

**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 2 p. m. on Friday the 17th November, 1944.

PRESENT

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

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(To which oral answers were given)

Re Mustard oil

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

*62. (a) Is the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge aware that mustard oil is one of the principal food articles for the people of the Province ?

(b) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that mustard oil helps nourishment of the human body and supplies one of the important vitamins in our every day food ?

(c) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he proposes to enquire as to whether the non-availability of this important food article is causing malnutrition in the health of the general public ?

(d) If so, does the Hon'ble Minister propose to put a stop to the said malnutrition going on any further ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

62. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—No. Mustard oil is still available up to requirement.

(d)—Does not arise.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: Has any complaint been received from the Assam Valley that there is scarcity of mustard oil ?

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

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Is it a fact that in Shillong, mustard oil has been rationed at 3 chataks per head for the whole month ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: That is so, Sir.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Do Government consider it sufficient, Sir ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: This is probably not sufficient but the ration has been fixed with reference to the availability of stock.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Do Government admit that the supply is not sufficient ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: 3 chataks are not sufficient.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: Do Government propose to take steps to see that Assam Valley gets sufficient quantity of mustard oil ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I made a long statement yesterday about mustard oil.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: In view of the fact that 3 chataks are not sufficient, will Government be pleased to take steps to increase the supply in this district ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Government are taking every step but unless the oil or the seed is allowed to be brought in by the Regional Priority Committee there is very little hope but I am doing my level best.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Is it a fact that there is acute shortage of mustard oil in the District of Sibsagar?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, we heard it from the Khan Bahadur yesterday.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: What steps Government are taking to remove the shortage?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It was already answered yesterday.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I understand from the reply to my Question No. 62 (c) that mustard oil is still available up to requirement. If that be the case, will Government please state why there should be scarcity in a district?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I started by saying, Sir, that at the time the reply was drafted we did not hear that. We only heard it from the Khan Bahadur yesterday.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I know, Sir, under the present arrangement, cannot Shaw Wallace supply mustard oil to this Province?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: They have been given permit to import 1 lakh maunds of mustard oil into the Province from the United Provinces for the Surma Valley.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Will Government be pleased to grant facilities to other traders also to import mustard oil for the Assam Valley as well as for Shillong, where there is such a scarcity?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am willing to grant permit to any one who can make his own transport arrangement.

Re Gur

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked:

*63. (a) Is the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge aware that the Gur supplied to the public by Government is not fit for human consumption?

(b) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he proposes to take steps for regular supply of better quality Gur in future?

(c) If the answer to Question (a) above is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he has ever seen and tasted himself the Gur that is now served to the public by Government?

(d) If not, whether he proposes to do so now in order to see for himself whether the Gur is quite fit for human consumption?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

63. (a)—Government have got no information but some consignments got damaged due to delayed transport but were not unfit for consumption.

(b)—Yes, but it is difficult to have a strict choice between good and bad in view of difficulty in getting transport as well as availability of stocks from the importing Provinces.

(c)—Does not arise.

(d)—Does not arise.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: As regards Question No. 63 (a)—Are Government aware that the shopkeepers refused to take goods from Government stores at Sylhet because of bad quality?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It is probably so. I mentioned on an earlier date of this Session that a consignment which was long delayed in transit and which was brought by the steamer got damaged and that consignment was generally not liked by consumers.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know to which district that consignment was distributed?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Shillong, Sylhet and Gauhati.

†Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: May I know who indented that consignment for Government?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It was the Government Agent.

†Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: May I know the name of the Agent?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It was Shaw Wallace and Company.

Control of prices of food-stuffs.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked:

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

(a) The principle underlying the whole matter of control of prices of food-stuffs, etc.?

(b) Whether it is the intention of Government to control prices of all sorts of food articles in the Province?

(c) Whether he is aware that as soon as the price of an article is controlled it disappears from open markets totally and it is sold in black-markets at a rate much higher than that at which it was selling at pre-control times?

(d) Whether he proposes to ensure the supply of a thing before its price is controlled?

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

(a) The basis on which price of a thing is fixed and controlled?

(b) Why a controlled article goes to the black-market as soon as its price is controlled?

(c) Whether the Hon'ble Minister proposes to control a thing in such a way in future that it continues to remain in the open markets?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

64. (a)—The principle in view is that traders and dealers do not exact much too large a profit from consumers and that a uniform price is charged throughout the Province.

(b)—No, not until circumstances demand to do that.

(c)—Not at all times and in all instances.

(d)—Control of price is also a necessary preliminary to a supply.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: As regards reply to Question No. 64 (a), Sir, just to maintain a uniform price throughout the Province will Government be pleased to state whether this procedure is being followed throughout the Province?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, Sir, so far as the Government imported articles are concerned.

†Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: May I know whether the control is preliminary to supply or supply is preliminary to control?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Control comes subsequent to supply.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Will Government be pleased to change their present policy and withdraw all control of prices about the food-stuffs which are produced in this Province?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The only food-stuff which is produced in this Province in sufficient quantity is rice and paddy. Under the policy laid down by the Government of India, we have controlled the prices of many commodities.

†Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Is it not a fact that by price control without ensuring supply, Government create blackmarket ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: That is obvious, Sir.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Will Government be pleased to state what step they have taken to remove blackmarketing where they have found that after the control of the price the commodity has disappeared ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: By improving the supply of the commodity and keeping a strict watch over the market condition.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Are Government aware that in certain districts the price of fish has been fixed ?

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

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Are Government aware that when the control was introduced on the price of fish at Gauhati, the fish disappeared from the market ; but as soon as the control was withdrawn, fish became available in the market and the price also gradually declined ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have had no official report about it. But the gradual decline of the price of fish was partly due to the approach of the winter when large fisheries began to be operated on by the lessees.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: But the control was withdrawn in the month of July or earlier.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Fish was scarce in the month of July as it was in the previous month, but it became plenty at Gauhati, Shillong and Sylhet towards the end of September.

†Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Are Government aware that since the first of November, fish has again become scarce in Sylhet ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have not had any report about it as yet. But while I was at Sylhet recently, I discussed this question with the Deputy Commissioner and he informed me that fish was plentiful and that he had allowed about 200 maunds for the Military and about 100 maunds for Shillong.

†Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Is it a fact that the price became lower after the withdrawal of the control order ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have had no official report about it.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Are Government aware that the price was reduced from the beginning of November ?

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I know what harm is there in withdrawing the control order on the price of fish so long as there is no possibility of a large export from the Province ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: As soon as the control will be withdrawn, there will be a large export of fish from the Province and the local people will suffer.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know whether it is not proper to ensure the supply before the price of it is controlled ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have already answered that in reply to a Question of Mr. Sen.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I could not follow the reply of the Hon'ble Premier regarding the relation between export and control of price. How can the control of price of fish prevent it going out of the Province ? May I ask the Hon'ble Premier to explain it ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: When a commodity is controlled by Government, they are to see that the supply of it is sufficient and

therefore ban on export of it is likely to occur. In cases where there is no control and the supply is also sufficient, there is no bar to anyone to export the commodity.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Cannot export be checked by any means other than control of price?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: That will again ruin the trader. If export is controlled where the supply is greater, the producers will suffer in lowering of prices.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Did the people demand introduction of control price or Government thrust it on them?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Wherever it was necessary to control the prices of any article, it was recommended by the local officers and we have extended the form of price control.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

65. (a)—In the case of imported commodities prices are fixed on the basis of the cost price paid at the source, freight charges, wastage in transit, shrinkage in storage and other incidental charges. In the case of rice and paddy prices are fixed with reference to those of other articles that the producers are to buy.

(b)—Not necessarily. In some cases it goes to the blackmarket. Due to the general tendency of the trading class to exact as much as is possible from the consumers and also largely due to the fact that public do not co-operate.

(c)—Certainly.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know of the other incidental charges as mentioned in reply to Question 65 (a)?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: They entail charges incurred in bringing the commodities either by rail or steamer into the godown and in cases where boat is to be used, the boat charge.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Do Government charge any cess?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, Government charge a cess.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: In reply to my Question 65 (a) the Hon'ble Premier said that in the case of imported commodities prices are fixed on the basis of the cost price paid at the source, freight charges, wastage in transit, shrinkage in storage and other incidental charges. In reply to my supplementary question he says that cess is also charged. May I know why this was not included in the reply?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have already answered that in reply to the supplementary question.

†Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: May I know whether the prices of rice and paddy have been fixed in reference to other articles of foodstuff?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It has already been answered that in the case of rice and paddy prices are fixed with reference to other articles that the producers are to buy.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know whether the present prices of rice and paddy are commensurate to the prices of other commodities which the cultivators are to buy?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: In many cases there is co-relation between the prices of rice and paddy and other commodities, but in some cases the prices of the commodities that the cultivators are to buy are higher than the prices of rice and paddy.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I know roughly the difference in prices of commodities at the source from where Government get them and at places where they are actually sold by retailers and wholesalers?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It depends on the prices of the commodities at which they are bought by Government and the freight or transport charges to be paid. But if my hon. Friend wants to know what commission is allowed to the retail sellers, I am not prepared to answer it.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, as regards Question No.65 (b) the reply is that some commodities go to the blackmarkets largely due to the non-co-operation of the public with the Government. Are Government aware that people do not willingly go to the blackmarket but they are compelled to go there?

† The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I cannot say for the general public. But what we have found in our official capacity is that large number of complaints are being poured into my ears but whenever I ask those complainants to put them down in writing, they fight shy.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Will Government please state whether this Government ever went to the blackmarket?

† The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I will give an instance, Sir. In the early days of my Ministry, that is in December 1942, I had to bring 10,000 bags of sugar from blackmarket.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Then, what are we to understand, Sir, whether Government went there willingly or they were compelled to go to the black market?

† The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We had to go there because our stock in the Province was practically nil at that time.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Do Government appreciate that this is also the case with the individual house-holders, i.e., with the public?

† The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Government never deny that, but all that I say is that those very persons who are very loud in complaining will never put their signatures to any written document saying that such and such person is blackmarketing and they are unwilling to go to the Court to give evidence.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE:—Are Government aware that the black-marketers do not sell their commodities to those persons who are likely to stand against them and bring them before a Court.

† The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: My experience is different, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Am I to understand that the Hon'ble Prime Minister has got experience of going to the blackmarket also (*Laughter*)?

† Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: Are Government aware that blackmarkets thrive not because of the apathy of the public but because of the disinclination of the District Officers to take actions against the blackmarketers?

† The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: That depends upon the activities of the Executive. I can say, Sir, that in Shilong five cases of black-marketing were detected and in all these cases, those who complained, refused to supply evidence before the court.

† Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I ask the Hon'ble Prime Minister to let us know what is the total amount of commission that is paid to the different purchasing agencies outside Assam including the wholesalers and retailers?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: It is out of order.

Daily allowance for Jurors

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked:

*66. Will Government be pleased to state the rates of daily allowance sanctioned for the jurors for the years 1939-40 and 1944-45?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA replied :

66.—The daily allowance for jurors both for 1939-40 and 1944-45 is, for each day of attendance at Court, such sum not exceeding five rupees as the Court considers to be a fair recoupment of the additional cost (if any) incurred by the juror on account of his own board and lodging.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Are Government aware that the jurors are being paid at the same rate at which they used to be paid four years back?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: Sir, the rate cannot vary from year to year. It has been laid down under rule 29 of the Contingency Manual. And as a matter of fact, I have not as yet received any complaint in this respect from the jurors.

† Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Will Government take note of the abnormal condition of the present time and see their way to increase the rate of the jurors?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: Up till now we have not received any complaint from the jurors in this respect.

† Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Are the town jurors paid anything, Sir, in the shape of carriage or anything of that kind?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: That I cannot say off-hand, Sir.

Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: Will Government reconsider the question of increasing the jurors' allowance, Sir?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: If we get any representation from the jurors we may take it into consideration.

Case for profiteering and hoarding

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked:

*67. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The number of cases filed in different courts for profiteering and hoarding during 1943-44 showing (i) the names of accused persons, (ii) their places of residence and (iii) the charge against each of them separately, district by district?
- (b) The number of cases tried?
- (c) The number of persons convicted showing (i) the names of the convicted persons or firms, etc., and (ii) the extent of punishment (figures to be shown district by district)?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA replied :

67. (a), (b) & (c)—Government have no information but have called for the same from the Deputy Commissioners.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, is not the answer a hopeless one?

