

STATE OF NEW YORK LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1923

(Continued from page 1)

ARTICLE

SECTION

CHAPTER

Page

1. The State of New York shall be a free and independent State, free from all external domination, and shall have the right to determine its own political destiny.

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Proceedings of the fourth Session of the Assam Legislative Assembly assembled after the first General Election under the Sovereign Democratic Republican Constitution of India.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, the 1st September 1953.

PRESENT

Shri Kuladhar Chaliha, B.L., Speaker, in the Chair, the ten Ministers, the two Deputy Ministers, two Parliamentary Secretaries and seventy-seven Members.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(To which Answers were laid on the table)

Scarcity of C. I. Sheets in the Gauhati Subdivision

Shri RADHA CHARAN CHOUDHURY asked :

1. Will Government be pleased to state—
 - (a) What are the reasons for scarcity of C. I. Sheets in the Gauhati Subdivision since January 1953 ?
 - (b) What steps Government are taking to minimise the hardships caused by non-availability or insufficient supply of C. I. Sheets ?
 - (c) Do Government intend to abolish control on C. I. Sheets ?

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE replied :

1. (a) & (b)—There was no scarcity of C. I. Sheets till after February, 1953. During the months of January and February and early March the Registered Stockists of Gauhati Subdivision received 2,171 bundles which were distributed. Since March due to the resignation of the previous Handling Agent and the consequent cancellation of indents by the Iron and Steel Controller and also because of a prolonged strike in Steel Corporation of Bengal orders got behind hand.

The Tata Iron and Steel Company was rushed with orders from all quarters and they could not cope with demands. On my personal request to the Central Minister for Industries, despite the great demand on Tatas, the case of Assam for 19,300 bundles has been granted top priority. As a result of constant efforts it is now expected that regular supplies of C. I. Sheets will be possible. Some quantities are already on the move and it is expected that all the districts will receive something in the near future. Government will also see that a regular flow is maintained.

(c)—This matter is not in the hands of this Government and the policy can only be decided by the Centre. For the information of the hon. Member it may, however, be stated that there is an acute scarcity of sheet material throughout India and it is, therefore, highly unlikely that controls can be lifted at this stage.

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: May we know, Sir, what the quota of C. I. sheets allotted to Assam in 1953 ?

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister): I cannot say offhand, Sir, because the main question relates to Gauhati only. However, I can supply the information later if the hon. Member desires.

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: May we know, Sir, what the quota allotted to Gauhati subdivision ?

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister): It is not fixed, Sir. It all depends on the allotment in a particular quarter, *i.e.* the allotment of basic quota which is received by us from the Centre is distributed to all districts or rather subdivisions according to population basis.

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: May we know, Sir, what the number of bundles allotted to Gauhati out of this 19,300 bundles ?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has answered to that. He said that according to circumstances it was distributed.

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: No, Sir, but my question is what amount was allotted out of this 19,300 bundles ?

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister): I cannot say offhand, Sir, but as I have already said, distribution of basic quota was made on population basis.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Is it a fact, Sir, that in the last disposal of C.I. sheets at Gauhati the quota consisted of some 17 hundred and odd sheets of "rejected" C.I. sheets ?

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister): It may be so, Sir, because sometimes we get extra quotas which are a little defective. But these are not included in our regular quota.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Are these 17 hundred and odd sheets exclusive of the quota which has been mentioned here, Sir ?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is in excess of the requirement—that has been answered to by the Minister.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Is it a fact, Sir, that some private firms and individuals could procure Corrugated Iron sheets direct from Calcutta with special permits from the Directorate of Supply ?

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is disallowed.

Shri RANENDRA MOHAN DAS: Is it a fact that the agency of the State Government could not lift the entire quota that was allotted for Assam during the last two years ?

Mr. SPEAKER: By the dealers or by the State Government ?

Shri RANENDRA MOHAN DAS: By the agent appointed by the State Government, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member said so I believe.

RAJA AJIT NARAYAN DEB of Sidli: I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister, Sir, how these rejected Corrugated Iron sheets were priced ?

Mr. SPEAKER: Do you mean to say that they are priced at a higher rate ?

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister): Certainly it was at a lower price, Sir.

Maulavi Md. UMARUDDIN: May we know, Sir, how many agents have been appointed by this Government for the purpose of lifting Corrugated Iron sheets quotas from Calcutta ?

Mr. SPEAKER: That does not arise from the Question.

Shri THANURAM GOGOI: Is it a fact, Sir, that Gauhati has got the highest quota of Corrugated Iron sheets as compared with other subdivisions ?

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow that. It has already been answered that distribution of Corrugated Iron sheet was made on population basis.

Shri MAL CHANDRA PEGU: On a point of information Sir,

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of information ?

Shri MAL CHANDRA PEGU: My point of information is that why my questions regarding a plot of land contiguous to that

of Shri Nilmoni Phookan M.L.A., and for the plot of land given to Nilmoni Phookan, M.L.A., had been rejected on the ground that it goes against public policy.

Mr. SPEAKER: That information you can get from the Secretary and not here. Please take your seat. It transgresses bounds of decency.

Shri HARINARAYAN BARUAH: মাননীয় অধ্যক্ষ মহোদয়, কলেজৰ ছাত্ৰ সকলে ধৰ্ম্মঘট কৰাৰ বিষয়ে

Mr. SPEAKER: Disallowed. Please take your seat.

Shri. JADAB CH. KHAKLARI: Sir, ডিব্ৰুগড়ৰ বিষয়ে হি পাবোনে ?

Mr. SPEAKER: নোৱাৰে। এতিয়া গুৱাহাটীৰ কথাহে হৈছে।

Motion regarding food situation in Assam.

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now take into consideration the food situation in Assam. Sir, we are really glad that the situation has comparatively improved since last year. Last year or the year before last it was indeed a very pitiable sight when in various parts of the State rice was not available. In comparison to that spectacle this year the situation has improved in the sense that rice is at least available in the markets. Sir, for this our thanks go to the 'Gods' mostly because the rains have been really very kind to us.

Mr. SPEAKER: What about the Government here ?

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: They have also some share Sir. From the Gods it goes to the Government also. But then, even though the situation has improved, it is not what it ought to have been. In various parts of the State there is a scarcity condition. Sir, when I speak of scarcity condition I particularly like to mention Cachar district, Nowgong district, Kamrup district and part of Dibrugarh. (A Voice: What about Sibsagar?) I have no information. In addition to that, although the situation has improved, yet there are pockets where actual scarcity condition prevails. I also thank our Government for one more thing. That they have sent out rice to neighbouring States like West Bengal and Manipur because when it was not possible to stock all the rice procured in the State, it was necessary also that something should be lent out to the neighbouring States in distress. Therefore, our Government actually did the right thing in lending out rice to West Bengal and Manipur. I believe that in doing so the Government made the point clear that if actually scarcity condition arises in our own State, then the paddy or rice lent would be returned immediately and that the Central Government

would come to our rescue immediately. Sir, while it was a good thing, on the other hand Government have failed in meeting the needs of the State also. Sir, our rationing system is actually confined to a certain towns. There is no comprehensive rationing and it is golden maxim that a Government that takes from the people should also give to the people in times of need.

Sir, what is surprising is that the areas which are scarcity areas to-day, even from those areas procurement of rice was done. Even from Dibrugarh, from Nowgong and from Cachar there was procurement, but in those areas when the situation has come to such a condition that people are not getting rice or paddy, it was the duty of the Government to rush paddy or rice to those places.

Shri BIMALA KANTA BORAH: May I know whether he says that Nowgong is a scarcity area ?

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: Not the whole of Nowgong, I said some of the pockets. I am gradually coming to that.

It was the duty of the Government to rush rice and paddy to those areas. It was also stated in the papers and there were also statements by no less a person than the President of the Assam Provincial Congress that there was actually in the months of June and July a scarcity condition in Cachar, and today we hear also of scarcity condition in Kamrup, Garubhat, Jorabari, Jamunamukh, etc.. Paddy or rice have not been rushed into these places in the manner it ought to have been done. Sir, I do not say that there is no rice or paddy in stock. There are in certain godowns enough paddy and rice and a situation is slowly developing where procurement has become difficult because there is no room for keeping these things and it has, as a result, acted as a damper on the price and the cultivators have suffered a great deal. In certain areas the price of paddy has gone down because of less procurement done by the Government. In some areas the price of paddy is not even more than Rs.5 per maund. In Mangaldoi, Ahu crop is selling to-day at Rs.4-8-0 per maund. In certain other areas rice and paddy are being sold at a price lower than the price fixed by the Procurement Department. The other day a circular was issued about the price wherein the prices for different Subdivisions were fixed, but in the prevailing situation although this price may help on the papers, the cultivators will not get that price. There was not that amount of procurement which ought to have been there. So this price is not actually benefitting the cultivators.

Mr. SPEAKER: Has not the target of procurement for Assam been reached ?

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: The target for the State of Assam has already been reached. But as there are no free movements of paddy and rice, the traders cannot bring them to the places where they are actually wanted. On the one hand Government is not taking all the paddy that a cultivator may want to sell and on the other they are not allowing the cultivator or the trader to take the paddy to the places where it is actually wanted. Therefore there is a damper on price in one area if there is plenty, in the other if there is scarcity. In the surplus area the cultivator is not getting proper price and in the scarcity area people are not getting paddy. As a matter of fact in those areas of Nowgong that I have mentioned above, in Tingkhong area of Dibrugarh and in some areas of Cachar it is not so much the availability of paddy but the purchasing power of the people which is the villain of the whole drama. In Nowgong recently we have a report of a starvation death of a girl of 5 years of age. She was the daughter of one Bankaram Malakar of Kapasban bazar in Mouza Namati who died of starvation (Shri Bimala Kanta Borah: It is not true). I will reply to that afterwards. Then there is another report, we know, of a widow of late Badal Laskar of village Atigaon who set fire to her house with children inside. Sir, there is report that in the Kampur area though the price at which the Government is selling paddy is Rs.9-8-0 per maund people are not able to purchase it. It may be said by the Supply Minister, "Well it is not my fault that the purchasing power is not there". So far as the argument goes it may sound quite plausible, but at the same time availability has no meaning unless it has some relationship with the purchasing power of the people. In Barpeta, Dhubri and Cachar areas where there is scarcity condition this is mostly due to the failure of crop for the last three or four years. Particularly in Kampur and Jamunamukh areas of the Nowgong district crop failed for the last three or four years, and people there who are mostly cultivators have lost their purchasing power. We have been hearing the harrowing tales of children being sent to school by selling ornaments.

Sir, this is a situation which demands two things. (1) In these areas it is necessary for the Government to subsidise food so as to give relief to the people. It will not do if the Government simply say, "We have made rice and paddy available to the people in the prevailing price". It is the duty of the Government to see that the price is brought down even by subsidising goods. I know, Sir, that the Supply Minister may say that Rs.5,000 has been made available for that purpose. But what is this amount? I have been given all the figures by a responsible friend of mine and from that I can say that out

the 28th of July paddy was sold at Rs.9-8-0 per maund at Kam-pur and only 200 persons collected in the retailer shop there whereas there are about 40,000 people suffering from starvation and hunger. The whole crux of the problem is that although there is enough paddy people do not have the purchasing power to purchase the paddy at this price. Unless we can engage these people in some productive activity or in some nation building activity like boat making and other things wherefrom they can get some money till then this situation will not improve and it is the duty of the Government, which has vital relation with the food problem of the State, to see that there is co-relation and co-ordination between the Supply Department and other Departments whereby they can augment the purchasing power of the people. Unless this is done, this situation will continue and as a result it will be a threat to the security, safety and tranquillity of our State. This factor should also be taken into consideration. Because there is no embankment in the Barpeta area, the two streams— one coming from the Beki river and the other from the Brahmaputra—flooded the Bagbar, Mandia, Jaina and Sen-ga areas and damaged the standing crops for the last two or three years and the jute crop on which most of those people depend for their livelihood has also become a losing proposition to them. Thus the people of those areas are also suffering because they have not got the purchasing power. What the Government is supplying, it is impossible for them to purchase at the present price. So, when we look at the food situation we have also to reckon with this situation. It will not help matters if the Supply Minister says that so far as he is concerned and so far as his Department is concerned he has not failed in his duty. It will also not help matters if he says, "Well, what shall I do if the people have not got the purchasing power"? I am not criticising the Supply Minister alone, I am criticising the whole Government or the whole Ministry because we find that there is lack of co-ordination and that they have not been able to grasp the whole situation into account. Therefore we find the problem of scarcity. It is the duty of the Government to see that the people of the scarcity areas get the paddy at the price which is within their means. Sir, I have reports that in the Kam-pur area though there are three rivers, namely, Kopili, Jamuna and Jogijan, there is a drought situation there and the Ahu crop has failed this year. The people cannot utilise the pumps there because to do so they are to pay Rs.200 and it is not within their means to do so. So, the Government should have sympathetically considered the situation and allowed the people to make use of the pumps at a rate which was within their means or it was necessary for the Government to allow the use of the pumps free of charge at least for some time during the cultivating season. Had it been done the scarcity

situation would have been greatly minimised and the people would have got a great relief. But such was not done by Government. Sir, I know also that in the Cachar District a similar situation has prevailed where the price of rice in the month of June was soaring high and it came to about Rs.35 a maund or near about. Fair-price shops have been opened, it is true, but the price at which the rice is selling there is such that it is not within the means of the poor people to purchase. Sir, with this object—to bring these areas to the view of Government I have tabled this Motion and I hope the Government will consider the situation in that light. It is a situation to be tackled not only by the Minister for Supply but should be taken as a problem which concerns the whole Government. It is a question of loss of purchasing power of the poor people which the Government should take into account even by subsidising paddy and rice so that this scarcity situation may not be there. It is a sad sight that in some areas there is plenty of paddy while the cultivators are selling at a price which is very low, but in other areas we find there is scarcity and starvation and other cultivators not allowed to take their paddy to the scarcity areas for sale. Where there is improvement in the situation, restriction of movement of paddy may be necessary from the procurement point of view, but such restriction must not be there if it impedes the free movement of paddy from one place to another when there is scarcity in one area and so this restriction should be removed. If it is done, the normal flow of paddy from one place to another and the price will come down to such an extent that it will be within the means of the poor people to purchase.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The Motion moved is: "This Assembly do now take into consideration the food situation in Assam."

