In Nowgong, Laukhua Game reserve and Bhurbandha group of reserves are situated on high lands where graziers from different places can graze their cattle in flood time. At present there are about 1,200 buffaloes besides cows. The milk to the Tezpur town comes from these reserves. It will be great hardship on the parts of the graziers if these reserves are thrown open. Mr. Desai states as follows regarding these reserves. (Page 19):—"In shaping a course of action we must take into account certain fundamental considerations. It is desirable that professional grazing reserve areas should be in big blocks and not in small one—so as to reduce friction with cultivators as far as possible. Secondly, it must be remembered that reserves on the banks of the Brahmaputra, unprotected by hills, are continually subject to erosion and alluvion. Bhurbandha-Barghuli area adjoins the Brahmaputra and the Laukhua forest reserve (which harbours thousands of animals of graziers). Its existence should depend on that of Laukhua forest reserve (which has been separately dealt with at the end of this report.)"

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I very much dislike to intervene in the debate. But I find that my hon. Friend is reading from Mr. Desai's report. Will he enlighten us how he got it?

Srijut BELIRAM DAS: It was published in the paper—The *Assamiya*.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The *Assamiya* is a vernacular paper. Was the report published there?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The report has not been published by Government up till now. Is the hon. Member taking responsibility for it?

Srijut BELIRAM DAS: I have got a copy of Mr. Desai's report. Somebody sent it to me.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then, it is a serious matter. Somebody must have smuggled out the Report from Government office.

The hon. Member may proceed with his speech

Srijut BELIRAM DAS: That the grazing reserves of buffaloes and cattle play an important part in the life of men, is evident from the fact that (1) we get draught animals for both plough and cart, (2) milk and milk produce for our consumption and (3) this is a source of income to some persons in the Province. The Royal Commission on Agriculture makes the following observations in this connection:

"In no country of the world are cattle of more importance than they are in India. Milk, though important, is of secondary consideration. The primary function of the cattle is as draught animals for the plough or the cart; without them no cultivation would be possible nor produce grown be transported. Where stall feeding is little practised, the facilities for grazing are the principal consideration. It may be said that in nearly every part of India the common grazing grounds and all grasslands close to villages are



generally hopelessly overstocked. The custom that an animal, if not working, should find its own food in jungle when there is no fodder available on his holding, results in the cultivator being unwilling to make any unusual sacrifice for the well-being of his cattle."

Sir, let me turn to the standard of fodder required for buffaloes and cattle. According to Mr. Arbuthnot who enquired about the standard of fodder for buffaloes and cattle of Assam, in 1918, fixed ten bighas for one buffalo and five bighas for a cow. According to Forest Department, where there is rotation of feeding, the figure is twenty-one bighas and nine bighas for buffaloes and cattle respectively. But our Government, on the alleged advice of the livestock expert Mr. Woodford, have fixed a standard of five bighas for a buffalo and roughly one and a half bighas for a cow. But so far as we know, this Mr. Woodford is not a livestock expert and he lacks the veterinary degree to be an expert. But for his high connection he would have been nowhere in the Assam Civil List.

It will surprise you, Sir, to find that the same Government have published recently through their Publicity Department a leaflet or pamphlet entitled, "More milk from better cows" which runs as follows: "Tests have been made which make it clear that about seven bighas of common grass lands are required for a cow for a year. But if a good sort of grass is grown on these seven bighas of lands, it will be sufficient for six cows for a year." If seven bighas are required for one cow, at least fourteen bighas should be required for a buffalo, if we take the standard published in the Government pamphlet to be true.

Sir, in 1939-40 Government invited petitions from persons requiring lands for settlement in Assam. Thousands of petitions were submitted by the landless people of Assam with annas eight court-fee stamp. These petitions are still lying with the district offices. But Government abruptly abandoned this policy on the ground probably that if lands are settled on these petitions with the Assamese people, there would be no room for immigrants in Assam.

Sir, this Government kept us quite ignorant of the fact that there was something going on with the Government of Bengal regarding opening out of grazing lands and providing lands for the immigrants. It is from the communiqué of the Government of Bengal of 30th October, which I read in the House the other day, that we could learn about what was going on. I think, it is for this reason that Sir Nazimuddin and Sir Firozkhan Noon visited the capital of Assam.