What was the good of giving this sort of reply, Sir?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: I have already stated that Government have called for the information from the Deputy Commissioners.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, Government could have waited for some time more. The Session is not going to be over to-day. I doubt whether any information has been called for at all.

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: I may tell the hon. Member that if the information is made available during the current Session, I am prepared to reply.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Thank you, Sir, this may be a reply.

Newspaper article re "Kidnapping" for Ghatua purposes

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

*68. (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the editorial article published in the "Sylhet Chronicle", dated the 19th September, 1944 under the caption "Kidnapping" giving and alluding to instances of kidnapping for *Ghatua* purposes and urging a legislation for putting down this evil practice ?

(b) If so, what action has been taken by Government to stop the long standing nuisance ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

63. (a)—Government have seen the article.

(b)—Government, after consulting local officials, consider that sections 362, 363 and 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which provide heavy penalties for abduction, kidnapping and unnatural offences, are sufficient provided they are reinforced by co-operation of the public in the few areas where this practice is said to exist. Legislation will not itself affect such practices which are already illegal.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, in view of the fact that in spite of these sections being in the Statute Book this sort of thing is going on, do not Government consider it necessary to take some other step so that this evil may be eradicated ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: What other step the hon. Member suggests ?

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Government's answer is that there is no sufficient co-operation from the public. What co-operation do Government want ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I said, Sir, that legislation will not produce any effect. Because such practice is already declared as illegal.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, is it a fact that the National War Front in the Surma Valley is encouraging the *Ghatua Nach* ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I absolutely repudiate the suggestion of my hon. Friend.

Re Oranges

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

*69. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether they keep any statistics of oranges that are grown in the Province and if so, what are they, district by district, for the last five years ?

(b) The quantity of oranges exported for the last five years district by district, showing the method of transport ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA replied :

69.(a)—No statistics are kept.

(b)—No information.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know from the Hon'ble Minister, the quantity of oranges that was sold through the Government Agency or Marketing Officer of this Government in Calcutta ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: If the hon. Member wants the figure about the quantity of oranges sold through our Agency in Calcutta, I can give him the figures for only two years, 1941-42—4,32,970, ; 1942-43—22,320.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Will Government please keep a record in future ?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Government will consider the suggestion of the hon. Member, but it is doubtful whether any useful purpose will be served by keeping the record.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Is it a fact that there was a great deal of agitation in this House about oranges and Government could not say how much could be exported outside the Province after meeting the military and civil demands here?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: At present no orange is sent to Calcutta because of the transport difficulty. Besides Calcutta market, the growers send their oranges themselves to Chittagong and other places and we do not get these figures from them. Therefore, it is difficult to keep a record of all the oranges that are exported from the Province.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: If the growers can arrange their own transport, will Government allow them to export outside the Province?

The Hon'ble Mr. NABA KUMAR DUTTA: Yes, if they can arrange their own transport.

Admission of male patients in the Ganesh Das Women's Hospital

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked:

*70. (a) Is it a fact that in the Ganesh Das Women's Hospital at Shillong, male patients were and are being admitted causing great inconveniences to the ladies?

(b) If so, whether Government propose to remove this situation?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN replied:

70. (a)—Male Army officers are being admitted and treated in the Ganesh Das Women's Hospital for the past three years. This is being done at the request of the military authorities owing to a shortage of beds in Shillong. No inconvenience, whatsoever is caused to the female patients and no complaint over this long period has been received by the Lady Superintendent or by Government.

(b)—Does not arise.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Will the Hon'ble Minister take it from me that there is a great deal of agitation in this town for admitting male patients in a women's hospital?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: This has not been brought to my notice, Sir.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I have brought it to her notice, Sir. Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the question now?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: Very well, I shall consider that.

†Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: May I know what particular diseases are treated on men there?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: I cannot answer that question off-hand.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Is it not a fact that Government is breaking the Trust for which this women's hospital was originally built and subscriptions received, by admitting male patients to the hospital?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: I do not think there is any breaking of the Trust. These are abnormal times and abnormal things are being done. This should be considered as a War Emergency action.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: We want a sympathetic answer from the Hon'ble Minister, specially when it concerns women.

†Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: Is it a fact that in that hospital there are only doctors who are proficient in female diseases?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: That is not so, Sir.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I know how many seats have been allotted to men?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: I cannot answer that off-hand.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know how many seats are there altogether?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: I think about 60 now.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: When there is competition for a seat between men and women, who will get the preference? (Loud laughter.)

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: I have already said there is no inconvenience caused to the female patients, therefore there is no such competition. Everybody is accommodated.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I personally visited the hospital and I heard complaints from the patients which I found genuine too.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: I can also support Mr. Mookerjee to that effect.

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: It is very strange that those complaints have not been made to me.

†Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: Is the Hon'ble Minister prepared to reconsider the question in view of the complaint made by Mr. Mookerjee?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: I have given that assurance.

Quantity of petroleum extracted by the Assam Oil Company

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH asked:

- *71. Will the Hon'ble Minister for Revenue be pleased to state—
- The quantity of petroleum extracted by the Assam Oil Company, Digboi in each of the years 1941, 1942, 1943 and 1944?
 - The amount of royalty realised in each of those years?
 - Whether there is any Government Agency to ascertain the quantity of petroleum extracted by the Company?
 - If not, whether Government propose to appoint a checking authority on behalf of this Government?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied:

71. (a)—It is regretted that in the interest of security the production figures cannot be disclosed during the War.

(b)—Figures for calendar years are not readily available. Royalty realised in the financial years 1941-42 to 1943-44 are stated below:—

				Rs.
1941-42	...	...	...	6,02,024
1942-43	...	...	...	8,39,331
1943-44	...	...	...	9,03,249

(c) & (d)—Government may at any time depute any of their officers to check the figures returned by the Company. They have not done so hitherto partly because these figures are audited by competent Chartered Accountants and partly because they have no reason to believe that the returns submitted by the Company are inaccurate.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: By whom these competent Chartered Accountants are appointed?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Appointed by the Company according to the terms of the lease.

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: I do not understand what the Hon'ble Minister means by the term "security". There is some sense if Government refused to disclose the quantity of petrol. But petroleum is a different thing from petrol.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Petroleum is a bye-product.

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: Excuse me, Sir. Petroleum is a mother crude product from which petrol, kerosene, and many other things are manufactured.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I ask the hon. Questioner whether the Hon'ble Minister is expected to know all these technical things?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Yes, petroleum is a crude product, I am sorry for the slip, Sir.

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: This is a common knowledge, Sir. May I know from the Hon'ble Minister who realise the royalty on natural products like timber, stone quarries, etc.?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Officers of Government authorised to realise such royalties.

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: Who are those officers?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question relates to petroleum, but the hon. Member is straying.

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: The reply is that Government may at any time depute an officer to check the figures returned by the Company.

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: Have Government up till now done so in the case of petroleum?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: The reply is there, Sir: "they have not done so hitherto partly because these figures are audited by competent Chartered Accountants and partly because they have no reason to believe that the returns submitted by the Company are inaccurate".

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, from the answer it is quite clear that Government do not doubt the return submitted by the Company, and so they do not feel the necessity of sending any Accountant on behalf of the Government. May I know from the Hon'ble Minister whether the same procedure is followed in any other case in the Province?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: Each case is considered on its own merits.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Is not the Hon'ble Minister aware that the Government of Assam collect 30 lakhs of rupees from agricultural income-tax exactly on the same basis, viz., on a Chartered Accountant's certificate?

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

Medical practitioners' fees for attending professional calls

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHOUDHURY asked:

*72. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether there is any rule fixing the rate of fees chargeable by Medical practitioners in Assam for attending professional calls given by patients?
- (b) If so, what fee is chargeable by (i) Medical Licentiates and (ii) Medical graduates for attending such calls?
- (c) If not, whether Government propose to frame rules immediately on this behalf?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN replied:

72.(a)—No.

(b)—Does not arise.

(c)—No.

Conveyance charges for Government doctors for attending Government servants

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHOUDHURY asked:

*73. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether Government doctors are permitted under the rules to take conveyance charges from any sick Government servant residing within five miles of the headquarters station of the Government doctor for attending to his call?

(b) Whether Government are aware that some of the Government doctors at Shillong charge conveyance allowance from sick Government servants, residing within the Municipal area of the town, for attending to their calls ?

(c) If the reply to question (a) above is in the affirmative, whether Government propose to abolish the rule on this behalf ?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN replied :

73. (a)—No, but Medical Officers liable to attend entitled persons without charging fees should be paid the actual cost of conveyance by the patient if required to attend such patient outside Municipal limits, but within a distance of ten miles from their headquarters.

(b)—No.

(c)—Does not arise.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I know how is it practicable for a doctor to go round to all the patients when there are hundreds of Government servants in this town without some sort of conveyance ?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: Fortunately for all concerned, Sir, all the hundreds of Government servants do not fall ill at the same time.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: With regard to (b), may I know whether Government will issue instructions to all the Government doctors that they should not charge anything from a sick Government servant residing within the municipal limits of a town ?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: I do not think such instructions are desirable; reasonable conveyance charges should be paid by the patients, if necessary.

†Maulavi ABDUL BAK CHAUDHURY: Is there any rate of fees for that ?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: No, Sir.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Will Government change the existing rule and permit doctors to take conveyance charges, or in the alternative, provide them with Government conveyance ?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: There is no bar to the doctors taking conveyance charges.

Bogus Co-operative Stores in Karimganj Subdivision

Maulavi MABARAK ALI asked :

*74. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether they are aware that many bogus Co-operative Stores have been started in the Karimganj Subdivision by some interested persons only, to have a regular supply of essential commodities, by forging the names of alleged share-holders and without receiving any share money from them and the alleged share-holders of which, do not even know the existence of such stores ?

(b) Whether such stores before registration were inspected by the officers concerned ?

The Hon'ble Dr. MAHENDRA NATH SAIKIA replied :

74. (a) — No.

(b) — Does not arise.

Assam Tea Labourers' Association cum Assam Chotanagpuri Association

Mr. BINODE KUMAR J. SARWAN asked :

*75. Are Government aware that the Assam Tea Labourers' Association cum Assam Chotanagpuri Association has been in existence for many years since Provincial Autonomy was given and that it is the only organisation of the Tea Labour Community in Assam ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

75.—Government are aware that there is an Association of this name.

Mr. C. W. MORLEY: May I know, Sir, what is the total number of fee-paying members of both these associations?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: This Association was formed by themselves, but so far as I am aware it is not registered.

Mr. C. W. MORLEY: Is there any fee payable for membership?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: I am not aware of that, Sir.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I know either from the Hon'ble Minister or the hon. Questioner whether these *ex-garden* labourers have already settled in the Province?

†Mr. BINODE KUMAR J. SARWAN: Yes, they are permanently settled in the Province of Assam. They have made Assam their home.

Lands for *ex-Garden* Labourers

Mr. BINODE KUMAR J. SARWAN asked :

*76. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether Government are doing anything to provide lands for cultivation for the landless *ex-garden* labourers?

(b) Whether Government propose to allow settlement of some Government waste lands and reserves for cultivation by the *ex-garden* labourers?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

76 (a) & (b)—There is no restriction on the settlement of land with *ex-garden* labourers. The attention of the hon. Member is invited to the replies given to his Question (Starred) No. 35 in the 1943 November Session of the Assembly.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Are any reserves being thrown open to these *ex-garden* labourers?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI: No, Sir, not particularly, because the whole of Assam is available to them.

Godowns for storage of paddy and rice in Surma Valley

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN asked :

* 77. (a) Are Government aware that the Government Agents for procurement of paddy and rice in the Surma Valley face much difficulties in purchasing paddy and rice for want of godowns?

(b) Are Government aware that very often these Agents stop purchases for want of godowns?

(c) Are Government aware that when Government Agents stop purchases, the paddy market goes down resulting in loss by cultivators?

(d) Will Government be pleased to state how many godowns since now the Government Agents have been able to secure through Government officials in Habiganj, South Sylhet and Sunamganj Subdivisions?

(e) Do Government propose to take necessary steps to remove these difficulties by procuring suitable godowns for Agents?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

77. (a) & (b)—There is shortage of godowns which has sometimes affected procurement.

(c)—This may be the case.

(d)—Habiganj ... Nil.

South Sylhet ... One.

Sunamganj ... Five.

(e)—Yes. Government propose to construct some godowns.

†Speech not corrected.

Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN: May I know whether in Gauhati residential houses are also used as godowns by the Government Agents?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The questions related to the Surma Valley, Sir, but my hon. Friend wants information about Gauhati.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: No, this is not allowed.

Officers appointed served as Under-Secretary to Government

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked:

*78. Will Government be pleased to lay on the table a list of Extra Assistant Commissioners who have up-to-date served as Under-Secretary to the Government showing (i) their religion, (ii) native district and (iii) the period of service as such in each case?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

78.—A list has been placed on the library table.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: On what standard are persons of the Assam Civil Service appointed to these posts?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Normally, an Extra Assistant Commissioner with ten years' experience is brought up for training in the Secretariat for three years. It is in very rare cases that the period of three years has been increased by a year or so. The standard laid down is that when the Deputy Commissioners find that a particular officer is very good in putting up notes he is recommended. Government consider such recommendations and select one.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Are Government aware that there is some kind of discontent among the Surma Valley Hindu officers for not being drafted to these posts all this time?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have heard complaints, and therefore I have tried my level best to bring them in similar posts although not as Under-Secretary in the Civil Secretariat.

Officers appointed as Controller of Emigrant Labour

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked:

*79. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether any officer of the Assam Government (either I.C.S. or A.C.S.) has ever served as Controller of Emigrant Labour?
- (b) If so, who are they and the period of their term of office as such in each case?
- (c) If not, why not?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

79. (a)—No.

(b)—Does not arise.

(c)—The Government of Assam are not concerned in the matter and have no information, as the post is one under the Central Government.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Do the Government of India consult the Government of Assam in this matter?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No.

Supply of Paddy and Rice by Messrs. Steel Brothers in Dibrugarh

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH asked:

*80. (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether they have directed Messrs. Steel Brothers to supply paddy and rice to the Military, Oil Company, Railway authority, Tea Companies and civil population in any order of priority in the Dibrugarh Subdivision?

(b) If so, in what order ?

(c) Are Government aware that Messrs. Steel Brothers have failed to supply rice for civil population of Dibrugarh for the months of July, August and September 1944 ?

(d) If so, why ?

(e) Is it a fact that other licensed purchasers of paddy were unable to supply the stuff for refusal of the Railway Company to afford transport facilities to such dealers without a certificate from Messrs. Steel Brothers ?

(f) If so, do Government propose to take immediate steps to remove such restrictions experienced by individual licensed dealers ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

80. (a) & (b)—Although the urgent needs of the Army and essential industries are generally met first there is no rigid order of priority which depends at any time on the relative position of stocks with the different consumers.

(c)—No.

(d)—Does not arise.

(e)—Yes.

(f)—No. Rigid control over transport is a fundamental part of Government's policy of maximum procurement.

†Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: Is it a fact that Messrs. Steel Brothers have not been able to supply to the Rationing Authority at Dibrugarh ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The District Officer did not report it to be so.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Has the Deputy Commissioner on his own initiative, mentioned in his order that the Military are to be supplied first, Railway authorities next and then the civil population ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir.

Next General Local Board Elections

Srijut JOGENDRA CHANDRA NATH asked :

*81. (a) Will Government be pleased to state when they are going to hold the general election to the Local Boards of the Province ?

(b) Do Government propose to hold the said election in the next year ?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY replied :

81. (a) & (b)—Hon'ble Member's attention is drawn to the reply given to Starred Question No.35 (a) asked by Maulavi Abdur Rahman, M.L.A. at this session.

†Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: May I know if necessary arrangements are being made for the revision of the electoral roll ?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: As soon as the number of seats are determined by Government, steps will be taken.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know when the number of seats will be determined by Government ? How long will it take ?

(No reply.)

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Will there be any legislation amending the present Act ?

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

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know on what basis additional seats will be allocated ?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: Sir, under the provision of the proviso to Section 4, clause (2) of the Assam Local Self-Government Act, in allotting seats to different communities and interests, Government is to take into consideration the area held, the local rates paid and the population of different communities.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Are Government aware that in permanently settled areas local rates are realised from the raiyots by the landlords or Mirashdars?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: It has been reported to me by some of the hon. Members very recently that in permanently settled areas the landlords realise from the raiyots local rate along with rents, but, Sir, this is not so in the temporarily settled areas.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Will Government make enquiries asking report from the Subdivisional Officers and to produce rent-sheets where it is specifically mentioned that so much is realised towards local rate and so much as rent?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: I do not exactly understand what purpose will be served by it. It will take a long time. If the intention is to have a report from the District Magistrates, it will not help the hon. Member; if the election is to be held by the 31st of March next, as desired by the hon. Members, I think, it cannot reach us before that.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: But in the matter of ascertaining the number of seats, does not the Hon'ble Minister consider it desirable that this information should be collected so as to allot adequate seats to people of different communities?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: This will help Government, of course, Sir, but the time is so short that it is practically impossible to collect all these returns.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is the Hon'ble Minister prepared to accept that if all these preliminary informations are not collected, the allocation of seats to all the communities, particularly, to the Muslim community in the Surma Valley, will be detrimental to their interests?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: I think, Sir, apart from this question, we have got almost accurate figures in all other requisites.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is the Hon'ble Minister prepared to take from me that the Muslim population in the Habiganj Subdivision is more than double of that of the Hindus, and if seats are to be allotted under the provisions of the Local Self-Government Act, the Muslims will not get the adequate number of seats, although the population is more than double?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY: I think, the hon. Member could not follow me. Population of different communities is being taken into consideration.

Seizure of Salt by the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet

Maulavi MABARAK ALI asked:

*82. Will Government be pleased to state whether it is a fact that some hundreds of bags of salt despatched by Messrs. Radha Charan Brojendra Chandra Roy and Narendra Chandra Roy and some other merchants of Karimganj Bazar from Calcutta to Karimganj by boat were seized by the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, on transit at Fenchuganj and were sold to some merchants of Fenchuganj and Balaganj?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

82.—Babu Amalendu Syam, Sub-Inspector of Supply, Sylhet Sadar, seized the total quantity of 224 bags of salt and other commodities though there were proofs of import of 300 bags of contraband salt in two boats in Kushiara near Fenchuganj, out of which 27 bags were discovered from the house of one Digendra Kumar Sen of Rukanpur and 50 bags were reported to have been removed to the shop of Mohendra Kumar Roy of Balaganj. Two cases are pending against Mohendra Kumar Roy and two others. Subsequently one Ashad Ali Chaudhury and another who were found to be the claimants of 100 bags of salt, sold them at the controlled rate under the order of the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet. The remaining 124 bags were sold to the wholesaler at Fenchuganj. Other commodities were released on proof of ownership.

Maulavi Maziruddin Chaudhury, Sub-Inspector of Supply, Sylhet Sadar, seized 451 bags of salt from four boats at Kayasthaghat under Balaganj Police Station, which were sold to the wholesalers of Feuchuganj and Balaganj.

Babu Jatindra Mohan Gupta, Sub-Inspector of Supply, Karimganj, seized 619 bags of salt concealed for black-marketing. These were distributed to the consumers at the controlled rate while there was acute shortage of salt in the Karimganj Subdivision. No movement of salt is allowed from Bengal to Assam except on Assam Government Account.

†Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Why the goods were not allowed to reach their destination, viz., Karimganj?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Because they were contraband.

†Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Under what order?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Under the Controlled Commodities Distribution Order.

†Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Is salt also governed by the Food Grains Control Order?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, salt is not allowed to be imported by anyone except the Assam Government.

†Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Is it a fact that there is a Salt Control Order of the Assam Government?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: There is a Control Order as mentioned above.

†Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Regarding salt?

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

†Maulavi MABARAK ALI: Is it a fact that under that Control Order, no Government officer is allowed to seize goods unless they reach their destination?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir.

Supply of sugar, flour, etc., during Idds and Durga Pujah

Maulavi MABARAK ALI asked:

*83. Will Government be pleased to refer to the Supply Department order, dated the 13th July 1944, published in the *Assam Gazette*, regarding special supply of sugar, flour, etc., and to state—

- (a) Why other festivals have been excluded from such special supply?
- (b) Whether they are aware that the special supply ordered for the two Idds, Durga Pujah, etc., is not at all sufficient to meet the demands of the general public and that there is public agitation on the matter?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

83. (a)—Because of the difficult stock position and limited supply of imported commodities.

(b)—It may be so but the issue of extra ration so far sanctioned is the utmost Government can give because of the difficult stock position and present limited supply of imported commodities.

†Maulavi MABARAK ALI: How Government could distinguish between one festival and another?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Government are supposed to know which are more important and observed by a large section of the public.

†Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: Why in the last Durga Puja, no special supply was given to the inhabitants of Shillong, in spite of the Government order?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I regret, Sir, that on account of the stock position being very low, flour and sugar which were to be issued to all Hindu public during the last Puja festival could not be issued in Shillong, to individual families. However, different Puja Committees were given articles to meet the requirement of *prasad* as well as feeding.

There is another set of Question, I think, in the name of Babu Lalit Mohan Kar which is going to be replied wherein it will be stated the number of Puja Committees which were supplied during the last Puja festival.

Publication of distorted reports of Proceedings in the "Hindusthan Standard"

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Sir, I beg to bring to your notice the distorted news that has been published in the newspaper "Hindusthan Standard" reported by the Associated Press, about the Assembly affairs on the Motion about the Primary School Teachers' salary. If one goes through the news he will understand that the Motion has not been passed. News is published as follows:—

"Mr. Karuna Sindhu Roy's motion for introducing compulsory primary education throughout the Province and fixing the pay of lower primary school teachers at Rs. 45 per month at least was supported by Maulana Abdul Hamid.

The Education Minister Khan Bahadur Sayidur Rahman expressing his sympathy stated that the report of the Primary Education Committee was under Government's consideration and he could not agree to the Motion".

Sir, my complaint is that from this it is not understood that the Motion has been passed and the people of the constituencies will understand also like this.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: If the hon. Member complains of any breach of the privileges of the House then he should follow the Rules prescribed by the House for bringing this matter before the House.

Further discussion on the Motion on the Scheme* for Procurement and distribution of consumer goods

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the statement placed before the House as a scheme can hardly be called a scheme. It merely narrates what Government had done and are doing in this matter with only one or two suggestions for their future course of action. Hence it has been difficult for us to table amendments to this statement. This has, consequently, resulted in tabling some amendments† at random and cancelling each other and as such it is not possible for us to support those amendments *in toto*, though I am inclined to lend my support to the amendments of Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy. In doing so, I would like to point out some of the defects of the present system. Now, Sir, under the present system private merchants have to procure their goods in Calcutta markets themselves and then to bring them to Civil Supply Agency for storage and despatch to Assam, for which the latter charge a commission. After booking the goods in the railway or steamer, the invoice is sent to the District or Subdivisional Officer and intimation sent to the merchant concerned. The merchant has then to appear before the Deputy Commissioner or Sub-divisional Officer, whose office hands over the invoice to him for taking delivery of the goods. This procedure sometimes entails great delay. As for instance, in North Lakhimpur recently one petty cotton dealer received such an intimation from Calcutta that two bales of cotton had been despatched to him to Badatighat. Now, this man had to go to North Lakhimpur several times to enquire about the invoice, but the officers of the Supply Department of North Lakhimpur could not trace the invoice in their office.

*See Appendix D.

†See Appendix E.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Cotton goods have nothing to do with this, Sir.

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: I am citing an instance only, Sir. It was not cotton goods—but raw cotton.

The man had to wait from September till to the end of October and even now he does not know where the invoice of the goods sent to him is. Then again, Sir, it is not clear to us how prices can be effectively controlled under this system. Merchants getting their goods under this system are, I understand, allowed a margin of 20 to 25 per cent. over the cost price at Calcutta, as disclosed by their challans. Is there no room for collusion between the Calcutta supplier and the merchant concerned? I think, Government ought to have some agency there to see what price is actually paid at Calcutta. There should be also some one to check malpractices or unfairness on the part of Government agents' employees as between different traders seeking their services in securing transport space. In allowing the margin of 20 to 25 per cent. over the cost price at Calcutta also, the local Excise officers sometimes are found to give undue advantage to the traders either through honest mistake or through partiality. As for instance, I know an Excise Inspector offering to give certain traders in North Lakhimpur a margin of 20 to 25 per cent. over the Calcutta price plus the transport cost to Badatighat, which he said he could give as "landing cost". This would give the merchants a greater margin of profit than what they could get by unchecked profiteering and that at the cost of the poor cultivators and other consumers.