Shri MOHENDRA NATH HAZARIKA: অধ্যক্ষ মহোদয়, আমাৰ অসম এটা কথা আছে যে "সভাত থাকি নকয় উচিত দোমে পাই কিঞ্চিৎ কিঞ্চিৎ"। বিৰোধী দলৰ নেতা শ্ৰীযুত হৰেশ্বৰ গোস্বামী ডাঙৰীয়াই খাদ্য সমস্যাৰ কথা কওঁতে জিলাৰ বিষয়ে কিছুমান কথা কৈছে। অৱশ্যে আজি কিছুমান দিনৰ পৰা বজাৰত মণ্ড ভাব আহি পৰিছে আৰু তাৰ ফল স্বৰূপেই কিছ কিছু ঠাইত খাদ্য বস্তুৰ জৰ অভাবে দেখা দিছে।

মৰাপাটৰ দাম কমি যোৱাৰ লগে লগেই চাৰিও ফালে অভাবে দেখা আৰু মানুহৰ কিনা শক্তি কমি গৈছে। কিন্তু খাদ্য বস্তু কিনিবলৈ অভাব হৈছে কোনো খৰৰ পোৱা নাই। তেখেতে নগাঁও জিলাৰ কপাচবাৰীত এজনী ছোৱালী খাদ্যৰ জৰ মৃত্যু হোৱাৰ কথা কৈছে। কিন্তু এই ঠাই নগাঁও কিয় গোটেই অসমৰে এটা ভৰাল বুলি কব

Shri MOTI RAM BORA. (Minister): For the information of the House, I may say that I have myself made an enquiry into this situation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Did the hon. Member make an enquiry as President of the District Congress Committee?

Shri MOHENDRA NATH HAZARIKA: মই জানো। কিন্তু খাদ্যৰ অভাৱৰ কাৰণে মানুহ মৰা নাই। আমাৰ যি বিলাক প্ৰাথমিক কংগ্ৰেছ কমিটি আছে, সেইবিলাকৰ দ্বাৰা অণুসন্ধান কৰা হৈছে; কিন্তু এনে অভাৱত মানুহৰ মৃত্যু হৈছে বুলি কোনো খবৰ পোৱা নাই। আজি নগাওঁ জিলাত ১৪ খন সৌজাত খাদ্যাভাৱ হৈছে বুলি খবৰ পোৱা গৈছে; কিন্তু তাত ইমান বেছি নহয় যে মানুহ মৃত্যুৰ মুখত পৰিছে। আচলতে সেইবিলাক ঠাইত মানুহৰ খাদ্য কিনিবলৈ অভাৱ হোৱা নাই। তেওঁবিলাকৰ কিনা শক্তিৰহে ভ্ৰাস হৈছে।

তেখেতে আৰু এটা কথা কৈছে যে খাদ্য বস্ত্ৰ এঠাইৰ পৰা আন ঠাইলৈ অনা নিয়া কৰিব নোৱাৰি। এইটো ঠিক যে নগাওঁ জিলাত এঠাইৰ পৰা আন ঠাইলৈ অনা নিয়া কৰাৰ তেনে কোনো বাধা নাই। সেইবিলাক ঠাইত যে ধান নেপায় এনে নহয়, আচলতে কথা আন এটা। তাত যথেষ্ট পৰিমাণে ধান চাউল আছে কিন্তু মানুহৰ কিনা শক্তিহে নাইকিয়া হৈছে। সেইবিলাক মানুহৰ অভাৱ দূৰ কৰিবৰ কাৰণে কিছুপৰিমাণে ব্যৱস্থা কৰা হৈছে। বানপানীত বিধ্বস্ত অঞ্চলবিলাকতো খাদ্য যোগানৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰা হৈছে।

মানুহৰ খাদ্যৰ অভাৱ দূৰ কৰিবলৈ এই বানপানী বিধ্বস্ত অঞ্চলবিলাকত খাদ্য উৎপন্ন কৰিবলৈ আমাৰ চৰকাৰী বেচৰকাৰী অনুষ্ঠান বিলাকৰ জৰিয়তে নানাতৰহৰ ব্যৱস্থা হাতত লোৱা হৈছিল, আনকি সেই ঠাইবিলাকত পুচাৰ কাৰ্য্যও চলোৱা হৈছিল। কিন্তু তথাপিও চলচলি, কামপুৰ আদি দুটামান অঞ্চলত আশানুৰূপ কৃতকাৰ্য্য হব পৰা নগল। কিন্তু অন্যান্য অঞ্চলত আছ আৰু ববোধান উৎপন্ন কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হব পৰা গৈছিল। এয়ে নোহোৱাহেতেন অবস্থাই গুৰুতৰ ৰূপ ধাৰণ কৰিলেহেতেন।

এইখিনিতে মাননীয় গোস্বামী ডাঙৰীয়াই এটা কথা উল্লেখ কৰিছে, যে চৰকাৰৰ তৰফৰ পৰা শস্য পথাৰবিলাকত পানী যোগাবৰ কাৰণে Water Pump ৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰিছিল কিন্তু পুতি খেতিয়কে আগতে ২০০ কৈ টকা জমা দিব লগীয়া হোৱাত তেওঁলোক সেই ব্যৱস্থাৰ পৰা বিমুখ হব লগীয়া হৈছিল। অৱশ্যে মোৰ বোধেৰে চৰকাৰে মানুহৰ পৰা এই টকাখিনি আদায় কৰাৰ আন ৰকমেও ব্যৱস্থা অবলম্বন কৰিব পাৰিলেহেতেন। সেই প্ৰাকৃতিক বিপৰ্য্যয়ৰ দ্বাৰা জুৰুলা-জুপুৱা হোৱা মানুহবিলাকে ইতিপূৰ্বেৰ ২০০ টকা জমা দিবলৈ অক্ষম হোৱাটো স্বাভাৱিক। প্ৰথমতে মানুহবিলাকক সেই Pump ৰ সহায়েৰে শস্য উৎপন্ন কৰিবলৈ উৎসাহ উদগনী দি শস্য উৎপন্ন হোৱাৰ পিচত সেই টকা আদায় কৰাৰ ব্যৱস্থা থাকিলে বোধকৰো সকলো খেতিয়কেই উপকৃত হলেহেতেন। আশাকৰো চৰকাৰৰ কৃষি বিভাগে এই বিষয়লৈ লক্ষ্যৰাখি ভৱিষ্যতৰ কাৰণে নিহিত ব্যৱস্থা কৰিব।

যিহওক মোৰ নিজা অভিজ্ঞতাৰ পৰা মই ইয়াকে কব পাৰো যে আমাৰ নগাওঁ জিলাত খাদ্য-বস্ত্ৰ পোৱাৰ অভাৱ হোৱা নাছিল।

সেই সময়ত যিবিলাক ঠাইৰ মানুহ বানপানীত প্ৰপীড়িত হৈছিল সেইবিলাক ঠাইত আমাৰ চৰকাৰী আৰু বেচৰকাৰী মহলৰ তৰফৰ পৰা কাৰ্য্যকৰী ব্যৱস্থা লোৱা হৈছিল। কামপুৰ অঞ্চলতো খাদ্যাভাৱ দূৰ কৰিবলৈ আমাৰ ফালৰ পৰা আৱশ্যকীয় পৰিমাণে খাদ্যদ্রব্য যোগান দিবলৈ চেষ্টা হৈছিল।

ইয়াৰ পৰা মই কব পাৰো যে প্ৰকৃততে সেইসময়ত খাদ্যদ্রব্য পোৱাৰ অভাব হোৱা কেৱল মানুহৰ ক্ৰয় শক্তিহে বহিত হৈছিল। সেইকাৰণেই খাদ্যদ্রব্য মজুত থাকাতো মানুহে নি নোৱাৰাত কিছু অসুবিধা হৈছিল। খেতিয়ক লোকসকলৰ খেতিৰ কামৰ পৰা বিৰত থাকিব হোৱাত সেই লোকসকলৰ কাম কাজ কমি গৈছিল। সেই লোকসকলক কাম কাজ দিবৰ কাৰণে চৰকাৰৰ ঘৰৰ পৰা সুতা কটাৰ ব্যৱস্থা অবলম্বন কৰা হৈছে, তেওঁ লোকসকলে দুই চাৰি পয়ছা উপাৰ্জন কৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰিছে। তাকে ঠিক সময়তে যাতে লোকে মজুত বা আদি পায় তাৰ কাৰণে বিশেষ লক্ষ্য ৰাখিবলৈ চৰকাৰৰ দৃষ্টি আকৰ্ষণ কৰোৱা বাস্তৱ পুখুৰী আদি কৰোৱাৰ কাম কৰিবলৈকো চৰকাৰৰ দৃষ্টি আকৰ্ষণ কৰোৱা হৈছিল কিন্তু কাল হোৱাৰ কাৰণে কাম কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম নহল। মোৰ বোধেৰে এনেকুৱা অবস্থাত লোকসকলে এনে এলেছৱা অবস্থাৰ পৰা দূৰত ৰাখিবলৈ গৱণমেন্টৰ তৰফৰ পৰাও লোকসকলক এৰি কৰ্পাহী সুতা আদি কটাত আৰম্ভ কৰি ৰাখিলে, এহাতে মানুহবিলাকে কিছু টকা পয়ছা উপাৰ্জন কৰিব পাৰে আৰু আনহাতে অৱ্যবত সময় নষ্ট কৰিবলৈ সুবিধা নাপায়। সুতা কাটো উপাৰ্জন কৰাৰ লগে লগে আৰু এটা অৰ্পকৰী ব্যৱস্থা হাতত লব লাগে। আমাৰ মহিলাক ধান বনা সম্পৰ্কেও মনোনিবেশ কৰা উচিত। আমাৰ বেচৰকাৰী কংগ্ৰেছৰ তৰফৰ পৰা পৰামৰ্শ দিলেও বাইজে তাত সহযোগীতা নকৰে।

Mr. SPEAKER: বাইজে কি সহযোগীতা নকৰে ?

