



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

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

PRESENT

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

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

SHORT NOTICE QUESTIONS  
(to which answers were laid on the table)

### Post of Inspectress of Schools, Assam

† Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

1. (a) Is it a fact that Government have asked the Public Service Commission to send them recommendations for the post of Inspectress of Schools which is going to be filled up soon due to the retirement of Miss S. Sen ?

(b) If so, when was the Public Service Commission referred to for submitting their recommendations ?

(c) How many nominations were asked for from the Public Service Commission ?

(d) How many recommendations, if any, have been received by Government from the Public Service Commission and when ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

1. (a)—Yes.

(b)—15th August, 1944.

(c)—Government did not ask for any specific number of nominations.

(d)—One. It was received on 16th September, 1944.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : How many recommendations are usually sent by the Public Service Commission ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : Generally, we ask for three recommendations for one post.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : Does the Hon'ble Minister realise that by giving only one recommendation the Public Service Commission becomes virtually the appointing authority, fettering the discretion of the Government, in the matter of appointments ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : Yes, I think it is.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : In that view of what has been said, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to refer the matter back to the Public Service Commission for giving at least three recommendations ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : Yes, the matter may be considered.

\*Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : May I know from the Hon'ble Minister why the post was not advertised ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN : There was no necessity for it because there are already three in the cadre of Assistant Inspectress of Schools.

†The Questioner being absent, Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya put the Question on authorisation.  
\*Speech not corrected.

†Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Is she, who has been recommended by the Public Service Commission, the senior-most Assistant Inspectress of Schools?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Yes, she is the senior-most.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I know the name of the nominee?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: I think, I should not mention the name, because the recommendations are confidential?

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I think, Government's attitude will be to accept this recommendation and very shortly her name will be out. Is there any objection in giving out the name?

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAJIN: Is it not a case of pure promotion, Sir?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Yes, it is a case of promotion.

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAJIN: If so, is it not the practice that the senior-most Assistant Inspectress is to be appointed to this vacancy?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: In case of promotion both seniority and merit are considered.

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAJIN: What is the length of service of the other two Assistant Inspectresses of Schools?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: They have served about one year probably.

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAJIN: And what is the period of service put in by the present person recommended as Assistant Inspectress of Schools?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: About four years.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I think my Question should be answered. Is there any reason that the name should not be announced? The Hon'ble Minister was saying that the recommendations are confidential and therefore should not be divulged.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: When the Hon'ble Minister says that it is confidential, I cannot compel him to divulge that.

†Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it Miss Thomas who is recommended?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: I am not prepared to answer that Question.

### STARRED QUESTIONS

(To which oral answers were given)

#### Civil and Criminal cases disposed of by the District Judges, Sylhet

††Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked:

\*106. Will Government be pleased to state the outturn of cases disposed of by the District and Sessions Judges, Sylhet, both Civil and Criminal for one quarter, *viz.*, January to March each year during the last five years mentioning the names of the Judges in each case?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA replied:

106.—A statement showing outturn of cases is placed on the table.

†† The Questioner being absent Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya put the Question on authorisation.

†Speech not corrected.

Statement showing outturn of cases both civil and criminal disposed of by the District Judges, Sylhet

1st quarter of—	Judges	Sessions	Criminal		Civil		Remarks
			Appeals	Motions	Original suits	Appeals and Execution cases	
1940	N. L. Hindley, Esqr. . .	5	49	50	24	102	
1941	N. L. Hindley, Esqr. . .	3	36	57	32	80	
1942	S. K. Halder, Esqr. . .	2	48	69	35	84	
1943	S. K. Halder, Esqr. . .	6	45	57	21	59	
1944	M. A. Ispahani, Esqr.	3	106	66	26	60	

### Re Judge's Bench Clerk

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE asked :

\*107. Will Government be pleased to state—

- Whether the Civil Rules and Orders of the Hon'ble High Court are followed regarding the period of retention of the Judge's Bench Clerk in the same post ?
- How long the present incumbent is holding the post ?
- What is the maximum period of retention allowed by the said Rules and Orders ?

The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA replied :

107. (a)—Yes.
- (b)—Since 11th January, 1937.
- (c)—No maximum period of retention is fixed by the High Court Rule.

### Allowance to Srijukta Girija Bala Gupta

Babu KARUNA SINDHU.ROY asked :

\* 108. Will Government be pleased to state—

- Whether one Srijukta Girija Bala Gupta alleging to be a sister to Srijut Abala Kanta Gupta, a security prisoner, applied to Government for a monthly allowance once on 14th May, 1944, and again on 1st August, 1944, stating that she had been all along a dependent on her brother the said Srijut Abala Kanta Gupta, that she had been starving in the house of her brother and that she had been suffering from illness without any treatment and having none to attend to her nursing ?
- Whether Government have given any reply to her petitions ?
- If not, why not ?
- Whether Government propose to grant her an allowance of Rs. 50 per month as prayed for in her petitions ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

108. (a) to (d)—A reference is invited to the replies given to Question (Starred Question No. 4) asked by Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee in this Session.

†The Questioner being absent, Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya put the Question on authorisation,

## UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(to which answers were laid on the table)

*Re Mustard Oil*

Srijut MAHI CHANDRA BORA asked :

102. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The nature of arrangements made by Government for supply of mustard oil in the district of Nowgong including the town area ?
- (b) Whether Government are aware that the people have been keenly feeling the want of mustard oil and that little quantities that have been supplied are highly adulterated and unfit for human use and consumption ?
- (c) Whether Government propose to instruct the local authorities and the Municipal and Local Boards of the Province to see that provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the Assam Pure Food Act are rigorously enforced against sale and supply of decomposed food-stuffs and highly adulterated mustard oil ?
- (d) What steps, if any, Government have taken so far to prevent supply and selling of highly decomposed food-stuffs and highly adulterated mustard oil ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

102. (a)—The entire produce of oil mills in Nowgong is distributed to licensed dealers for issue to consumers. A quota received from Kamrup district produce is also distributed similarly.

(b)—Yes, supply has been short due to want of seed and there is a general complaint about adulteration.

(c)—Instructions were issued and being issued very often.

(d)—Reports from District Officers indicate that there has been no supply or sale of highly decomposed food-stuffs. Anything reported bad was condemned. Police have taken samples of mustard oil from mills and dealers and sent to the public analyst for report when necessary action will be taken. Government are doing their utmost to prevent such malpractices, but public co-operation in this respect is lacking.

Srijut MAHI CHANDRA BORA: In reply to Question No.102 (c) it is said: "Instructions were issued and being issued very often." But, Sir, it appears that no action has been taken so far as Nowgong is concerned. Will the Hon'ble Premier please instruct the local authority there to see that the instructions are followed by action ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If my Friend thinks a fresh reminder is to be issued to the Deputy Commissioner, Nowgong, I will carry out his wish.

Srijut MAHI CHANDRA BORA: Is it not a fact that various representations have been submitted to the Hon'ble Premier complaining against the sale or supply of highly decomposed food-stuffs ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir. The complaints made to me are about the bad quality of rice and *dal* but not about the sale of decomposed articles.

Srijut MAHI CHANDRA BORA: Has he not received a representation from the President of the Bar Association, Nowgong, complaining against the quality of *atta* flour and *gur* ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, as I said, about the bad quality of certain food-stuffs and not about the sale of "highly decomposed" things.

Srijut MAHI CHANDRA BORA: In reply to Question No.102 (d), it is said "Anything reported bad was condemned." May I know what action has been taken regarding such bad articles?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Whenever any articles are condemned by any competent authority, those articles are destroyed.

### Communal Percentage in the Assam School Service

Babu BALARAM SIRCAR asked:

103. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The percentage of appointments held by each community in the Assam School Service?
- (b) How appointments are made in this Service now?
- (c) The number of inspecting posts in Assam School Service and how they are represented by the members of different communities in each of the Valleys?
- (d) Whether the quota of appointments to be held by the Scheduled Castes in the inspecting section has been satisfied?
- (e) If not, whether Government propose to transfer some of the officers of the Scheduled Castes from teaching to the inspecting section?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied:

103. (a)—

	Surma Valley	Assam Valley
Muslims ... ..	50.78	23.48
(Caste) Hindus ... ..	25.13	55.68
Scheduled Castes ... ..	5.23	3.03
Tribals (Hills) ... ..	12.56	5.3
Tribals (Plains) ... ..	...	1.51
Ahoms ... ..	...	7.57
Others ... ..	6.28	3.78
Muslims of Surma Valley serving in Assam Valley.		.75
Hindus of Surma Valley serving in Assam Valley.		1.136
Domiciled ... ..		1.136

(b)—Appointments are filled by graduates with approved officiating experience with due regard to the representation of the communities.

(c)—Eighty-two. They are represented as below:—

	Surma Valley	Assam Valley
Muslims ... ..	26	15
Hindus ... ..	5	22
Scheduled Castes ... ..	1	2
Ahoms ... ..	...	2
Tribals (Hills) ... ..	5	3
Tribals (Plains) ... ..	...	1

(d)—There is no fixed quota for any community in the Inspecting Branch. The whole service is taken as one unit for the purpose of determining the communal representation.

(e)—Does not arise.

### Aided Middle English Schools in Sunamganj

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

104. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The names of Middle English Schools of the Sunamganj Subdivision which were granted grants-in-aid in 1943 and 1944 ?
- (b) The names of Middle English Schools of the Sunamganj Subdivision which applied for grants-in-aid in 1943 and 1944 ?
- (c) The names of those Middle English Schools which have not yet been granted Government grants-in-aid but have applied for such grants ?
- (d) Whether Babu Basanta Kumar Chakravarty, Secretary, Hasnabaj Middle English School under Police Station Jamalganj in the Sunamganj subdivision, applied for grant-in-aid for his School on the 26th June, 1943 ?
- (e) If so, whether any grant has been given ?
- (f) If not, why not ?
- (g) Whether Government propose to give necessary grant-in-aid to the said School ?
- (h) If not, why not ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

104. (a)—1. Mirpur Middle English School.  
2. Swarup Chandra Middle English School at Jagannathpur.  
3. Ramjibanpur Middle English School.
- (b)—1. Fatehpur M. C. Middle English School.  
2. Hasnabaz Middle English School.  
3. Baushi M. C. Middle English School.  
4. Harinakandi Middle English School.  
5. Lakeswar Middle English School.  
6. Pagla Middle English School.  
7. Lalchandra Middle English School.  
8. Ramjibanpur Middle English School.  
9. Sachyani Middle English School.  
10. Rashgobinda Middle English School.  
11. Khurma Middle English School.  
12. Mirpur K. C. Middle English School.  
13. Swarup Chandra Middle English School.  
14. Bisweswari Middle English School.  
15. Chandranath Middle English School.  
16. Mahadeb Chandra Middle English School.
- (c)—1. Fatehpur M. C. Middle English School.  
2. Hasnabaz Middle English School.  
3. Baushi M. C. Middle English School.  
4. Harinakandi Middle English School.  
5. Lakeswar Middle English School.  
6. Pagla Middle English School.  
7. Lalchandra Middle English School.  
8. Sachyani Middle English School.  
9. Rashgobinda Middle English School.  
10. Khurma Middle English School.  
11. Bisweswari Middle English School.  
12. Chandranath Middle English School.  
13. Madhab Chandra Middle English School.

- (d)—Yes.  
 (e)—No.  
 (f)—For want of funds.  
 (g) & (h)—The matter will be considered, whenever funds permit.

### Appointments of Headmasters and Assistant Headmasters in Government Schools

Srijut GHANASHYAM DAS asked :

105. (a) Is it a fact that recently it has been notified in the *Assam Gazette* that none but persons belonging to certain special communities should apply for the vacancies in the posts of the Headmaster and Assistant Headmaster of Government Schools?  
 (b) If so, why?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied :

105. (a)—Yes.  
 (b)—To remove the existing under-representation in the class I and class II of Assam School Service posts of those communities.

†Srijut BELIRAM DAS: With regard to reply to Question No.105 (b), may I know why the members of the Scheduled Castes were excluded from these appointments? The Gazette notification referred only to the Tribals and the Muslims.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN: Their turn will come next. The Assam Valley Scheduled Castes are not so much under-represented, but the Surma Valley Scheduled Castes are so, and their cases will be considered.

### Rural Health Inspectors' peons

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA asked :

106. (a) Are Government aware that in the absence of peons or medicine carriers, the Rural Health Inspectors cannot carry sufficient medicines, and other requisites to the outlying centres of distribution?

(b) Do Government propose to appoint peons for Rural Health Inspectors?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN replied :

106. (a)—The duties of Rural Health Inspectors are mainly supervisory and advisory and they do not normally carry any medicines apart from Cholera Vaccine and Phage' and Vaccine Lymph. Even the necessity for carrying considerable amounts of these, only arises during outbreak of epidemics in which case, temporary peons can be sanctioned to cope with the situation as occasion demands.

(b)—With further knowledge of the working of the re-organisation scheme it will be examined whether peons will be necessary for the Rural Health Inspectors.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that during the recent malaria epidemic in the Karimganj subdivision, the Rural Health Inspectors had to carry concentrated quinine mixture to outlying centres themselves?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: That may be so, Sir, during times of epidemics.



Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that in every centre there was a complaint that sufficient amount of quinine mixture could not be carried on account of the absence of any carrying agency for these health centres?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: If that be so, they could have come up for sanction of posts of temporary peons.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that very often in times of epidemics and other occasions, sterilising apparatus, anti-malarial lotions, disinfectants, etc., are to be carried by these Health Inspectors themselves to the outlying stations?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: That may be so, Sir, during epidemics.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Do not Government realise that there is necessity for a peon, so that the Health Inspectors may discharge their duties effectively?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: In reply to Question No.106 (b), I have said "with further knowledge of the working of the re-organisation scheme it will be examined whether peons will be necessary for the Rural Health Inspectors".

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Will the Hon'ble Minister come to a decision shortly?

The Hon'ble Miss MAVIS DUNN: The question is being examined.

### Appointments according to population and communal ratio, in Kamrup and Goalpara Districts

Maulavi Syed ABDUR ROUF asked :

107. (a) Will Government be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing—

(i) the total population of Muslims, Caste Hindus, Scheduled Castes, Tribals and of others in the districts of Kamrup and Goalpara, subdivision by subdivision;

(ii) the area of land each community holds in the different subdivisions of these two districts;

(iii) the amount of local rates paid by each of the communities;

(iv) The number of clerical posts distributed amongst different communities in the offices of the Deputy Commissioners of these two districts, subdivision by subdivision;

(v) the number of posts of Mandals and Kanungoes distributed amongst different communities subdivision by subdivision of the above two districts;

(vi) The number of clerks and Mandals appointed from different communities by the Deputy Commissioners of these two districts since 1st April 1937 (to be shown year by year and subdivision by subdivision);

(vii) The percentage of appointments which the Muslims are entitled to in the above mentioned two districts?

(b) Is it a fact that the recent appointments in the aforesaid services in Kamrup have disturbed the communal ratio to the detriment of Muslim interest?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

107. (a) (i)—A statement showing the figures of the Census of 1941, after exclusion of labourers resident on tea estates, is given below:—

Statement showing the population of various communities in the districts of Kamrup and Goalpara

Communities	Kamrup district			Goalpara district		
	Gauhati subdivision	Barpeta subdivision	Total for the district	Dhubri subdivision	Goalpara subdivision	Total for the district
Scheduled Castes ..	47,153	11,767	58,920	9,037	14,369	23,406
Other Hindus ..	463,091	174,052	637,143	192,493	87,067	279,560
Muslims .. ..	144,623	222,716	367,339	337,026	131,708	468,734
Tribals (Plains) ..	132,868	42,795	175,663	117,420	42,790	160,210
Tribals (Hills) ..	10,065	..	10,065	3,055	20,526	23,581
Ahoms .. ..	538	..	538	..	..	..
Indian Christians ..	934	48	982	115	87	202
Sikhs .. ..	37	1	38	25	17	42
Jains .. ..	603	..	603	289	117	406
Buddhists .. ..	373	18	391	371	7	378
Others (including Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Jews, Parsees, other Christians & others unclassified).	128	..	128	16	..	16

(ii) and (iii)—The information is not available and is not likely to be obtainable with any accuracy, whatever labour may be expended to obtain it.