Sir, too much has been said by this Government about Central Government asking Assam to settle lands with immigrants and outsiders. But I am definite that the Central Government have not asked this Government to settle lands with outsiders by dereverting the grazing grounds. Sir, according to Government of India Act, we cannot prohibit persons coming to Assam, but it is quite certain that we can prohibit settlement of lands with the outsiders when we ourselves require them. To provide lands to the Bengal immigrants is the responsibility of the Government of Bengal. The Government of Assam is not responsible for them. The primary duty of the Government of Assam is to look to the welfare of the people of the Province.

That there is no sufficient land for settlement with outsiders will be evident from the communiqué issued by the Government of Assam on 14th March 1942—

"One thing is plain beyond doubt and that is that, although it is not possible to stop immigration into the Province, there is not enough waste land fit for settlement to accommodate all those who are in search of land, without seriously prejudicing the interest, not only of the indigenous people but also of those who have already come in from Bengal and settled in the last twenty or thirty years, and that consideration must condition any arrangements that are made for settling land."

Sir, the Resolution of the 24th August 1943 of this Government and the letter of the Revenue Secretary to the Commissioner of Divisions, specially paragraphs 4 and 5, are actually invitations to the immigrants to encroach upon grazing reserves.

Sir, I shall not take much time of the House, as I have already taken much time. With these words, Sir, I commend my Motion for the acceptance of the House.



The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Motion moved :  
 "This Assembly do now adjourn for the purpose of discussing an urgent matter of public importance and of recent occurrence, *viz.*, forcible and unauthorised occupation of lands set apart for grazing purposes by immigrants from Bengal and acts of lawlessness and breach of peace committed by the trespassers, without any check or hindrance by the authorities."

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I welcome the suggestion made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, for, I think he remembers that it was my policy in 1940, immediately after assumption of office, to convene a Conference of all concerned, specially the representatives of the three lower Districts of the Assam Valley. In that Conference we wanted to evolve a uniform formula for land settlement in the Province. I remember many of my hon. Friends of the Congress Party, representing all interests of the Assam Valley, including immigrants, Scheduled Caste Members as well as Tribal people, sat to work on that Conference and ultimately a resolution was adopted for the Nowgong District to the effect that one-third of all available Government waste lands should be reserved for future expansion of the Province, and new lands in large blocks be divided amongst the applicants of both indigenous as well as immigrant people. In the case of indigenous population, three divisions were made, one portion was allowed for the Tribal people, one for the Scheduled Hindus and the other for the Caste Hindus. The poor indigenous Assamese Muslims were merged together with the immigrants to get their share of lands. After we unanimously decided in this line and after a special officer was appointed to demarcate blocks, to receive applications—of which Mr. Beliram Das has made mention in his speech—and when everything was ready for settlement of lands according to the number of applications received, a big hue and cry was raised from interested quarters and as a result of which one of our Colleagues thought fit to resign from the Cabinet with the consequence that I had to resign on behalf of the entire Cabinet. This was followed by Section 93 Administration and the labour of this protracted negotiations and the unanimous conclusion were laid at rest by the then Governor, His Excellency Sir Robert Reid.

I will, now, only be too glad to accept the hand of co-operation which my Friend, Srijut Gopinath Bardoloi, has extended. Let me state here again and I hope I will be able to convince him and those of his way of thinking that the best course was to accept the Resolution we arrived at after the Conference of representatives of the different groups in 1940. I would again request him that if I convene such a Conference he along with one or two of his friends from his way of thinking will kindly give consent to sit on that Conference. For we hear every day that the Congress Party is not in a position to accept any nomination to a Committee which is not formed on an elected basis. This matter is so vital, for the best interest of all concerned in the Province, that I would request him that for once he should withdraw from this attitude and join hands with me in sitting round a table to come to some satisfactory solution of this vexed problem of land settlement.

If the Conference is to sit at all, it must sit by the middle of December and if my hon. Friend, the Leader of the Opposition, agrees to sit with us on the Conference, I am prepared to stay new settlement of lands in professional grazing reserves to that date.

Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI : I desire to say, Sir, that in 1940 Congress Party Members were mostly in Jail and whatever decision was arrived at it was not done with the Congress Party Members.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Srijut Sarveswar Barua and Srijut Kameswar Das were Members and attended the Conference, Sir.