Shri MAHENDRANATH HAZARIKA: যি সকল বাইজৰ মুখত সেইসকলে এনেকুৱা বিময়ত সহযোগীতা নকৰে। তেওঁলোকে কয় যে এনেকৈ কৰি বানি নো কেনেকৈ অৰ্থ উপাৰ্জন কৰিব'। সেই কাৰণেই তেখেত সকলে সহযোগীতা নকৰা সাধাৰণতে দেখা যায় যে দুগৰাকী তিবোতা মানুহে এবেলাত এমোণ ধান বানিব পাৰে তাৰ কাৰণে তেওঁলোকে কম পক্ষেও বাৰ অনা পইচা পায়। এই উপাৰ্জন একেবাৰে তাকৰ নহয়। আমাৰ দেশ বেকাৰ সমস্যাৰ সম্মুখীন হৈছে। জাতি লোকসংখ্যাৰ প্ৰায় আধাই হৈছে তিবোতা। এই তিবোতা সকলক অবসৰ সময়ত যদি তেওঁ লোকৰ অভ্যস্ত হৈ থকা এই ধান বণাশিল্পত নিয়োগ ৰাখাযায় তেন্তে বহু টকা বাৰি তেতিয়া মিল মালিক বনিকসকলৰ হাতলৈ টকা নগৈ দুখীয়া পৰিয়াল সকলৰ হাতলৈ টকা যাব আৰু বেকাৰ সমস্যা ও কিছু সমাধা হব। সেই মৰ্শে মই আমাৰ চৰকাৰ আকৰ্ষণ কৰো যাতে ভৱিষ্যতে ৰাজ্যত মিলৰ সংখ্যা বৃদ্ধি নকৰে।

অৱশ্যে মই ইয়াকেই কবলৈ বিচাৰো যে, কেৱল চৰকাৰক সমলোচনা কৰিলেই ৰাজ্যত খাদ্য দ্ৰব্যৰ বাহি নহয় আৰু ক্ৰয়শক্তি হীন লোক সকলৰো সমস্যা সমাধা নহব। মাননীয় হৰেশ্বৰ গোস্বামী ডাঙৰীয়াই তেখেতৰ সমালোচনা মূলক পদ্ধতিৰে কেৱল চৰকাৰৰ ভাৱধাৰাহে প্ৰচাৰ কৰিছে। এইপ্ৰচাৰ কাৰ্য্যৰ দ্বাৰা কোনো সংগঠন মূলক কাম কৰা নহয় তেখেত সকলে অন্যান্য বিৰোধী দল সমূহৰ কেৱল মন যোগাইছে। তেখেত সকলৰ মনোবৃত্তিয়ে আমাৰ বাইজৰ সমস্যা জটিলহে কৰিব। আমি কেনেকৈ এই সমস্যাৰ ওৰে সংগঠন মূলক কাৰ্য্যপদ্ধতি হাতত লবলৈ তেখেতক অনুৰোধ কৰো ইয়াকে। কৈ মই বক্তৃতাৰ সামৰণী মাৰিলো।

Shri BIMALA KANTA BORA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, heartily thank my Friend, Shri Hareswar Goswami, for allowing the House an opportunity to discuss the food situation of the country. It is true that there is distress in certain areas of the State. Mr. Goswami's speech was confined more to the area of the district of Nowgong, such as Kampur, Garubat, Jamunamukh and other places though he incidentally mentioned Cach

and Kamrup ; but the main emphasis he laid on the food scarcity in the district of Nowgong. As I come from the Nowgong district and more particularly from a constituency where this food scarcity exists and as, unfortunately, I was born and brought up in these flood-affected areas, I can say with greater personal experience than any of my Friends here about the actual state of things prevailing there. I feel that Mr. Goswami's speech is very much exaggerated. It is true that there is distress prevailing in some parts of the district, but while speaking about the distress of the people, we must try to find out the reasons of the distress and also ascertain the steps taken by Government to relieve the distress of the people. Unfortunately, however, this aspect of the matter did not find sufficient space in the speech of my Friend, Mr. Goswami. These places, Kampur, Garubat, Jamunamukh were at one time the granary of the district. People were very happy and industrious. At one time this Kapili Valley was the most prosperous valley not only in the Nowgong district, but in the whole Province. But these very people are now suffering from want of food, and starvation is staring them in their face. What is the cause of it ? It is not that the people are not industrious but Providence seems to be against them. For the last three years there have been repeated floods not once or twice, but thrice in a year. People fought the nature, they fought the floods with as much courage as is necessary, but ultimately they failed. The result is scarcity of food and low purchasing power of the people. These repeated floods have ruined the people economically in that area. Sir, two kinds of people are inhabiting these areas. One is the immigrants and the other is the indogenous Assamese people. Fortunately, the immigrant people stood the flood some how or other, as after the last year's flood of October when the crop in those areas were completely destroyed and even the houses went under water, these immigrant people of Gurabat and Jorubat Mouzas managed to grow good Boro paddy by cultivating this paddy in the low lying areas of those Mouzas. But our people who were not accustomed to cultivation of Boro paddy had to face great difficulties. Anticipating great hardship that might appear as the result of the destruction of the crop we held a very big meeting after the October flood to explain to the people the situation that might arise. It was one of the biggest meetings that was ever held in that area. About 10,000 people attended the meeting. In that meeting we took some decision. We warned the people to take care from the beginning of the year. People enquired how could they take care, and what were our suggestions to meet the situation. We suggested test relief work and growing of Rabi crops. The Government provided the cultivators with seeds of Boro paddy and other crops also. That

was done. I may inform the House that about Rs.60,000 was spent in test relief work in construction of Kampur and Jamunamukh Road where people high and low worked on Public Works Department roads on test relief measure. In the Kampur-Chaparmukh road about Rs.10,000 was spent in a similar way. There were other similar projects which enable people to get work and earn some money for three or four months. The people thus got work and did not suffer. But as soon as rain set in, these test relief work could not be carried on and there was practically no work to enable the people to earn money. Therefore the situation aggravated. Repeated floods already impoverished the people and there was non-availability of work. As a result, their sufferings became more acute. When the matter was brought to the notice of the Government, Government took some action by giving the people paddy at concession rate. When the Chief Minister went to Nowgong, people went on a deputation to him at the Circuit House and explained their difficulties. Their demand was that paddy should be made available to them at a lower price. It was not a fact, as Mr. Goswami has said, that paddy was not available, but it was the low purchasing power of the people which aggravated the situation. In Jamunamukh, Hojai and Kampur there were huge stocks of paddy in the Government godowns, but the difficulties were that people had no money to purchase the paddy. The low purchasing power of people could not be raised by mere raising of slogans or by criticising the Government. It can be raised by only definite constructive plan of work chalked out both by the Government and the people. The first thing the Chief Minister did after his return from Nowgong was that he arranged to supply paddy to the people at some concession rate. In place of Rs.10-8-0 or so which is the controlled rate, Government arranged supply of the paddy at Rs.9-8-0 per maund and on this account Government sanctioned Rs.5,000 as subsidy for the supply of this paddy at concession rate. I agree with Mr. Goswami that the amount is small, and that is not sufficient. Personally I would be happy if Government could be able to provide more money for the purpose. Besides this, Government opened several Cheap Grain Shops. I invite Mr. Goswami to visit the areas and instead of criticising the Government alone let him put forward constructive suggestions as to how the economic condition of the people could be raised. If that cannot be done, you cannot solve the problem. There is no real scarcity of paddy, or rice there. So I do not understand how the suggestion of free movement of paddy, given by my Friend, Mr. Goswami, would have eased the situation. As I have already said it is not the question of availability or non-availability of paddy, but it is a question of the purchasing power.

of the people. So I cannot say what is the position in Cachar or Gauhati, but from my experience of the Nowgong areas which is also my constituency, I can say that it is the low purchasing power of the people which has caused the distress of the people.

Now a word about the report of the starvation death in Kapasbari which is also in my Constituency. I made enquiries even from the responsible people of the locality there and I came to learn that the report was not correct. It is a fact that the family was poor and it may be that he could not arrange for proper treatment, medicine, etc. It is not a fact that the child died of starvation. About the burning of the house by the widow of Badan Laskar, the report was highly exaggerated. That house is not far from my village home. The house was roofed with thatch which somehow caught fire and capital was made out of it. Sir, now-a-days Kampur has become a very hot bed of politics. The area is very progressive. There are educated people.

Shri MOTI RAM BORA (Minister): It is called the 'Chhoto Kalikata' (*laughter*).

Shri BIMALA KANTA BORA: Sir, there are doctors, big officers and other educated people in that area. Politics is most complicated there. Therefore, Sir, my submission is that the statement of Mr. Goswami, which is mostly based on a Kampur report must be taken with a grain of salt. I feel Government should be more charitable and sanction more money. It is my Constituency and I have every right to say so, so that the distressed people may be in a position to purchase the paddy at a concession rate.

Now as regards the price of Aus paddy, Sir, my Friend, Mr. Goswami, says that the price is lower than the Sali paddy. That is bound to be so, Sir.

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: What I said is that, Sir, in certain areas Aus was sold at Rs.4-8-0- per maund and if there was free movement, it could have been available to the people at lower price than what it is now.

Shri BIMALA KANTA BORA: Even if there was free movement, the price would not have gone up. So far as Nowgong was concerned, it was selling at about Rs.6-8-0- or so per maund at the beginning. Sir, about the real demand of the people, I must say that it is loan. We have been requesting Government for loans so that the people may somehow or other manage to eke out an existence till the next harvest. As we know, this loan business is a difficult business. I suggested to Government to arrange loan to the people through the Land Mortgage Bank and Co-operative Societies, etc., so that people could get the money at the least possible delay when they are in extreme need.

Unfortunately, this year where there were floods, there is complete drought. Failure of crop is a certainty there. So I would request the Government to foresee what might happen there next year and what steps they should take from now and to keep a watch on the situation. People are suffering from flood and drought in turn and they are helpless against the act of God. Government has got its duty to its people and I hope it will not forget its responsibility towards this suffering humanity.

Sir, the control of the Kapili river is a most important thing. It is Kapili which has become the sorrow of the people of these areas. If it can be controlled, then paddy from this area will not only feed our own district but it will be able to give supply to other scarcity areas of the State. I repeat that if Kapili is controlled, smiling paddy fields will appear on the banks of the Kapili river again. With these words, I would request the hon. Member to withdraw his Motion.

Shri RANENDRA MOHAN DAS : Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are glad to get an opportunity to discuss the food situation in the State. Unlike previous years, the situation has improved a lot and I am not so unkind like my Friend, Mr. Goswami, to offer our thanks and gratitude to God but I would convey thank and gratitude to God through our Supply Minister (*Laughter*). The situation has improved and our people generally are getting rice and paddy and Assam has got that position now to export rice and paddy for the help of other neighbouring States. We congratulate the Government and the Supply Minister particularly for this improvement, but I would also ask him not to be guided by a spirit of complacence because of the improved food situation. He has many more things to do. We have many defects and because of the defect in the administration for procurement and supply in the State, people in different places of scarcity are not getting adequate supply of food like other areas of the State.

Sir, we the people of Cachar have sent deputations to the present Supply Minister and also to many other Ministers and officers of the Government to lift the cordons within the district of Cachar particularly, we have tried to convince and explain to them about it and I am sure they have been convinced from our facts and figures given to them. There are some places in our Cachar district where supply of rice and paddy is very limited and people in those places have got to depend on other neighbouring areas. In this connection, I would like particularly to say about Badarpur and Kaliganj. Sir, you know very well that Kaliganj area is very backward and very thickly populated by poor scheduled caste people. They used to get rice and paddy by *bhara* from Hailakandi Subdivision through a hill route, but because of this cordoning system those people have been deprived of this. The position of Badarpur, which is a thickly populated area, is

also very bad regarding supply of rice and paddy and people there depend for supply on Katigora in Silchar Subdivision and for this cordoning they are in great difficulty. These are the two places which are well known for scarcity of rice and paddy every year. There are also some more places which are suffering from this cordoning system. If this cordoning is removed, the people in the scarcity areas of the district will be relieved and the food situation in those areas will be much improved.

So, I would request the Government to consider this point and particularly when the food position in our State has improved—I say—remarkably, and therefore it is the opportune time when the cordoning system within the district should be abolished at the first instance. It is also argued by the Government that in Cachar there is every chance of smuggling of rice and paddy to Pakistan. Sir, you know the position of Cachar. It is bounded on three sides by hills and on the other side by Pakistan. After the introduction of the Passport system, inter-Dominion movement has almost stopped—as a result, smuggling has almost disappeared and I have got information from authoritative sources that price of rice and paddy in Jakiganj area in Pakistan which is just opposite to Karimganj is lower than in Cachar. So smuggling is not necessary. Apart from this, there are the Enforcement Department, Customs, Police and other barriers to stop smuggling by undesirable people. For these reasons, I would request the Government again to abolish the cordoning for at least a few months to see how it works.

Sir, I have also received similar reports from the border areas of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. These areas are situated within 15 to 20 miles of Shillong. These are Mawphlang and Mawngap in which areas there is acute scarcity of rice and paddy and people there are practically starving. It is reported that they are taking aram, potato and other wild products. The food situation there deteriorated mainly due to bad communication. We have got sufficient stock of food in Shillong and other places in the State, and as our Leader pointed out that foodstuff cannot be supplied timely to the pocket in scarcity areas, so people there are suffering. So, I would request the Government to improve the system of transport so that people living in the interior and in pockets may get rice and paddy properly in time.

Sir, I would like to impress on the House about the condition of Cachar district during the last June and July. During these two months food situation was very bad and it is a fact and I say with authority that the price of rice at that time rose upto Rs.40 per maund in Karimganj Subdivision.

Sir, the Assam Congress President, Shri Bimala Prosad Chaliha, was in Karimganj Subdivision at that time. He visited places

like Badarpur, Kaliganj and other areas where there were great scarcity. On a personal inquiry after visiting all those places even in heavy rains just like a *pucca* Congress-man and a true disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, he issued a statement in regard to Karimganj Subdivision to the effect that rice was selling at Rs.35 to Rs.40 per maund. But curiously enough, a statement was issued simultaneously by the Supply Minister from Shillong that the position of rice and paddy in Karimganj Subdivision in the Cachar District was quite satisfactory.