(iv) to (vi)—The information is not available, and would take a great deal of time to collect.

(vii)—29·23 per cent. in Kamrup and 46·57 per cent. in Goalpara.

(b)—Government have no reason to suppose so, but before enquiring on the point would be glad to know more specifically what recent appointments are meant by the hon. Member.

#### Extra Assistant Commissioners appointed since 1937

Maulavi Syed ABDUR ROUF asked :

108. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The number of Extra Assistant Commissioners appointed since 1st April 1937 ?
- (b) How many of them were appointed by promotion from the Junior Civil Service cadre ?
- (c) Whether Government propose to promote a fair percentage of Sub-Deputy Collectors to the rank of Extra Assistant Commissioners in future ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

108. (a)—22 permanent and 40 temporary. Out of the Officers appointed five are no longer in service.

(b)—Eight permanent and two temporary.

(c)—It is Government's policy to promote a fair percentage to the vacancies and this is followed out on each occasion of recruitment. Of the temporary appointments mentioned, it is to be noticed that eight of the appointments were of re-employed Officers made with the object of not losing their experience at a time of stress, 22 were of temporary recruitments from the Bar for the purpose of providing for special and temporary requirements in the courts, and one was a Provincial Service Officer from Burma for a special need.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: With regard to Question No. 108 (b), the reply is "eight permanent and two temporary". May I enquire whether there is not a good number of Sub-Deputy Collectors who are enjoying first class and summary powers and discharging their duties efficiently?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The reasons, why more Sub-Deputy Collectors could not be promoted, have been given in details in reply to Question No. 108 (c), where I mentioned, "of the temporary appointments mentioned, it is to be noticed that eight of the appointments were of re-employed Officers made with the object of not losing their experience at a time of stress, 22 were of temporary recruitments from the Bar for the purpose of providing for special and temporary requirements in the courts, and one was a Provincial Service Officer from Burma for a special need". So, as many as 31 of these appointments had to go to these special classes of officers, and out of the balance, promotion of eight permanent and two temporary officers from the Junior Civil Service, gives the Service a decent proportion of promotion.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it not the present policy of Government to recruit some Extra Assistant Commissioners from the Bar?

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

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Are Government aware that there are some Sub-Deputy Collectors who are B.Ls., and are discharging their duties with efficiency?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: There are some with B.L. qualification.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Will Government please take into consideration their cases at the time of promotion?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The cases of all suitable incumbents of the Junior Civil Service, if they are of a certain standing, are always considered by the Public Service Commission, who make recommendations for promotion.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Is it not a fact that a Resolution was adopted by the House with Amendments of Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury that a fixed quota of promotion be given to the Sub-Deputy Collectors who are found fit and efficient?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The policy of Government under me has always been to see if direct and promoted officers can be recruited on a fifty fifty basis.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: In reply to Question No. 108 (a), I find that 22 permanent and 40 temporary Extra Assistant Commissioners have been recruited since 1st April 1937. May I enquire whether Government have in mind to put the temporary officers on a permanent basis if they are found fit?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Government cannot formulate any policy with regard to the permanent absorption of these temporary officers, for, under the orders of the Government of India, we have to keep a certain percentage of posts temporary to see whether any of the demobilised Army Officers can be absorbed after the war is over.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Does it not include the pleader Extra Assistant Commissioners?

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

*Re Dhubri-Kachugaon Road*

Srijut JOGENDRA NARAYAN MANDAL asked :

109. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether they are aware that the Dhubri-Kachugaon Road is the most important road in the western part of the district of Goalpara ?
- (b) The condition of the said road as described in the inspection note of the Commissioner of Divisions while he last visited the Local Board office at Dhubri ?
- (c) Whether Government propose to take over the charge of the road for its proper maintenance ?

The Hon'ble Srijut HIRENDRA CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY replied :

109. (a)—It is one of the important roads in the western part of Goalpara district.

(b)—The portion of road between Tamahat and Paglahat is reported by the Commissioner to be in a very bad state.

(c) — There is no proposal to take back the road under the Public Works Department. But the question of giving increased grants to the Local Board to maintain these roads in proper condition is under consideration.

**Complaints re Questions left unanswered during the Session**

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I sent notices of about 25 to 26 Questions, but up till now only two Questions have been answered, and there is very little hope that the remaining Questions will be answered on the 23rd. May I know from the Hon'ble Premier whether these Questions are intended to be replied, and if they are not replied in this Session whether the replies will be sent to my residence ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : I do not know to which Department my hon. Friend's Questions relate. Do they relate to the Departments concerning myself ?

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA : Some of them do.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Well, Sir, I remember to have drafted replies to some Questions, and if they are not replied within this Session, I will see that the replies are sent to his home address, as desired by him.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : I submitted a set of Short Notice Questions regarding the appointment of some Regional Controllers under the Provincial Motor Transport Controller. The advertisement was for candidates with engineering qualifications, but I understand one pleader has been appointed. May I know from the Hon'ble Premier whether he has accepted those Questions and will answer them ?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The Questions have been disallowed, as the Hon'ble Premier informed us that there was not sufficient time to collect the information wanted.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : That could be done over the telephone.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : I have already tried but could not get the figures. The time is too short for replying to those Questions in this Session.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I refer to Questions ? On the 31st October, last, I tabled a list of Unstarred Questions, which I conceive were fairly important, on the subject of hydro-electricity. These were admitted according to a letter, I received on November 8th. But they are not yet tabled. The other day the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of the subject was pleased to say that he would see that they are answered sometime towards the end of the Session. Now as Thursday will be the very end of the Session, may I know when they will be answered ?

\*Mr. C. W. MORLEY: I have some, dated the 1st of October, Sir.

\*The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA: So far as the Questions of Mr. Blennerhassett are concerned, I may tell him and I have already told him that the Questions will, I hope, come during the Session. We took some time in consulting our Technical Adviser and therefore there was this delay. I hope the replies will come up but if the replies do not come then I am prepared to send him the replies.

\*Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: I would have liked to get the replies in the House.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Probably with regard to Short Notice Questions, Mr. Blennerhassett refers to the Question about the Bengal Government prohibiting despatch of cotton cloth. I have drafted replies to those only yesterday. I think, they will come up next day. Our Controller of Cotton Cloth was not in the Province, and he returned only two days back and immediately submitted his note and I have drafted replies.

\*Mr. C. W. MORLEY: My Questions were dated the 1st of October, with regard to rice and paddy detailed returns.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I do not remember to have received from my office the Questions of Mr. Morley. Even if I phone to my office today, I do not think there will be time to reply to them on the 23rd.

\*Mr. C. W. MORLEY: I will see the Secretary afterwards.

\*Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURY: I sent a set of Starred Questions about a month ago, relating to certain replies, given by the Hon'ble Premier during the last November Session. The replies are not coming as yet.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I would request hon. Members to wait for a day, to see if their Questions come up for replies on the 23rd, that is, the last day of the Session. On the 23rd we shall have a very heavy list of Questions to be answered and there is no use mentioning all these facts now, because even if the Ministers send their replies today to us it will not be possible to table these Questions on the 23rd, because we shall have to print the replies and it will not be possible to print the replies and to make them available to the House by the 23rd. The replies received already are being printed. So, on the 23rd there will be a very heavy list of Questions to be answered by the Hon'ble Ministers.

**Statement by the Hon'ble Speaker regarding granting of permission for absence from Assembly Meetings by certain Members of the Legislative Assembly.**

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Now, the House will take up consideration of the question of granting permission for absence from the meetings of the Assam Legislative Assembly as applied for by some Members.

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

1. Mr. Purna Chandra Sarma, Member representing the Nowgong (North-East) General Constituency.

2. Mr. Sarveswar Barua, Member representing North-Lakhimpur General Constituency.

3. Mr. Rajendra Nath Barua, Member representing Golaghat (North) General Constituency.

4. Mr. Jogendra Chandra Nath, Member representing Goalpara (South-East) General Constituency.

The hon. Members are aware that the question that I shall put before the House is to be voted upon without any debate. The circumstances under which these hon. Members were unable to attend the past four Sessions of the Assembly, and one of

them, namely, Mr. Purna Chandra Sarma is still unable to attend the present Session, are well known to all the hon. Members of the House. These circumstances were and are still admittedly beyond their control. Mr. Purna Chandra Sarma was in detention under the Defence of India Rules since the 23rd August, 1942, Messrs. Sarveswar Barua and Rajendra Nath Barua since the 7th and 8th September 1942, respectively, under the same Rules, and though they have been released from prison are still under restrictions put on their movements which are now deemed to be restrictions under the Restriction and Detention Ordinance No. III of 1944. Mr. Jogendra Chandra Nath has stated that he could not attend the first two Sessions covering 35 days, held in November 1942 and March 1943 as he was unavoidably away from home at the time and that during the last two Sessions he was in jail undergoing imprisonment under the Defence of India Rules. Their applications are dated respectively the 12th March, 1944, 19th April, 1944, 8th and 10th November, 1944. The applications of these hon. Members, contain statements of the circumstances under which they could not attend the past four Sessions of the Assembly. Mr. Purna Chandra Sarma has informed me that he sought for permission to attend the present Session, but that this was not granted by Government. I do not know what action Government have taken since the request made the other day on the floor of the House in connection with an Adjournment Motion for permitting Mr. Purna Chandra Sarma to attend the remaining period of the current Session. The reading of these letters would take a considerable time of the House. The requirements of Regulation 1 (d) of Appendix E to the Assembly Rules which is a Regulation framed by me is complied with by what I have stated before the House. I therefore dispense with the formalities of reading these letters.

Having regard to all these facts, therefore, I have worded the question to be put before the House in the following terms:—

“That this Assembly do permit the following hon. Members of the Assam Legislative Assembly to be absent from the meetings of the Assembly for the period from the 12th day of November, 1942 until the date on which the March, 1944 Session of the Assembly was prorogued:—

1. Mr. Purna Chandra Sarma.
2. Mr. Sarveswar Barua.
3. Mr. Rajendra Nath Barua.
4. Mr. Jogendra Chandra Nath.”

Mr. Purna Chandra Sarma has also asked for permission to remain absent from all meetings of the Assembly that will be held in future. Unless Government permits Mr. Purna Chandra Sarma to attend the remaining period of the current Session and he actually attends it, I also propose to put the following question:—

“That this House do also permit Mr. Purna Chandra Sarma to be absent from the November 1944 Session and all future Sessions of the Assembly which may be held hereafter during the continuance of the restriction imposed upon his movements for the reasons stated in his application.”

I am putting the questions now.

The question is:

“That the Assembly do permit the following hon. Members of the Assam Legislative Assembly to be absent from the meetings of the Assembly for the period from the 12th day of November, 1942 until the date on which the March 1944 Session of the Assembly was prorogued:—

1. Mr. Purna Chandra Sarma.
2. Mr. Sarveswar Barua.
3. Mr. Rajendra Nath Barua.
4. Mr. Jogendra Chandra Nath.”

The question was adopted.

Then I put the next question.

The question is:

“That this House do also permit Mr. Purna Chandra Sarma to be absent from the November 1944 Session and all future Sessions of the Assembly which may be

held hereafter during the continuance of the restriction imposed upon his movements for the reasons stated in his application."

The question was adopted.

I see that three of the four hon. Members who have sought leave of the House for their absence for these long periods under circumstances beyond their control are present in their seats. They are hereby informed accordingly of the decision of the House that they are to continue to be Members of this hon. House.

Srijut SARVESWAR BARUA: Mr. Speaker, Sir. I rise to offer our sincere thanks to you and through you to the hon. House for kindly condoning our absence. In this connection, I would also draw your attention to the fact that other Members, I mean, Messrs. Fakhuddin Ali Ahmed and Mahadev Sarma also applied to you and through you to the House for similar permission. I know that they made such applications on the same day as I made, namely, on the 8th of March, 1943. Those applications were withheld in the same way as my application was withheld. I had an opportunity to send a copy of the application to you after I was released on the 18th March. Their applications have been intercepted or withheld in the same way. Therefore, I beg of you and through you of the House to consider their applications as well.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: When these would reach us, they will certainly be placed before the House for consideration.

Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA: Mr. Speaker, Sir. I thank you and the hon. House for the consideration that has been shown to our applications. But I beg to draw your attention to one matter. Srijut Krishna Nath Sarmah, who is still in jail, and myself during the last Budget Session, sent you our applications through the Superintendent of the Jorhat Jail. I think those applications might have been held up in the Inspector General of Prisons' office. So, if you kindly call for the applications through the Department concerned it will be apparent that we did apply long ago. Along with us our friends Srijut Bishnu Ram Medhi, Srijut Omeo Kumar Das and Srijut Siddhi Nath Sarma also sent their applications intimating to you their desire to attend that Session. I think these applications also met the same fate in the office of the Inspector General of Prisons. Those applications may also be called for.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Now, the hon. Members must have noticed that this hon. House is indulgent enough to grant leave to the hon. Members who had been absent and who have been still absent for reasons beyond their control. Under the Restriction Order No. III of 1944, it may be that the applications of some of the hon. Members who are in detention have been withheld and so they have not reached our hands. But having regard to the fact that whenever applications are received by us they are placed before the House for their consideration, there is no reason to be at all worried on the score of their applications not having been as yet received by us. Some of the applications might have been withheld; but after release from jails the hon. Members who are still in detention and whose applications have been withheld will be entitled to apply again and when their applications will be received, certainly this House will be given an opportunity to consider those applications favourably.

**Presentation of Authenticated Schedule\* of authorised expenditure in relation to Supplementary Demands for Grants for 1944-45.**

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir. I beg to present the Authenticated Schedule of authorised expenditure in relation to Supplementary Demands for Grants for 1944-45.

**Further discussion on the Motion† *Re* the Food-grains Procurement Policy of the Government of Assam.**

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Now, the debate on the Motion tabled by Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhuri on the Food-grains Procurement Policy of the Government of Assam is to be resumed.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhuri for having brought this Motion and also for Government having accepted this debate. We heard yesterday a more outspoken criticism of Government than on any occasion during the last five years. I think this is a tribute to the importance of this subject of procurement. It is undoubtedly the most important subject discussed this Session and far more important than raising the Members' and Ministers' salaries. The fact that the subject was raised by a private Member supports the view which I put forward several days ago that there should be more opportunity given to private Members to debate public business during Sessions. This subject is important not only now but is going to remain important, because the Government of India have declared unequivocally that rationing and organised procurement of food-grains will probably last for 5 years. Any one who ponders the Military situation will realise that there can be no prospect of any import of rice from Burma for at least 4 to 5 years and as the import of rice from Burma conditions the prosperity of the cultivators of this Province, there is no need for me to underline its importance further.

I have always understood that the Prime Minister, in appointing Members of the Legislative Assembly as Government Agents, was making an experiment. I do not think that he ever had any very high hopes about this experiment (*laughter*) which, in the opinion of this Group, and, I trust, in the opinion of other Groups in this House, has ended in complete disillusionment.