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA : That was in 1940.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Order, order. It is now for the hon. Leader of the Opposition to say whether he is willing to accept the offer that has been made by the Hon'ble Leader of the House. The Hon'ble Leader of the House has just said that he is going to hold a Conference in December next and in the meantime new land settlement proceedings will be stayed till that date, provided the hon. Leader of the Opposition accepts his offer.



**Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI :** What I was really wanting to point out to the Hon'ble Premier is that while, since 1937, attempts have been made to arrive at some settlement over this question, encroachments have been going on which neither the Government has controlled in the manner it should have been done nor sufficient steps have been taken in any way to ease the situation. What I was just pointing to him is this—that in the meantime proceedings should be stayed. I mean to say that all actions that have been proposed over the scheme should be stayed and that wherever there have been encroachments, he will direct the officers concerned that at any rate, in so far as those areas are concerned and where there has been occupation in excess, eviction should take place. In the meantime, I accept the Hon'ble Premier's offer to meet and discuss the matter.

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA :** My Friend has traversed a wider ground just now in order to press that the encroachment has been in excess of the areas than what is necessary for the cattle paying tax and that the encroachers must be evicted. I would not like to stop demarcation of those reserves, but as a gesture of good will, I would order those officers to stop further settlement of those demarcated lands where many people have already settled, till the middle of December.

**Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI :** I am satisfied with the assurance just now given by the Hon'ble Premier. I hope, I heard him correctly when he said that the occupations which have taken place in the demarcated areas will be stayed till we have decided the matter in the Conference.

**Srijut BELIRAM DAS :** As the Hon'ble Premier has given an assurance and as our hon. Leader has accepted it, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my Motion.

**\*Srijut MAHI CHANDRA BORA :** In connection with the matter that has just been concluded, I want the Hon'ble Premier to say whether the report of the Special Officer will be circulated among the officers.

**The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA :** The report of Mr. Desai will be placed before the proposed Conference.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** The next item of business is the further discussion on the Motion for procurement and distribution of consumer goods.

**Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI :** What about my Adjournment Motion?

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** I am not taking that today.

**Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI :** I am speaking about my Motion on grazing reserves.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** I thought the hon. Member was not going to move his Motion.

**Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI :** My Motion stands on a different footing.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** Reference was made to the question to which the hon. Member's Adjournment Motion relates by the Mover of the last Motion. On the other hand I took it that the hon. Member was not going to move his Motion.

**Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI :** That was about the Samaria Satra—a religious place. By the order passed in 1931 by the Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup, the neighbouring land of the Satra, in the interest of the Satra itself, was excluded from settlement. He kept it as a reserve but now a large number of Muslim immigrants

\*Speech not corrected.

†This Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a question of urgent public importance of recent occurrence, viz., the forcible occupation of land in the neighbourhood of Samaria Satra in the District of Kamrup which was especially excluded from settlement, in future, in order to respect the religious sentiment of Hindus."



have been settling round the Satra which was stopped by the order of the Deputy Commissioner. That point should also be examined.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Yes, it will be done, I think.

**Further discussison on the Motion\* re the Scheme for Procurement and Distribution of consumer goods**

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Is any other hon. Member going to speak on the Amendments †to the Scheme for procurement and distribution of consumer goods ?

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think Government in their Scheme for procurement and distribution of consumer goods have placed all the facts that led them to adopt a Scheme like this. Now, Mr. Mookerjee while moving his amendment, said that the Civil Supply Agency should be abolished and the Trade Adviser should remain. His arguments are that according to this scheme the duties of the Civil Supply Agency are narrated here in the Scheme and the first is assistance to traders in procuring goods at controlled rates and transporting them. The second duty is procurement and distribution of consumer goods directly from importers and manufacturers on a provincial quota basis. Therefore, he concludes that at the beginning, this Agency was employed for assisting traders and for procuring their goods. Now that Government have changed that policy and have prohibited the Agency from purchasing goods for Assam traders, he argues that there is no necessity for this Agency at all.