Sir, it is difficult for the poor people to reconcile these two statements, *viz*, a man of position who made a statement after personal inquiry and another person holding a position making a statement basing on his office reports just like a bureaucratic administrator. Sir, I leave it to the decision of the House as to which statement is correct. From my side, I can say that I have seen personally that rice was selling at Rs.40 per maund. But the Supply Minister says, "We had sufficient rice at that time, and there was no purchasing capacity of the people". If there is sufficient stock at godown but—ন দানম্, ন ধর্মম্, ততঃ কিম্, ততঃ কিম্,

Sir, the people were starving not only due to their low purchasing power but also due to the abnormally high price of rice, which continued for some considerable time say, for more than a month or so.

Sir, in the statement issued by our Supply Minister at that time, *i.e.*, in the months of June and July, it was stated like this, "By middle of June we had 92,000 tons of rice in the Cachar District and that was given through those Cheap Grain Shops and by first part of July there were 77,000 tons of rice". From the report which we have got from authoritative sources, it was stated that only 72 Cheap Grain shops had been opened at that time.

Now, we know that the population of Cachar District is nearly 12 lakhs and 72 Cheap Grain Shops were opened for them, I should naturally be guided by the belief that those shops were opened surely for giving relief to the poor people. I leave it to the decision of the House. Sir, when there was a necessity for opening 5 or 6 hundred Cheap Grain Shops, after opening only 72 Cheap Grain Shops the Supply Minister has ventured to contradict the statement of the President of the Pradesh Congress Committee who had inquired matters locally. Sir, I appeal to the House and to the Government to see if they can relax this control and procurement system of rice and paddy in the district of Cachar. If it functions well, they can adopt a system of gradual decontrol.

Secondly, I shall explain by few facts and figures at my command how our Supply Department is inefficient in matters of foodstuff which is a vital sucker of the people. The Government

of India issued a press note on 15th April 1953. By that press note they abolished all restrictions on wheat products, also the restriction on prices of wheat products. That notification from the Government of India was not published by our Government for several weeks and even for several months. The Government of West Bengal, after a few days, *i.e.*, on 28th April 1953 informed to all mill-owners, steamer companies and other firms that all restrictions on wheat products including price have been abolished. The mill will be free for milling these products and sell it. On an agitation which was sponsored by the Merchant Association, Karimganj who sent a telegram to new Delhi and also to the Assam Government on 19th May 1953, the Government of India immediately sent copies of the notifications about wheat products to the Association, but our Assam Government did not even care to reply to the telegram of the Association. Sir, on the 12th June, *i.e.*, after a lapse of two months, our Government issued a press note, by which they admitted that the notification of the Government of India was right. I leave it to the House to see if it is fair for our Government to take more than 2 months for issuing a notification of the Government of India for the information of the people of Assam. What happened during these two months? The Government Supply Staff seized several maunds of wheat products from the merchants in the Karimganj Subdivision and the loss thus sustained would amount to several thousands.

Mr. SPEAKER : You will please look at me and not to others.

Shri RANENDRA MOHON DAS : Yes Sir I am looking at you but there is some attraction over there. I mentioned these also in connection with selling of sugar, V.O.P. and other things and delay and negligence of our Government in publication of India Government notification is criminal.

Shri BIMALA KANTA BORA : Sir, to mention sugar and other things, I think is irrelevant.

Shri RANENDRA MOHAN DAS : Sir, incidentally I mentioned it. The Department which is constituted with so called more efficient Minister who had also experience of those bureaucratic administration, an I.C.S. Secretary and with a Director who is one of the most efficient men of the Government, it is really painful if they fail to tackle the situation in a proper way. I would request the Government to see if they can improve the administration so that the harassment of the people and merchants may not be made in future.

With these words, I support the motion moved by my Friend Mr. Goswami.

Shri A. ALLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not always speak on a subject with which I am not very familiar, but on this occasion I thought I would speak something, at least for the hill areas.

Sir, I am sure everybody would like to have some discussion on the food situation because food is the primary necessity of life and our life depends on food. Some months ago I remember I sat in a Committee. In that Committee we were told that the supply position had been rather unexpectedly good in Assam and some Members were even talking of full decontrol. But on hearing the Government and after some discussion we thought that it would not at all be desirable to decontrol foodstuff at the moment, nor even to relax what was known as the cordon system. I think, Sir, the present food situation in our State is very encouraging, considering our experience for the past few years. We have to congratulate the Government for what they have done, though much still remains to be done. If everything can be solved, there would be no need for any Government. We know that our Government are trying to solve any trouble that we face from time to time.

Sir, in the hill areas there is no such thing as procurement, there is only supply. In my district of United Khasi-Jaintia Hills there is supply in the towns and partial supply in the villages. It is true that the people living in the bordering villages of both the Khasi Hills and the Garo Hills have experienced very great difficulty since 1948. They have suffered terribly; many of them had to live on roots, fruits and other things. Government have somewhat realised the position and are trying their best to mitigate the hardship. Although much yet remains to be done, the Government have done what could reasonably be expected to be done in order to relieve the distress of these people. From what we have seen and heard from the people of these affected areas we gathered that many of them do not get rice. Rice is the staple food for those areas. The people there do not grow any food crops. They depend entirely on cash crops. Since Partition their cash crops could not be profitably moved to Shillong, then to Gauhati and then to Calcutta for marketing. The suffering of the people of these border areas is, to put it mildly, very acute. But I suppose the Government are alive to the situation and will do what they can. We are grateful to the Government of India—of course the Government of Assam moved the Government of India—for giving a sum of Rs. 5 lakhs as subsidy in order to relieve the distress of the people. As you know, Sir, the cost of carriage of rice to those areas is very high. If you take rice from Shillong to a village near about Nongstoin.....

Mr. SPEAKER : What about the Mawngap village ?

Shri A. ALLEY : Mawngap is all right, Sir, as there is a motorable road.

As I was saying, Sir, in the bordering villages Government have been selling rice at Rs. 21 per maund although the actual cost is near about Rs. 30 per maund. The difference is met by Government from the subsidy. But, Sir, the only trouble is that although Government have sanctioned 5 lakhs of rupees, it is not known whether people are benefited to that extent. I have personally grave doubts about it. I would be happy if even 3 lakhs of rupees went to benefit the people. But the fact is that almost half of the money disappears somewhere in between Shillong and the villages. I suppose it cannot be helped, as some of our people, both officials and non-officials, are bad. But I suppose this problem will also be solved in due course.

Sir, the people of the affected areas and other areas who do not get or grow much rice have started taking to maize and other food-stuffs which are more substantial than rice. In this connection, Sir, I would like to speak something about making some of the hill areas self-sufficient in food. It is not good to be supplied with food always from other areas, which may also be suffering. If you can make our district self-sufficient in food, it would be a blessing not only to us but to the State as a whole. In this connection I am led to speak something about Nowgong. We have just heard from the hon. Member from Nowgong that the Kopili river has done a lot of damage to Nowgong. Kopili river originates in the Khasi Hills, somewhere in the Jowai Subdivision. It is met in its course by two hill streams Umkhen and Umiam. These streams are so rapid in their course that by the time they reach Nowgong, Nowgong is flooded. I would therefore suggest that Government should take steps to train these hill streams which meet in the Killing river. If it is done, rice can be grown in those areas. Why not tap the resources of these rivers ? Why not pump out water and make small irrigation schemes ? This will go a long way in making the State self-sufficient in food. We are trying to build some roads in that area. Why not start irrigation work immediately ? I would, therefore, request Government to take up this matter and try to make these areas productive areas.

There is yet another thing, Sir. Although rice is a very important food, there are other foodstuffs, which can be grown, for example, tapioca. Tapioca can be grown in abundance in the northern areas. The difficulty is that although they can be grown

they cannot be easily sold. But if part of it is eaten and part marketed somewhere in Uttar Pradesh and other places the difficulty will be solved.

Only yesterday I came from Nongpoh and sat down in a man's house where I found some spinning was going on. Then I saw in his garden number of tapioca that he has grown. He told me that he could grow still more but for want of market he could not do so. This question of procuring market for such produce is also an important consideration, Sir, while we are considering the food problem.

Now, Sir, there is another thing which I must bring to the notice of the Government. That thing, Sir, is with regard to Jhumming cultivation. How this system could be done away with? In the hills although there is paddy cultivation, wet cultivation is done only once a year. Paddy is not grown twice a year as is done in the plains. I suggest that Government should take steps to teach the people to grow wheat say after October or November. After paddy had been grown, wheat can be grown there so that we get rice in the summer and wheat in the winter.

Then another thing, Sir, I want to present before the Government. In this I am speaking for my own constituency. As you know, Sir, as you come up from Nongpoh you can see vast areas of rice cultivation and this rice is also grown in surrounding villages. But when a man brings his own rice in a jeep or in his own transport he is arrested and fined Rs. 20 or 30, 50 or even 100—the other day I know of a man who was fined as much as Rs. 500 by mobile court for bringing his produce in his own jeep from Byrni area.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are not discussing about these areas. Please confine yourself to the point.

Shri A. ALLEY: But Sir, these are relevant because if you can bring rice from these areas and distribute it to other areas which are in need of it, the food problem can be solved to a great extent. I only want to bring to the notice of the Government the difficulties of those cultivators who want to bring their produce to Shillong in their own jeeps. They were being arrested not only under the Essential Supplies Act but also under the Motor Vehicles Act. If you want to take rice from Nongpoh to Mawngap, you have to come to Shillong, but in Shillong bringing of rice is prohibited. So in order to help these people, these things deserve serious consideration.

Sir, although we are all happy that the food situation has improved, I cannot support this Resolution in the sense that it says that Government has not done anything.....(Shri Hareswar Goswami—It is only for discussion, there is nothing to support) Anyway I am glad this has been brought in for discussion.

Personally I feel confident that the Government will consider all these things and that we shall have better procurement and better supply in our State.

Shri NARNARAYAN GOSWAMI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I fail to understand what the Leader of the Opposition has got in his mind. I do not know whether Mr. Bhattacharyya will extend his support to him in thanking God for the good production of food in the State of Assam. I have followed his speech, but his statement is full of contradictions. In one place he says there is good production in Assam and that even the price of paddy has gone to Rs.4 per maund, and for that he gives his thanks to God. I think he should have at least the courage to speak the truth that it is not for the act of God for which there has been plenty of rice in Assam this time, but that it is only for the policy adopted by this Government. I do not think his Friend, Mr. Bhattacharyya, will support him in this. I quite admit that there may be in some parts of the State some accidental difficult problem in procurement, but this accidental problem also existed only during the month of June. But now much of this problem has been solved by the policy and procedure followed by this Government to whom all our thanks are due. I am surprised to find Mr. Goswami in his speech confined himself only to what has happened in the month of June. Now we have come to the month of August and September when, as I said, much of this food problem has been solved. But Mr. Goswami has not said anything for the present time. As I said, I admit that in a society there may be and there will be some accidental food problem, but our thanks are due to the Government by whose policy they can take the problem tactfully and have solved the food problem to a great extent.

Now, Sir, in this connection I have also watched for sometime past that some people with Pakistani mentality were trying to cry down the procedure or policy that is being followed by our Government or our Party in the matter of procurement.....

Shri RANENDRA MOHAN DAS: I object, Sir, I am not a Pakistani. (*laughter*).

Shri NARNARAYAN GOSWAMI: I said, Sir, that there are some Pakistani mentality people (*loud laughter*), in Assam who are trying to undo what this Government was trying to do for the best interest of this State. I say also that the procurement system followed by our Government has been successful in solving to a great extent the food problem of the State so much so that they are in a position to come to the help of our neighbouring States like West Bengal and Manipur. So, Sir, I say that my Friend, Mr. Goswami, should at least have the courage to speak the real truth in these things. He should have come forward before this House to speak only the truth, that is to say, that it was due to

the wise policy followed by this Government that the food problem has been solved instead of saying only half-truths and showering his thanks on God. Let him sit here without doing anything and let us see whether God will come to feed him. Certainly God will not come and drop food in his mouth! There may be scarcity condition in some parts of the State, but Government by its policy has been able to solve the problem to a great extent. If my Friend Mr. Goswami, is sincere, he should realise that it was due to the policy followed by our Party that has practically successfully solved the food problem in Assam.

Then, Sir, with regard to procurement, it is a fact that rice cannot be taken from one place to another in great quantities. But if we go to the rules we will find that this cordon system allows the consumers to carry 10 to 12 maunds of rice or paddy from one place to another. There is no restriction in this. A customer can carry from 10 to 12 maunds without any permit. Now, my Friends want to exaggerate all these things against the Government just to make a big name for themselves. But as I said at the beginning, if they are really sincere, they will find that because of this procurement system this Government has been successful in solving this problem. Mr. Goswami has brought this Motion now to gain cheap popularity when he finds that Government have practically solved the food problem. But I say that he will not be successful in his such attempt. Our Government, our party, stands for justice and do things with good reasons. Therefore, instead of introducing such a Motion I request my Friend to come forward and co-operate with the Government in making the Five-Year Plan successful, and in that way Assam will be able to give a lead to the whole of India, and thus the people, the children of the soil, shall know that their representatives are really doing their duty. The Opposition parties in other democratic countries come forward with constructive suggestions. With such a constructive idea my Friends should come and help the Government. If they see with open eyes, they will find that cordon system is necessary to stop paddy from going to Pakistan. I expect my Friends in the Opposition to cultivate the habit of placing before the Government constructive ideas and suggestions, through which the Government can be successful in executing their programme successfully. Instead of doing this the Opposition party tries to throw dust on the Congress party which is in power and criticises their policy for nothing. Such things.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you discussing the matter?