We heard yesterday many allegations against these Agents and the critics took no pains to disguise their view that in condemning the Agents they were also condemning the Ministry of the day. It matters to me very little whether the allegations are wholly true or only largely true. The important point is that the majority of the people in the Surma Valley believe these allegations and will go on believing them to be true. It is not sufficient, Sir, for procurement to be effective and efficient. It has got to seem effective—and obviously effective—to the public generally. Therefore, whatever improvement this Syndicate may bring about by their own efforts or by Government compulsion the damage has been done. The impression in the public mind that the operation of these Agents is bound up with graft and money-making, will remain and nothing that these Agents can now do is going to undo that impression. Therefore, the only thing Government can do is to end this experiment and liquidate this Syndicate. There are distressing features about this experiment. During the last 5 years of Assembly work I have seen no more humiliating spectacle than Members of the Legislative Assembly being accused of malpractices. The Government of India Act recognises the healthy tradition that Members of the Legislature shall not hold any office of profit under the Crown. Section 69(1), Sir, is quite clear. If he seeks any office of profit under the Crown in India he shall be disqualified from being chosen as a Member of the Provincial Assembly. The dignity of the House, of which you, Sir, are the able custodian, requires all Members to observe that tradition. The Assembly cannot afford to have its Members starting amateur trading companies. If there are any Members who gamble in the people's food, they must expect and they will also deserve the rough handling they received yesterday.

My Friend Mr. Maqbul Hussain Chaudhuri, who, I hope, is still my Friend though he is a member of the Syndicate, lamented yesterday that his brother Members of the Legislative Assembly had, to use his own quaint expression, refused to stretch out their hand to help him and reproached the Khan Sahib and my hon.

†“This Assembly is of opinion that the food-grains procurement policy of the Government of Assam be taken into consideration”.



Comrade Karuna Sindhu Roy with this refusal. Why should Mr. Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury expect that Members would help him in this commercial transaction? If they had done so they were merely laying themselves open to the same rough handling that the Government Agents received yesterday and it would have been most unwise of them to do so. But at the same time, Sir, we must be fair to this Syndicate. In 1944 conditions no Syndicate, with or without the assistance of qualified Members of the Legislative Assembly, could possibly have done a successful procurement job in the Surma Valley. Transport, storage capacity and the curious behaviour of Bengal Government were all against them. The only satisfaction Mr. Maqbul Hussain and Mr. Abdur Rahman have, is the fact that they were unlucky pioneers and have shown by their mistakes just what pitfalls Government should avoid in 1945.

I suggest, Sir, the lessons need to be thoroughly learnt and I support the demand made in several of the amendments for an enquiry committee. If the enquiry committee is to do any good at all, it should report quickly and therefore I would suggest that the Chairman of the Public Service Commission and the Member, Revenue Tribunal should jointly enquire into the operations of the Government Agents in the Surma Valley in 1944 and report by the 1st January, 1945 on the methods they recommend for 1945.

Maximum and minimum prices have been discussed. The Hon'ble Prime Minister has shown how difficult it is to fix a fair minimum price. If, however, procurement is efficiently done, there is no need for a minimum price, because vigorous buying by efficient Government Agents must mean a price which tends to reach the maximum price as has happened in the Assam Valley during the whole of 1944. I find myself in the anomalous position of advocating the end of a procurement system which, with the collapse of prices in the Surma Valley, has saved the Tea Industry an expenditure of 5 lakhs of rupees per month compared with the gardens in the Assam Valley. If procurement is done in a faulty way and with insufficient storage, there is much to be said for a minimum price. The minimum, however, has to be a good deal less than the figure my Friend Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury proposed, for if you fix a high minimum the result will be that all the cultivators will rush to put their grain on the market at one and the same time. It is quite impossible for Government or any agent to provide either storage or transport to deal with all the sellers offering their grain simultaneously. Procurement can only be successful if substantial cultivators have confidence in the procurement plans and are prepared to hold some of their stocks for a price which is better than the minimum. As the Hon'ble Prime Minister and Mr. Aditya observe, success depends on the cultivator holding some of his stock on Government account against an instalment of cash paid by Government. The minimum must not be such an attractively high price that the cultivator's main desire is to unload the whole of his stock on to Government.

My own view is that the safest course is to make an efficient procurement plan so that a minimum or floor price is not necessary. If, however, Government are determined to make in 1945 another experiment on the 1944 lines, then I must advocate for next year what I advocated for this year, namely, a floor price.

The Tea Industry has been asked to help. In the first place gardens have begun to lay in large stocks and I hope that this will strengthen the price. The Hon'ble Prime Minister has referred to gardens with large resources of thatch and bamboo. Unfortunately there are not many gardens which have large stocks now and those that have are seldom near the Railway. Nevertheless, I am certain that there are gardens that will help in putting up *kutchha* storage godowns. Other gardens could build on Government account *pucca* godowns more quickly than the Public Works Department if Government could get the cement and the iron work.

Finally, I hope Government's next venture in procurement for the Surma Valley, will be with proved men and proved methods. The Hon'ble Prime Minister has shown with his usual skill that his 1943 claim that the Surma Valley is a surplus area, was absolutely correct and that his critics were wrong. The working of Government Agents in 1944 has further shown how completely wrong the critics were. I hope that for 1945 there will be a new plan which will mop up every surplus grain in the Surma Valley at prices attractive to the cultivator. I am as certain of my conclusion as the Prime Minister is certain of his facts—and my conclusion is that in 1945 Government will have to procure every surplus grain and distribute that surplus efficiently if hardship on a large scale is going to be avoided.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Mr. Whittaker, the Leader of my hon. Friends to my right for his advocacy of the cause, as he has expressed before this august House and attracted the attention of the hon. Members. He recommended that after calculation of the surplus stock in the Surma Valley, Government should appoint proved persons as agents. Sir, every child of the soil knows who are proved persons. Are not Messrs. Steel Brothers and Co. proved persons?

Sir, it is unfortunate that my hon. Friends who are within this House have not cared to take any information as to what is going on in the other valley, I would urge upon them and beseech them to have a look into the Government file and ascertain for themselves how the things are going on in the Assam Valley.

Now, as regards the procurement policy of Government, my hon. Friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury has been kind enough to move this Motion only with a view to lay allegations against the Agencies which were appointed by Government. Let me say only a few words and allow me to disclose what has been larking in the mind of my Friend. Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury offered himself to be a partner in the Eastern Bengal and Assam Commercial Syndicate. One day when I was sitting with Mr. Binode Behari Dutta at Sylhet, he demanded to know why he had not been included in the Syndicate and whether we would include him. Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury was present there. He did not speak but I said "Mr. Bari when we are there, we shall make full consideration about you". But any way, my soothing words did not please him and he left the place in an angry mood. Then only after a week he submitted a petition to His Excellency the Governor and sent copy of it to various quarters.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: It is untrue, Sir.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: It is fully true, Sir.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: It is a lie.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order. Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury will have a right to speak afterwards.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Then, Maulavi Mabarak Ali submitted a petition to the Hon'ble Premier with a request for granting him agency for his own Subdivision. The petition is, I think, lying with the Hon'ble Premier or it may be lying with the Supply Secretary.

Now, with regards to malpractices and other allegations, I should only say that they have all come from those hon. Members who are disappointed in this matter. I emphatically deny them and say that none of the hon. Members who have spoken up till now, could cite any instance that malpractice was adopted in the purchase. I can openly challenge them to point out a single instance of malpractice in our works and that we refused to make full payment for the goods that were delivered to the godowns.

Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURY: It is absolutely true, Sir!

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: My hon. Friend Babu Dakshina Ranjan Gupta Chaudhury categorically says "it is absolutely true". I know his case—how he got the best help of Maulavi Naziruddin. Even without giving delivery of commodities he got full payment of them. I have got innumerable instances to cite where people

asked us to make full payment before taking delivery of their paddy or to take goods from their godowns. Is it possible for us, Sir, to go from village to village to take delivery of the paddy and rice? The terms of the agreement are not such. We are to receive the commodities which are delivered to the godowns and after delivery we are to make full payment of the stuff.

Sir, I may narrate how the agitation was started. Since Maulavi Abdul Bari was disappointed, he being a leader of National War Front moved from place to place organising public meetings. "Comrade activities" in the Surma Valley are well known to the hon. Members of the House and most of the communist people come from the Sunamganj subdivision. These people took advantage of Maulavi Abdul Bari's attitude and joined hands with him. The cultivators are dissatisfied with the present rate of paddy and rice and we also could not buy all the surplus goods for want of godowns. All these factors agitated the people and comrades availed of this opportunity. Our purchase of rice and paddy for the company in Habiganj came to the neighbourhood of 4 lakhs of maunds, and from my personal knowledge I can say that there is still surplus of 4 or 5 lakhs of maunds.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Is that "Buro" paddy?

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: There are "Aus", and "Amon" paddy.

Sir, another feature for which people of my subdivision is crying, is non-acceptance on the part of Government of the Aus paddy which has grown by lakhs of maunds. I had had to send representations after representations to Government asking to allow us to accept Aus paddy but we had been refused. Government's view is that this paddy cannot be stored because it is perishable. It was very recently, just before I left for Shillong to attend the Session of the Assembly, that I received a letter from the Secretary, Supply Department, permitting us to purchase Aus paddy only for disposal and not for storing. We are despatching paddy and rice to Bengal only. But Government have directed us not to send any Aus paddy to Bengal, which the Bengal Government do not accept. Thus Government do not allow us to purchase Aus paddy which is grown in abundance.

Sir, we have been charged with profiteering but I am sorry, Sir, no specific allegations have been made by any Member. Rather I can cite hundreds of instances where it will be seen that the growers who delivered the goods direct to the godowns received the full value of the goods. Mr. Karuna Sindhu Roy mentioned of one incident at Nabiganj. Sir, what is that incident? They say that one Dr. M. Rahman assaulted a man. I have nothing to do with this man; he is nobody to me. He carried on business with the Syndicate for sometime long before this incident. His connections with the Syndicate was dispensed with.

Then, again my Friend Mr. Karuna Sindhu Roy brought in yesterday an allegation wherein he mentioned that one Mr. R. Nandi sent a telegram alleging that the paddy of some persons are not being accepted at the Noapara Centre. Mr. Nandi is a cousin of Mr. B. Dutta of the Syndicate. This Noapara Centre was opened after the last Puja holidays and it is operating under the Sylhet Sadar Divisional office, and as such it has no connection with me. Mr. Nandi appeared before Mr. B. Dutta and demanded for a centre to be opened at Noapara and asked him to appoint him (Mr. Nandi) a purchasing agent of that centre. But Mr. B. Dutta did not agree on the ground that people would think otherwise as he was his cousin. On the other hand Mr. Dutta appointed Mr. S. Ahmed, a pleader as the purchasing agent. He went over to Noapara and took one small house and started the business. After that Mr. R. Nandi again appeared before Mr. B. Dutta and threatened him saying that unless he was appointed a purchasing agent there at Noapara, he would not allow any shop to be leased out to the company, and as a matter of fact, the houses which were leased out and the documents which were executed could not be taken possession of. The Syndicate announced the Centre being opened and people brought their paddy. But, as Mr. Nandi did not allow the houses to be taken possession of, no goods were stored. This matter was reported to the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Purchase at Sylhet; the latter went to Noapara and made personal enquiries into the matter. They warned Mr. Nandi and asked him to put in possession of the house

the purchasing agent of the Syndicate, but up till now, I am told, he has not done so. This is the whole history of the case.

Sir, I am citing another instance how people had been working to blackmark the Syndicate at Balaganj. I came to Shillong probably in July and found certain allegations published in some papers. The allegation was to the effect that people were made to put in their signatures on blank cash vouchers form without knowing what value was paid to them as price of their commodities. A petition was submitted to the Secretary, Supply Department under the signatures of some people of the Balaganj area. The petition was sent to the senior partner of the Syndicate, Mr. B. Dutta and directed him to report on this. The purchasing agent of Balaganj met those signatories. These signatories belong to various parts of the Balaganj area. When they were approached they said that they did not submit that petition. They said that some *comrades* approached them and requested them to put in their signatures in a blank paper in support of a petition which they were going to submit to the Deputy Commissioner for better supply of kerosene and salt; and these simple villagers believing in their words put in their signatures in good faith. The Agent thereupon asked them to submit a petition to the Secretary Supply Department to the effect that these *comrade people*, on false pretext, took their signatures. The people agreed to that and acted accordingly. If anybody cares to ask Government, I am sure, it will be produced readily from Government file. Sir, these are the things which are going on in the name of peasants' benefit. We heard that the *comrade people* were holding meetings from place to place dissuading people not to sell their commodities at the present rate.

I went to some villages personally and met people and requested them to dispose of their *boro* paddy at the price then prevailing, *i.e.*, Rs. 5-5-0 per maund. But the people told me that they would not dispose of their paddy because they had been told that Government were being moved to increase the rates and that they were expecting better price. Although I warned them that after two months they would not get that rate, still the people were unmoved. They replied that they sold the paddy at this time last year at Rs. 20 to 25 per maund and why should they sell at Rs. 5-5-0 this time? But, Sir, all these people are now coming to us and requesting to take delivery of the paddy which is still lying with them.

I have heard some of my Friends now lamenting for the poor cultivators. If you look into the proceedings of this House of the last seven years you will find, Sir, who have done much for the cause of the poor raiyats. In that respect I can challenge many of my Friends here, who are now shedding crocodile tears, for these agriculturists. I am sorry, Mr. Mookerjee is absent. If he were in the House I would have challenged him what he had done for the malaria affected people of Baniachong. Has he remitted a single pice of the rent he received, in that area? The dumb peasants have no views of their own but they are guided by the intelligentsia. The communist party is out to bring revolution and they have chosen this as an opportunity. They want to start a mass agitation. They went to the villages and told the peasants that last year they used to get Rs. 20 to 25 per maund for paddy whereas this year Government had fixed the price at such a low rate without considering the price of other commodities. However, Sir, in my opinion the minimum ought to have been fixed at Rs. 10 per maund for paddy and Rs. 18 per maund for rice; and I hold that opinion even now. I emphatically urge upon Government that it is high time that they should fix up the minimum price of paddy at Rs. 10 and that of rice at Rs. 18, otherwise there would be no relief to the poor cultivators. Sir, by jeopardising the interest of the peasants, I will not advocate the cause of the Syndicate to which I belong. I shall be the last man to ask for any support from Government for the retention of this Agency. I shall be making a big *Salaam* if I can be relieved of this. The only difficulty is that the gentleman with whom I have made partnership insists that if I leave him in the midst of the season he will be put to enormous trouble. (Maulavi

Abdul Bari Chaudhury: Leave after earning several lakhs more.) I am ready to transfer my share to my Friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury.

Sir, I would request Government to raise the minimum price of paddy and rice and if Government do not find ways and means to increase the rate it would be very hard for the peasants of the Province. I am still of opinion that the wealth of the Province entirely depends on the welfare of cultivators, because the Province is rich only in paddy and rice. There is no big industry in the Province and the few, we find, is only a mockery. Even in the reconstruction scheme, we have not heard anything about the establishment of big industries in the Province. It is only rice and paddy which are grown in abundance in the Province and which are the source of living of the people. I urge upon Government that they must fix a minimum rate of paddy and rice and that should be fixed in consideration of the prices of other necessities of life. The Maulana Sahib the other day was speaking that the price of plough and bullocks has gone so high that it is high time for Government to consider whether they should not fix a higher price for rice and paddy. Last night I calculated with a friend of mine the cost of cultivating one bigha of land and it was found that at least Rs. 28 is needed to complete the cultivation of one bigha of land. We found that the peasants are running their cultivation at a loss. The labour is scarce and the cost is high. I am myself a poor cultivator; I have got a small cultivation, but I have been discouraged this time as the cost will not be proportionate to the outturn, considering the cost of labour and other factors.