Then as regards method of distribution, I have to point out that on account of faulty selection of centres for the supply of consumer goods by wholesalers to retail dealers, some essential articles like hoes, axes, lanterns, woolen cloth, etc., are getting scarce in places like North Lakhimpur. Under the present arrangement the North Lakhimpur merchants, however big they may be, have to get their supplies of these goods from a wholesale dealer at Tezpur, at a discount of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. which is meant to cover their cost of transport from Tezpur to North Lakhimpur, as well as their margin of profit. Now this is an absurd proposition in view of the fact that quotas of goods allotted to these North Lakhimpur merchants by the Excise Superintendent at Tezpur, out of each consignment arrived at Tezpur, are ridiculously low, say 18 buckets or 15 hoes and axes or 20 woolen blankets only to big merchants like Messrs. Meghraj Ramgopal, Messrs. Amarchand Ramprasad, Messrs. Meghraj Gulabchand, who are expected to send a lorry each with a representative to get these small quantities of goods from a distance of one hundred and twenty-five miles. No sane person can expect these big merchants to do so for a discount of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. which can hardly cover the cost of transport, not to speak of leaving any margin of profit. The result has been disastrous. No one of these merchants feel inclined to get the quotas meant for them and in consequence the people of North Lakhimpur have to go without these essential articles. I would therefore suggest that a separate centre be opened in each Subdivision for wholesale supply.

With these words, Sir, I support the amendments of my Friend Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the only reason I wish to intervene in this debate is because Members have omitted to give any concrete example of the manner in which a Trade Adviser can justify his appointment. Anyone who tries to procure goods in Calcutta or from any area beyond Calcutta must know about the difficulties in the way. My hon. Friend, Khan Bahadur Keramat Ali, has asked whether the tea industry has got Trade Advisers in Calcutta. The answer is "no". But the tea industry has got a number of people who spend a good deal of time and trouble in going through all these control orders to secure goods within the terms of control orders and arrange the necessary transport to Assam. If I were to estimate the amount of time and money spent by these highly paid employees of agency houses in Calcutta it would be equivalent to 3 or 4 Trade Advisers. There are three cases however in which, to my own knowledge, a Trade Adviser who knows his job can perform a

great service. The first case concerns imported articles like patent medicines and foods such as powdered milk. The Central Government often control these articles by freezing imports, that is to say, they prohibit the importer from distributing these commodities until the Central Government has approved the system of distribution between the various provinces and between the various wholesalers. The Central Government orders the importer to allocate certain quotas to certain firms. Because such commodities as powdered milk are always in short supply, no wholesaler has the slightest difficulty in selling such commodities in towns like Calcutta, Nagpur and Bombay. The result is, Sir, these traders have no need to incur heavy freight charges and the very great risk of theft in sending such goods to Assam because they have large merchants waiting on their door steps in Calcutta ready to take these commodities away. The private traders in Assam can secure no quotas of these valuable imports unaided. The only way Assam can get its share is for a Trade Adviser, who is not a dealer, to interview the Controller of Import and insist on a quota being allotted to Assam. That quota can be allotted either to approved merchants in Assam or can be allotted to a Calcutta wholesaler on the firm condition that the wholesaler despatches a proportion of those goods to the Province of Assam. That is the first group of cases in which a *competent*, and I underline *competent*, Trade Adviser could assist this Province.

The second group of articles in which a Trade Adviser can assist is the procurement of articles which are manufactured in India. As most people in this House know, commodities such as fine cloth, machinery, tools and cutlery are all manufactured in India usually at a very long distance from Assam. Now the normal channel of distribution of these products is for the manufacturer either to have his depots in such large centres as Calcutta or to send these products to large wholesalers. In the past Assam merchants have been only small traders and have never been accustomed to deal with large manufactures on the other side of India. Commercial practice in Assam is for our small traders to secure these goods from large wholesalers in Calcutta. Therefore a small Assam trader has to get in touch with the wholesalers which means persuading the manufacturer that there is such a place in Assam so that when a manufacturer supplies a wholesaler, there will be a condition attached that the wholesaler sends a percentage of that supply to Assam. Making these contacts, Sir, is one of the services which a competent Trade Adviser could render small traders in this Province.

There is yet a third group of commodities whose sale is governed by very rigid control orders. I refer to iron and steel as an example. If Members have read that very formidable control order they will realise how difficult and how technical it is for a lay man to understand. It is quite obviously a waste of time for the small dealer in Assam to examine this difficult order and try to get materials through channels advertised so extensively by the Government of India. What happens in practice is that small traders do not understand what they have to do. They are entirely at the mercy of the black market. A Trade Adviser therefore could perform an invaluable service by collecting the orders of all small traders, assembling them in a form which complies with the control order and securing a bulk release from the iron and steel works in Bengal.

Finally, there is a service which a Trade Adviser can and should perform, namely, to see that the quota of goods once released by these controllers actually reaches Assam. Many Members in this Assembly will be surprised to know that not only is there a black market in Calcutta in these controlled commodities but there is actually a black market in quotas. What happens in practice is that a Bengal merchant secures a quota of a controlled article and instead of sending the quota to Assam he parts with it at a very large profit to a merchant in the Central Provinces or the Punjab and we in Assam see absolutely nothing of it. It is not therefore sufficient for Assam traders to get a quota of goods. That is only the beginning of their trouble. It is necessary to see that the quota is despatched from Calcutta and reaches the people of the Province. I, therefore, agree with my Friend Mr. Mookerjee that a Trade Adviser should be set up in Calcutta and that the Trade Adviser ought to be by far more important than a Civil Supply

Agency. Personally I have some doubts whether it is necessary to have the Civil Supply Agency, but on that I am prepared to be guided by the Hon'ble Premier. I consider that the biggest need is a competent Trade Adviser in Calcutta. My hon. Friend Khan Bahadur Maulavi Keramat Ali refers to the Trade Adviser as controlling the Civil Supply Agency. That is not my conception of his duties. He should be a general factotum and an adviser for all traders in Assam and in no sense controlling anybody—in no sense controlling the Civil Supply Agency. Therefore, Sir, without entering into personalities, if the Government of Assam have made an unwise appointment, I suggest the correct answer is to appoint a better Adviser.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: Will the hon. Member please inform the House as to what sort of man he wants to be appointed?

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: I am not in the Ministry of Assam.

Khan Sahib Maulavi DEWAN MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my hon. Friend Khan Bahadur Maulavi Keramat Ali has thoroughly dealt with the question of appointing a Trade Adviser in Calcutta and the activities of our Trade Adviser was brought to light by different Questions and answers which were put in this very Session of the Assembly. But it has been said by some other hon. Members that the Trade Adviser has proved a failure and that it is unnecessary to incur a recurring expenditure of Rs 30,000 a year. He has got no experience in trade. We have several other trade agencies, such as, for food-grains and other things. But no Trade Agent was appointed for that. So, the post of the Trade Adviser should be abolished. Sir, on the other hand, the Civil Supply Agency may be maintained in Calcutta as they have been performing their duties faithfully. They not only forward goods but also help dealers in procurement as far as possible. At least some purchases will be made by Government from time to time and so the Agency may remain in tact. Lastly, I may say that the Civil Supply Agency is the best medium to help procurement and transport of dealers' goods as well as goods ordered by Government.

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN: গভর্ণমেন্ট জনসাধারণের নিত্য প্রয়োজনীয় জিনিষ ক্রয় বিক্রয়ের যে ব্যবস্থা করিয়াছেন তাহার ফলে আসামের প্রজাসাধারণ ক্রমানুয়ে মৃত্যুর কবলে পতিত হইতেছে। আসাম গভর্ণমেন্ট ১ কোটি ১২ লক্ষ্য মানুষের গভর্ণমেন্ট কিন্তু দুঃখের বিষয় এই যে এই গভর্ণমেন্ট বর্তমানে দরিদ্র প্রজাসাধারণের প্রতি দৃষ্টি না রাখিয়া কেবল কতিপয় ধনিক বনিক ব্যবসায়ী এবং Supply Department এর কতিপয় officers দের পেট ও পকেট মোটা করিবার জন্যই ব্যবস্থা করিয়াছেন। দেশের মেরুদণ্ড কৃষক সমাজ যাহাদের উপর আসামের আর্থিক অবস্থার উন্নতি নির্ভর করে সেই কৃষকদের দাঁ, কোদাল, কাঁচি, পাচন ইত্যাদি দিবার কোনো ব্যবস্থাই করা হয় নাই। আমি অনেক জায়গায় দেখিয়াছি যে চা'রি আনার জিনিষ ৫ টাকায় লোকে কিনিতে বাধ্য হইতেছে। অনেক জায়গায় এবং অনেক সময়ই এই সব জিনিষের জন্য অনেকে ঘুরিয়াও পায় না। পূর্বে গ্রামে গ্রামে কলকাররা লাঙ্গলের ফাল, কাঁচি, দাঁ, কোদালি ইত্যাদি তৈয়ারী করিত কিন্তু এখন তাহারা বসিয়া আছে। কয়লার অভাবে তাহারা কিছুই তৈয়ারী করিতে পারিতেছে না। গত মার্চ মাসে আমি এই সমন্ধে মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করিয়াছিলাম কিন্তু বোধ হয় দরিদ্র কৃষকদের কথা তাহার স্মরণ নাই। আমি বিচার করিয়া দেখিয়াছি যে এই কয় বৎসরে whole salers, retailers ও Supply Department এর officer রা খুব কম পক্ষে ২০ কোটি টাকা দরিদ্র প্রজাসাধারণের নিকট হইতে আদায় করিয়াছে। এই সব অত্যাচারের প্রতিকারের জন্য মুশলিম লিগের পক্ষ হইতে বার বার গবর্ণমেন্টের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করা হইয়াছে কিন্তু আজ পর্যন্তও কিছু করা হয় নাই। মাননীয় প্রধান মন্ত্রী অস্বীকার করিতে পারেন কিন্তু আমি প্রত্যেক জিলা ও মহকুমা ভ্রমণ করিয়া যাহা দেখিয়াছি তাহাতে আমার এই ধারণা হইয়াছে যে Supply Department এর Officerরা দেশের প্রজাসাধারণকে ধ্বংস করিতে বসিয়াছে। মাননীয় প্রধান মন্ত্রী অনেক সময় বলেন যে এই সমস্ত অভিযোগের বিরুদ্ধে প্রমাণ সংগ্রহ করা উচিত। আমি জিজ্ঞাসা করি ইহা কি দরিদ্র কৃষকদের পক্ষে সম্ভবপর। অভিযোগের কথাত দূরে থাকুক কোন বিষয়ে Supply Department এর Officer দের নিকট বা Subdivisional Officer এর নিকট দরখাস্ত করিলে অনেক ঘুরাঘুরি