I am afraid, Mr. Mookerjee has either misread the Scheme or has misunderstood it. He will find in paragraph 1 where it is said "The Agent selected are Messrs. Civil Supply Agency, 72, Canning Street, Calcutta, a partnership of two big firms of importers and general traders". Their activities fall under three heads. The first is that they will store and despatch goods procured by traders and left in their custody. So, their duty is not to purchase goods for traders, they are to store and despatch goods that may be procured by traders and left in their custody. Then their next duty is to distribute them to different districts as advised by the respective traders. So, his argument that because this Agency has been prohibited from purchasing goods for traders, their existence is not justified and does not hold good at all. Now, if the hon. Members think that it is necessary that an agency is to store and despatch goods purchased by the Assam traders and left in their custody for transportation into Assam, I think the Agency should remain. Now, Sir, in these days when transport difficulty is so grave, when Assam traders find it difficult even to travel to Calcutta to get their goods, and even if they go to Calcutta, they do not know how to find a place to stay, and at a time when the Calcutta market is so fluctuating that they do not know where to go, they should have some agency in Calcutta to advise them as to what articles are available, at which places, and at what rates. After the goods are purchased, difficulties of transport come in; they fail to bring their goods straight to the station for booking as they used to do previously and send them to their respective places. Therefore, they must place those articles in the custody of somebody who will take care of them, and then transport them to their respective destinations when convenient. So, the necessity for an agency in Calcutta is very great, at any rate as long as war conditions prevail.

Then, Sir, complaints have been made against the Agency by my friends, Srijut Lakshesvar Borooah and Mr. Kedarmal Brahmin. They said that they received complaints from various local traders that the soap supplied to them was of inferior quality and the price was very high. As against that, it was pointed out by the Hon'ble Premier, in reply to a question by my friend, Mr. Kamini Kumar Sen, that this soap was ordered not by the Agency, but by the Trade Adviser. The order was placed with the Bengal Trading Company for country washing soap by the Trade Adviser. The goods came to the Agency according to the orders placed by that Officer and they simply sent them to Assam. Therefore, they were not responsible either for the quality or for the price. It was brought to the notice of Government as well as of the Members of this

\*See Appendix "D"  
†See Appendix "E"



House that certain orders were placed by the Trade Adviser with certain companies. The orders were regarding soap, nickel buttons, steel buttons and wire strings. It was, however, found on enquiry that all these firms sent their bills in the name of one person. This shows that although the firms were in different names it was one and the same firm. All these articles were delivered at the agency godown and in all these cases the orders were placed by the Trade Adviser. It was also found that prices for these articles were fixed by the Trade Adviser ; and that the prices were sometimes 100 per cent., sometimes 50 per cent. or so higher than those prevailing in the Calcutta market for those articles at that time. These articles came to Assam ; now it is for the House to judge whether the Agency or the officer who placed these orders with different firms is responsible.

Sir, I quite agree with the hon. Mr. Chaudhuri and Mr. Aditya that more importance should be given to agricultural implements—the things which are necessary for our cultivators. Sir, as I have already said, the orders placed by our Trade Adviser were for nickel buttons, steel buttons, tooth paste and other things. May I ask whether these things would at all benefit the cultivators? It is said that the Trade Adviser was appointed to control the operations of the Agency. It has been rightly pointed out by Mr. Buragohain that we have agents in Calcutta for supplying foodstuffs; we have also agents in the Province for supplying rice. Is there any officer to control these agencies? Is there any adviser to advise them? Sir, we spend more than a crore for the supply of our food-grains, and if these things can be supplied by the agents without any control, I do not know why a Controller is necessary to control the Agency for the consumer goods. Sir, my Friends of the Planting Community will agree with me that all the tea companies in Assam have got their own agencies in Calcutta, and all the requirements of their estates are sent by those agencies. Have any of these companies got any Trade Adviser to control the agencies in their operation? (*Voices*: No.). If so and if many big companies can have their requirements through their agencies in Calcutta, I do not understand why a Controller is necessary to control the Agency for sending consumer goods to Assam. Sir, it has been pointed out that a sum of about Rs. 30,000 is being spent over this Trade Adviser. It is for the House to judge whether we are justified in providing this amount for this post.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the outset, I must admit that the supply of consumer goods has been very scanty, and as such it is quite fit and proper that Government should take some steps to ensure a constant, regular and sufficient supply of consumer goods. But, Sir, the Scheme that has been adumbrated before the House, cannot be supported in all its aspects. With regard to the procurement part of the Scheme, I think it would be better for Government to stay their hands, as much as possible, from procurement on their own account. It would be safer and more expedient on the part of Government, at least at the present moment, to leave the procurement of consumer goods entirely in the hands of the traders themselves.