Now, Sir, I will say a few words about procurement and our experience as Government Agents. What facilities have Government given us? In the terms of agreement it was laid down that Government would provide us with all facilities and that the Government Officers will render all co-operation to us. But not to speak of any co-operation, there is a regular tussle between the Supply Department and the Executive Officers. We were placed under the direct control of the Supply Department. At the beginning we were given the liberty to employ our own procuring agents. But hardly after two months we received direction from the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Sharpe that we should purchase from the license-holders. Now, Sir, who were those license-holders? Some people were given licenses to operate throughout the whole district, and these people got their licenses by buying Defence Bond, etc., at a cost of Rs.5,000 or Rs.10,000. The license-holders are business men and hold good position. Can any fool think that these intelligent people will part with their profit for our sake? My hon. Friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury having being disgruntled, have gone so far as to allege that we are making profits through these license-holders.

Then, about the Muslim League Resolution of Habiganj; I was then out and none of my side was informed about the meeting which was presided over by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan. The President of the Habiganj League was also not informed and the meeting was held just to lower me by my opponents with whom I am not in terms regarding local political matters. There was a quarrel over the election of League President and I have an anti-party Muslim leaguersic (*sic*).

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member will please realise that the way in which he is delivering his speech makes it very difficult to be reported.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I am sorry, Sir, I shall try to be slow. These are the facts about the so-called League Resolution at Habiganj. Sir, the President himself was absent, I, the Vice-President, was absent and all my party members were absent. Even when a man is hanged he is given an opportunity to defend himself. But this was denied to us. I shall be very much happy if the Hon'ble Prime Minister enquires through some official channel and see what is going on in my part and see if the Syndicate have indulged in any misdoings. But it is true, we could not take delivery of the whole surplus paddy which are still lying in the godowns of the people for want of space. Now, if we had purchased it, Government would not have been able to provide godowns for the same. I had to spend money for construction of houses to store the paddy. I had to send men to Bhairab and Narsingdi for bringing corrugated iron sheets for the construction of godowns. Private houses also have been

taken for use as godowns. Just before the Pujas, people became mad to sell their surplus paddy. But it was humanly impossible to accept the whole quantity at a time for want of accommodation. We formed a committee with the leading persons of the town consisting of the President of the Bar Library, President of the Hindu Mahasabha and some distinguished lawyers and merchants to help our purchase operation at Habiganj. We left the thing entirely in their hands to regulate purchase and other matters. I requested them to help the Syndicate in the matter of procurement, and some of them rendered very valuable service. One Babu Benode Lal Roy arranged godowns for 25,000 maunds of paddy on behalf of the Syndicate and one Mr. R.N. Dhar, pleader, Chairman, Municipal Board, a man from Nabiganj, purchased ten thousand maunds of paddy and he himself made the payment.

Sir, I have tried to draw a picture of the agitation which is malicious and mostly out of personal jealousy. Nobody can deny the defects of the procurement policy. I hold the view that because some Members of the Legislature are in the Syndicate that is the cause of the jealousy. Whole agitation is against them. The House may be benefited to hear the news that they are ready to withdraw from the partnership of the Syndicates who are the Government agents.

Mr. F. W. BLENNERHASSETT: I want to say something and shall take only two minutes, it is just a matter of explanation. There are just three points arising from Mr. Ralunan's speech that I should like to raise.

The first point is that our Leader, Mr. Whittaker did not adjudicate, nor did he apportion praise or blame to anybody in this matter. He merely said that Members of this House should be above being accused of things such as they have been accused during this debate; that they should not occupy positions in which they are bound to receive criticisms. He did not praise or blame anybody at all.

The second point is that we are not an advertising agency. We go further; we hope procurement in the Surma Valley will be done by Government itself and by Government officers and not by Messrs. Steel Brothers. (*Applause.*)

The third point is that we have not hitherto, as far as I know, received any reliable statistics from Government concerning the cost of production of paddy and rice. Will Government be pleased to collect those statistics, make them available and see that they are reliable.

Maulavi MUZARRAF ALI LASKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I shall be betraying the confidence of the people I represent, if I fail to place their grievances before this hon. House. The selfish piece of executive measure in the shape of Procurement Scheme has ruined the existing trade channel and the peasantry of the country. A scheme more designing and more selfish has no parallel in history. The Procurement Agency of Government, *i.e.*, the Syndicate would purchase rice and paddy at a price much below (at almost half) the rates fixed by Government, leaving a margin of profit at the cost of Government either for themselves or their sub-agents. To control the market they would not readily agree to purchase unless placated in some shape and would too often point out that they have no godown space. It has been argued that the Syndicate is not responsible for the very low price the cultivators are getting, and that the Government licence-holders who make direct purchases are cheating the growers; but it should be remembered that the Syndicate being the sole and ultimate purchasers, are dictating the rates to these middle men. It may also be argued that due to the benevolent policy pursued by Government, Assam did not experience any food problem as it was in Bengal; but we should not forget—unless conveniently—that Assam is a surplus province so far as paddy is concerned and paddy is the chief money crop in my district (*i.e.* Cachar). There have been complaints about the bad quality of rice and Government was supplied with such rice at the ceiling price. In October rice was sold at Rs. 6 per maund in Cachar but may I know the rate Government had to pay in October for it? The question of bad quality is very often raised with a motive to reduce the price. If Government do not really require all the qualities and if the Government agents are unable to accept and accommodate all the quantity of available rice and paddy, what right Government have to ban export and ban free purchase and sale? As soon as ban is imposed on free trade and

export, is not Government legally and morally bound to purchase all the quantity and quality of food-grains offered for sale? Is it not the duty of Government to find out market for the disposal of the surplus paddy and rice which Government or their agents are not prepared to accept?

People came from distant places to sell their paddy or rice and had to wait at the mercy of the agents for a long time and unless offered favourable terms had to return with their paddy or rice unsold.

As the men in power are interested, protest from all quarters—officials and non-officials—and from all public organisations, such as, Muslim League, Bar Associations and the like proved ineffective. District Officers pointed out how fraud was being perpetrated on Government and the public, but, alas! who would pay any heed to it against their own interest?

Ban on trade and ban on transport centralized all business in the hand of the gentlemen in power. They found an opportunity to exploit. Some hon. Members of this House by their selfish pursuits have brought up on us the slur that we in this stale Legislature represent nobody except ourselves. They have formed a Syndicate with some Members as active partners and some others as sleeping ones and *benamdars*. It is said that some of them have proved unworthy of their oath of allegiance and in all fairness there should be an Ordinance to confiscate all their assets, secured or gained since they have been in power.

Considering the selfish ways of these gentlemen it will be no matter of surprise if people would ascribe motive to me or other hon. Members, who are likely to speak against the Syndicate. Some may say "Grapes are sour", but I can assure them—may God save me from any such unholy alliance. I have no fascination to be a robber. One who criticises the action of another does not certainly do so with a motive to exchange position with one whom he criticises. Criticism is meant for mending methods. There is a strong feeling against these exploiters in the country, and if they have the courage, with their recent gains, let them face the electorate. This is a challenge to prove the public sanction to their action. It is rumoured that one of our Friends was going to be burnt alive. Such is the growing resentment of the people against the association of exploiters.

It is an association formed to exploit the cultivators with Government capital and Governmental authority. People are helpless because they think that those who are in authority are the perpetrators of the crime. What relief can be had from the offending persons themselves? If the Company's servants had to be impeached in the past, I have no hesitation to say that the time for impeachment of this band of hon. gentlemen has also come. If these gentlemen were not actuated by any selfish motive, such a disaster would not have fallen on the people. Monopoly in trade is against public policy; but here a class of gentlemen to dictate public policy supported monopoly which has virtually brought disaster on the peasantry in the country.

This is a golden opportunity to show our unworthiness to be entrusted with any responsibility. Here is a beautiful system of business with Government capital having no risk of any loss. Here is an opportunity to share the booty among some. "Make hay while the sun shines. Those who are less shrewd, sit idle." If this be the motto, how can they be representative of the people any more? Sooner the association be dissolved better it is for all concerned. Sir, I have often wondered that even the Presidential election could not wait indefinitely in a belligerent country, but here the election is postponed indefinitely in the name of war. What a blessed land we are living in! Permanency in politics brings in degeneration in its trail. Well, there are also the Defence of India Rules to crush the dissenters in the name of safety of Government and the land. Sir, I would only ask an impartial committee to examine the accounts of any supplier of rice and paddy to the Syndicate and find out the tricks resorted to by the Agents of Government. It will be found that entries are there to the effect—"Loss due to 82 tolas and other incidental losses." What does it mean? It reveals that the Syndicate made purchases at 82 tolas a seer and supplied to Government at 80 tolas a seer. The supplier besides had to placate the acceptor in other ways to have his commodities accepted. Under the existing system of monopoly, how can any

human agent put a stop to it? If Government be really the representative of the masses and if Government is at all anxious to save the peasantry from utter ruin, let this monopoly be forthwith abolished. Let the Government fix a minimum price, keeping in view the fact that price of various necessities of life has soared from 200 per cent. to 1,000 per cent. or more. The cost of production has also gone up many times. A bullock or a buffalo, once sold for less than Rs. 50 or Rs. 100, sells now for Rs. 200 or Rs. 1,000 or so. The daily wages which was annas 5 per diem is now one rupee eight annas or more. A poor man's comfort, namely, tobacco sells at Rs. 3 a seer in place of annas 3 before the war. Six seers of rice can hardly bring one seer of onion and 16 seers of rice have to be sold to purchase one seer of highly adulterated mustard oil. Even betelnut is being taxed. Besides, what a salt famine the people are still experiencing in the villages? four chataks of salt is the quota per capita for a whole month in my subdivision excepting the cases of a few shareholders in the newly started co-operative stores. Sugar is not available even for the dying sick. This is how the unfortunate cultivator is being victimised. Let us pause and consider for a moment his sad plight and forget our selfish pursuits, or history will certainly condemn us in no unmistakable terms as a "League of Robbers."

\* Sir, with all sincerity at my coming, I appeal in the name of God and humanity that monopoly in all spheres of trade and business should at once be abolished. If the procurement scheme is found imperatively necessary, I should like to suggest that let there be appointed a number of independent *bonafide* traders as direct Government Agents in each Subdivision, so that there may exist a sense of healthy competition in the market for the benefit of the peasantry. This will also ease to a great extent the difficulties regarding godown space. Let the minimum godown price (at the buying centres) of rice and paddy both *Aus* and *Sail*, be fixed, and let all restrictions in inter-subdivision and inter-district trade be withdrawn and registered traders be allowed to find market for the surplus rice and paddy which Government do not require. This will definitely help the small traders who have been thrown out of their *bonafide* employment and rendered helpless owing to the restrictions. It will also allow facilities for transport and movement of other marketable commodities from one place to another.

Sir, the Hon'ble Premier yesterday told this hon. House, as a reason of his granting the agency, that the family of the Hon'ble Mr. Chakravarty had rice and paddy business for over half a century, but he was misinformed. The late illustrious father of the Hon'ble Mr. Chakravarty was known to the people of his district as the biggest Zaminder with a very high integrity. He was never a rice or paddy merchant nor a business man. It is only after his lamented death that his worthy sons have taken to business, during the present advantageous days of inflation about 2 or 3 years ago. We were also told by the Hon'ble Premier that Messrs. Steel Brothers have no complaints against them in the Assam Valley. But there are a thousand and one complaints against the Surma Valley Agents, some of whom are representatives of the cultivators themselves. As a matter of fact, these hon. Members were all these long 8 years more vocal for the popular cause than any other Member of this side of the House. But they are now defending themselves ascribing motives to others. It is therefore only desirable that a committee of enquiry should be set up to ascertain whether the allegations against them are based on the personal grudge of some other Members or a particular political group of people, or whether these are due to actual high-handed methods adopted by the Agents who are new in this vast field of business with a wide scope of making unauthorised gains overnight. The general impression now is that we have assembled here to further our own cause, and that some bigger personalities in Assam have found an opportunity to rob the rural population of what they were to earn by the sweat of their brow. If Government are not really a party to the alleged unauthorised actions of the Syndicate, let them with a view to vindicate their position, appoint an impartial committee to enquire into the allegations against the Syndicate and deal with them according to the result of such enquiry.



Sir, one word more and I have done. The consumers in Shillong are paying Rs.17-8 for a maund of rice and the producers in Cachar or Sylhet are getting Rs.6 to Rs.10 for it. Those who are in the control and management of such a situation must, in spite of all honesty and integrity, roll in opulence. This is the Blood Bank where the cultivators are giving their blood. I cannot help reciting here a verse from the writing of a Persian poet which is to this effect.

“A burning fire cannot do such mischief as can be done by the sigh of afflicted hearts.”

With these words, Sir, I support all the amendments tabled by different hon. Members excepting the one of hon. Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury which I emphatically oppose.

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAIN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, a remarkable feature of the present debate is undoubtedly its personal character. From principles and policies we are descending to personalities. It is indeed in the discussion of the latter that one is bound to be swayed away by strong feelings of bias and prejudice.

Sir, in this dangerous and uncertain ground of the discussion of personalities, I do not propose to enter, for, I believe, that such a course would land me in more heat and less light in the words of my hon. Friend, Mr. Aditya.

Sir, coming to the policy and principle, I find that the very principle of procurement by Government is under fire. My hon. Friend, Mr. Aditya has recommended in his amendment that the procurement of rice and paddy be discontinued and that usual trade channel be restored. I do not think this is a correct attitude to take. Sir, in war time 100 per cent. control, actual and physical control of the most essential of commodities, food and cloth, is very vital. Normal, trade channels, if allowed to have free play, would lead to unbridled private profiteering motive with consequent death and disaster. Normal trade channels must be choked unless a Government want to abdicate its power and responsibility in favour of private profiteers.

Sir, this policy of procurement of rice and paddy is a part of that policy of physical control on the part of Government. The purpose is to bring maximum stock of food-grains under governmental control for export outside and distribution among the deficit areas within a province, for Defence as well as civilian needs, and at times even to stabilise prices. These are certainly objects for the achievement of which no exception can be taken. It is as a means to that end that a procurement organisation have to be set up everywhere both in a deficit or in a surplus province or area.

Personally I cannot think that our Government can abdicate its responsibility or resile from its task in this matter even if they have an option to do so. The history of the Bengal famine is before us and a part of that calamity was brought about by that Government's failure to bring the local produce under their command by suitable procurement organisation or even by their refusal to do so with an attitude of complicity during the days immediately preceding the famine. I do not however think that Government have any option in this matter of procurement. This is an All-India policy and I believe, if this Government refuse to undertake procurement, the Centre will step in with its own procurement organisation. I would, however, like to be corrected in this matter by the Hon'ble Prime Minister.

Now, if the procurement must remain, what should be the nature of the organisation, whether it should be a Government agency of traders or trade adventurers in the words of my Friend Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury, or amateurs in the words of hon. Mr. Whittaker, or a pure Government agency or rather a departmental operation, as have been recommended by some Members of this House?

Sir, we had had bitter taste of this departmental operation throughout the Province about the middle of last year, 1943. Stocks were requisitioned, stocks purchased by private traders were seized, a percentage of all purchases by private agencies were ordered to be surrendered and in some cases at a price lower than the purchased price, stockists were ordered to close godowns, traders were ordered not to sell and all these things were done by peremptory orders. Feeling was running very high and producers and traders were in utter confusion and they prayed for the end of this terror and menace of the Government Officials. At the top of all this, collusion and corruption

were reported against the Government Officials engaged in the purchase of stocks of food-grains.