করিয়াম তাহার কোনই স্বাক্ষর পাওয়া যায় না—এই ত দরিদ্র কৃষকের অবস্থা। আমরা নিরুপায় হইয়া গরীব প্রজাদের উপদেশ দিয়াছি যে Supply Sub-Inspector দের নিয়া নাড়াচাড়া করিলে কিছুই হইবে না—তাহারা অনেক দায়ী-সম্পন্ন লোকের সঙ্গে সংশ্লিষ্ট আছেন এবং তাহাদের বিরুদ্ধে কিছু করিতে হইলে দরিদ্র কৃষকদের সর্বস্বান্ত হইতে হইবে। তাহাদের উপরওয়ালার উপর নির্ভর করা ছাড়া উপায় নাই। আমরা বুঝিয়াছি যে যেমন একদিন কৰ্মীয়ার দরিদ্র জনসাধারণ একত্র হইয়া পুৰল পরাক্রান্ত জ্বরের ধবংস সাধন করিয়াছিল সেই রকমে যদি আমরা জনমতের একতা স্থাপন করিতে পারি তাহা হইলে এইসব অন্যায় অত্যাচারের বিরুদ্ধে প্রতিকার সম্ভব হইবে। আমি মাননীয় প্রধান মন্ত্রীকে বার বার জানাইয়া দিতেছি যে যদি শুধু কয়েকজন wholesaler; retailer ও Supply Department এর officer দের স্বনি করিবার জন্য তিনি এই গভর্ণমেন্ট স্থাপন করিয়া থাকেন তাহা হইলে এই গভর্ণমেন্ট কখনও স্থায়ী হইবে না—ভাঙ্গিয়া পড়বে। যদি জনসাধারণকে রক্ষা করিবার জন্য এই গভর্ণমেন্টের সৃষ্টি হইয়া থাকে তাহা হইলে মাননীয় প্রধান মন্ত্রীকে আমি অনুরোধ করিতেছি যে তিনি যেন অতি সঙ্গর একটি কমিশন নিযুক্ত করিয়া প্রত্যেক জিলায় অনুসন্ধান করাইয়া আমার কথার সত্যতার প্রমাণ নেন। তারপর Excise Department এর officer দের উপর তদন্ত করিবার ভার দেওয়া হইয়াছে যাহাতে লোকে কোন জিনিষ লুকাইয়া আসামে আনিয়া অধিক মূল্যে বিক্রয় করিতে না পারে। কিছুদিন পূর্বে বড়পেটা হইতে আসিবার সময় আমি নিজে দেখিয়াছি যে এই সমস্ত officer কাহারও বিছানা দেখিলেই বলে “বিছানা খোল”। একজন মাড়োয়ারীর বিছানা খুলিতে বলা হইলে সে বিছানা না খুলিয়া পকেট হইতে Money bag বাহির করিয়া তাহা খুলিতে আমি দেখিয়াছি। আজকাল বহুলোকে বিছানার ভিতর অনেক জিনিষ বাকিয়া আনে এবং পরে Black market এ তাহা বিক্রয় করে। Excise Department এর Checking officer দের পকেটে কিছু দিলেই গোলমাল মিটিয়া যায়। এই ভাবে এই officer রা ধনী হইতেছে। জনসাধারণের অবস্থা শূণ্যালের কাছে মুগী বর্গা দেওয়ার মত হইয়াছে। আপনারা সকলেই এই Department এর officer দের গুণাগুণ জানেন এবং এইসব officer দের হাতে এইরূপ দায়ী-সম্পন্ন কাজের ভার দেওয়া হইয়াছে। আমি বলিতেছি যে অতি সঙ্গর Excise Department এর officer দের হাত হইতে চেক করিবার দায়ী-সম্পন্ন উঠাইয়া লওয়া হউক। আমি অনুরোধ করি যে অতি সঙ্গর কৃষকদিগকে দাঁ কোদাল, লাঙ্গলের ফাল, পাচন ইত্যাদি—দেশের আর্থিক উন্নতির জন্য যাহা দরকার সেইসব জিনিষ Co-operative basis এ যেন দেওয়া হয়। দেখা যায় যে আজকাল Co-operative Stores গুলিকে কোন মাল দেওয়া হয় না—retailer দের সমস্ত মাল দেওয়া হইতেছে এবং তাহারা Black Market এ অনেক বেশী দামে মাল বিক্রয় করিতেছে। ইহার ফলে অনেক Co-operative Store বন্ধ হইয়া গিয়াছে এবং কৃষকেরা উপযুক্ত মূল্যে তাহাদের দরকারী জিনিষপত্র পাইতেছে না। Co-operative Stores গুলিকে মাল না দেওয়ার কারণ এই যে Co-operative Stores এর হিসাব পত্র অদল বদল করিবার উপায় নাই এবং officer দেরও ঘুষ খাইবার সুযোগ নাই। মাননীয় প্রধান মন্ত্রী বলেন যে তিনি এই সঙ্কে বার বার circular letter দিয়াছেন কিন্তু তাহার circular letter অনুযায়ী কাজ হইতেছে না। আমার মনে হয় জিলায় Deputy Commissioner, Subdivisional Officer এবং Supply Department এর officer রা এই সমস্ত circular letter বাস্তবে ফেলিয়া রাখিয়াছেন। Co-operative Stores গুলির উপর Deputy Commissioner, Subdivisional Officer, Supply officer রা খুশী নন। Co-operative Stores গুলি যাহাতে বন্ধ হয় তাহার চেষ্টা তাহারা করিতেছেন—ইহার একমাত্র কারণ হইতেছে যে তাহারা এইসব Co-operative Stores হইতে টাকা বা ঘুষ আদায় করিতে পারেন না। আমি বার বার অনুরোধ করিতেছি যে অতি সঙ্গর যেন গভর্ণমেন্ট একটা কমিশন নিযুক্ত করেন এবং এই সমস্ত ব্যাপারে তদন্ত করান নতুবা দেশের লোকের যে অবস্থা হইয়াছে তাহারা আর বাঁচিবে না। গভর্ণমেন্ট যতই Grow More Food Campaign ও National War Front মারকণ্ড প্রচার কার্য করুন না কেন যদি লোকের হাতে কাঁচি, দাঁ, লাঙ্গলের ফাল, পাচন ইত্যাদি না থাকে তাহা হইলে শুধু বক্তৃতা দিয়া কিছু হইবে না। বক্তৃতা গভর্ণমেন্ট অনেক দিয়াছেন, এখন বক্তৃতার সময় নাই কাজের সময় আসিয়াছে। আমি supply officer দের কার্য দেখিয়া আশ্চর্য হইয়াছি।

তাহাদের বাড়ীর দরজায় silk এর পর্দা। আমি মাননীয় প্রধান মন্ত্রীকে অনুরোধ করিতেছি যে এই সব officer কত টাকা Bank এ জমা রাখিয়াছেন,—তাহাদের পরিবারদের জন্য কত গহনা করিয়াছেন, কত সম্পত্তি কিনিয়াছেন, ইত্যাদি বিষয়ে তদন্ত করাইবার জন্য অতি সত্বর যেন একটা Commission নিযুক্ত করেন। যদি গভর্ণমেন্ট ইহা করিতে অক্ষম হন তাহা হইলে আসামের ১ কোটি ১২ লক্ষ লোক নিজেরাই যাহা করিবার করিবে। আমি বার বার অনুরোধ করিতেছি যে গভর্ণমেন্ট যেন Co-operative Stores গুলিতে মাল দিবার ব্যবস্থা করেন, এবং দেশের লোক যাহাতে তাহাদের বিশেষ দরকারী জিনিষ পত্র পান তাহার ব্যবস্থা করেন।

উপসংহারে আমি উপরোক্ত অভিযোগ ও বিষয় গুলির প্রতি পুনরায় আসাম গভর্ণমেন্টের তীব্র দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করিতেছি।

Maulavi ABDUL AZIZ: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the scheme for procurement and distribution of consumer goods and sundry articles which has been placed before the House shows that the partnership of two big firms in Calcutta have been procuring consumer goods for Assam under the name of Messrs. Civil Supply Agency of 72, Canning Street, Calcutta. Sir, it does not disclose the names of the two firms which, in my opinion, ought to have been given for the information of the Members of this House as well as of the traders of the Province. The scheme is quite a new one and the place of its execution is located in Calcutta. So few of our people came to know of this before and even now. When anything new is done by Government for the people, sufficient publicity should be given for the benefit of the people so that they may avail of due and legitimate advantage of it. I hope Government will hereafter give due publicity to all their new doings through the Publicity Department as well as local newspapers.

Now, Sir, as to the firms selected and appointed by Government, I have nothing to say provided they are reliable and send us goods of the right type. Some of the articles coming into the Province through this agency have been found to be bad and I myself can mention of one such article, namely, umbrellas. I myself examined some of the umbrellas and found that they were of very inferior quality and at the same time prices charged for them were much higher than the umbrellas of the same quality brought by the traders on their own account. Now, my submission therefore is that Government should insist that the agency should not send up quantity only but also quality.

It has been suggested, Sir, from some quarters that the agency should have been given to some traders of Assam. But in my opinion, Sir, Calcutta firms would be in a better position as they are on the spot for a long time and have been very much informed of the market conditions of Calcutta and places beyond Calcutta.

As to the Trade Adviser, Sir, it has been said that this post is unnecessary and that it should be abolished, but I differ from this point of view. As I understand, Sir, the Civil Supply Agency make purchases of goods, store them up in their godowns and pack and despatch them and their duty ends there. But the Trade Adviser is a wholtime servant of Government, who keeps an eye on the market, and finds out when and where controlled goods are available and also at favourable prices. Thus, his duty is, I understand, to secure transport for the purchased goods. He further gives advice to our traders and also to the Civil Supply Agency. The Civil Supply Agency have done their business and they are not expected to do and devote their whole time services to the Province of Assam.

In view of this, Sir, I think that Government have rightly created the post of the Trade Adviser. But, as to the incumbent of that post I have one objection. I understand the present incumbent is an old pensioner and he is a man of Bengal. He has retired from service and he is living in Calcutta now. He served under the Income Tax Department and after a long period of service has retired and he has spent his life in calculating mathematical figures on papers. As he is an old man and is not expected to live long and even if he live he would not come back to this Province. So, I hold, Sir, that this gentleman ought to be discharged and a

younger man of this Province of good education should be taken in his place. The new incumbent should be given all facilities so that he may get training in the matter of trade. Sir, my idea is that such a man will be an useful hand for the Government of Assam even after the war. After the war, Sir, there will naturally be a race for industrialisation of the provinces and at that time such a trained hand will be of very great help. So, my suggestion is that the present incumbent be discharged immediately and a comparatively young man of good education be appointed in his place and that the new incumbent be given all facilities for training in Calcutta.

Sir, as to the consumer goods, I confess that I have not a very good idea of the various articles coming to this Province and I would request the Hon'ble Prime Minister to enlighten us on this matter. I would request the Hon'ble Prime Minister to include in the list building materials, such as iron posts, joists, nails and cement. Sir, the war has brought money to the country and our people are wanting to make dwelling houses, but for want of iron materials and cement they are failing to do that.

As to the distribution, my idea is that it should be placed in the hands of the food committees which are functioning in the Subdivisions and the sale of these things should be given to the traders who should sell them under permit system to be issued by the Deputy Commissioner or Subdivisional Officer as the case may be instead of the Excise Inspectors who are all touring officers and are not available at all times. With these observations, Sir, I resume my seat.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : The scheme for the purpose of procurement and distribution of consumer goods has been placed before the House for its verdict. I may be permitted to say that the whole scheme is primarily divided into two parts. The first is the procurement scheme and the second is the distribution scheme. Various Members have expressed their views with regard to the policy of procurement and it is evident from those speeches that the scheme as followed by Government up till now is not up to the mark. It could not create such an impression that all the Members of all sections of the House are satisfied. From the criticisms which have been made by the individual Members it is seen that it is by nature defective in many parts.

Now let me scrutinise the scheme as presented by the Hon'ble Premier and try to find out how far it is defective and whether those defects are likely to be removed. Their scheme is that they have appointed certain agency in Calcutta and the primary duty of that agency is to assist traders of the Province in the matter of procurement. This agency is also buying controlled articles on behalf of Government. Sir, in this connection I will share the same views with Mr. Sen. My idea is that in spite of buying on Government account the private traders should be given the best possible assistance in procuring the consumer goods at controlled prices and that assistance should be rendered by Government agency—I do not mind whether it is the Civil Supply Agency or the Trade Adviser. I shall come to this later on and discuss the matter. What is the present policy of Government? They have a Supply Secretary in charge of the management, they have got another Director of consumer goods in the Commissioner of Excise. What is his duty? We have been told that he frequently visits Calcutta and looks to the various matters relating to procurement. So to say he is also the Controller of Purchases in Calcutta and abroad. We are also told that the Central Government have lent us an officer for Assam in the matter of assisting the procurement scheme of Government. I do not think whether that particular officer is utilised in the Province, but this is my information that there is an officer who has been lent by the Central Government. While we have these officers now we are to see whether it is at all necessary that there should be another Trade Adviser in Calcutta. As regards the present incumbent at Calcutta who is now functioning as the Trade Adviser and his activities towards assisting the procurement of consumer goods, it many scandalous things have come up before the House

is expressed in the House that the Trade Adviser has taken recourse to various scandalous practices and it has been reported to me that Government have been pleased to institute an enquiry into the allegations which are now being made against that particular officer. Now, Sir, whether that particular officer is a capable one or whether he has become incapable on account of his retirement, as suggested by Maulavi Abdul Aziz, to hold charge of this office, I am not to say. If he is not fit he may be removed. But now it is to be seen whether it is absolutely necessary that there should be two agencies to assist Government in procuring the consumer goods outside the Province, one in the shape of the Civil Supply Agency and the other in the shape of the Trade Adviser. I see the ability of the Trade Adviser is absolutely meagre and he is of no good. On the face of one agency which have been entrusted with the duties that they should make the best efforts to help traders of the Province as well as Government in the matter of purchases, I do not see why there should be another Trade Adviser whose functions will always overlap the functions of the other agency. As a matter of fact I have been told that things have been happening like that. Now it is to be considered very carefully whether without any third hand outside the Province it will be possible on the part of Government to make procurement possible at controlled prices. I would hold that there must be some agency and there must be one agency in the shape of Civil Supply Agency or so and not in the shape of Trade Adviser. But there must be one body which should look to the interest of the Province and also whose duty should be to assist Government in making adequate purchases at controlled prices.