The first part of the Scheme which states about the assistance to traders in procuring goods at controlled rates and transporting them, I think, Sir, this part should remain. This is very necessary at the present time because due to difficulties of transport and also the allotment of quota on a provincial basis, traders cannot possibly get all the consumer goods they want, and cannot get necessary transport for the same unless they get some help from Government. So, Government must have some agencies to assist traders in procuring and transporting consumer goods.

With regard to the second part, that is the procurement and transport of consumer goods directly from manufacturer on a provincial quota basis, this can be left to the normal trade channel by calling for tenders from different traders. Government's hands are too full with procurement of food-grains, so they should not now take the risk of doing this because the procurement of food-grain is far more urgent than procurement of consumer goods. Moreover, Sir, the traders themselves are better experienced and better fitted to find out the quality or brands that will find a good market here. It is impossible for Government or any of their agents to make a judicious selection of the consumer goods, or to find out the quality that will find a ready market. Therefore, my first suggestion would be that Government should



stay their hands as far as possible, I can only say, except for goods which it would be impossible for private traders to indent. Goods that have been included in the amendment of my hon. Friend, Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri, the Government can take the risk of procuring these articles leaving the articles of luxury for the normal trade channels to deal with. Here, Sir, it seems that there is some confusion about the Scheme as has been adumbrated because in the first item it is said, that the purpose of appointment of the Trade Agent is to give assistance to traders in procuring goods at controlled rates. But as has been rightly pointed out by my hon. Friend, Mr. Mookerjee, it is curious that these agents have been precluded from doing any purchase for the traders. If the main purpose of appointing an Agent is to assist traders in procuring goods, what is the reason for the Agency being precluded from making purchases for the traders themselves? If there is an Agency for the purpose and if that Agency be reliable, certainly it should be allowed all opportunities of procuring goods for the traders themselves. I do not know why this prohibition has been made. I am afraid, Sir, my hon. Friend, Khan Bahadur Keramat Ali has probably misunderstood the position.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: Please refer to item No. (i) in paragraph 1 of the Scheme.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: There it is: 'Assistance to traders in procuring goods at controlled rates and procuring them'.

My first suggestion is therefore that there should be some agency for the purpose of procurement of consumer goods and also for the purpose of transporting the same. I am, however, not satisfied with the present Agency, I mean the Civil Supply Agency—I have heard many complaints against them. I would suggest that as stated by my hon. Friend, Sriji Lakshesvar Borooah, that Agency should be cancelled and fresh settlement be made after calling for tenders. Then, Sir, if there is a Trade Agency, I do not see any necessity for a Trade Adviser. It seems, it is absolutely redundant, as has been rightly pointed out by my Friend, Khan Bahadur Maulavi Keramat Ali and Mr. Buragohain. It is quite true that if the agency for procurement of food-grains can work satisfactorily without an adviser, there is no necessity for a Trade Adviser for procurement of consumer goods. The name 'Trade Adviser' seems to be new. The present incumbent had never been in trade and knows nothing about trade. I think, he was an officer of the Income-tax Department. Certainly, he had no opportunity of getting any experience of trade in the Calcutta market. So, it seems that the appointment of such a Trade Adviser is absolutely useless. On the other hand, it has been admitted by the Hon'ble Premier that several complaints have already been received with regard to some of the actions of the Trade Adviser, which he has taken up. I had personal experience of some washing soap procured by Government. I do not know whether this had been procured by the Trade Adviser. These washing soaps are absolutely useless. There is absolutely no market for it. At least it is not worth the price.

With regard to some other articles indented on Government account, they are absolutely rotten. I once sent for a tube of Kolynos tooth paste. I found that it was so soiled that it was not at all fit to be used. I have heard many complaints regarding Kolynos tooth paste from others, particularly my Friend, Mr. Aditya and also about butter there are similar complaints. Most of these Kolynos tooth paste, I am afraid, will have to be thrown away as better tooth pastes are available in the market at a lesser price. This is an additional reason why Government should leave the procurement of consumer goods solely to the traders except in cases, where traders cannot procure even with the aid of the Trade Agent.

Then, with regard to distribution, I am sorry to say that the system that has been stated in the Scheme, is not at all satisfactory. First of all the supply is very scanty. The choice of consumer goods is not at all judicious. Some of the goods can be available in the market at lesser price, or slightly higher price; whereas goods that are absolutely necessary, or goods absolutely scarce in the market, have not been selected. So, supply even if judiciously distributed would not make any impression in the market. Black market still prevails as before. I think, it is almost the daily experience of many not excepting even the hon. Members of this House that in spite of the Scheme, many of the articles indented are not available at the controlled price.