So, Sir, for the sake of principle, I am opposed to departmental procurement by Government. Public servants are greater menace to the public under these conditions than even perhaps public men. In my opinion, Sir, trading organisations constituted out of natives of the soil are the best machinery to try on behalf of Government on a commission basis. Such is the course recommended by my Friend Mr. Muzarraf Ali Laskar.

I next come to the direct or indirect purchase by any such machinery of procurement. I don't like anyone to stand between the producer and this procurement organisation in any area of operation. The middle man must go. He makes his profit out of the producer and at his great cost. His license as a dealer must be cancelled. It is even alleged that this middle man shares his loot with the procurement agency itself. I will not be surprised if it is proved to be true. So, I would like this middle man to be abolished. Any price that their grain fetches must go to the poor producer. It may be argued that such a course will be a colossal task for any single or small number of agencies to undertake. It may be true that in the Surma Valley alone there may be 3 or 4 lakhs of peasant producers and a similar figure or even more of such producers may be in the Assam Valley. To get over this difficulty, organisations may be set up on regional basis with a limited and small area to operate.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: On a point of information, Sir, there are many producers in the Surma Valley who do not care to give delivery of their rice to the Government godowns.

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAIN: These are details which can be worked out.

The Government may even offer these agencies higher commission for increased trouble and bother in collecting from producers direct.

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

*After lunch*

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAIN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my hon. Friends Mr. Whittaker and Mr. Kedarmal Brahmin have whispered to me that the middle man cannot be got rid of. Perhaps their reason for saying so, is the great task that will fall upon the Government Agency, in the event of their procuring direct from the producers. It is in that view, Sir, that I have proposed increased commission for these Agents of Government. They will be appointed on a higher rate of commission and with the middle man gone it will afford a great boon and benefit to the producers themselves. These producers may even be encouraged to form Producers' Co-operative Societies from which these Government Agencies may be able to purchase. Such a course will reduce clandestine transactions to minimum and will rule out collusion and will ensure a fair price to the producers.

I next come to the question whether it is at all proper for Government to offer contract or agency to a concern or company or firm in which an hon. Member of this House may have connection. My hon. Friend Mr. Mookerjee has quoted from May's "Parliamentary Practice" and my hon. Friend Mr. Whittaker has cited from the Government of India Act certain provisions to show the impropriety of such a thing. Sir, to me it appears that it is certainly wrong and improper for an hon. Member of this House to function as a Managing Partner or Managing Director of a firm or company which has secured a Government contract or agency of the kind under discussion. But it cannot however be wrong for an hon. Member to remain in such concerns as a sleeping or inactive partner or as a shareholder of a company. Even Government servants are allowed to own shares in a limited company. If our hon. Friends belonging to the Syndicates have been functioning as Managing Partners of their firms, it must be condemned and I wish they had left the actual management to other partners of their firms.

Lastly, Sir, I come to the question of the Enquiry Committee to be set up to investigate into the allegations made against Government Agencies. In this matter I have no doubt that these Agencies will themselves welcome such an enquiry which will afford

them an opportunity to vindicate their position and I hope they will be well advised to accept this. So far as this House is concerned when allegations are made with such vigour and vehemence, they must be enquired into. We must not sleep over these things. When allegations are flung on our face we cannot remain silent over them. I hope the House and the Hon'ble Prime Minister will accept this proposal of enquiry in some form or other.

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

Dr. C. G. TERRELL. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I welcome this opportunity of saying a few words in support of the principle in No. (iii), group IV of Mr. Karuna Sindhu Roy's amendments, in which he mentioned the subject of additional storage and this was also stressed by Mr. Aditya in his speech supporting his amendment. The question of dry and adequate storage is a very important one and it certainly has lagged behind in the race for procurement, which was thrust upon us by exigencies of the war situation and found us largely unprepared. The value of adequate food reserves is largely annulled by inadequate and improper storage and this is particularly the case under the damp climatic conditions which prevail for many months of the year in Assam. Good food is so often ruined by bad storage and so much ill-health and malnutrition result, that it is essential to urge for a higher standard. There appears to be a tendency to look upon foodstuffs in terms of quantity only and for them to be considered as in the same category as non-perishable goods. Food in godowns should be subject to continual expert and intelligent inspection so as to ensure that deterioration does not take place. Incidentally, Sir, the same thing should apply to all forms of food, whether stocked on behalf of Government or privately and in particular an article such as mustard oil should be liable to continual inspection, samples taken and sent regularly by members of the Public Health Organisation and District Medical Officers to the Public Analyst of Assam for analysis and to keep a check on its quality. And it should be also ensured that larger stocks are not accumulated than can be protected against deterioration. It is understood that Government require that considerably larger stock should be held in reserve in this Province and in view of the very inadequate godown accommodation this policy must be viewed with some apprehension. As such it is suggested that Government should give earnest consideration to the suggestion made for making use of the excellent storage facilities that exist in the houses of the cultivators and they alone appear to have solved the problem of good storage. In any case, difficulties for the additional storage required confront Government and despite what the Hon'ble Prime Minister has said it would be almost impossible for them to build sufficient extra accommodation within a period of one year and that only at a great expense. As such it is urged that the question of arranging for storage in the cultivators' homes should be investigated at once. A reference to the total area under cultivation together with the figure of Government requirements would at once supply the quantity of *dhan* per bigha required to be frozen and held in reserve by individual cultivators. It is suggested that every cultivator should be made responsible for storage of his quota by proper contract with Government and that he should at this stage be paid a good percentage of the prevailing price. It has been noted that the Hon'ble Prime Minister has himself suggested 40 per cent. as a suitable figure. This would enable him to finance his immediate requirements and the balance would be paid him when he delivered his stock in good condition to the nearest Government godown when called upon to do so. Failure to deliver the goods would entail refund of the deposit and other penalties which might be deemed appropriate as provided by an Ordinance. Apprehension is also felt in view of the intention to increase storage of Atta in this Province. This is notoriously liable to deterioration and it is suggested that not more than two months' supply can reasonably be expected to resist deterioration under monsoon condition.

With these few words, Sir, I support the principle, particularly amendment 3 of Mr. Roy's amendment.

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as the amendments have been arranged in groups, I think, I can also speak according to the groups.

First of all I will speak about the procurement policy. We are very much surprised to hear specially from the Members of the Surma Valley that there has been a surplus produce in the Surma Valley. Before this we had been hearing about the scarcity of food in the Surma Valley. When Government wanted to help Bengal by exporting some paddy and rice from this Province, there had been all sorts of criticisms against the action of Government. Now I would like to know where are those critics today. Does it mean that Government is forcing these people of the Surma Valley to sell their paddy or that they themselves are bringing them out into the open market? We have been hearing for some time and in the session before this that in the Surma Valley the price of paddy is falling and the people do not find market. It shows that Government cannot please everybody. Government was at that time in possession of all the facts and from the facts they were in possession of, showed that Assam was able to export some paddy. But now we have heard that in the Surma Valley the surplus is so great that the paddy is rotting in the godowns.

A contention is made that in the Assam Valley rice prospect is bad. I question that. As we hear from the Members coming from the various parts of the Province, it is not so bad as the people say. The Government of India must have made a summary enquiry and say that Assam Valley paddy forecast is bad. But we hear from our friends that there is good crop, may not be cent. per cent. good but may be 75 per cent. good. Now the Assam Valley people are very much concerned in this that if the surplus produce of the Surma Valley is sent to the Assam Valley it will lower the price of paddy in the Assam Valley.

Sir, the lot of cultivators is always the worst. Their only means is paddy and by selling paddy they get all their necessaries of life. We know that Government always pay heed to the clamour of the urban people, who are officials, influential men and business men, etc., but they do not hear much of the cultivators. They try to satisfy these people who have to buy rice, and only to satisfy them they try to lower the price of paddy and rice. They pay no heed to the hard lot of the cultivators. All Members are vehement about the hard lot of cultivators, but when their own needs are met, they are satisfied. They do not pay heed to what difficulty the cultivators are undergoing. We contend therefore that if paddy is not exported from the Assam Valley to other places and the Military supply is brought from outside, the Assam Valley is quite competent to meet its needs. It will be a criminal breach of trust on the part of Government if they do not pay heed to the cultivators whose welfare is entrusted in their hands and in the hands of the legislators in this hon. House. Government should enquire very carefully and scrutinize the summary report of the India Government that Assam Valley crops are bad. We can safely say the crop is 75 per cent. good. According to our judgment there should be a uniform price for the whole year to help the cultivators in the lean months and in the months of plenty, and the minimum should be fixed at Rs. 10 per maund.

Next I come to the procurement agency. If the policy that is adopted by Government forcibly lowers the prices of paddy in the Surma Valley, it is regrettable. It is detrimental to cultivators and can never be advocated. As in the Assam Valley we resent low price of paddy, so will they in the Surma Valley. Government should enlighten us whether this fall of price is due to high-handedness of agents or due to normal surplus of paddy grown in the Surma Valley. Government should also ascertain and enlighten the House what will happen if normal channels are restored and paddy allowed to flow outside Assam. We heard before the agency was instituted or the procurement policy was adopted in the present form, that Surma Valley had a lot of surplus paddy.

Then I come to the cancellation of the agency. Cancellation is demanded now because they have been alleged to have taken recourse to malpractices. I am not going into the question whether that particular agency is at fault. It is

a matter for the local people and the officials on the spot. But to substitute one agency for another is no remedy. Where is the guarantee that the new agents will be free from malpractices? We hear the statement made often "Whoever goes to Lanka becomes a Ravana." The same applies here very appropriately. There is also the spirit of jealousy and envy. If one set of people are favoured, others will envy and criticise. This is natural. So, the cancellation only will bring no remedy whatsoever. The formation of an Enquiry Committee also falls in the same category, for the plea may be made from the same motive under the same circumstances. Moreover a Committee of Enquiry will entail a heavy expenditure of money, time and energy and will continue for a length of time. It would therefore frustrate the very purpose of instituting a Committee of Enquiry. Then comes the question of Government taking over this function in their own hands, and that is the only course open to them. Sir Muhammad is not going to do buying and selling himself; he will have Government agents let us call them Government officials, but they are agents none-the-less, to do the procuring. But the hon. Members here have been vehement in condemning Government officials and charging them with corruption, bribery and favouritism. I do not say that they are absolved from these, but I would like to know since when this change of heart has come upon the hon. Members, since when they have come to disbelieve in the integrity and honesty of Government officers? (Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury: Lesser evil.) It only shows how the hon. Members change their ideas; their ideas are fluid and unsteady. I do not see how Government can import officials who are free from corruption and bribery. The only practicable solution is to reconsider the scheme, in the light of the speeches made here, and bring forth a revised scheme, and issue a communique allaying suspicion in the minds of men. I am sure Sir Muhammad does not claim his scheme to be perfect or infallible. This scheme, as any other scheme, is an experiment. Such a situation never arose during the World War No. 1. Now we are in the midst of World War No. 2. I am also sure that Sir Muhammad is open to suggestions, revision and the formulation of a new scheme.

Now, Sir, I come to the last phase, *viz.*, malpractices. If we leave the question at that and look at the allegations and counter-allegations on the surface, we cannot solve our problem. This question takes us deeper into the question of public morality and political development of Assam. So far, we have been hearing of mal practices of Government officials, now these have entered the Assembly Chamber. The speeches we have heard, I ask, are they befitting the House? It is a matter of grave concern for each one of us, as we are answerable to our country and to the world at large. It is not a small matter. I would therefore like to make certain observations.

Sir, it is clear from the speeches made here both now and during previous sessions, that corruption, bribery and malpractices have touched all sections of the people. Coupled with these profiteering, black-marketing and other evils have been brought by the war in its train. This has led Mahatma Gandhi to show grave concern over the matter. If hon. Members have read papers a few days ago it is reported in the Press that he has expressed grave concern about these malpractices. He says that greed, money-making desire, dishonesty and lie have griped the country. Where is the remedy? The remedy is that all high Government officials, appointing authorities, Members of the Legislature, all public spirited men and women in the country, all those who consider themselves somebody in the country, all gentlemen at large, set an example of the highest integrity, honesty and truthfulness in every sphere of life. For, any corruption, dishonesty and untruthfulness seen amongst these big people will reflect in the rank and file. All these will have their repercussions. After a thorough self-examination a change of heart must come in all these people of influence. The great working principle to bear in mind is that "I have no moral right to condemn any one who practises in

corruption and dishonesty if I practise the same in some form or another." Or in other words, I have no moral right to expect justice, honesty and truth from another if I in my dealings with others do not have the same. If Gandhiji starts a campaign against this deplorable state of things he will have to take the same procedure. He will examine himself, purify himself; then he will purify the Congress Working Committee and then all the Congress Members wherever in the country and ask them to examine themselves. Everyone will have to undergo a rigid scrutiny of Gandhiji to be a co-worker with him. Then he will go to the rest of the country to examine and change heart. The great spiritual law is "Begin with self".

There is a lot of talk about co-operative societies. My Friend Mr. Karuna Sindhu Roy has talked of co-operative societies. He urged that procurement be given to certain people or groups. I would ask him whether he knows what is the secret of success of a co-operative society. In 1938, I attended a conference where representatives of 70 countries from various parts of the world were present; where representatives of 70 countries from various parts of the world were present; a social worker from Japan was also present. He was telling us that in Japan co-operative societies were working in various departments with success. When he was asked about the secret of success, he replied that the secret of success was character. Now, will my Friend Mr. Roy guarantee the required character in the men whom he is now proposing to take up the work of procurement? Can his men stand the rigid scrutiny of Gandhiji? If they can, give them, let them have a chance, but the verdict given here is that "all who go to Lanka become Ravana."

Finally, Sir, my plea is that all Government Officials, Ministers, Members of the Legislature, all appointing authorities, all public-spirited people and all who are eager and interested and agitated over this question, go from here with a determination to examine themselves, to change their hearts and surrender to the Almighty, go to bed peacefully and rise in the morning refreshed as new men ready to create a new India and a new regenerated Assam.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the procurement policy of Government has perhaps by this time been thoroughly discussed. God has been brought in. Gandhi has been introduced. *Lanka* and *Ravana* have not been left out. There have been also challenges and counter-challenges. So I do not want to bring myself into the heat of all this. I will simply try to place before the House certain inconsistencies in the amendments, that occurred to me.

If you, Sir, look to all these amendments, you will find that cancellation of the license has been advocated in group 1 and in group 2 an Enquiry Committee is wanted. I think, the amendment in group 2 should have been placed in group 1 and the amendment in group 1 should have been placed in group 2, because, if the license or licenses are cancelled forthwith, I do not know where is the scope of an enquiry. Now, Sir, after the cancellation of the license if an Enquiry Committee is formed and the members, after investigating into the whole matter and going into the charges brought against the licensee, find that these charges are all false, or that the members of the Syndicate are not responsible if there was any irregularity, will not the license have to be restored? So, I hope the hon. Members who have brought in these amendments should either ask Government to cancel the license forthwith or press for an enquiry committee, so that Government may find out whether the charges that have been brought out are true or false. If they are found true, the licenses would automatically stand cancelled and if not, the licences will have to continue.

With these few words, I resume my seat.

\*Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY : On a point of personal explanation, Sir.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. Member spoke once.....

\*Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Various allegations have been made against the Communist Party by the Hon'ble the Premier, Messrs. Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury and Abdur Rahman.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I never criticised my Friend. I said that my Friend took very great interest in the matter. During the last 6 months, on several occasions he waited on me with big deputations.

\*Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: On a point of personal explanation, Sir.....