Shri NARNARAYAN GOSWAMI: I am trying to show how the Opposition Party is making arguments and criticising the policy followed by the Government in regard to cordon system and stating that this policy should be discontinued. Rather I say that that policy should not be abandoned for the present, but instead

I request my Friend, Mr. Goswami, to withdraw his Motion in the light in which he has placed it in this House.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, originally I did not want to take part in the discussion, but after hearing the learned speech of my Friend, Shri Narnarayan Goswami, I feel very difficult to restrain myself and I am grateful to him for his kindly making some mention of me. But I am sorry that perhaps I shall not be able to oblige him with the attitude which he anticipated of me. The Motion before the House is meant not to condemn the Government or to condemn the Congress Party. The Motion before the House is to discuss the food situation in the State and to place suggestion of the Legislators, whether they be on the Government side or on the opposite side, and therefore the question of attacking and counter-attacking either party does not arise here. The question of food is a problem which is, according to our opinion, above party politics and therefore we want to be one with all people of good will irrespective of Party affiliations to serve the country and to solve the food problem of the people. When Shri Hareswar Goswami moved his Motion he also did the same thing. He placed certain concrete suggestions in the context of the situation which is prevailing in the State. I am glad to see that Shri Mahendra Hazarika and Shri Bimalakanta Bora of Nowgong have also appreciated that there is really a food problem in the country, particularly in their District. There may be difference as to whether the problem is from the point of production or from the point of distribution. But it is admitted on all hands that if there had been no food problem there would have been no Procurement Department, no Supply Department, no cordon system, no rationing and no Supply Minister (*laughter*). Therefore the facts that have been placed here go to prove that there still persists a food problem in our State. Now we are to see whether the problem has been acuter or it has been lighter or whether the problem remains as it was or it has taken a new turn. I think Shri Hazarika and Shri Bora were correct in their statements that so far as our State is concerned it is primarily the distribution side that is creating the food problem, and not so much the production side. Yet I beg to submit that there still remains the problem on the production side also. But distribution side has become of course a very important side just now. There may be sufficient food in certain Government stocks, in certain areas or in certain granaries. The assertions that have been made may be quite correct that in certain places there are huge stocks of food. But it is also equally correct, as I know of acts, that side by side there is starvation, there is scarcity, there is want, there is hunger and also death. Some of my Friends on the Government side jumped off at the very mention of death. They might come and say that there has been no starvation death.

When an instance is given it is said from their side that such death might be due to some disease. Now, Sir, I may say that nowhere and at no time does a man die of starvation just in the same manner as he dies when he receives a bullet. When a bullet strikes the heart of a man he at once falls on the ground, makes some movement of his limbs and then expires. That is not the case with starvation. Starvation does not bring death to a man instantaneously. It gradually weakens and devitalises the victim and ultimately diseases that follow starvation bring death to him. So, when we speak of starvation death we are to see whether a man dies because of having no food to eat for some days, and whether it causes the death ultimately, because starvation is followed by attack of resultant diseases. That is the point to be considered. If the immediate cause be taken as the sole cause of death then the Government may very well claim that there is one and only one cause of death in our State—it is not starvation, not diseases, it is "heartfailure" because whatever might be the near or distance cause of death the ultimate result is "heartfailure" (*laughter*).! We, however, say that one dies from this or that disease and that is how people die of hunger and starvation though it is a death by inches. This point should not be ignored and we should not think that if the death by starvation is admitted then everything collapses, that our Congress Raj collapses.

Shri BIMALA KANTA BORA: This Government will collapse.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: In the process of the efforts there are many difficulties. Why should we be so nervous that if we admit the truth that the problem has not yet been solved everything goes to our discredit? People may have to suffer in the interim period of solution of the problem. This does not discredit the Government provided there is an honest effort. So those people who are very nervous at the very name of starvation-death seem to think that their own Government is only a house of cards. Now, if it is contradicted, I may cite several other instances of starvation deaths not only in Nowgong district, but in other districts as well. For instance, in the Cachar district in Lakhipur Police Station one tribal girl died of starvation. This is reported in papers. Then in Sibsagar....

Shri BISHNURAM MEDHI (Chief Minister): On a point of order, Sir, newspaper reports should not be cited in support of ones contention unless he can take the responsibility for such reports.

Shri RANENDRA MOHON DAS: Was it contradicted?

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: I am not going only by paper reports. There is a letter from a very responsible person from Sibsagar and in that letter he has stated that in the district of Sibsagar in the Panidihing Mauza following persons died as a result of starvation. These are the persons and their villages—

“শিবসাগৰৰ পানীদিহিং মৌজাত খাবলৈ নাপাই মৃত্যুহোৱা মানুহৰ নাম আৰু ঠিকনা :—

| নাম | গাঁও |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| (১) নুলাদৈ মিৰি | দলপা গাঁও । |
| (২) মালিনী মিৰি | ” |
| (৩) বালাম মিৰি | শামুকজান গাঁও । |
| (৪) চিকং বোৰা | দলপা গাঁও । |
| (৫) বগীদৈ | ” |
| (৬) ধৰ্মেশ্বৰী | ” |
| (৭) বামেশ্বৰ | ” |
| (৮) যাদবাম | ” |
| (৯) আতিবাম | ” |
| (১০) গভীন্দ্র | ” |
| (১১) গুৰুদত্ত | ” |
| (১২) পাবসিং | টেঙাপানী গাঁও । |
| (১৩) বাহাদুৰ চেত্ৰী | আজাব গুৰী গাঁও । |
| (১৪) অজ প্ৰসাদ দেউৰী | ককিলা মাৰী গাঁও । |
| (১৫) ভগৱান মিৰিৰ পুতেক (সৰু) | দলপা গাঁও । |
| (১৬) এজনী সৰু ছোৱালী (নেপালী ছোৱালী) | ককিলা মাৰী গাঁও । |

Voices from the Government benches —What is the name of the gentleman ?

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Shri Promode Chandra Gogoi. He was the Secretary of the Sibsagar District Kishan Sabha. The letter is dated 5th September, 1952.

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister): Sir, will my Friend give a copy of the letter so that I may enquire of the matter ?

Shri BISHNURAM MEDHI (Chief Minister): Was the matter brought to the notice of the Government ?

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: The matter was brought to my notice subsequently. I have brought this matter to the notice of the Government because I have got this occasion. If I would have got such an occasion previously I

would have brought it to the notice of the Government earlier.

Now the point is, I am not fighting on technicalities and I hope our Chief Minister will also not fight on technicalities. My only request to Government is to consider whether this is a subject matter fit to be enquired into that there has been chronic scarcity of food in this Panidihing Mauza of the district of Sibsagar.

Mr. SPEAKER: You will please pass on the letter to the Revenue Minister who has already assured the House that he would enquire into the matter.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Yes, Sir. I am passing the letter on to the Revenue Minister. There is another thing which, of course, my Friends Shri Hazarika and Bora have admitted and it is that food scarcity is there. In the first phase of the food scarcity prices rise higher and higher and then the people lose the purchasing power as it goes beyond the reach of the common people. And the second cause, which is a corollary to the first, is that the people's economic condition has deteriorated and the 3rd cause is that many people have become unemployed and they have no land to produce food. So we see that though there are granaries of rice near about and though rice is available at Rs.20 per maund, many a man cannot purchase because of the fact that he has no money, he is unemployed and even if he has some money it is so small that he cannot purchase the necessary rice for himself and his family with it. Now, if we want to solve the problem, this aspect of the question needs tackling. There is another aspect of the question, that is the production side. By the supporters of the Government it has been contended that we have sufficient food-stuff in the country as a result of which not only can we meet our own requirements, but our Government has been able to export large quantities to Manipur and West Bengal. But one memorandum has been submitted to the Government by the Assam Rice Millers' Association. In that memorandum a copy of which has come to our hand also, it has been stated that while in 1951-52 Autumn production in our State was on 9,17,400 acres yielding about 2,46,200 tons, and winter crop was on 31,33,700 acres yielding about 12,25,062 tons according to the forecast of the Agricultural Department of the Government we find that (I do not know the final figure, if ready, Government will please enlighten the House) Autumn crop was on 9,46,700 acres, and winter crop was on 28,12,200 acres. So in terms of acreage at least, there has been a fall in winter production, that is, while in 1951-52 it was 31,33,700 acres in 1952-53 it has come down to 28,12,200 acres. Now, we find from the Government notification in the *Assam Gazette*....

Mr. SPEAKER : What is the figure and ending on what date ?

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA : Sir, it was the forecast of the Agriculture Department for the year 1952-53.

In this connection we may also compare the cost of living of the rural area according to the Government's own notification which appeared in the *Assam Tribune*, dated the 26th May 1953. There we find....

Mr. SPEAKER : Please do not refer to any newspaper.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA : I am referring to the Government Notification which was published in the newspaper, Sir. Now, we find that in January 1952 it was 174·6 and in June-July it was 148 taking 1944 as the base year. Then so far as the working class cost of living is concerned, in March, 1953 it was 131. As compared to that we find that the price that the agriculturists received for the things they sold in the period August to December 1950, it was 171·9 but then in 1952 December it came down to 125·8 whereas the price they paid to purchase their necessary things was in 1950 August-December 158·9 and in 1952 December it was 141·8. Thus we find that in their receipt side there has been a fall—a greater fall than in their expenditure side. As a result we find this great disparity. Taking 1944 as the base year the economic parity of the farmer stands at 108·2 in 1950, but it has fallen to 88·7 in December, 1952. That is the economic condition of the peasantry, which has deteriorated very much. If that be the position of our rural population then it is only natural that even if there be greater stocks lying in the Government godowns, than in 1950, they may yet not be able to purchase and consequently they starve. That position is to be taken into consideration by every well meaning citizen of this State so that the problem can be tackled and solved. Now, we know that the standard is not and does not remain the same in all the districts of the State and at all times. For instance, Nowgong was a granary of Assam. Cachar was till a few years ago self-sufficient in food. Now we find that there is scarcity in these very Districts and that has been admitted by the Government. Everybody knows that Hojai, Lanka etc., were granaries of the State. Does it not make any difference if a girl dies there for want of food ? We should not allow ourselves to be sidetracked. The issue of all issues is whether there has been scarcity of food in this area, or not ? Whether a considerable percentage of the population in that area has been starving or half starving ? And if it is so, why it is so ? That reason should be found out and tackled. It cannot be tackled simply by producing more food in a particular area; we should

see whether it is being equitably distributed in all the areas. I am not advocating that every Thana and every village should be made self-sufficient in food production. That is bad economics. When we are going by the road of planned economy, when we are taking part in planning our State as a whole, we cannot just take a policy where every village must be self-sufficient in producing everything it needs. For example, in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, if potatoes, oranges or Tezpat can be produced more easily and abundantly at a less cost than in the plains districts of Assam, then these should be produced in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. If Nowgong is in a position to produce paddy more economically and profitably, she should grow more paddy. If some areas of Kamrup can produce more jute, they should be specialising in that thing. If Sibsagar and Lakhimpur can produce more tea, they should produce more tea and so on. But in the matter of distribution, we should see that the people of Khasi and Jaintia Hills for example, who produce potatoes, oranges etc. do not starve for want of rice and other necessaries. We cannot do that by increasing the food production alone. We know that in Belgium the density of population is 800 per sq. mile, in Great Britain it is 750 per sq. mile, whereas in India it is only 250 per square mile. Our country is primarily an agricultural country. People here mostly depend on agriculture. While Great Britain could feed their population, why could we not do so with a lesser density of population, and especially when our country is an agricultural country? Why are we to go to America, Siam and other places for procuring food? This is because we have no proper planning. In spite of my sympathy for my Friend, Mr. Alley, I cannot agree with him that Jhum cultivation should be encouraged, because it will ultimately do no good to the country. But I cannot tolerate the position why the people of Mawngap and Mawflang at a distance of only about 15 or 16 miles from Shillong should starve. That cannot be tolerated. It is also reported that people in the rural areas in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills are given only 11 to 16 chhataks of rice per week.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned for lunch till 1-30 P.M.