## Appendix " D "

**The Hon'ble Prime Minister to move:—**

" That the Scheme for the procurement and distribution of consumer goods as placed before the House be approved "

*Scheme for distribution of consumer goods*

Government have been noticing for a long time the steady deterioration in the flow of consumer goods into Assam. The various Control Orders, the difficulties in procurement, the trouble in getting transport, etc., all contributed to these difficulties in the way of normal trade functioning. After considerable discussion Government therefore adopted a scheme in May last for increasing the flow of consumer goods at controlled prices into Assam. The scheme falls under four heads—

- (i) Assistance to traders in procuring goods at controlled rates and transporting them ;
- (ii) Procurement and transport of consumer goods directly from the importers and the manufacturers on a provincial quota basis ;
- (iii) Procurement from the open markets in Calcutta or elsewhere of sundry goods at favourable prices and their transport into Assam ;
- (iv) Controlled distribution of consumer goods within the Province.

As most of the consumer goods coming into Assam have to be obtained in Calcutta, Government decided to appoint an Agent there for the purpose of procurement, storage and transport. The stoppage of all booking from stations beyond Calcutta to Assam made it all the more necessary to have an Agent in Calcutta to handle any goods which may be received from up-country also. The Agent selected are Messrs Civil Supply Agency, 72, Canning Street, Calcutta, a partnership of two big firms of importers and general traders. Their activities fall under 3 heads—(1) they will store and despatch goods procured by traders and left in their custody ; (2) they will take over and forward quotas of various goods allotted to this Province by importers and producers ; they will procure goods on Government account in Calcutta. For the first two services they were granted a commission of 3½ per cent. and for the 3rd service, which included financing, they were granted a commission of 6¼ per cent. After 3 months' working the rates of commission were revised and now they get a flat rate of commission of 3½ per cent. on all goods they handle whether for traders or for Government. This commission includes storage and insurance charges at Calcutta and transport to Railway stations and Steamer ghats within Calcutta. The Agents have been precluded from doing any purchase operations for traders as this would lead to complaints from unsuccessful traders who may approach them. But to assist traders in procurement and to keep in touch with the big importing and manufacturing firms as well as the authorities in Calcutta Government have appointed a Trade Adviser with a small office, who will keep all up-to-date information about the Calcutta market and will give such assistance as he can to any trader in Assam who might approach him. He will also assist traders to obtain permits for export where necessary from the Bengal Government Authorities. In the matter of transport a quota of transport by river has been allotted for consumer goods to be operated by the Government's Agents in Calcutta and in addition heavy goods which can go in wagon loads will come under priority orders issued by the Regional Controller.

At the beginning traders were not taking full advantage of the arrangements made by the Assam Government. For a start Government themselves had to procure some goods in Calcutta and send them for distribution in Assam. They consisted mainly of butter, soap, tinned milk, toilet articles, etc. There are scores of items of consumer goods and under each item so many varieties to suit different tastes. It is not possible for Government to procure and distribute all of them. It is Government's intention to leave these things to normal trade which they will assist, confining their purchases only to articles like iron and steel, electric bulbs, etc., which are all rigidly controlled



and are extremely difficult for private traders to obtain in adequate quantities. It is a relieving feature of the scheme that gradually traders are coming to take advantage of it and since August the entire quota of transport has been fully utilised. Up to the end of September goods to the value of Rs.10,88,917 have been despatched into Assam of which goods to the value of Rs.5,33,951 consisted of private merchandise. Another relieving feature of the scheme is that the big importers and manufacturers are also gradually extending their co-operation by allocating quotas to Assam and despatching them under the transport quota at the disposal of Government agents.

In the matter of distribution, the Commissioner of Excise with his staff, reinforced by the appointment of Inspectors of Consumer Goods, is responsible. Centres have been selected, quotas have been allotted and traders, as far as possible from those who are in the line, have been selected and other arrangements made for equitable distribution of the goods received whether on Government account or on private traders' account. Government hope by these arrangements that trade will be improved and the Province will get a fair share of consumer goods subject to the transport difficulties now inevitable.