Sir, a good number of amendments have been proposed to the scheme. The Leader of the Communist Party, Mr. K. S. Roy in one of his amendments suggests that instead of the Civil Supply Agency or the Trade Adviser, there should be one Trade Commissioner who should be a whole-time servant of the Government of Assam. In another amendment, he has suggested that an Advisory Board, whose advice should be binding on Government, should be formed immediately, and he went so far as to say that it should be elected by the House during this Session. Here Sir, I am at one with him. To regulate and to give advice to Government officers like the Secretary, Supply, who are directing the whole purchase scheme, an advisory Board composed of the representatives of the people of this Province would be of great help. It is not expected that Government should know every details of the interior, the particular needs of the rural population, and so on. So, I would urge upon Government to form such an Advisory Board during this Session and thus give us a chance to render help in this matter.

Lastly Sir, I would urge upon Government that they should abolish the post of the Trade Adviser immediately, as much scandalous things are being said against him.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank all those Members who have participated in the discussion on the scheme for procurement and distribution of consumer goods in the Province. I have analysed every suggestion made on the floor of the House, and I find that there is very little difference between the Government scheme and suggestions made. Everyone is agreed, Sir, that there must be a procurement agency at Calcutta, the principal market centre, but opinions have differed whether it should have the shape of a Trade Adviser or in the words of my hon. Friend Mr. Karuna Sindhu Roy, who only wants to change the nomenclature, to that of "Trade Commissioner," whereas the opposite view has been expressed that there is absolutely no justification for this post, and a procurement agency should always function in Calcutta to get the largest quantity of consumer goods for Assam. Opinions have differed again—some suggesting that some one from Assam should be given the chance of procurement for Assam. One enterprising member of the great mercantile community recommended that even the commission should be enhanced, whereas the other view has been very strongly held that people who have been in that trade, people who know the centres where these goods can be obtained,

people who have got connection not only with Calcutta, but even Bombay, Lahore, Delhi, etc., should be appointed as our procurement agents. I was especially asked by Maulavi Abdul Aziz to inform the House what goods are included in the term 'consumer goods'. It is a long list, but I think in order to facilitate the decision of the Members on this important subject, I had better place the list. The list has been divided into two groups—one called the primary consumer goods, and the list contains as many as 40 articles. Naturally agricultural implements have taken the top place in the list. I will read through the list, Sir.

1. Agricultural implements, as under :—

Daos	Kurpis
Harrows	Ploughs
Kodalis	Powrahs
Sugar-cane crushers.	
2. Bamboo umbrella handles.
3. Bangles, celluloid or glass.
4. Beads.
5. Bell metal, ingots, sheets or slabs.
6. Bell metal (*kansa*) ware.
7. *Biddies*.
8. Blankets.
9. Bottles.
10. Brass ingots, sheets or slabs.
11. Brassware.
12. Buttons.
13. Candles.
14. Caps.
15. *Catechu*.
16. Chalk.
17. Chakees, stone or wooden.
18. Cocoa-nut oil.
19. Fair rope, string or yarn.
20. Colours and dyes, as defined in the I.R.C.A. Goods Tariff.
21. Drugs, crude or raw, as defined in the I.R.C.A. Goods Tariff.
22. Fishing nets.
23. Hemp, raw, for the manufacture of fishing nets.
24. Hookaks and *narials* or *naichas* and component parts thereof.
25. Iron and steel, as under :—

Anghities, or iron *choolas*—

Angle iron, Anvils, Axes, Axles, Bars, Bolts, Buckets, Channels, Cooking utensils, corrugated sheets (galvanized), Crow-bars, Flat iron, Hammers, Hinges, Gutters, Hoops, Hoop iron, Mortars and pestles, Nails, Nuts, Pans, Picks, Pipes, Plates, Pots, Ridging, Screws, Sheets, Shovels, Spades, Tacks, Weights for fishing nets, Wire, Wire netting.	
26. Lead weights for fishing nets.	
27. <i>Lohras</i> and <i>sils</i> .	
28. Matches, safety.	
29. Medicines.	
30. Piece-goods, as under,	
Book-binding cloth	Thread,
<i>Doosoolie cloth</i>	Twist,
<i>Khaddar</i>	Yarn.
Standard cloth.	
31. Saws.	
32. Slate pencils.	
33. Slates, writing.	
34. Soap, country.	
35. Soda ash.	
36. Soda crystals.	
37. Tinned sheets.	
38. Tobacco, country manufactured.	
39. Umbrella.	
40. Umbrella fittings.	

This is the exhaustive list of primary consumer goods.

Then we have got a Secondary Consumer Goods list consisting of 33 items :

1. Aluminium ware.
2. Beer.
3. Bicycles.
4. Bicycles, Component parts of.
5. Books.
6. Boxes or trunks leather, tin or steel.
7. Brushes.
8. Bulbs, electric.
9. Caps and discs for closing bottles.
10. China ware.
11. Cigarettes and cigars.
12. Cigarette paper.
13. Clocks and watches.
14. Combs.
15. Confectionery.
16. Copper ingots, sheets or slabs.
17. Copper ware.
18. Cutlery.
19. Disinfectants.
20. Electric appliances, including electric torches.
21. Electroplated ware.
22. Enamelled ware.
23. Footwear, *i.e.*, boots, sandals, shoes and slippers.
24. Glass ware.

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| 25. Groceries. | 33. Piece goods, as under, Bed and table linen, Calico, Cambric, Flannel. Hosiery, Kharwa cloth, Linen, Mull, Muslin, Shawls, Wearing apparel, Silk, including artificial silk. |
| 26. Haberdashery. | 34. Stationery. |
| 27. Hardware. | 35. Tobacco, imported, manufactured. |
| 28. Lamps and lanterns, brass or tin. | 36. Toilet requisites. |
| 29. Oilman stores. | 37. Wines, Spirits and Cordials, |
| 30. Paint and Varnish. | 38. Zinc Ware. |
| 31. Paper including blotting paper | |
| 32. Pen knives. | |

One thing—I will draw particular attention of my Friend Mr. Kedarnal Brahmin is that in neither of these two lists ground-nut finds a place.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: On a point of information, Sir. Who has prepared this list?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Higher up. Not here; by the Regional Priority Committee.

Now, Sir, the list that I have placed before the House is formidable and any one of Assam traders who wants to deal in these articles will find great difficulty, as pointed out by Mr. Whittaker, to find out where to get these goods; the metallic goods are very strictly controlled. For the quarter ending 30th September we are having—

C. I. sheets	...	...	...	500 tons.
Bars	...	...	...	300 ,,

If Maulana Sahib had been here, I would tell him that long before he thought, Government had asked the Government of India to allot their share of steel. Then—

Rods	...	...	...	50 tons.
Wire nails	...	...	...	30 ,,
Plain black sheets	...	...	...	50 ,,
Galvanized wire	...	...	...	10 ,,

For the next quarter, we would be getting more quantity of those controlled articles.

Before I proceed further, I would like to place before the House the articles which we have been able to secure through the help of the procuring agency at Calcutta, the Civil Supply Agency, up till 30th September, 1944,

1. Staffad's Butter	...	...	...	50,020 lbs.
2. Condensed milk (vitol)	...	...	...	4,848 tins.
3. Egg Powder	...	...	...	3,000 lbs.
4. Electric bulbs	...	...	...	555 Nos.

in procured goods, that is goods we are getting on the quota system.

Then from the General market, the following goods were bought and sent to the Province

1. Hurricane lanterns	...	...	...	...	85 Dozs.
2. Jabakusun Hair Oil (large)	...	...	...	...	2064 Bottles.
3. Lakshmbilash Hair Oil	...	...	...	...	1896 ,,
4. Candles.	...	...	...	...	3581 Dozs.
5. Washing soap	...	...	...	...	4611 mds.
6. Khaki buttons	...	...	...	...	150 Grs.
7. Red Ink Nibs	...	...	...	...	250 Grs.
8. Relief Type Nibs	...	...	...	...	250 Grs.
9. Lead Pencils	...	...	...	...	25 Grs.
10. Kolinos Tooth Paste	...	...	...	...	576 Dozs.

11. Wilson's Dental Cream	...	...	62 Dozs.
12. Enoline Tooth Paste	...	...	144 Dozs.
13. Umbrellas	...	...	9,000 Nos.
14. Bengal Chemical Hair Oil	...	...	170 Dozs.
15. Canvas Shoes	...	...	1,000 Prs.
16. Pickaxe	...	...	567 Dozs.
17. Kodalis	...	...	901 Dozs.
18. Cloudy Amonia	...	...	176 "
19. Mistol (Large)	...	...	4 "
20. Dietz Junior Lanterns	...	...	93 "
21. Dietz Comet	...	...	36 "
22. Buckets 12"	...	...	155 "
23. " 10"	...	...	126 "
24. Kodalis (Heavy)	...	...	420 "
25. Paint	...	...	3 Tons.
26. Woolen blanket	...	...	5,585 Pieces.
27. Cloth Caps	...	...	5,250 "
28. Galvanized Screw	...	...	29 Cwt.
29. Coir String	...	...	570 mds. 33 $\frac{3}{4}$ srs.
30. Pencil	...	...	340 Grs.
31. Copying Pencil	...	...	12 "
32. Penholders	...	...	100 "
33. Nibs	...	...	90 "

Now, it is for hon. Members to see whether Government are not pursuing proper policy in trying to get articles which are necessary. Butter and condensed milk are daily necessities, and form part of sick diet. Kodalis, Pickaxe and lanterns—these are daily wanted and we have been trying to secure them as much as possible. We have also tried to get umbrellas, for which order was placed, but so far, Calcutta could produce about 50 thousand only of which 9 thousand were received within 9th September. The point that has got to be taken notice of by my Friends who have taken part in this discussion is that we must have an Agency in Calcutta. Somebody said that the Civil Supply Agency is a black horse or dark horse as it is called in racing circles. For Assam they are really dark horses. We did not know them at all. It is the Deputy Controller of Consumer Goods who recommended this firm and said that these two firms were the biggest importers of consumer goods in pre-war times in Calcutta. They were recommended to him by the General Trades Association. It is on his recommendation that this firm was engaged as our procurer in Calcutta.

Babu RABINDRANATH ADITYA: Were they importers of all these consumer goods?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Barring metals they were.

Babu DAKSHINA BANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: What are the names of these firms?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: That will be given in answer to a Question, which will be placed before the House in a day or two. The names I do not exactly remember. My Friend will get them in a day or two. This firm was originally engaged to help Assam traders, first, in procuring goods which they wanted to indent, and then in transport which was not particularly available. They undertook storage and ultimately arranged transport to send them to their destination. In consultation with the Deputy Controller of Civil Supplies, they were to get a commission of 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ th per cent. In some cases, it was found that Assam traders did not take their own money to Calcutta to pay for the goods. Then it was arranged that if this firm advanced 75 per cent. of the capital and bought the

goods for import into Assam, as required by the terms, they would be allowed to charge one anna in the rupee as commission, that is 6½ per cent. Goods like groundnuts and vegetable oil were required by a large number of big merchants in the Province. We heard that one particular oil mill wanted to import 10,000 mds. of groundnuts as has been disclosed here by my Friend Mr. Kedarmal Brahmin and he is falling foul of this agency because that party could not procure transport for that commodity. I have read out to you the list of consumer goods, and groundnut is not one of the items for which transport can be found by the firm.

Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN: Will Government be pleased to issue permits to the traders?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, if my Friend will apply to me later on.