After lunch

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was saying that in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills only at a distance of some 15 to 16 miles from Shillong people are not getting

adequate rice ration and the less is said about the border areas the better, because in those areas only 1 seer and 5 chhataks of rice is being supplied per head per week. We should remember that as a result of partition of the country these border areas have lost their natural trade communication with Sylhet. So the supply of rice, fish and other eatables which the people there used to get from Sylhet has been totally stopped and if they cannot be compensated by a flow of food grains from within the State then naturally the position of those people can be better imagined than described ; but, in this long period of Congress Government's rule the position of concrete help to these people has been practically negligible except of course the Shella road and the airstrip which serves only 5 villages when the border area in the Khasi Hills is about 150 miles long. And this air-strip which serves only 5 villages also functions for only winter months and not during the rainy season. Moreover, these people, the entire people of these border areas are dependent on production of oranges, Tezpat and such other things. Our Government says that it is not proper to increase and encourage the Jhuming method of cultivation. I agree ; but if we do not allow them to continue Jhuming method of cultivation and, at the same time, if we do not give them adequate ration, how can they live ? The result has been that the people there are starving.

Last year, I had been to these areas and after some weeks our Chief Minister also went to those areas. I am sure, the Chief Minister will agree with me that when he saw the faces of the people of those areas his heart must have been throbbing with feeling, because those people who at one time were sturdy and hard-working, have now become pale and emaciated, there are apparent signs of anæmia and dropsy and hundreds of them are on the point of starvation-death and some people in desperation have gone over to Pakistan simply for want of food. They have not gone to Pakistan for the love of Pakistan but they have gone there for food. My Friend, Mr. N. Goswami, still says that there is no food problem in the country !

Shri NARNARAYAN GOSWAMI : I did not say that the food problem was fully solved, but I said that it was partly solved.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA : I am glad, Sir, my Friend has admitted it.

Not only in the Khasi Hills, the position in the Lushai Hills is not better—perhaps, it is worse. Because of communication in the Lushai Hills the position there is far worse and I have the information that a Dao there cost between Rs.7 and Rs.8, whereas in other parts it is about Rs.3. Now, it may be asked why I have brought in the price of Dao here in discussing food ? It is because in those areas people

depend mostly on Dao as Jhuming is the prevailing method of cultivation there and we have not been able to introduce terrace cultivation in those areas, or in spite of our schemes the high altitude method of cultivation could not be introduced and the archaic method of cultivation with Dao is still existent. But the price of a Dao is Rs.7 or Rs.8. These people are to mostly depend on roots, tapioca, etc. and are thus gradually losing their strength and vitality. If this is the condition in the Hill areas, if condition in the rice bowls of Assam, namely, Hojai, Kamrup and Lanka, is not what it used to be, if Cachar—a surplus district has become a deficit one and a problem district from the point of food, if there is scarcity of food in Sibsagar district, then how can we say that in the State as a whole we have solved the food problem, or we are nearing solution? We have not been able to solve the food problem. It is there. Formerly production was a great impediment and now distribution has become a greater impediment.

Under the circumstances, we should see whether the policies followed and steps taken by the Government are adequate or whether they are really made for immediate solution of this problem.

Now, how this problem can be solved from the point of view of production, how can the huge agricultural man-power be harnessed to productive labour? What the Government is doing while there is scarcity in Kamrup, Hojai and Lanka areas? From the reports we get from newspaper correspondents and also from our personal enquiries we have learnt that hundreds of peasant families are being evicted, thousands are served with notices of eviction.....

Shri RAMNATH DAS (Minister): What for?

Shri GAURI SANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Because it is alleged by Government that they have encroached upon Government land. But why they have encroached upon Government land? It is because Government have not provided these peasants with land. Is it not the duty of the Government to provide land to these primary producers of food, so that they can produce food for themselves and the country? If you cannot give other avenues of employment, if you cannot industrialise the country, in that case you have got to depend on the primary method of production, otherwise this huge man-power not only becomes useless, but worse than that, it becomes a problem and not an asset for the State. But the Government has, as a matter of fact, been denying land to the peasants. That is one of the failures of the Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think, you are concluding.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Yes, I am making concluding remarks. The second failure of the Government

has been that these peasants who have small or medium holdings or those cultivating in other's holdings were not given necessary resources for implements and cattle.

Mr. SPEAKER : It is something away from the subject.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA : Now if the Government wants more production by these peasants it is the duty of the Government to supply them adequate agricultural loans so that with that they can purchase necessary cattle and also necessary implements. But, Sir, what we see in the district of Nowgong ? 40,000 cultivators in Jamunamukh area have been given only Rs.5,000 as agricultural loan whereas one single individual Shri Jawaharmal Agarwalla who is a money-lender and stockist of jute and paddy has been sanctioned a loan of Rs.80,000! That is the primary care which is shown to these primary producers !

Mr. SPEAKER : Is that agricultural loan ?

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA : We know that a trader, money-lender and stockist has been given a loan of Rs.80,000 whereas 40,000 cultivators have been given agricultural loan amounting to only Rs.5,000. I am showing these two things side by side. This is the pattern of love of the Government for the peasants ! This is the Ramraj for them !

Next, we see that apart from evicting the peasants and not giving them implements, in the matter of distribution of food we know full well that certain areas have become scarcity areas and Government has not made adequate provision for those areas.

Mr. SPEAKER : I think you have finished.

Shri GAURI SANKAR BHATTACHAYYA : I need only one minute more.

Mr. SPEAKER : Excuse me, you may sit down please.

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister) : Sir, the subject-matter of this discussion under the Motion moved by my eminent Friend, Mr. Goswami, pertains to Revenue Department as well because in the matter of granting relief to the distressed people in the scarcity areas the work is done by the Revenue Department with the concurrence of Finance. It is therefore proper that I should speak a few words on this subject and place certain information in the possession of the Government before the Members of this House.

At the outset I must express my thanks to the Leader of the Opposition for drawing the pointed attention of the Government to certain scarcity areas of the State. But I feel, Sir, that my Friend while painting a picture of scarcity in this State has made exaggerations on a lot of things. It is not the case of the Government that there is no scarcity condition in some parts of the State, but that the scarcity conditions are very local in nature and are due to

local causes. What steps are being taken by the Government in the regard, I will come to that later on. Before coming to that aspect of the thing, namely how relief is given, what steps are taken by Government to give relief, I would like to submit one thing in regard to the matter on which great stress has been given, *i.e.* in respect of the allegations made by my Friend Mr. Goswami about starvation death in the district of Nowgong. He has referred to cases of starvation deaths in the district of Nowgong.

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: I referred to one case of starvation death and another case where a widow was setting fire to her house.

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister): I would come to that. My Friend, Mr. Bhattacharyya, who is sitting by the side of Mr. Goswami has realised the untenable stand of Mr. Goswami and has tried to twist it by trying to explain it in a clever manner. He has stated that the cases of starvation deaths referred to by Mr. Goswami may not be actual starvation deaths but these deaths may be due to other causes, *i.e.* mal-nutrition etc., etc. For the information of this Hon'ble House I should like to say that not only there have been no starvation deaths in Assam, even there have been no deaths due to causes like mal-nutrition or things of that sort. Regarding alleged starvation deaths I do not know wherefrom my Friend, Mr. Goswami has got this precious information. This matter was enquired by the Government and what Government found after making enquiry into the matter? It has been found that there has been no basis for it. Not only that all the members of the family in which this starvation death is alleged to have taken place were examined and they were all found hale and hearty. There was therefore no death even by mal-nutrition. That is the report we got after the enquiry by Government. Therefore to say that there have been starvation deaths or deaths aggravated by other causes such as mal-nutrition is wide of the mark.

Now, Sir, my Friend, Mr. Bhattacharyya, has read out a certain letter on the floor of this House wherein it is stated that there have been a large number of starvation deaths in the State of Assam. In one village in the district of Sibsagar, he has stated, that there have been a large number of deaths, but when, Sir? According to him it occurred in September 1952; and we are now discussing this matter in September 1953, *i.e.* about a year ago there was a large number of starvation deaths according to my Friend, Mr. Bhattacharyya. This precious information about a large number of starvation deaths was not brought to the notice of Government by any member of the State. I do not know wherefrom and when my Friend Mr. Bhattacharyya got this information.

Any way, the occurrence, according to him took place in the month of September, 1952. I met Mr. Bhattacharyya about a month back at a meeting at Gauhati. I have been meeting him for the last

6 or 7 days in Shillong. Not only that, I remember to have met him in Shillong on other occasions. But this very serious information, that a vast number of people died of starvation was not brought to my notice. He being a responsible Member in this House could have at least brought the matter to the notice of Government so as to enable Government to make an inquiry whether really such a serious occurrence took place.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA : The matter was brought to the notice of the S. D. O. and the local Government.

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister) : Any way, Sir, is it not the duty of the hon. Member of this House and is it not his duty who owes an obligation to the country and to the society at large to bring this matter to the notice of this House? But without doing this, my Friend now comes here and alleges such a thing without ascertaining whether the facts stated by him are true or not. He himself did not cause an inquiry about the matter which occurred about a year ago. Sir, I feel this is not the way of discharging duty by a responsible Member of this House. I did not expect that Mr. Bhattacharyya who is such an intelligent man, who is highly educated and who is also a Member of this Legislature, would have brought such a charge against Government without being sure of this ground. I have seen Mr. Bhattacharyya always taking every available advantage to castigate the Government. He has now come to state that is the state of Ram Rayya administration going on here. I am sorry for that. Sir, he had the advantage of bringing this matter to the notice of Government during the last Budget Session not only that, Sir, he met me about a month back in a certain meeting which was attended by both he and I. I do not know what is the intention of Mr. Bhattacharyya. Is it alleged with the idea of getting a big headline in the newspaper? I feel, Sir, Mr. Bhattacharyya was not only doing injustice to the Government, but he was not doing justice to the members of the family in whose houses such sad deaths were alleged to have taken place. I feel we are entitled to get co-operation from all sections of Members of this House, but I am sorry that Mr. Bhattacharyya has failed us.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA : On a point of information, Sir.....

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister) : I have already assured him that I shall cause a very sifting inquiry into those allegations. Sir, I thought that I would be very brief in my reply because my Friend, the Supply Minister would do justice to the other part of the Resolution. But my Friend has made certain references about eviction and the scarcity condition of the State. I, for myself, should like to say that in those areas where scarcity condition are alleged to have taken place in the Nowgong District, no eviction

has been made. No eviction has been made in the Kampur Jorabari and Jamunamukh Mauzas as has been alleged by my Friend. If there is eviction, it is in the Laskar Pathar, Okset Pathar and some other places, *i.e.*, Hojai Mauza. Therefore my Friend, Mr. Bhattacharyya, should not have found fault with Government. The people in the Laskar Pathar were evicted because they occupied Government land without authority and thereby took the law into their own hands and I feel that Government is perfectly justified in evicting trespassers.

Now about the policy that is being adopted by Government in the matter of granting relief. Sir, for the information of the hon. Members of the House, I should like to say that as soon as informations about scarcity conditions are received by the Government, they take steps to grant relief as deemed proper by the Government. How the relief measures are being given and in what proportions these are being dealt with by the Revenue Department on the reports of the Deputy Commissioners concerned. If they consider that gratuitous relief should be given or if they consider that a subsidy is necessary, steps are accordingly taken to meet the situation. Again, if it is found that test relief work can be done in such places that is also undertaken. Such test relief work was undertaken in Kampur area, involving the expenditure of a large amount.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: On a point of information, Sir. Will the Minister be pleased to give information as to how many people were actually employed?

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister): It is not possible for me just now to say correctly, but from the amount that was spent it can be said that a fairly large number of people was employed. Sir, Nowgong consists of 48 Mauzas and my Friend has stated only four Mauzas, *viz.*, Jamunamukh, Jorabari, Kampur and Garubari are only affected by scarcity conditions. These four Mauzas will not be as big as the Hojai Mauza from the point of view of population. According to my Friend, Mr. Bhattacharyya, we have given Rs.5,000 as agricultural loan. It is not a fact, we have given Rs.40,000 (Shri Gaurisankar Bhattacharyya:—To cover an area of 40,000 people!). If there is scarcity in a particular area, the whole amount may be spent in that area. It is for the Deputy Commissioner to spend money according to the necessities of particular areas. I cannot make allotment area-wise by sitting here in Shillong. Government simply make allotment district-wise.

Shri RANENDRA MOHAN DAS: Was any test relief work done in the Cachar district?

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister): There was probably no demand. I would have been only too glad to help the people if there was a demand. For the information of the House I may

state, Sir, that as much as 7 crores of rupees have been earmarked in the Public Works Department Budget to be spent this year in the State of Assam. If our people can take advantage of that, Government would only be very glad. Sir, the other day, in course of a discussion, my Friend, the Public Works Department Minister, mentioned about labour difficulties in the Lushai Hills. Similar are the conditions in other parts of the State also. Unfortunately, our people are very reluctant to do this sort of work unless goaded by extreme hardship. In Nowgong, thanks to the efforts of my Friends, Shri Bimala Kanta Bora and Shri Mahendra Hazarika, the position was a bit different. They went to the Kampur side, held several meetings and induced people to take up this kind of work. Some prominent members took up spade in their hands and cut earth in order to set an example to the people. It was due to their efforts that we could get people in that area and a sum of near about one lakh of rupees was spent in that area in test relief work by Local Board and Public Works Department. If the people of Cachar really take to this work, I would only be too glad to help them. My Friend, Mr. Das, who is also the Chairman of a Municipal Board, has got a lot of influence and he can influence people to take up this work. Assam will profit enormously if the people can earn these seven crores of rupees. Most of the amount now goes out of the Province. I hope, Sir, my Friend will understand the position now.