### Appendix "E"

#### Amendments to the Motion moved by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on the 16th November 1944 regarding the Scheme for the procurement and distribution of consumers' goods

1. Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy to move :—

(Notice received at 2 P.M. on 16th November 1944.)

#### *Procurement Machinery*

Both the Trade Adviser and the Government Agents, Messrs. Civil Supply Agency be replaced with a Trade Commissioner with necessary staffs under the Provincial Civil Supply Department to fulfil the tasks of the both as narrated in paragraph 2 of the Motion. It will be one of the main duties of this officer to give utmost facility to the *bonafide* traders of the Province in procurement of consumer goods and thus try to keep the normal trade channel intact as far as possible.

#### *Distribution Scheme*

In the scheme of distribution preference should be given to the consumers' co-operative stores and other approved dealers. In between the Government agency for procurement and the actual consumers the middlemanship shall be curtailed to the minimum. The goods shall be distributed on ration basis.

#### *Vigilance over procurement and distribution*

(1) A Committee of 9 members be set up with Hon'ble Premier, the Secretary, Civil Supply Department and 7 other members from this House to be elected forthwith, on the basis of proportional representation, for monthly review and check up of the whole process of procurement and distribution of consumers' goods. This Committee may tender advice from time to time to the Government on all matters relating to procurement and distribution of all consumer goods, which will be binding on the Government.

(2) For fighting blackmarket, profiteering and corruption in the trade of consumer goods the effective help of public bodies such as Food Committees and Consumers' Committees composed of all sections of the people of the localities shall be taken.

2. Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri to move :—

(Notice received at 2-12 P.M. on 16th November 1944.)

That the scheme be operative only with regard to husbandry implements, building materials, brass and bell-metal sheets.



## 3. Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee to move :—

(Notice received at 2-10 P.M. on 16th November 1944.)

(1) The services of Messrs. Civil Supply Agency of 72, Canning Street, Calcutta, be dispensed with effect from the 1st December, 1944 and the function of the said Messrs. Civil Supply Agency as stated in the scheme be allotted to the Trade Adviser appointed in Calcutta.

(2) The Trade Adviser be allowed to have an office in Calcutta with reasonable staff necessary for his assistance for the discharge of the duties allotted to him.

(3) Sub-Divisional Committees should be formed with officials and non-officials in each subdivision and also District Committees consisting of both officials and non-officials in each district. The Sub-Divisional Committees will inform their requirements to the District Committees concerned who will inform the Trade Adviser accordingly and when articles are received they will be distributed to the Sub-Divisional Committees by the District Committees. The centres, quota and traders should be selected by the District Committees in consultation with the Sub-Divisional Committees. The supervision work should be entrusted to the Supply Department which should be provided with necessary additional staff.

## 4. Srijut Surendranath Buragohain to move :—

(Notice received at 1-50 P.M. on 16th November 1944.)

“That the post of the Trade Adviser in the Scheme for the procurement and distribution of consumer goods be abolished”.

## 5. Srijut Lakshesvar Borooah to move :—

(Notice received at 1-45 P.M. on 16th November 1944.)

“That selection of the agent at Calcutta for procurement, storage and transport, etc., for Government of Assam be made by a Committee consisting of Hon'ble the Premier, and 4 other Members of this House elected for the purpose. Local enterprises should always have preference and that authority of the present agents be withdrawn but that they should be given the option of applying for the agency”.

## 6. Mr. Kedarmal Brahmin to move :—

(Notice received at 2-12 P.M. on 16th November 1944.)

That in paragraph 2 of the scheme delete the sentence beginning from “The Agents selected.....general traders” and add “The Agents will be appointed from among the *bonafide* merchants of Assam who have to keep an office in Calcutta”.

Delete the sentences beginning from “For the first two services.....whether for traders or for the Government” and insert “They will get a flat rate of commission of Rs. 4 per cent. on all the goods handled by them”.

And delete the sentence beginning from “But to assist.....Bengal Government authorities” and add “and the Agent shall engage such Trade Adviser or expert and whom they think fit and proper after due consultation with the Government”.

In paragraph four delete the first sentence and insert “In the matter of Distribution the Deputy Commissioner with the advice of the local Food Advisory Committee assisted by the Inspectors of consumers goods will be responsible and will see that such goods are sold through the *bonafide* dealers”.

*Reeb*