\*Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: He made personal explanation yesterday, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: There is no necessity for personal explanation.

\*Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: I protest against these allegations because Messrs. Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury and Abdur Rahman both alleged that I was a party with them.

\*Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I said about the "Communist Party" Sir.

\*Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Sir, I am glad that myself and the Communist party have been put under fire. The chief agents of the procurement agency, I mean Messrs. Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury and Abdur Rahman.....

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I am afraid, this is not going to be a personal explanation. A personal explanation is to be brief and to the point. But the way in which the hon. Member has begun shows that he is going to deliver a speech over again.

Order, order.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: As we heard hon. Mr. Goldsmith, loyalty and honesty to oneself and his fellow countrymen and to God are only the basis for the success of everything. (*Hear, Hear and laughter*). Of course, it goes without saying, Sir, that corruption is everywhere. It is a shadow of everything, shadow of all organisations and every individual. Nobody can say in this world that he is without corruption and sin. If anybody says so, he is a liar. (*Loud laughter.*) There is none in this House who is without sin. So, I think, if Maulavi Abdur Rahman or Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury or anybody else in this House becomes a member of the Syndicate he will be getting such severe criticisms and accusations. Now, after hearing the prosecution side (*Laughter*)—hon. Members who brought the amendments are regarded as a prosecuting party and the other party as defendants.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: But there is no Judge here to give the verdict.

(*Laughter.*)

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: After hearing both sides, my personal opinion is this. The procurement policy adopted as a temporary measure by Government is now found to be defective and faulty. Government may not be at fault and the Syndicate members may not be also entirely at fault. What we heard from the Syndicate members is that the purchasing was done either direct from the producers or through some license-holders. So, Sir, what policy is to be adopted, is not a thing I am to say. The Hon'ble Premier is very strong and I believe he will give his decision on this matter.

Regarding cancellation, I think, it is not yet time for cancellation, because the term is expiring and I do not of course exactly know the terms. If this is ordinary regular term, then before cancellation a notice has to be served on them and by this time the term of the Syndicate will expire. So there is no question of cancellation. Of course, it is the question of discontinuance. Discontinuance and cancellation are different things. After the expiration of the term this may be discontinued.

Regarding the construction of storage in villages where there are rice stock, of course, this question is quite sound. This also should be considered, Sir, whether there are any such villages where there is good communication and roads by which paddy will have to be transported at any time of the year. If there is no good communication or roads, such storage will be quite futile.

I am for the amendments. Of course on the whole, the Hon'ble Premier has very kindly assured us that he is prepared to abide by the decision of the House. I

think, we also as Members of the House should follow the footsteps of the Leader of the House.

Khan Sahib Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMIRUDDIN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, while there has been much too of a flutter and no small criticism on the Motion, I also like to speak a few words on the food-grains procurement policy of the Assam Government. As a cultivator and also as an humble representative of the cultivators of the Assam Valley, I would like to add my humble voice to the cry of the peasants of the other Valley rising above the chorus of the country-wide sympathy that is being accorded to it. The other Valley, as has been said, was a deficit area last year and the year before last. But there being no calamity of season to hamper the growth of the food crops last year, there might have fortunately been a very appreciable surplus. When the ban on export of rice and paddy into Bengal came into operation, Sir, some hon. Members of the other Valley, who spoke the loudest of all in criticising the Government policy on that restriction, pressed Government very much to review that policy and to appoint agents from amongst the businessmen of the Province. Some hon. Members of this House posing themselves to be the celebrated exponents of the peasantry of that Valley appeared on the scene and as a result some four of the hon. Members stepped into the arena of the rice purchasing operations. Now, Sir, there have been against them regular complaints of exploitation, looting, depredation and *jhulum* in the field of purchase of rice and paddy, and there is no doubt about this and to go into these allegations an Enquiry Committee has been pressed by some hon. Members of this House. My hon. Friend, Mr. Whittaker, has suggested the Chairman of the Public Service Commission and the Member of the Assam Revenue Tribunal to form the Enquiry Committee. To this I would like to add the name of the Advocate General of Assam in the sense that, when those two veteran I.C.S. Officers will be going into the inner most recesses of that Valley to enquire into the allegations of about 80 per cent. of the people that would appear before them to adduce evidences will be found illiterate and would speak in a language that they would not quite conveniently follow and hence the inclusion of the Advocate General in that Committee will surely be of great use in translating their vernacular evidences into English before those two European I.C.S. Officers. I like further to suggest that without cancelling the Agency outright at this stage, we must also see to the legal aspect of the whole thing governing the Agency, and without having the charges substantiated it will be most illegal and no less imprudent to cancel the Agency. On what I lay more stress is that an Enquiry Committee must be forthwith set up and at the same time further operations by the Agency should be in all fairness suspended. While the present is so uncertain, the past so dismal and the future so very gloomy from the peasantry's point of view, the Enquiry Committee should immediately be formed and that should proceed in no time to enquire into the allegations, within a time limit, say within a fortnight so as to avoid stagnation of the new crops of paddy and rice that are appearing in the market soon. While the people of the other Valley mostly depend upon the cultivation of paddy which is the main crop, the Enquiry Committee should go out in intensive tours so as to acquaint themselves with all the circumstances prevailing in different localities in different ways. With these few words, Sir, I support the Motion for appointing an Enquiry Committee.

Khan Bahadur Hazi ABDUL MAJID CHOUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, আসাম গভর্ণমেন্ট ১৯৪৩ইং বোৰো পaddy খরিদ কৰিবৰ পৰিকল্পনা কৰিয়া শ্ৰীহট জেলায় এটি Centre কৰিয়া মাননীয় Deputy Commissioner সাহেব ফেঁচুগঞ্জ centre এৰ জন্য ১০০ বৎসৰেৰ প্ৰতিষ্ঠিত বিখ্যাত জমিদাৰ ও merchant খান সাহেব আব্দুল কৰিম চৌধুৰীকে agent নিযুক্ত কৰেন। কাছাড় জেলায় আউশ paddy খরিদ কৰিবৰ জন্য H. Chakravarty & Bros. কে agent নিযুক্ত কৰিয়া Fenchuganj হইতে বোৰো paddy ও কাছাড় হইতে আউশ paddy খরিদ কৰাইতেছেন। সেই খরিদে মাননীয় Deputy Commissioner সাহেব সন্তুষ্ট হইয়া এই ২ ফাৰ্ম ও হবিগঞ্জৰ Datta Chaudhuri & Bros. কে খবৰ দিয়া Shillong এ পাঠান। তদনুসাৰে H. Chakravarty & Bros. ও Khan Sahib Abdul Karim Chaudhury Firm একত্ৰ হইয়া Surma Valley Food-Grain



Syndicate নামে গভর্ণমেন্টের Purchasing Agents নিযুক্ত হন। তৎপর করিমগঞ্জ সাব-ডিভিজননের প্রায় ২০০।৩০০ লোককে Rice ও Paddy খরিদ করিবার লাইসেন্স Subdivisional Officer দিয়াছেন। এইসব লোক গ্রাম হইতে গৃহস্থের rice ও paddy খরিদ করিয়া আনিয়া হাটে, বাজারে ও Tea Garden এ এবং সময় সময় গভর্ণমেন্টের গুদামে বিক্রয় করিয়া থাকে। প্রায় ২ মাস যাবৎ খাল, নানা ইত্যাদির জল শুকাইয়া বাণ্যায় গ্রাম হইতে আনান খরচ অত্যধিক লাগিয়া যায়। হাকালুকু side হইতে করিমগঞ্জে আনান খরচ মণ প্রতি ১।।০ হইতে ২ টাকার কম হইবে না। এইজন্য গ্রামের গৃহস্থরা উপযুক্ত মূল্য পায় না বলিয়াই আপত্তি করে। ইহাতে তাহাদের কৃষির খরচ পোষায় না। এখনও গ্রামে যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে আমণ paddy গৃহস্থের গোলায় রহিয়াছে। গভর্ণমেন্ট এইসব paddy খরিদ করাইয়া Truck যোগে গুদামে আনাইলে খরচ অনেক কম লাগিবে এবং গৃহস্থেরাও উপযুক্ত মূল্য পাইবে। Truck এর ব্যবস্থা করিয়া গ্রামের paddy কম খরচায় গভর্ণমেন্টের গুদামে আনিবার জন্য আমি গভর্ণমেন্টকে অনুরোধ জানাইতেছি। করিমগঞ্জ সাব-ডিভিজননে ও কাছাড় জেলায় অনেক আউশ paddy গৃহস্থের গোলায় রহিয়াছে—তাহা বিক্রয় করিতে না পারিলে নূতন ফসল উঠাইয়া রাখা অনেক গোলায় স্থান হইবে না। আউশ paddy বেশীদিন রাখিলে নষ্ট হয় বলিয়া গভর্ণমেন্ট খরিদ করিতে ইচ্ছুক নহেন। ঐ আউশ paddy Tea Garden এ গভর্ণমেন্ট নির্ধারিত দরে যাহাতে খরিদ করিয়া নেয় তাহার ব্যবস্থা গভর্ণমেন্ট অবিলম্বে করুন। শিলচর প্রভৃতি স্থানে এখনও প্রায় ১৫।২০ হাজার মণ আউশ rice licence প্রাপ্ত ব্যবসায়ীদের নিকট রহিয়াছে। এইসব rice এর quality খারাপ থাকায় অর্থাৎ জল দেওয়া rice বলিয়া Syndicate খরিদ করিতেছে না—যেহেতু Badarpur Railway Grain Shop প্রায় ৭০০ মণ এইরূপ rice ফেরৎ দিয়াছে। তাহা করিমগঞ্জের Subdivisional Officer শীঘ্রই নিলাম করাইবেন বলিয়া শুনিতেছি। ইহাতে বহু টাকা ক্ষতি হইবে। Bengal Government এর Inspector ও আউশ চাউল পছন্দ না করায় Syndicate আউশ rice খরিদ না করায় বিক্রেতার নানা প্রকার মিথ্যা অভিযোগ আনয়ন করিতেছে। এইসব সম্পূর্ণ মিথ্যা ও দ্বন্দ্বামূলক। গভর্ণমেন্ট করিমগঞ্জ Centre এ মাত্র ৬০।৭০ হাজার মণের উপযোগী গুদাম দিয়াছেন। কিন্তু বর্তমানে সেখানে ১ লক্ষ মণের উপর rice ও paddy মজুদ আছে। এখনও অনেক Paddy বাহিরে পর অবস্থায় রহিয়াছে। গুদাম ও বস্তার অভাবে মাল খরিদ করিতে না পারায় Syndicate মাল নিতেছে না বলিয়া আপত্তি হইতেছে। গুদাম থাকিলে এইসব আপত্তি হইত না। লোকের নিত্য ব্যবহার্য্য জিনিষের মূল্য বর্তমানে প্রায় ৮ গুণ বৃদ্ধি পাইয়াছে। এইসব অবস্থা বিবেচনা করিয়া গভর্ণমেন্ট rice ও paddy র মূল্য বৃদ্ধিত হারে ধার্য্য করুন নতুবা আগামীতে Grow more Food আন্দোলনের কোনই ফল হইবে না। My Friends Mr. Mabarak Ali ও Mr. Abdul Bari Choudhury তাহাদের Speech এ যাহা বলিয়াছেন তাহার অধিকাংশ মিথ্যা বলিয়া মনে হয়। যেহেতু Supply Secretary কে আজ পর্য্যন্ত কে কখনও কোন dinner দিয়াছে বলিয়া শুনি নাই। My Friend Mr. Mabarak Ali rice ও paddy খরিদ করিবার Agency র জন্য প্রার্থী ছিলেন—তিনি Hon'ble Prime Minister ও Supply Secretary র নিকট অনেক টেলিগ্রাম ও চিঠি দিয়াছিলেন। কিন্তু শ্রীহট্টের মাননীয় Deputy Commissioner সাহেব Mr. Mabarak Ali র ভাষ্যক, তৈল ইত্যাদির ব্যবসা থাকায় ও rice ও paddy র কোন business না থাকায় তাঁহাকে recommend না করায় তিনি অকৃতকার্য্য হইয়া এইপ্রকার মিথ্যা অভিযোগ করিতেছেন। Surma Valley Food-Grain Syndicate এর নামে যেসব অভিযোগ হইতেছে তাহা সম্পূর্ণ মিথ্যা। Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury Eastern Bengal and Assam Commercial Syndicate এর অংশীদার হওয়ার চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন। Mr. Abdur Rahman ও Mr. Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury তাঁহাকে অংশ দিতে স্বীকৃত না হওয়ার তাহার জেদের কারণ।

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS: I am sorry, Sir, that I did not participate in the debates from the beginning. I have come here this afternoon. I have seen the anxiety of the "hon'ble defence members" for the Syndicate. The allegations and charges which have been brought against them have been agitating the minds and brains of the "hon'ble defence members" of the Syndicate. Sir, whatever defence they may set up, I find there should be no defence for the Syndicate. At any rate

Sir, I see that even the walls are speaking against them. This Syndicate should never be allowed to continue any longer to plunder or suck the blood of the poor cultivators of the Surma Valley.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: These have been said by many Members. The hon. Member, I hope, will speak new things.

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS: I was absent, Sir, and I did not hear what other hon. Members have said. Sir, my Friend, Mr. Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury has, I understand, stated on the floor of the House that they have purchased their stock from private license holders. I say it is a down right falsehood. Sir, they have purchased direct from the cultivators who were cheated like anything under the very nose, of my Friend Mr. Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury. I am amazed to hear, Sir, that a section of this House is anxious to allow the Syndicate a further extension. I am also astonished to hear that some of my Friends have accused or abused Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury that he is responsible for the agitation against this procurement policy of the Government. I say, Sir, personally some members of the Syndicate approached me to induce Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury to enter into a partnership with the Syndicate which I scornfully and indignantly refused to do. Sir, during the month of September, Government fixed a higher price for rice and paddy and what the Syndicate did? At Sachna centre, they changed their accounts overnight and a large stock which was purchased in the month of August was transferred to the account of September in order to earn a big margin. Sir, I make all these allegations on the floor of this House and I request the Government to make an enquiry. Sir, I have seen the anxiety of my Friend, the Deputy Speaker and also of my Friend, Mr. Goldsmith supporting the cause of this Syndicate. If they could learn the real facts they would not have supported their cause. Sir, can a civilised Government allow this Syndicate to continue after this? This Government is much anxious to increase the Ministers' and Members' salaries by 50 per cent., but they do not care to express their opinion for or against the Syndicate. So, Sir, I request this House to cast their vote against the Syndicate. They should not enquire whether there are charges or not. I say surely there are charges when the whole country is making allegations and charges against the Syndicate before the hon. Members of the House, the Hon'ble Ministers, the Deputy Commissioner and the Subdivisional Officer. I want the Hon'ble Premier to look into the report of the erstwhile Subdivisional Officer of Sunamganj and to decide what the Syndicate are doing, how they are deceiving the cultivators and how they are making their fortune. But it is useless to speak on this subject unless Government take action. Are we to feel that there exists a Government? Indeed, it seems, the people are crying in wilderness. The other day the Hon'ble Premier, the Hon'ble Medical Minister and some other Hon'ble Ministers went to Derai, which is in my constituency. Unfortunately for me, I was ill and could not attend their meeting. The people are suffering from a money famine. They cannot purchase their cattle, their plough and other daily necessities of life for want of money. They could not sell their rice and paddy. Is there any civilised Government in the world who can pass an order that the cultivators should not be allowed to sell their surplus rice and paddy to any body they like? Is there any justification, Sir? Is there any law? But our civilised Government is doing that. As there is no time to speak more, my advice to the Syndicate is that they should plead guilty to all the charges and pray to God and men for their mercy and forgiveness.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before I make my submission regarding the various points that have been raised by the hon. Members in the course of the debate, I must express my gratefulness to them for the generous support that they have extended to the Motion as well as to the Amendments.