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI: May I know, Sir, why groundnut is wanted by oil mills?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The hon. Member who has raised this complaint is in a better position than myself to answer that and I find that the last questioner as well as the complainant are Members of the same block and sitting in the same group and thus he can have a better idea if he asks the Members from his group. Then again, Sir, the same hon. Member made a complaint about a certain merchant who I know was wanting to import a big quantity of vegetable oil or ghee. I remember the trader took from the Assam Government a letter—as no permit is required—to this firm to import 5,000 mds. of vegetable oil or ghee. The Civil Supply Agency gave them only 2 wagons or 1/10th of what the trader wanted to bring. On the enquiry of the reason why this small allotment was made, the Civil Supply Agency explained that the Bengal Government had fixed a quota of vegetable oil or ghee for Assam to the extent of 7,000 mds. only and if one party was given 5,000 mds. very little would be left for the other claimants for it. I do not know for what purpose it is used, but I am told by a trader that in the absence of good ghee in the market to make sweetmeat there was a great need for vegetable ghee and so I permitted a large number of suppliers to bring in that commodity, but the Calcutta Agency could not give more than a few wagons' space to those traders. So, Sir, the complaint from that particular quarter against the Civil Supply Agency falls to the ground. Most of the hon. Members have complained against this firm on account of the bad quality of washing soap and dental cream that this firm has despatched to the Province. In connection with the report which I have received from the Director of Consumer Goods, I went into the matter thoroughly and I found that those two particular varieties of goods were not purchased by the Civil Supply Agency for any trader of Assam, nor on behalf of Assam Government but the orders were placed either by the Trade Adviser or by the Deputy Controller-General of Civil Goods. They merely forwarded the goods.....

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Who is that Deputy Controller-General of Civil Goods?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have been mentioning that very often. However, this Deputy Controller-General is in charge of seeing that the 4 Provinces, *viz.*, Bihar, Bengal, Assam and Orissa, do get consumer goods and they are sold at controlled rates. This Officer is appointed by the Central Government.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: May I know, Sir, who is the Director of Consumer Goods of this Province?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The Excise Commissioner. It was found, Sir, that this Civil Supply Agency are not at fault for the bad quality of those goods. I am not here, Sir, to say that the Civil Supply Agency are saints and that they are not amenable to corrupt practices. But at the same time, one should not condemn anyone unheard. Many Members have heard

that this firm was selected, as I have said, by a very responsible officer and recommended to us at a time when consumer goods were practically unavailable. The first consignment of washing soap was sent at the instance of our Supply Secretary, Mr. Marar, who goes to Calcutta almost once in a month in order to arrange transport programme with the Regional Priority Committee. Once when there was very acute shortage of washing soap in our Province he placed a certain order in Calcutta. At that time the Deputy Controller-General was not present at Calcutta but had gone to Orissa. After about a fortnight the Deputy Controller-General came to Shillong with some samples of soap which he showed to some traders of Shillong to know whether that kind of soap would be acceptable to the people of Assam. The traders selected a certain quality and he pointed out to me that, whereas the soap ordered for by Mr. Marar was somewhere at Rs. 38 per maund, this variety which was acceptable to the traders of Shillong, if not of whole of Assam, could be available at Rs 32 per maund. He said that there was a great advantage to the public of Assam in having a Trade Agent or Trade Adviser of their own at Calcutta who would contact with the manufacturers to get competitive tenders and would get the best class of goods at the cheapest price. It was at his suggestion that the Assam Government first took up the idea of having one as Trade Agent. Luckily for Assam, within a month or two Mr. G. C. Desai, I. C. S., the Controller-General of Civil Supply of consumer goods whose headquarters is at Bombay came to Assam along with Mr. Subhan, the Deputy Controller-General and both discussed with us and at the time Mr. A. C. Datta, who retired from Assam as Assistant Commissioner of Income-tax was available. They interviewed him and selected him to be the best man to become Trade Adviser at Calcutta. It is in consultation with them that this gentleman was appointed. Whatever has been done by the Provincial Government has been done with the best of motives, that is of helping the Assam public in getting consumer goods at controlled prices. If some articles have arrived which are unsalable or which are found to be unusable stuff, the cause does not lie with the procuring agency or those who place orders with importers or manufacturers. It was either lack of judgment or I should say, lack of inspection at the time of despatch of goods that is responsible for the loss of some quantities of stuff to Assam. Therefore, Sir, I see that the advice which has now been tendered on the floor of the House is that there should be a procurement agency either as Trade Adviser and a procurement agency working on commission basis or at least one of these two functionaries should remain in Calcutta.

Next question is as regards distribution in the Province. After the goods arrive, we have done our best for equitable distribution. When they were bought at Government cost, the goods were consigned to the Deputy Commissioners and Subdivisional Officers and they were asked to issue them to the trade. My Friend suggests that it should not be left in the hands of one single executive officer. If they want, I can ask these Subdivisional Officers and District Officers that just as they are discussing with representatives of the people in food committees as regards distribution of imported foodstuff, the same committees should be consulted at the time of distributing consumer commodities.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: They may not be consulted, Sir.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We will see that they will be consulted. Any way, Sir, setting up another body will mean multiplicity of committees and it may be that the executives who will hold the goods will not have time to consult too many committees. Therefore it will be much better to allow the existing food committees to have a say in the matter of distribution of consumer goods that come to the hands of the civil authorities.

One suggestion has been made by various hon. Members and that is to see that more goods are distributed through consumers' co-operative societies. That has been the policy of Government wherever we have found enough and competent co-operative societies. As a matter of fact, we have already registered about 1,200 such consumers' co-operative societies throughout the Province and about 600 still remain

to be scrutinised and registered but nothing can please some people. Maulana Saheb who is now absent says that the co-operative societies are looked with askance by the subdivisional authorities and they prefer to have distribution made through retailers. I would not stoop so low as to emulate his example and give the deserved to him. But, on the other hand, some representatives of the public—I am referring to hon. Members sitting here at the present moment, but I need not name them—led a deputation from the Subdivision of Maulvibazar to me three days back, protesting against the experiment which Government was wanting to perform in that Subdivision that all the distribution should be through consumer co-operative societies. Now whom I am to please? Here we find that the consumer co-operative societies are thriving in a particular Subdivision and in order to test whether distribution through them will satisfy the public, we selected that Subdivision and when we were about to introduce the system, I received at least a hundred telegrams protesting against it within the last fortnight. Over and above that an influential deputation waited upon me a few days back led by two hon. Members of this House. They advanced some very cogent arguments. I need mention only a few. They urged that the distribution through the co-operative societies alone will mean more costly prices to the general public. There is a central co-operative society at headquarters who alone will be wholesaler of the entire Subdivision, who realises a commission of one per cent. from the village consumer societies and these societies have to come from a distance of about 30 to 35 miles from out-lying centres to get their goods. The cost of carriage from such a distance would add tremendously to the ultimate cost of the goods, whereas in the Government's present scheme there are distributing centres or wholesalers' agency right near those villages and the co-operative consumer societies would get enough stuff from those wholesalers at a much lesser cost of carriage than the experiment through the co-operative societies. Then again they say that all the members of the population of the Subdivision have not become members of the consumer co-operative societies. Under the co-operative principle, members alone are to be benefited by such societies who will cater for the members. If these consumer co-operative societies are alone getting the distribution of the foodgrains or consumer goods, they will violate the principle of co-operative societies. They rightly remarked that all the members of the society are not equally literate or even businesslike or co-operative-minded and a few leaders will draw the lion share in the name of co-operative consumer societies. Any way these are some of the objections which have been mentioned.

We are not depriving the public of the benefit of both the systems of distribution, *viz.*, licensed retailers and co-operative societies. But if the House say that everywhere the co-operative societies alone should be allowed to distribute, then I should tell them that they should think twice, because it is only the war emergency that has led Government to procure foodstuff and after the war business must flow into the normal trade channels and if all the retailers who are also merchants in the system of distribution are swept away now, it will be difficult to revive them later on. So, Sir, to the advice which my hon. Friends have given that the representatives of the people should be given a voice on the method of distribution, I am willing to concede and to give that charge to the Food Committees which are already in existence. They have gone one step farther and said that there should be at the centre, *i.e.*, in Shillong, a body to advise Government as regards import of goods and the kind and quality of consumer goods that should be imported. As I have mentioned already, it is the desire of Government that gradually the procurement facilities provided for the traders should be taken advantage of by the traders themselves and Government would concentrate their attention on procurement of those goods on which strict control orders have been passed by the higher authorities. So, a body like that which has been suggested will not be of much good. At the same time, I am willing to concede to the suggestion for an Advisory Body on the lines we have for standard cloth on which I have a few Members from this House. But it will be very difficult, at least for me, to find time to convene a meeting every month. That should be left to the discretion of Government. Sir, much has been spoken against the note on the scheme of

distribution of consumer goods that has been placed before the House. I think, Sir, I must plead guilty at least for one part of this note, because the sentence has been so condensed probably it is ununderstandable to the uninformed. As I mentioned earlier both in my speech and in the note, the Civil Supply Agency were granted commission of $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. in those cases where they bought goods on behalf of Assam traders by advancing 75 per cent. of the capital. We found that many traders went to Calcutta empty handed and wanted this company to buy goods on their account promising the money on receipt of the bill of lading. In some cases goods could be procured, while in others goods were not available. This brought the allegation of partiality to the Civil Supply Agency. Many of the traders who got the money and not dependent on the Civil Supply Agency could procure their goods, while in the case of the others this could not be done. Therefore, Government decided to do away with this part of the scheme, that is, advancing of money by the Civil Supply Agency and of allowing them double commission. So, the sentence "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" has been put in the note.

Then again, Sir, some hon. Members said that the mercantile community think that the $3\frac{1}{8}$ per cent. commission is too low and that it should be raised, while others criticised it to be high. As I explained, this commission includes storage and insurance charges at Calcutta and transport to Railway stations and Steamer ghats within Calcutta. We considered the godown charge not merely at Calcutta but also in the suburbs is a considerable sum, so also insurance charges. All this was taken into account in arriving at the rate of commission. Together with these, the handling charges from the delivery centre to the godown and from godown to the Railway or Steamer stations were taken into consideration, and in consultation with the Deputy Controller of consumer goods, Government have allowed two pice in a rupee as commission to the procuring agents.

Lastly, Sir, I have got to inform the House that from some quarters objections have been raised to the Excise staff being put in charge of controlling or looking after the distribution and sale of the consumer goods. They prefer that the matter should be handled by the Supply Department itself. But the work of the Supply Department has become so big that an idea of it can easily be formed when I state that the Provincial Budget figure is 4 to 5 crores, whereas the Supply Department alone has got a budget of over 14 crores of rupers. The Supply Department has been so heavily over-worked that I had to appoint a large number of officers—the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, and the Under-Secretary, and even then, not only the Secretaries but also myself can hardly find any time after disposing of various problems that arise in the matter of supply. Therefore, when Mr. Marar, the Supply Secretary suggested that it would be next to impossible for him to supervise the distribution and operation of Control Orders of consumer goods if he is put in charge and as we found that with the prohibition policy on opium, as well as on account of transport difficulty the country liquor has not been coming into the Province as much as was contracted for, the Excise Commissioner has got some time and his staff also is not over-worked, we asked that Department to take over the supervision of the operation of consumer goods and Control Orders set up by the Centre. One hon. Member mentioned that the Central Government have given us some officers. For his edification, I should tell him that as soon as the Control Orders were applicable to this Province, only one Inspector has been provided by the Centre to see that consumer goods are sold in the Province at controlled rates. The Government of India have been considering to increase their staff in the Province at their cost and have asked us whether we could release a particular officer and I am still in correspondence with the Hon'ble Commerce Member of the Government of India.

If it is the decisive opinion of the House that the supervision of operation of Control Orders for consumer goods should not be left in the hands of the Excise Department, I

will see whether arrangement could be made from the next financial year to bring it back under the Supply Department and then probably I will have to come before the House for additional staff.

I again thank all those hon. Members who have given very valuable suggestions, every one of which I have considered, analysed, scrutinised and I have found that my scheme is on all fours with them. If my hon. Friends desire that the people's representatives should be taken into confidence both at the time of procurement, that is placing orders, as well as at the time of distribution, I will immediately pass orders embodying this recommendation in my scheme.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I shall first take up the amendment of Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri.

Does he press his amendment ?

Srijut ROHINI KUMAR CHAUDHURI : Yes, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I am putting it as a question. The question is ;

“That the scheme be operative only with regard to husbandry implements, building materials, Brass and Bell-Metal sheets.”

The question was negatived.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The other amendments standing in the name of Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy and other hon. Members fall under three heads.—(1) Procurement Machinery (2) Distribution Scheme and (3) Vigilance over procurement and distribution. I should first take up the amendments which relate to Procurement Machinery, and then go on putting other amendments as arranged under these three groups.