Then, Sir, for the district of Nowgong I have given Rs.40,000 as agricultural loan. Besides this, Rs.3,000 has been granted for issuing paddy at concessional rate and we have also given some amount for gratuitous relief. We have also opened an increased number of cheap grain shops in the affected areas. I will now give the figures of agricultural loan sanctioned for different districts. It should be remembered, Sir, that a sum of Rs.24 lakhs is still outstanding as arrears on account of agricultural loan issued from time to time in the State. In the district of Nowgong alone a sum of more than Rs.8 lakhs is due as arrears. In the Goalpara district the arrear will be near about 6 or 7 lakhs. In spite of this, Sir, for the current year, we have sanctioned the following amounts as agricultural loan :—

| | | | | Rs. |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| Lakhimpur district | ... | ... | ... | 2,15,000 |
| Sibsagar | ... | ... | ... | 23,200 |
| Nowgong | ... | ... | ... | 40,000 |
| Darrang | ... | ... | ... | 27,500 |
| Kamrup | ... | ... | ... | 55,600 |
| Goalpara | ... | ... | ... | 15,000 |
| Cachar | ... | ... | ... | 80,000 |
| To Director of Agriculture for supply of Sali Seeds | ... | ... | ... | 46,000 |

It will be seen, Sir, that we have distributed about Rs.5 lakh agricultural loan for the current year.

I would now give the figures for gratuitous relief sanctioned both from the Governor's Earthquake Relief Fund and the State finances :—

| | | | | Rs. |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| Lakhimpur | ... | ... | ... | 1,40,000 |
| Cachar | ... | ... | ... | 11,000 |
| Sibsagar | ... | ... | ... | 5,000 |
| Kamrup | ... | ... | ... | 5,500 |
| Nowgong | ... | ... | ... | 1,000 |
| Naga Hills | ... | ... | ... | 1,750 |
| Community Project areas | ... | ... | ... | 10,000 |

Thus you will see, Sir, that the amount spent for gratuitous relief for the current year is over Rs.1,74,000.

Not only this, Sir. We also try to help the people when they are hit by scarcity conditions in other ways. For instance, we try to give relief by granting remission of land revenue. Sir, last year the amount of remission was over Rs.85,000. This year I have already sanctioned remission of revenue to the extent of Rs.56,000. I have also received recommendations from different Deputy Commissioners for sanctioning remission of revenue to the extent of Rs 3,00,000. These are now being scrutinised by the Revenue Department. Thus, you will see, Sir, that the steps taken by Government to relieve the distress of the people hit by scarcity conditions are not trifling. Government are doing their best within the limited resources of this State. The hon. Members are fully aware of our resources. They passed our last Budget with a deficit of Rs.2,50,00,000. Considering that, I do not think that the Government have been lacking in their efforts to help the people. Of course I do not think that the steps taken by Government are quite adequate. I feel that more remains to be done and I am still looking into this matter. For the information of the House I may state that my Friend, Shri Bimala Kanta Bora, has brought to my notice that the quantity of paddy issued at concessional rates in the Kampur area is not enough. I am examining the matter. Government cannot sit idle when people are hit by scarcity conditions. They will do their utmost consistent with the resources for their disposal.

Sir, my Friend, Mr. Bhattacharyya, it seems, will get hold of a stick to beat the Government. Otherwise how can he find a fault with the loan given to Rai Bahadur Joharmal Agarwalla? Probably the hon. Members of this House have not forgotten the fact that last year a sum of Rs.15 lakhs was provided in the Budget for giving loans to different mill-owners to help in procurement. My Friend, Mr. Bhattacharyya, was also a party to that as this House

passed the budget with a provision for a loan of Rs.15 lakhs to be given to mill owners for helping Government in procurement. Not only Joharmal Agarwalla gets this loan, but other mill-owners also who have got their mills and who have got adequate security in the opinion of Government for such loan, were given the aid. For the information of the hon. Member I can tell him that although this loan was sanctioned to Joharmal Agarwalla, he has not yet taken it.

Shri RANENDRA MOHAN DAS : That is no explanation.

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister) : However, what I want to impress upon the House, Sir, is that this loan was given to different mill owners of our State to help procurement of rice and paddy and that, that loan was given out of the sanction which this House passed last year. So, Sir, there is no connection whatsoever between this loan and the agricultural loan. From these observations you will see, Sir, that Government has been able to do whatever is possible to help these people in the scarcity areas. Another thing, Sir. In such matters Government is always guided by the reports which they received from their district officers, the Deputy Commissioners, Subdivisional Officers, etc. Whenever we get report from these officers that relief is needed by the people anywhere, we do not spare our efforts to help those people in distress. Only the other day I received a report from the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur that a vast area of the district was affected by the recent cyclone a few days ago in which food grains and property worth several lakhs of rupees have been destroyed and where as many as ten deaths have been reported due to that cyclone. As soon as I had received that report from the Deputy Commissioner and that the people there were in need of help from Government, I sanctioned a big amount of something like 12 thousand rupees. So, Sir, from what I have been able to place before the House, the Members will see that Government is doing whatever possible to help our distressed people. I also assure my Friends opposite that Government will not fail in their duty to help where help is needed.

With these few observations Sir, I resume my seat.

Maulavi TAJUDDIN AHMED : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I take my stand in support of the motion moved by my Leader, Shri Hareswar Goswami and also in support of the views of my Friend, Shri Gourisankar Bhattacharyya. It is not a question that Assam is deficit in food or that there is scarcity of food in Assam. It is a question that there are some pockets in Assam where there is the scarcity of food and where the people are suffering for want of food.

As regards Barpeta subdivision, I would like to place before the House that there is a Mauza known as Hastinapur Mauza where the flood of the river Moinarjan has destroyed the whole crop in the area of the village Baribaori and some villages near Sarupeta Station. These people are suffering hardships for want of food due to flood since the last three years. Recently I visited the place and the people told me that they want immediate help in the shape of gratuitous relief and also test relief work. Agriculture between the stations Barpeta Road and Sarupeta there was a Railway bridge which has been newly built and the Railway Department had to close the water that flows under the bridge with the result that the whole area on the northern side of the railway line between Barpeta Road and Sarupeta stations was flooded untimely and the people of those areas are facing great hardships for want of food and they need immediate help from Government.

Regarding Howli and Ghilajari Mauzas, there was also untimely rain and consequently there was untimely flood and the people could not cultivate their lands in time, so they are suffering from great hardships and they want food. I think they will also need some help though not gratuitous relief, but some test relief work and concessional rate for purchasing foodgrains. There is a Sir, there is a great current of Brahmaputra known as the Great "Parua Barghul Dhala" near Tarabari which is damaging the food crops of some parts of Mauza Barpeta, Bagribari, Cheng Bagbar and the whole of Mondi Mauza. These areas are scarcity pockets. The people of these areas collected together and voluntarily they tried to construct one embankment and I also went there and with about 2 thousand people we tried to work for about 15 days and constructed a Bund, but unfortunately it was washed away. As a result of this, a big area was affected and the people are suffering a great deal. On the other hand, Sir there is a great current of the Beki river which is damaging crops in Jonia Mauza and...

Mr. SPEAKER: We are not discussing about these areas. The question is whether you want food or not. That is the point.

Maulavi TAJUDDIN AHMED: Yes, Sir, that is why I said that food should be rushed to these areas and supplied at some concessional rates or gratuitous relief or test relief should be given to the people of these scarcity areas, otherwise they will be in great difficulty as there is no way out.

With these words Sir, I resume my seat.

Maulana ABDUL JALIL: Mr, Speaker, Sir, House কে সামনে জো Motion পেশ করা হয় উসবার কুছ বোলনেকা বিচাৰ মুখে নহী থা। মগৰ মেবে দোস্ত Mr. Das নে কবিমগঞ্জ, বদৰগুৰ, হাইলাকান্দি আউৰ কালিগঞ্জ কী বাবত কুছ কথা হয়। ইসলিয়ে মেই চাহতা ছঁ কি মেই ভী ইস বাবত আপনে খয়লাত জাহিব কক ? কোঁকি য়হ হব আজাদ নুত কে Citizen কা ফৰ্জ হয় কি য়হ ঐসে মামলেপৰ অপনে খয়লাত জাহিব কঁবে। Mr. Goswami জী ইসী খয়লমে অপনা Motion পেশ কব বহে হেঁয়। কি House কে মেয়াব ইস বাবতপৰ অপনা অপনা খয়লাত জাহিব কঁবে।

ইমে ইসমেঁ কোঐ শক নহী কি হমাৰী কোমী Government দেশ কী খাদ্য সমস্যা কো সমাধান কবনে কে লিয়ে ডবসক কোশিশ কব বহী হয়। ওব য়হ বড়ী খুশী কী বাত হয় কি উছে ইস বাতপৰ কাময়াৰী, সফলতা ভী মিলী হয়।

কবিমগঞ্জ Subdivision কে বাবত মই দো চাৰ বাত আপসে কহনা চাহতা ছঁ। আপ জানতে হয় কি Karimganj কো তিন হিসেসমে বাঁটা জা সকতা হয়। এক হিসসা পাহাড়ী হয়, ওব উসমেঁ বহত সে টিলে হেঁয়। জহা কোঐ খেতি নহী হোতা দুসবে হিসেসমেঁ কুছত এয়াছ ইছমে ববছাত কে পানী বহতা হয় আউৰ কুছ হিসসা হমেশা পানীমে ডুৰা বহতা হয়। তীসবে হিসেসমেঁ ধান কী খেতি হোতী হয়। লেকিন ইস হিসেসকী খেতিকো ববাক নদীকে পানী সে কাফী নুকসান পহঁচতা হয়। ইসলিয়ে ইস নদীকে Control কবনে কে লিয়ে সবকাবকো সোচনা চাহিয়ে। জেইসা কি Umtra-Hydro Electric, Dibrugarh, আউৰ দুসবী Project সবকাব লে বহী হয়। রৈসে হী ববাক নদীকে ভী লেনা চাহিয়ে।

Voice—ইসকে লিয়ে বহত সাল লগ জায়ঙ্গে।

কোঐ বাত নহী, লেকিন য়হ হোনা চাহিয়ে। আউৰ ইস বাবেমে মই সবকাব কী দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ কবনা চাহতা ছঁ।

Mr. SPEAKER: দেখিয়ে, মৌলানা চাহাব, আপ কিস বাতপৰ বহস কব বহে হেঁয়। আপ Motion কে বাহব যা বহে হেঁয়। আপ খাদ্য সমস্যা কে বাবেমে বোলিয়ে।

Maulana ABDUL JALIL: লেকিন মহাশয় ইস নদীসে হমাৰে ইলাকে কী খেতি কো বড়া নুকসান পহঁচতা হয়। ইসলিয়ে সবকাবকো ইস পৰ ধ্যান দেনা চাহিয়ে ওবনা কাছাবকো ফ্লাডছে বাচানা মুশ্কিল হেঁয়।

দুসবী বাত য়হ হয় কে হমাৰে বাজে ইলাকে মেঁ জঙ্গলী সুরব হেঁয়। য়ে জানরব হমাৰে খেতিপৰ হমলা কবতে হেঁয় আউৰ খেতিকো নুকসান কবতে হেঁয়। ইসলিয়ে রহাঁকে লোগ বন্দুক কী আৰাজ ভী উঠাতে হয়। লেকিন মইনে উনসে কহা হয় কে বন্দুক সে য়হ মসলা হয় হো সকতা বাত য়ে হেঁয় কি উছ এলাকামে জমিনদাবোকি জমিন জিয়াদা হেঁয় আওব উনকে কৰ্মিওডকে কৰাপশন কি বজহসে জাহুছে জি জমিন সে খেত কবতে হেঁয় উছকে কবিব জমিন উনকে হাতমে নাহিহতা হেঁয় আওব উছমে জঙ্গল লাগা হোয়া হতা, হেঁয় আওব জঙ্গলী হায়ওয়ান অহা হোতা হেঁয় ইছে পহলে খুড়া পয়ছা দেকব জঙ্গল কাটনে কি ইজাজত নিলিতিথি আৰ কৰ্মিওকে জুলম লি অজাহ ন হি মিলতি। সবকাব ইসকো ধ্যান দে আউৰ কালিগাও কে ইন কেসানোকো হান সুনাবনে মে সদ দে।