First of all, I will refer to the beautiful speech of the Hon'ble Leader of the House. He has no doubt presented the Government case in a masterly fashion. But I feel he has not done full justice to me when he said that I was out to expose the supposed shortcomings of the Eastern Bengal and Assam Commercial Syndicate from the very beginning. In this connection, he has referred to a letter of mine

written to him in January 1944. On another occasion he mentioned this letter on the floor of the House. My hon. Friend, Maulavi Abdur Rahman, has misconstrued this letter as a representation to His Excellency the Governor of Assam. That is, Sir, a distortion of truth, and this is not the only instance of falsehood in which my hon. Friend, Maulavi Abdur Rahman, has indulged this afternoon. The letter was not confidential, but still I hesitate to divulge the contents of it, as it raised a grave constitutional issue. I will only read out the particular paragraph when I made mention of my hon. Friends who condescended to become partners in the Agency. I said, "It is encouraging no doubt that some of the representatives of the people have interested themselves in the matter. I am sure they will try their utmost to safeguard the interest of the agriculturists." This is, Sir, the only reference to my hon. Friends. Sir, the Hon'ble Prime Minister will bear me out that in that letter there was nothing for or against the Syndicate. Still my hon. Friend, Maulavi Abdur Rahman, said that from the very beginning I started agitation against him by this letter. Sir, I emphatically submit that between January and August I did not utter a single word against the activities of the Syndicate. Within this period no note or report was submitted by me to any one in authority. Even in the last Budget Session I had not a single unkind word against the Syndicate.

During the month of August, the Hon'ble Prime Minister agreed at my request to undertake a tour in the *Buro* growing areas of the Sunamganj subdivision. But unfortunately, as the date collided with the visit of Hon'ble Sir Azizul Haque, Commerce Member to the Government of India, the programme had to be cancelled. On the 17th of August when I saw the Hon'ble Prime Minister at his House, he regretted the circumstances which led to the cancellation of the Sunamganj programme. However, at his request, I submitted a short note to him on that very day—in which I stated how the peasants were in a miserable condition as they could not dispose of their stocks. I urged upon him to take adequate steps for purchase of the stock and to ensure proper weight and price to the cultivators. This note at the direction of the Hon'ble Prime Minister was signed by two other hon. Members of this House. In that note also I did not make any allegation against the Syndicate. Early in the month of September when the cry of the cultivators became very insistent, I undertook a tour for inspecting several centres in Sunamganj and Habiganj. By the 10th September I submitted a note to the Hon'ble Prime Minister and the Supply Secretary as to the working of these centres. This is the last note I ever submitted to the Government. If by submitting these two notes, I have offended any body, I plead guilty to the charge. But this is a charge, Sir, which can be labelled against any public man who cares to espouse a public cause.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister has stated that he referred these notes to the Deputy Commissioner for enquiry, but he has not enlightened the House as to the result of this enquiry.

In divulging the contents of a letter of the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, I did not surely commit a new crime in the history of Parliamentary Procedure. Starting from the mother of Parliaments—it has been done everywhere and in innumerable cases.

It pained me, Sir, when I found that the Hon'ble Leader of the House was pleading, though in qualified terms, for the Agency. We have always known him as a friend of the poor. He has always stood by their sufferings and sorrow. I expected that after his recent tour in the Surma Valley he would advance at once to save the cultivators from sure ruin. It would indeed be a very laudable move to advance *Dadan* to the cultivators who could not dispose of their stocks. I am glad that the Hon'ble Prime Minister has agreed to advance to the cultivators to the extent of 40 per cent. of the stocks in hand.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister stated, Sir, that there were many private licensees for purchasing paddy and rice up to the extent of 10 to 15 thousand maunds. I make bold to say that there was not a single licensee of this type in Sunamganj up to the end of September.

As to the nice speech that has been delivered by my hon. Friend, Mr Whittaker, I would refer to only two points. Sir, he has justly said that no gambling with the people's food should be allowed. This should no doubt be the criterion of the procurement policy of any civilised Government. He also mentioned how majority of the Members coming from the Surma Valley had very severely criticised the Syndicates. It is enough condemnation of the policy adopted by the Agencies.

I cannot but admire the restraint, which my hon. Friend, Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury exhibited in delivering his speech. I did not expect him to admit of the charges that were made against him, but he has performed a difficult job with dignity and self-respect. I am sorry, Sir, that I cannot admire in the same tune, the fery and furious speech delivered by my hon. Friend, Maulavi Abdur Rahman. In this connection, I am reminded of an earlier remark made by my Friend, Mr. Aditya, that "when passion runs high, reason retires". That was exactly the case with Maulavi Abdur Rahman.

Sir, I admit that I do not possess the same language nor the same temperament to reply to his speech in the same vein. He has poured upon my poor head all kinds of insinuations, invectives and innuendoes which I did not deserve. These I cannot but refute with all the strength that I command. Sir, Maulavi Abdur Rahman started by saying that because of the fact that I could not be a partner of the Syndicate I started a Sylhet-wide agitation. At the next breath, Sir, he gave away his case when he said, that though he assured to safeguard my interest, but still, in spite of his soothing words I did not agree to be a partner with him. Here also, he directly contradicts his other partner, Maulavi Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury.

Sir, my hon. Friend has thrown out a good deal of challenges to the hon. Members to cite one single instance of corruption, practised by him. In this connection, for the information of the hon. Members of this House I would read out the report which was submitted to the Chairman, Enquiry Committee, Provincial Muslim League, Assam, regarding purchase of rice and paddy in Habiganj. It runs as follows:—

“To  
The Chairman, Enquiry Committee (regarding purchase of rice and paddy)  
Provincial Muslim League, Assam.

Sir,

I have made enquiries assisted by Maulavi Md. Monowar Tarafdar, Maulavi Ali Akbar Tarafdar, B. L., Maulavi A. J. Abdur Nur Choudhury and Maulavi Sayid Md. Munidul Hussain about the purchase of rice and paddy by the Eastern Bengal and Assam Commercial Syndicate in Habiganj Subdivision and my report is as follows:—

(1) The Aman and Sail paddy were and are being purchased by the Syndicate or their Agents at rates varying from Rs. 4 to Rs. 6-8.

The Syndicate has not yet purchased any Buro paddy worth mentioning though there is a vast area where only Buro paddy is grown. This has added to them series and difficulties of the people.

(2) The price of Sail rice given by the Syndicate or their Agents varied from Rs. 9 to Rs. 10 and price of Aus rice varied from Rs. 5-8 to Rs. 8.

(3) The weight given by the Syndicate or their Agents varied from 82 tolas 10 annas (a seer) to 85 tolas though the weight fixed by the Government is 80 tolas.

(4) Persons who took their paddy to Government Agents' godowns were detained for days and in many cases their paddy were refused. This was done apparently with the motive of lowering down the prices of paddy.

(5) Unusual delay was made by the Syndicate in paying the price of paddy in almost all cases and in many cases price has not yet been paid though the purchase was made one or two months before.

I enclose herewith written complaints received from different sellers during our enquiry. The time at our disposal was very short *otherwise thousands of such complaints would have been forthcoming.*

One thing that has struck us and pained us most was extreme difficulties of the people for not being able to dispose of their huge stocks of surplus paddy and want of money for meeting their daily necessities of life.

*Dated Habiganj,  
The 7th November, 1944.*

Yours faithfully,  
Sd/- ABUL HUSSAIN,  
*President, District Muslim League."*

Sir, the list that is enclosed is very formidable. I propose to read out only a few of them for the information of the hon. Members of the House:—

- (১) গুদাম নাই—বিক্রয় শ্রাবন মাস—দর ৬৯/০ ওজন ৮২৯/০ রসিদ দেওয়া হয় নাই—মফিজ আলি।
- (২) বানোয়র পরিমাণ ৩০০ মণ—রসিদ দেওয়া হয় নাই—ওজন ৮২৯/০—ইত্যাদি।
- (৩) গুদামের নাম—হবিগঞ্জ—প্রতি মণ ৬—ওজন ৮২৯/০ রসিদ দেওয়া হয় নাই। কামিনী কর।
- (৪) চুনাকুখাট—বানোয়র পরিমাণ ১৯ মণ দর ৫৯/০ ওজন ৮৫—রসিদ দেওয়া হয় নাই। ইত্যাদি।

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: What is the use of reading out all these reports? These things should have been mentioned before so that Maulavi Abdur Rahman could have got an opportunity to reply.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Very well, Sir, I will not read out any more.

Sir, Mr. Abdur Rahman has not only shown his wrath and fury against me but unfortunately he did not spare to gnash his teeth against very many respectable gentlemen of Sylhet.

As regards vouchers, my hon. Friend has said that on enquiry the application that was made regarding Balaganj was found to be a forged one. But may I ask him whether it is not a fact that an enquiry was made by Mr. Waris Ali, Extra Assistant Commissioner at Batpathar and the allegations were substantiated?

Lastly, Sir, my hon. Friend invites me to hold a meeting at Habiganj to test his honesty. I am reluctant to accept his challenge, as I apprehend, it will endanger his personal safety.

It appears, that there is a good deal of confusion in the minds of some hon. Members as to whether the Agency can be cancelled forthwith. I submit, Sir, that there are provisions for such cancellation. Clause 12(a) of the Agreement provides that if either Party want to terminate the Agency three months' notice would be required.

But sub-clause 12 (b) lays down that the Agencies may be cancelled at a moment's notice if the Agencies are found deficient in the discharge of their duties.

There is another point over which too much stress has been laid. Some Members think that the Agency should not be cancelled before an enquiry is held. I think there is no anomaly involved. Rather it will facilitate the work of enquiry. The Committee will be able to find out what were the defects and what amount of extortions and excesses were committed by the Agents and by what amount they cheated Government. I accept the suggestion of Mr. Whittaker that the Chairman of the Public Service Commission and Member of the Revenue Tribunal should be in the Enquiry Committee. In this connection I suggest that at least two more non-officials should be there.

I will put one question to my hon. Friend, Khan Bahadur Abdul Majid Chaudhury. Is it a fact that for demanding higher price for paddy purchased was he not threatened with prosecution?

Before I conclude, I will read out an extract from the Report of the Food-grains Policy Committee, 1943.

"The solution of the food-problem does not consist merely in finding adequate policy. Bad policy may be neutralised, to some extent at least, by adequate administration: bad administration will wreck any policy, however, good. And good administration in this connection calls not only for the normal qualities of assiduity and conscientiousness, but

for something else. It calls for a realization of the fact that the lives of humble men and women and children, who cannot help themselves are at stake. We feel that every Member of the Food Administration in every part of India, should be inspired by the thought that upon his efforts, however humdrum and humble they may be, the life and happiness of his co-citizens depend".

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

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would not detain the House long this time as I expounded the Government policy in this matter at great length yesterday. I tried not to engender any heat by entering into any controversial matters and I was congratulated upon the calm and reasoned way in which I placed the Government position before the House. Even the author of the present Motion was pleased this afternoon to characterise my speech of yesterday as marvellous. But, Sir, what is the use of giving credit and in the same breath saying that I pleaded for the Agency, though in a qualified form? I would say that the appreciation shown by my Friend, Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury, for my exposition of the Government position is nothing but hypocrisy. He should come forward if he dared and say openly that I have sided with the Agency. Sir, when I stated yesterday that Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury espoused the cause of poor peasants from the very beginning, I did not want to detract even one jot of admiration for him. But he has challenged my statement that he was trying by this means to expose the defects of the Agency and the malpractices that are being committed by them or their employees. I should be ashamed being the sponsor of a noble idea and a bold experiment—of espousing the malpractices of any one, be it Mr. Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury or anybody else. When I laid all those facts before the House I wanted to extol the activities of Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury. I wish I could congratulate him on his performance both yesterday and today if he had taken a leaf out of the book of Mr. Rabindra Nath Aditya and openly declared that his intention in moving this Motion is not vindictive as Mr. Aditya did. I was really amused when my Friend said that I was siding with the Agency, whereas at every stage, I have been helping Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury in the cause which he has been espousing, namely of exposing the malpractices of this Syndicate. He said that he had written me a letter in which he did not make any allegation against the Syndicate. That was in January 1944 and the Agency came into existence towards the latter part of December. He saw me in Shillong shortly after and narrated all those facts which he has placed before the House now. He called me out to preside over the National War Front meeting at Sunamganj in February and he was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. The entire length of his speech was condemnation of the actions of the Syndicate. I never stopped him and I encouraged him to speak. My Friend, Mr. Akshay Kumar Das was there and he also spoke quoting the food-grain policy of the Bombay Government. So at every stage my Friend did really take part of a detector and at every stage I enquired into his allegations. Then, Sir, only last month he asked me to preside over another National War Front meeting at Deraï. I went there at great personal inconvenience and heard what the people had to say and even in that meeting, I told the audience that through Government Agents I would try to procure as much rice and paddy as possible from the peasants and advance them one-third of the sale price. Even after all this, he characterised my speech of yesterday as pleading for the Agency. I did not really expect this much from Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury.

Now I come to the points raised in the debate. I would not take much time though I find there are various misunderstandings in the minds of many people. Most of the hon. Members said that the Rice Procuring Agencies of Government were given a monopoly in the rice trade. That is not correct, as I stated yesterday. There are Government licensees, ordinary traders and then there are special Agencies who were given licenses to trade in large quantities of rice and paddy. Moreover, the Syndicate could not buy and sell in the open market; they were asked to purchase and despatch the rice and paddy as directed by the Supply Department of the Assam Government.