Does the hon. Member, Mr. Karuna Sindhu Roy press his amendment ?

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY : Yes, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : I am putting it as a question. The question is :

“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.”

The Assembly divided.

Ayes—22

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee. | 12. Mr. Kedarmal Brahmin. |
| 2. Srijut Bepin Chandra Medhi. | 13. Srijut Lakshesvar Borooah. |
| 3. Babu Bipin Behari Das. | 14. Babu Lalit Mohon Kar. |
| 4. Babu Dakshina Ranjan Gupta Chaudhuri. | 15. Srijut Mahi Chandra Bora. |
| 5. Srijut Ghanashyam Das. | 16. Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri. |
| 6. Srijut Gopinath Bardoloi. | 17. Srijut Paramananda Das. |
| 7. Babu Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri. | 18. Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya. |
| 8. Srijut Jadav Prasad Chaliha. | 19. Srijut Ram Nath Das. |
| 9. Srijut Jogendra Chandra Nath. | 20. Srijut Sarveswar Barua. |
| 10. Babu Kamini Kumar Sen. | 21. Babu Shibendra Chandra Biswas. |
| 11. Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy. | 22. Babu Sanat Kumar Ahir. |

Noes—47

1. The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla.
2. The Hon'ble Mr. Naba Kumar Dutta.
3. The Hon'ble Maulavi Munawwar Ali.
4. The Hon'ble Srijut Hirendra Chandra Chakravarty.
5. The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi Mudabbir Hussain Chaudhuri.
6. The Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Nath Saikia.
7. The Hon'ble Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri.
8. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman.
9. The Hon'ble Miss Mavis Dunn.
10. The Hon'ble Srijut Rupnath Brahma.
11. Srijut Jogendra Narayan Mandal.
12. Rai Sahib Doulat Chandra Gohain.
13. Srijut Surendra Nath Buragohain.
14. Maulavi Abdul Aziz.
15. Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury.
16. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan.
17. Khan Bahadur Hazi Abdul Majid Chaudhury.
18. Maulavi Abdur Rahman.
19. Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahabab Chaudhuri.
20. Khan Sahib Maulavi Muhammad Amiruddin.
21. Maulavi Badaruddin Ahmed.
22. Maulavi Ghyasuddin Ahmed.
23. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Keramat Ali.
24. Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury.
25. Maulavi Mabarak Ali.
26. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mufizur Rahman.
27. Maulavi Muzarraf Ali Laskar.
28. Maulavi Namwar Ali Barbhuiya.
29. Maulavi Sheikh Osman Ali Sadagar.
30. Mr. F. W. Blennerhassett.
31. Mr. E. H. S. Lewis.
32. Mr. D. B. H. Moore.
33. Mr. C. W. Morley.
34. Mr. R. A. Palmer.
35. Dr. C. G. Terrell.
36. Mr. W. D. Rutherford.
37. Mr. A. Whittaker.
38. Mr. Benjamin Ch. Momin.
39. Srijut Bhairab Chandra Das.
40. Srijut Bideshi Pan Tanti.
41. Mr. Binode Kumar J. Sarwan.
42. Srijut Dhirsing Deuri.
43. Rev. L. Gatphoh.
44. Mr. C. Goldsmith.
45. Mr. Jobang D. Marak.
46. Srijut Khorsing Terrang.
47. Srijut Rabi Chandra Kachari.

The question was negatived.

The Hon'ble the Speaker: Then I am going to put the *amendment of Srijut Lakshesvar Borooah. Does he press his amendment?

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: No, Sir, I do not like to press my amendment, and I beg leave of the House to withdraw it.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think, the hon. Member has got leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

The amendment, with the leave of the House, stands withdrawn.

Then I put the amendment of Mr. Kedarmal Brahmin. Does he press his amendment?

Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN: Yes, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Very well. The question is:

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".

The question was negatived.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then I am going to put the amendment of Srijut Surendra Nath Buragohain.

*"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.—

The question is :

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

The question was negatived.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :—Then, I am putting the amendment of Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee.

The question is :

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

The Assembly divided.

Ayes—21

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|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee. | 11. Srijut Lakshesvar Borooah. |
| 2. Srijut Bepin Chandra Medhi. | 12. Babu Lalit Mohon Kar. |
| 3. Babu Dakshina Ranjan Gupta Chaudhuri. | 13. Srijut Mahi Chandra Bora. |
| 4. Srijut Ghanashyam Das. | 14. Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri. |
| 5. Srijut Gopinath Bardoloi. | 15. Srijut Paramananda Das. |
| 6. Babu Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri. | 16. Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya. |
| 7. Srijut Jabav Prasad Chaliha. | 17. Srijut Ram Nath Das. |
| 8. Srijut Jogendra Chandra Nath. | 18. Srijut Sarveswar Barua. |
| 9. Babu Kamini Kumar Sen. | 19. Babu Shibendra Chandra Biswas. |
| 10. Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy. | 20. Mr. A. Whittaker. |
| | 21. Babu Sanat Kumar Ahir. |

Noes—40

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|---|---|
| 1. The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla. | 18. Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahabab Chaudhury. |
| 2. The Hon'ble Mr. Naba Kumar Dutta. | 19. Khan Sahib Maulavi Muhammad Amiruddin. |
| 3. The Hon'ble Maulavi Munawwar Ali. | 20. Maulavi Badaruddin Ahmed. |
| 4. The Hon'ble Srijut Hirendra Chandra Chakravarty. | 21. Maulavi Ghyasuddin Ahmed. |
| 5. The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi Mudabbir Hussain Chaudhuri. | 22. Maulavi Jahanuddin Ahmed. |
| 6. The Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Nath Saikia. | 23. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Keramat Ali. |
| 7. The Hon'ble Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri. | 24. Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury. |
| 8. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman. | 25. Maulavi Matior Rahman Mia. |
| 9. The Hon'ble Miss Mavis Dunn. | 26. Maulavi Mabarak Ali. |
| 10. The Hon'ble Srijut Rupnath Brahma. | 27. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mufizur Rahman. |
| 11. Rai Sahib Doulat Chandra Gohain. | 28. Maulavi Muzarraf Ali Laskar. |
| 12. Srijut Surendranath Buragohain. | 29. Maulavi Namwar Ali Barbhuiya. |
| 13. Maulavi Abdul Aziz. | 30. Maulavi Sheikh Osman Ali Sadagar. |
| 14. Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury. | 31. Mr. F. W. Blennerhassett. |
| 15. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan. | 32. Mr. Benjamin Ch. Momin. |
| 16. Khan Bahadur Hazi Abdul Majid Chaudhury. | 33. Srijut Bhairab Chandra Das. |
| 17. Maulavi Abdur Rahman. | 34. Srijut Bideshi Pan Tanti. |
| | 35. Mr. Binode Kumar J. Sarwan. |
| | 36. Rev. L. Gatphor. |
| | 37. Mr. C. Goldsmith. |
| | 38. Mr. Jobang D. Marak. |
| | 39. Srijut Khorsing Terang. |
| | 40. Srijut Rabi Chandra Kachari. |

The question was negatived

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I would like to ask Mr. Mookerjee whether he presses his other *amendment.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: No, Sir. I beg leave of the House to withdraw.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think, the hon. Member has got leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

The amendment stands withdrawn with the leave of the House.

I now come to Mr. Kedarmal Brahmin's †amendment deleting certain sentences in the scheme.

Does he press his amendment?

Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN: No, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think, the hon. Member has got leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

The amendment stands withdrawn with the leave of the House.

I am now putting the other amendment of Mr. Kedarmal Brahmin.

The question is:

“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.’”

Does Mr. Kedarmal Brahmin press his amendment?

Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN: No, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think, the hon. Member has got leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

The amendment stands withdrawn with the leave of the House.

I now take up the distribution scheme. I first put the **amendment of Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: In view of the assurance given by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my amendment.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think, the hon. Member has got leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

The amendment stands withdrawn with the leave of the House.

Then comes Mr. Kedarmal Brahmin's ††amendment about distribution. Does he press his amendment?

Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN: No, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think, the hon. Member has got leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

The amendment stands withdrawn with the leave of the House.

Then I come to the amendment of Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy. Does he press his amendment regarding a committee of nine members?

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Yes, Sir.

*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—

†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”—

**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.—

††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 consumer goods will be responsible and will see that such goods are sold through the bonafide dealers.”

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then I put the amendment.

The question is:

"That a Committee of 9 members be set up with the 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."

The question was negatived.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I am putting the other amendment of Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy.

The question is:

"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 Assembly divided.

Ayes—30

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee. | 16. Srijut Paramananda Das. |
| 2. Srijut Bepin Chandra Medhi. | 17. Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya. |
| 3. Babu Bipin Behari Das. | 18. Srijut Ram Nath Das. |
| 4. Babu Dakshina Ranjan Gupta Chaudhuri. | 19. Srijut Sarveswar Barua. |
| 5. Srijut Ghanashyam Das. | 20. Babu Shibendra Chandra Biswas. |
| 6. Srijut Gopinath Bardoloi. | 21. Maulavi Abdul Aziz. |
| 7. Srijut Jadav Prasad Chaliba. | 22. Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury. |
| 8. Srijut Jogendra Chandra Nath. | 23. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan. |
| 9. Srijut Jogendra Narayan Mandal. | 24. Maulavi Badaruddin Ahmed. |
| 10. Babu Kamini Kunnr Sen. | 25. Maulavi Jahanuddin Ahmed. |
| 11. Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy. | 26. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mahmud Ali. |
| 12. Srijut Lakshesvar Borooah. | 27. Maulavi Matior Rahman Mia. |
| 13. Babu Lalit Mohon Kar. | 28. Mr. E. H. S. Lewis. |
| 14. Srijut Mahi Chandra Bora. | 29. Mr. Jobang D. Marak. |
| 15. Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri. | 30. Babu Sanat Kumar Ahir. |

Noes—28

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla. | 13. Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahab Chaudhury. |
| 2. The Hon'ble Mr. Naba Kumar Dutta. | 14. Khan Sahib Maulavi Muhammad Amiruddin. |
| 3. The Hon'ble Maulavi Munawwar Ali. | 15. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Keramat Ali. |
| 4. The Hon'ble Srijut Hirendra Chandra Chakravarty. | 16. Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury. |
| 5. The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi Mudabbir Hussain Chaudhuri. | 17. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mufizur Rahman. |
| 6. The Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Nath Saikia. | 18. Maulavi Namwar Ali Barbhuiya. |
| 7. The Hon'ble Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri. | 19. Maulavi Sheikh Osman Ali Sadagar. |
| 8. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman. | 20. Mr. Benjamin Ch. Momin. |
| 9. The Hon'ble Miss Mavis Dunn. | 21. Srijut Bhairab Chandra Das. |
| 10. The Hon'ble Srijut Rupnath Brahma. | 22. Srijut Bideshi Pan Tanti. |
| 11. Rai Sahib Doulat Chandra Gohain. | 23. Mr. Binode Kumar J. Sarwan. |
| 12. Khan Bahadur Hazi Abdul Majid Chaudhuri. | 24. Srijut Dhirsingh Deuri. |
| | 25. Rev. L. Gatphoh. |
| | 26. Mr. C. Goldsmith. |
| | 27. Srijut Khorsing Terang. |
| | 28. Srijut Rabi Chandra Kachari. |

The question was adopted.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER : Mr. Speaker, Sir, another question is this. In the scheme of distribution preference should be given to the consumers' co-operative concerns and other approved dealers in between a Government agency for procurement and the actual consumers and the middlemen and the goods should be distributed on ration basis.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Now I am putting this as a question.

The question is :

"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."

The question was adopted.

Now I am putting the main question.

The question is :

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

The question was adopted.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned to 11 A. M. on Saturday, the 18th November 1944.

SHILLONG :

The 30th December 1944.

A. K. BARUA,

Secretary, Legislative Assembly, Assam.

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 ; (?) 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 $3\frac{1}{8}$ per cent. and for the 3rd service which included financing, they were granted a commission of $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. After 3 months' working the rates of commission were revised and now they get a flat rate of commission of $3\frac{1}{8}$ 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 consumer 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 the 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 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.

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 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.

4. Srijut SURENDRA NATH BURAGOHAJ 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 assistBengal 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 consumer goods will be responsible and will see that such goods are sold through the *bonafide* dealers."