Then, again Mr. Mookerjee yesterday said that the Agency was given without any security being taken from the Agents. He is entirely mistaken, for we asked the Agency to deposit a sum of Rs. 50,000 as security for performance of their part of the contract, which they did. The only thing that I need refer to here is that, as I stated yesterday, Government has been moving in the manner in which the hon. Members of this House want action to be taken. The only point of difference between us is as regards the formation of a Committee of Enquiry. I will request every hon. Member of this House to give their calm judgment on the few things that I will be placing before them. Khan Bahadur Keramat Ali was perfectly correct in placing before the House this aspect of the question that if you immediately liquidate the rice procuring agencies in the Surma Valley, and then start an Enquiry Committee, if after the enquiry is finished either in course of a week or a month, and the charges are not brought home to these Agencies, what happens then? In the first place, we have condemned unheard an innocent party; then the Rice Procuring Scheme will be upset, and unless we can set up some other organisation to procure in the meantime, the much-needed relief to the poor peasantry will be denied to them. Let us take the other side of the question. We start an enquiry against these Agencies. If from the enquiry it is definitely found that the Agencies have purchased rice and paddy at a certain price, but they have charged Government a higher price, then it will be open for Government either to prosecute them or to demand damages from them. But what help will that be to the peasants? If the peasants have been cheated, they have got the Criminal Court open to them. If they want to be paid the full control price they will have to go to the Civil Court for proper relief. In any case, the Committee of Enquiry, if it is set up only for the purpose of finding the truth of the allegations about the malpractices, will not be of much help. I hope the hon. Members listened carefully to the speech, as it deserved, of the Leader of the European Group. He suggested a Committee of Enquiry for the purposes of finding the best methods of procuring the large surplus grains of rice and paddy from an admitted surplus area in the year 1945 when we will be faced with a situation which is fraught with grave danger to the people of the Province. And in this matter, he suggested the names of two Government Officers who are beyond the jurisdiction of the Ministry. Sir, if the House want I have got absolutely no objection to accept a Committee of Enquiry for the purposes mentioned by Mr. Whittaker composed of these two Government Officials. (*A voice*: Not two, but three with Mr. Desai) Mr. Desai is not available at the present moment. He is on leave, and he will be coming back in the new year. He has already been earmarked for a higher and a very responsible post. So, probably he will not be available.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: Mr. Whittaker may be taken in.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: No, Sir.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: My hon. Friend Khan Sahib Maulavi Muhammad Amiruddin has suggested that in order to understand the language and interpret the feelings of the people and the spirit in which the enquiry shall have to be made, our learned Advocate-General should be included. If the House desire, I may include him to help the Committee of Enquiry. I will be pardoned, and I will be spared the criticism that I am siding with the Agency, if I oppose a Committee of mixed officials and non-officials. And my reasons are as follows:

If we take non-officials in the Committee, I think I cannot ignore the claims of the hon. Members of this House to sit in that Committee. I find, Sir, that the Members of this House have ranged themselves in two groups—one for the Syndicates and the other against them. Those who have spoken against, they have spoken in such a manner as if they had sifted all the evidence that were placed before them and they had already pre-judged the issue. It will therefore be unfair to the Syndicates, to the Government and to those Members themselves, to include them in the Committee when they have already formed a very decided opinion on one side. On the other hand, if I do not take any Member of this House, who are representative.

of the people, I will have to go outside and take some people from the Surma Valley, because the Committee's sphere of action will be the Surma Valley, who are either retired Government Servants or public men outside the Legislature. Normally, the Bar Association produces men who voice the grievances of the public, and as stated on the floor of this House, various Bar Associations have already identified themselves against the Syndicates. Therefore they also will not be proper persons to sit in the Committee of Enquiry. Lastly, Sir, my hon. Friend, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan, made an impassioned appeal to me personally to preside over this Enquiry Committee. I will excuse him if he does not understand Constitutional Law. As I will be the final authority to pass judgment on the report of this Committee of Enquiry, I cannot both be a member of that and the final authority. Therefore, I am sorry I cannot oblige him by making this enquiry myself.

Sir, one word more and I will finish. But I am sorry to find that the Member against whom I wanted to speak is absent, *i. e.*, Mr. Mookerjee. In the beginning of his speech yesterday, he started by complaining that I showed partiality in allowing Mr. Abdul Bari's Motion to be tabled and discussed, whereas, at the same time, I did not agree to his Motion being admitted. I noted on the file that there was a misunderstanding between myself and the Supply Department for, I believed that I passed orders to the Department to table a Government Motion to be moved by myself. On that impression, I wrote on the file when my consent was sought that I was myself moving a Motion and Mr. Mookerjee will get his chance to speak then, so I need not give consent. Later on, when I found that such a Motion has not been placed on behalf of the Government and Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury brought his Motion, I readily agreed, so that the House may get a chance for discussing this burning topic. My hon. Friend, Mr. Badiyanath Mookerjee, himself admitted towards the middle of his speech when you, Sir, Mr. Speaker, pulled him up for introducing question on consumer goods and the Excise Department dealing with it. At this stage he admitted the reason why I did not agree to his Motion being admitted.

Then again, Sir, he in his characteristic fashion gave me credit that when I appointed this Agency, I acted bonafide, but just after a few sentences, he started by saying that by appointing this Agency, I have done the blackest act in my political life. When, Sir, people of the type of Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee has not been able to bring an unbiassed mind in the discussion of this subject, I will not be doing justice either to the House or for the cause which is at the heart of most Members, if I start an Enquiry Committee of officials and non-officials. If the House will agree to the suggestion made by Mr. Whittaker as amended by Khan Sahib Maulavi Muhammad Amiruddin, I will not object to an Enquiry Committee, and I will request His Excellency to allow these three officials who are directly under him to form the Committee of Enquiry.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Members have received a list of Amendments classified and arranged into four \*groups according to the subject matter to which these Amendments relate. I shall now take up group No. I. In group No. I there are four Amendments. I would ask Khan Sahib Dewan Ahab Chaudhury whether he presses his Motion.

Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: Yes Sir, I press my Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I am placing this Amendment before the House.

The question is:

"That 'the inverted commas and the fullstop' after the word 'consideration' be replaced by a comma and the following words be added at the end of the Motion—'and that all the Government Agencies in the Surma Valley for procurement of paddy and rice be cancelled.'"

There is also another part of this Amendment that 'the ban on free trade be withdrawn'. I shall deal with it later on.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Mover what he means by the term 'cancel'. Does it cover the 'non-renewal'? These are two different questions. One is summary cancellation and the other is non-renewal. As



the Hon'ble Prime Minister said that the contract of the Government Agency expires automatically on the 31st of December, would the hon. Member accept both non-renewal and summary cancellation ?

Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: I accept the Amendment.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: There is no question of acceptance. What hon. Mr. Whittaker wants to know is whether the hon. Member means, by using the word—'cancel', that it is also to include non-renewal of the license.

Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: Yes, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the 'inverted commas and the fulstop' after the word 'consideration' be replaced by a comma and the following words to be added at the end of the Motion—'and that all the Government Agencies in the Surma Valley for procurement of paddy and rice be cancelled.'"

The question was adopted.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think, the other Amendments under group No. I fall through.

Then I come to Amendments in group II. Does Maulavi Mabarak Ali press his Amendment ?

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: I press, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the 'inverted commas and fullstop' after the word 'consideration' be omitted and the following words be added—'and an Enquiry Committee consisting of officials and non-officials be constituted to enquire into the working of the purchasing Agencies.'"

The question was adopted.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think, the other Amendments under group II fall through.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Now let us come to group No. III.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Sir, I do not want to press my Motion, that is No. (I).

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then let us consider Amendment No. 2 (d). Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan's Amendment No. 3 is very comprehensive.

The question is:

"That the 'inverted commas and fullstop' after the word 'consideration' be omitted and the following words be added—'and that the minimum and maximum price of these commodities be fixed from time to time with reference to their delivery at approved stations to be opened for the purpose and the price chart be duly published to make it reach the rural areas in the Province'".

The question was negatived.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Let us now take up Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan's another Amendment. The Amendments are that the inverted commas and fullstop after the word "consideration" at the end of the Motion be replaced by a comma and the following be added—'and that the purchase of rice and paddy in the Surma Valley be made through direct Government Agency', 'arrangements be immediately made for purchase of entire surplus stock of Buro paddy, stock them at the granaries of the sellers by paying at least 50 per cent. of the price immediately' 'surplus *Amon*, *Sali* and *Aus* paddy be purchased immediately by the Government and stored in Government godowns', and 'minimum price be fixed for the sale of rice and paddy'."

The Hon'ble Maulavi Sayid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: On a point of information, Sir, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan has agreed that it should be 40 per cent. instead of 50 per cent.

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN: Yes, Sir, I agreed.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then in place of 50 per cent. it should be read 40 per cent.

The question is:

"That the 'inverted commas and fulstop' after the word 'consideration' at the end of the Motion be replaced by a comma and the following be added—'and that the purchase of rice and paddy in the Surma Valley be made through direct Government Agency'.

'Arrangements be immediately made for purchase of entire surplus stock of Buro paddy, stock them at the granaries of the sellers by paying at least 40 per cent. of the price immediately'.

'Surplus Amon, Sali and Aus paddy be purchased immediately by the Government and stored them in Government godowns and minimum price be fixed for the sale of rice and paddy'."

The question was adopted.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Just one point, Sir, about Amendment No. 2. Does Maulavi Mabarak Ali accept the Hon'ble Prime Minister's modification? The Hon'ble Prime Minister said that he will accept the Motion for an enquiry provided the Committee consists of officials.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Now, Mr. Whittaker wants to know whether Maulavi Mabarak Ali accepts the assurance of the Hon'ble Premier to constitute an official Enquiry Committee for a mixed Committee of officials and non-officials. His Motion has been accepted by the House. Still it is open to Maulavi Mabarak Ali to say whether he is agreeable to accept the assurance given by the Hon'ble Premier.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: I accept the assurance given by the Hon'ble Prime Minister plus non-official members will be taken.

Babu DAKSHINA RANJAN GUPTA CHAUDHURI: On a point of information, Sir, may I know whether the enquiry will be an open one?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Sayid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It must be an open one but I cannot commit myself to any line of action.

Maulavi MABARAK ALI: However, Sir, I shall have no objection if even an official Committee be constituted.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I think it is also the sense of the House that the Hon'ble Premier's assurance be accepted. (Cries of "yes, yes.")

Then Group No. IV, Amendment No. 3. Then I am putting it in this way.

The question is:

"That in case Government purchase paddy and rice and stock them in the granaries of the producers themselves....."

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: No, Sir, not that one. The Amendment is "A portion of stock procured by Government etc."

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Yes, then: The question is:

"That a portion of stock procured by Government be retained as a reserve against possible deficits in the Surma and the Assam Valleys"

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, before the question is put before the House I think there is no necessity for it. I think nothing will be taken out of the Province. It will be used in the Province. I think it is not necessary, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Any other Amendment going to be pressed?

(Cries of "no, no".)

Then I would ask each of the hon. Members, in whose names the remaining Amendments stand, to rise up in his seat and ask leave of the House to withdraw his Amendments that remain to be put to the vote.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: I beg leave of the House to withdraw the other Amendments which stand in my name and have not been put to the vote.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I take it that the hon. Member has got leave of the House to withdraw the Amendments.

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

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: I beg leave of the House to withdraw the other Amendments which stand in my name and have not been put to the vote.

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

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

Maulana ABDUL HAMID KHAN: I beg leave of the House to withdraw the other Amendments which stand in my name and have not been put to the vote.

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

Maulavi MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: I do not press my Amendment, Sir.

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

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: There is another part of the Amendment moved by Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahab Chaudhury.

Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan MUHAMMAD AHBAB CHAUDHURY: I beg leave of the House to withdraw the second part of my Amendment.

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

#### Adjournment

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

*Shillong,*  
The 16th January, 1945.

A. K. BARUA,  
Secretary, Legislative Assembly, Assam.

#### APPENDIX—"E"

### Amendments to be put on Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury's Motion regarding food-grains procurement policy of the Government of Assam.

#### Group I

*Regarding cancellation of the present Government Agencies in the Surma Valley*

1. Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahab Chaudhury—  
"and that all the Government Agencies in the Surma Valley for procurement of paddy and rice be cancelled \* [ and the ban on free trade be withdrawn]"

2. Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy—  
"and that all Government Agencies and licensees for procurement of rice and paddy on behalf of Government in the Surma Valley be cancelled".

3. Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya—  
"and that the present system of procurement of rice and paddy be discontinued".

4. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan—  
"and that the present Agencies appointed by Government in the Surma Valley for procurement of rice and paddy be cancelled".

#### Group II

*Regarding setting up an Enquiry Committee to investigate into the complaints against the procurement Agencies in the Surma Valley.*

1. Maulavi Mabarak Ali—  
"and an Enquiry Committee consisting of officials and non-officials be constituted to enquire into the working of the Government purchasing Agencies".

2. Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy—  
"and that an Enquiry Committee be constituted with officials and non-officials to enquire into the allegations made against the said Agencies and particularly against the Eastern Bengal and Assam Commercial Syndicate and to recommend to Government the necessary measures to be taken against them".

3. Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya—  
"(e) and an Enquiry Committee be set up with a view to investigating into the complaints of malpractices against some of existing procurement Agencies and suggesting ways and means for better procurement on examination of the defects of the present system".

4. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan—  
"and that a Committee of Enquiry be appointed to enquire into the alleged malpractices of the present purchasing Agencies in the Surma Valley".

#### Group III

*Regarding purchase of surplus paddy and rice by Government and fixation of the minimum and maximum price of these commodities.*

1. Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy—  
"To arrange forthwith purchase of the entire marketable surplus of paddy and rice in the Surma Valley directly from the producers through Government machinery following the methods mentioned below :

(i) Bottom price of rice and paddy be fixed at the present scheduled rate fixed by the Government and also fix a reasonable maximum price".

2. Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya—  
"and that (c) the marketable surplus in rice and paddy be purchased forthwith by the Government on condition of its being ware-housed by the sellers at Government expense ;

(d) Minimum and maximum price of these commodities be fixed from time to time with reference to their delivery at approved stations to be opened for the purpose and the price chart be duly published to make it reach the rural areas in the Province".

3. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan—

"and that (3) the purchase of rice and paddy in the Surma Valley be made through direct Government Agency,

(4) arrangements be immediately made for purchase of entire surplus stock of Buro paddy, stock them at the granaries of the sellers by paying at least 50 per cent. of the price immediately,

(5) surplus Amon, Sali and Aus paddy be purchased immediately by the Government and stored them in Government godowns, and

(6) minimum price be fixed for the sale of rice and paddy".

#### Group IV

##### *Independent Amendments*

1. Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahabab Chaudhury—

["and that all the Government Agencies in the Surma Valley for procurement of paddy and rice be cancelled] and the ban on free trade be withdrawn".

2. Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya—

"and that (b) normal trade channels be restored as far as possible subject to such control and supervision by the Government as may be deemed necessary from time to time".

3. Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy—

["(2) To arrange forthwith purchase of the entire marketable surplus of paddy and rice in the Surma Valley directly from the producers through Government machinery following the methods mentioned below:—]

(i) See No.1 of Group. III.

(ii) Government machinery be directed to purchase paddy and rice from the producers in co-operation with the Food-Committees, Co-operative Societies and Producers' Committees,

(iii) Purchasing centres be increased and more godowns be arranged all throughout the surplus areas, so that they may be within the easy reach of the producers. In Buro areas Government may arrange the granaries of producers till 31st March 1945 as godowns and further arrange extra available houses of persons who may spare them for the godown purpose, in consultation with the aforesaid peoples' committees. In Amon and Sali areas, Government shall arrange extra available houses of persons who may spare them in consultation with the committees mentioned above and utilise them as godowns,

(iv) In case Government purchase paddy and rice and stock them in the granaries of the producers themselves at least 50 per cent. of the prices are to be paid to the sellers immediately and the rest to be paid with the clearance of godowns,

(v) Winter tracks be constructed in areas away from rivers or railway centres and carts, motor trucks, horses and mules be used for transport of rice and paddy from these areas.

(3) Government licences be issued to the Co-operative Societies and honest traders under the recommendation of Food Committees in deficit areas for purchase of rice and paddy from surplus areas within the Valley.

(4) A portion of stock procured by Government be retained as a reserve against possible deficits in the Surma and the Assam Valleys".

4. Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya—

"and that the cess now levied on food grains procured from other Provinces be reduced by 50 per cent. in order to put them on to the market at a lower price".

5. Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury—

"and the Procurement Agencies in the Province specially in Surma Valley be given all facilities for procurement".

Authenticated schedule of supplementary statement of expenditure for the year 1944-45, laid before the Legislative Assembly in the November, 1944, Session under Section 81 of the Government of India Act, 1935.

No. of Demand	Heads	Supplementary amount laid before the Assembly in this Session	Amount of cut made by the Assembly	Amount included by Governor	Amount now authenticated	Remarks
		Non-excluded areas (Voted)	Non-excluded areas (Voted)	Non-excluded areas (Voted)	Non-excluded areas (Voted)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	
1	29.—Police .. .. .	21,329	.	..	21,329	
2	42.—Co-operation .. .. .	5,332	..	..	5,332	
3	50.—Civil Works (excluding Tools and Plants and Establishment).	28,066	..	..	28,066	
	Total .. .. .	54,727	..	..	54,727	

The 20th November, 1944.

A. G. CLOW,  
Governor.