তিসৰী বাত হয় check gate of ইসৰাবে মে মই নে চৰকাৰ সে কথা বাবে অফিছ
হয় আউব খাগৰ পিছলৈ Budget Session কে নোকেপৰ বদৰপুৰ মে জে check gate
হয় উসে Shri Gauri তক হটা লিয়া জায়। উসকো মন্তী মহোদয় নে কথা থা কে check
gate কো ইটানেমে ধান চাবেল চোৰী হোনেকা উব হয়। উনহোনে দেখা ভী মে ই
ইস বাবেমে সোচা হয়। আগৰ সবকাৰ ইস Check Gate কো ইটা দে তো ইস ইলা
কে ৪০ হজাব আদনীকো বহত সুবিধা হোগী ঔব উনকী জিন্দগী বগৰ কৰনে কে লিয়ে
হোগী। ইসকে সাথ সাথ বাস্তা ঘাট বগৈবহ কে লিয়ে ভী সবকাৰ ধ্যান দে। খাগৰ ক
গল্প ইলাকে মে বাস্তা ঘাট কী তকলাক লোক ভোগতে হয়।

ইস সাল সবকাৰ নে বহত Cheap Grain Shops খোলী হয়। লেकिन ইন Shop
কে লিয়ে চাবল বগৈবহ Supply মঞ্জিল যে হোতা হয়। কোয়িক বহা বাস্তা ঘাট বগৈবহ
ভী কঠিনাই হয়। ইসৰাবেমে বহাকে Subdivisional Officer সাহাবসে ভী মেৰী বাত
থী। উনহনে কথা হয় কি বাস্তা ঘাট কে অভাৱ কে লিয়ে লোক Cheap Grain Shop
সে খৰীদনে তক কী অসুবিধা পাতে হয়।

আউব এক বাত হয় ইওফাকী শৈলাৰ কী। ইওফাকী শৈলাৰ ভী কালিগল্প
লোগোকো কাফী নুকসান পহৌঁচতা হয়। ঐসে শৈলাৰ কো বোকনে কে লিয়ে সবকাৰ
কোশিশ কবনী চাহিয়ে।

দুসৰে জিলোকী বাত মই নহী জানতা, লেकिन হমাৰে কাছাৰ জিলেকে কিসান মহাজ
সে কৰ্জা লে কে অপনী জকবত কে সামান খৰিদতে হেঁয় ঔব অপহণকে মহীনেমে
প্ৰতিশোধ কবতে হেঁয়। লেकिन Cheap Grain Shop উনহে ঐসী সুবিধা নহী
মিলতা হয়। উনকো Cheap Grain Shop নে নগদ পৈচা দে কব মান বে
পড়তা হয়। ইসলিয়ে ভী উন গৰীব ভাইয়োকো Cheap Grain Shop সে কো
বিশেষ ফায়দা নহী ছা হয়। সবকাৰ কো তো উহে কপয়া পৈচা দে কব
কবনী চাহিয়ে। (বিলিফ) আওব কমতি কিনতপৰ চাউল মিলনে কি ছুবত কিজায় আউ
চীফ গ্ৰেইন সপ মে দাম ছছতি কব দিলায়ে।

(Voice—হম ভী যহী চাহতে হেঁয়। হম ভী যহী কহ বহে হেঁয়।)

লেकिन ইতনা হোনে পব ভী সবকাৰ কো ইস ইলাকে কে লিয়ে বিলিফ
জকবত হাঁয় ঔব না হাজাব চীফ গ্ৰেইন সপ সে কুস নহী হোগী।

Mr. SPEAKER: Maulana Sahib: আপ কা ইলাকা কেতনা
Square Miles কা হেঁয়?

Maulana ABDUL JALIL: ১৪১১৫ মাইল হোছে।

Mr. SPEAKER: কেতনা square miles হোছে? আচছা আপ ১৪১১৫
মাইল কে লিয়ে ১৮০০ Cheap Grain Shops চাহতে হেঁয়।

Maulana ABDUL JALIL: তো অপনে ইনাকে কী খাদ্য সমস্যা কে
মতলিক মইনে যে ও বাত কহী হয় ঔব ইন বাতঁপৰ ধ্যান দেনেমে হমাৰী খাদ্য সমস্যা
হো সৰ্তী হয়। পহলী বাত হয় লোগোকো Relief দে কপয়ে পেসেসে তাকি
Cheap Grain Shops সে আপনী জকবত কী চীজে খৰীদ সকেঁ। Cheap Grain
Shop সে চাবল বগৈবহ লকনে কে লিয়ে ঔব আনে জানে কে লিয়ে বাস্তা ঘাট কা
ইন্তজাম কৰে
আওব জবতক বাস্তাঘাট নাহি হোয়া ধান চাউল গবৰ্ণমেণ্ট কি তবফ ছে
ইন্তজাম কিয়া জায়। তীসৰী বাত হয় condon কা হন condon কো
হটায়ে। হম
বাতোঁপৰ ধ্যান দেনেমে হমাৰে জিলেকী খাদ্য সমস্যা হল হো সৰ্তী হল
হে কবডন উঠানকি
জকবত মুখত লিফ অজাহ ছে হ্যায় বড়ি অজাহ ইয়ে হাঁয় কি
কবডন এৰিয়া মে লোগ
বচপনছে
সাগ্ৰ লিম ছিক্না গুরু কবদেতে হ্যায় ইছে
লোগোকো নৈতিক
বহত নকছান
হতা হ্যায়
লোগোকো ইছ
মাৰাত্মক
নকছানছে
বাচানা
চাহিয়ে।

Maulavi MUHAMMAD UMARUDDIN: Sir, it is in the fitness of things that the question of food has come up for discussion before the House. It is important that this vital matter should come up for discussion before the House from time to time. Now our Government have taken upon themselves the responsibility for feeding people at least in the areas of the State. As a matter of fact in every civilised country, it is the Government who take the responsibility of feeding its people at least to prevent starvation. At any rate, it is clear that the Government of ours has taken this responsibility. Now, Sir, we want to see whether in terms of the policy which this Government has been pursuing it has been able to discharge that responsibility. Sir, this responsibility has got two aspects, *i. e.*, the first is the moral or administrative aspect and the second is the commercial or money making aspect. This House will remember that they sanctioned not less than Rs.8 crores 50 lakhs for the purpose of enabling Government not only to procure food but to earn some money through what they call State Trading. Sir, has this Government been able to feed the people? Let us examine this question carefully. By this, of course, I do not mean that everybody should be fed by the Government, but what I mean is that at least the people in the rationed areas and in the scarcity and deficit areas, should be fed by the State. Now, Sir, what are the commitments of the Government in this connection? We have seen from the address of the Governor and Budget Speech that the commitment for the current year has been fixed at 70,000 tons. Now, Sir, I want to know on what basis the requirements of the State, *i. e.* for rationed areas deficit areas and certain industrial concerns have been estimated. Now, Sir, it has been complained that as a result of shortage in certain areas or pockets as some of the hon. Members have described it, hardship has occurred. In my opinion this is the direct result of the bad procurement and distribution policy pursued by the Government. Sir, with a view to procure paddy in the surplus areas, agents were appointed. Now we find from the Government admission itself that in the earlier part of April or middle of May this year more than one lakh ton was procured which exceeded the year's target of 70,000 tons. That is quite good. But what is the result, Sir? On the one hand there arose the storage difficulties and the whole operation of procurement came almost to a standstill. Luckily a part of this stock was diverted to West Bengal and Manipur. On the other hand, there was scarcity in certain parts of the State. Why? This is the result of the imperfect and defective policy pursued by the Government, both in the matter of procurement as well as distribution. When Government have procured enough paddy and when there is no room for storing the same and when the agents' money is blocked, it

was quite necessary in the circumstances to remove the restriction on movement, so that people in the deficit areas could be in a position to procure paddy at a lesser cost, from the surplus areas. I do not follow why this was not done, Sir. From the experience of my own district, I say that while paddy in certain areas were available at Rs. 7 or Rs.8 per maund it was being sold at Rs. 12 to Rs.13 a maund within a distance of two miles. Even Aus paddy was being sold at Rs. 4 to Rs.5 per maund in some parts of the district while it was being sold at Rs. 10 to Rs.12 per maund in other parts. Similar was the case in Chapra and Sidli areas. In some other parts of Dhubri subdivision near Patamari where crops had failed. Sali paddy was being sold at Rs.15 to Rs.16 and Aus at Rs.12 to Rs.13 per maund. This is the result of restriction on movement of paddy. Sir, I want to know why after the entire procurement quota has been procured the restriction is still continuing? My Friend, Maulana Jalil, has said that some people used to go to the neighbouring surplus areas to procure paddy on loan or they used to get paddy as the wage in place of cash, but as a result of restrictions on movement, these poor people even if they come with a couple of maunds of paddy on their shoulders are subjected to harassment by the staff of the Procurement Department at the various checking posts. In this way by shutting out surplus paddy in surplus areas, a temporary shortage has been created by Government and people's hardship is knowing no bounds. For this State in affairs the Government is fully responsible. Some hon. Members said that people's purchasing power has been affected. This is only one factor. By shutting out paddy in the surplus areas the people who have sufficient purchasing power and could procure paddy for their full requirements are not in a position to do so and sacrificing a larger quantum of their purchasing power having to buy paddy and rice at a higher price caused by artificial shortage. Then again, Sir, I do not understand how the Government is in a position to determine whether the State is deficit or surplus. Have they got reliable statistics? If we had reliable statistics, Government could have determined what is the actual requirement of the State and what quantity could be exported to other States, if we have any surplus. Sir, we all know that till about 1949-50 this State was in a position to export paddy to the tune of one lakh tons of rice annually. Of course I admit that after the great earthquake and due to other reasons and floods in some parts of the State the position has changed to some extent, and as such the position so far as even the question of self-sufficiency of the State in the matter of food is not so comfortable. If this year we have a surplus, next year we may face a deficit due to vagaries of weather. So my

suggestion is that we must first of all assess our position in this regard and formulate our policy in the proper way. Government should have a consistent policy in procuring food and should adopt a well thought out plan for procurement so that after meeting the internal requirements we may be in a position to export to other States the surplus quantity, if any. Sir, we know that the Government of India has given loan for financing the Grow-More-Food Scheme in our State and it is only meet and proper that we should in our turn help the Government of India by supplying some of the deficit States with our surplus paddy, which will be a help to those States in their needs and at the same time it will relieve the Government of India of their anxiety to meet the food requirement of some deficit States of the Country. We should utilise this loan from the Government of India in the best possible way so that we are in a position to have a surplus stock of paddy to enable us to be in a position to export to some other States who may be in need of it.

Sir, we find *vide* Government Notification No.SDB/433/53, dated the 6th July, 1953, the maximum procurement price and retail price for paddy and rice have been notified. For the purpose of procurement Government have divided the State into four Zones, *viz.*, (1) zone which is surplus in paddy, (2) zone which is partially surplus. (3) zone which is deficit and (4) area which is neither surplus nor deficit.

Sir, I have no objection to such proposals. Under that proposal, different prices have been fixed for different zones. Now, Sir, under the same notification—sub-clause (f), page 2, there is a provision for charging a cess at $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent on the maximum procurement price. Sir, certain areas, I mean, certain Hill areas have been excluded from this cess, but I want to point out what is the quantum and incidence of this cess. This cess is charged at the rate of one anna per rupee per maund.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think, Mr. Umaruddin you are going away from the discussion.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD UMARUDDIN: Sir, Government is taking away in the shape of cess at one anna per rupee per maund, but on the other hand only 6 or 7 annas are given to the retailers. Now, why the selling price of rice and paddy is so high in deficit areas? Because the price is higher there the people cannot buy for want of purchasing power. This $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. rate of cess is very high. Of course, Government has got to pay towards establishment, godowns charge and shrinkage, etc., but even then it is found that 50 per cent. net profit can be made by Government. In view of the fact that Government takes the lion's share of the profit, it is unfortunate

that the prices of paddy and rice are thereby pushed up and made more expensive for the consumers. It is no doubt true that a part of the profit earned through cess is spent for some public activities such as roads, but even then cess has caused hardship to the consumers. If the retailer is given the benefit of only 6 or 7 annas per maund as profit why the Government...

Mr. SPEAKER : Excuse me, Mr. Umaruddin, you are speaking beyond the discussion. You should discuss whether people are starving and what should be done by Government. It seems you are getting too far. You are to follow certain logical arguments.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD UMARUDDIN : This is directly connected with the food problem and I am talking about the policy pursued by Government.

Mr. SPEAKER : You should point out what is the defect in procurement and distribution.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD UMARUDDIN : Sir, food has not been properly procured. Then in the matter of distribution this policy is defective and there is unnecessary control. Government has fixed prices which are beyond the purchasing capacity of consumers. If a retailer can manage with 6 or 7 annas per maund, why Government should realise cess at a much higher rate? So I suggest that the whole question of food policy should be the subject matter of enquiry by a committee consisting of members who have knowledge of the food problem and who can give valuable suggestions about procurement and distribution. It can look into the whole position of the entire State regarding food production and problems arising from flood, drought etc. In my view, the present policy is defective and it has got room for improvement and modification. Then again, we may take into account policies followed by other States and revise our policies, if necessary. This Committee will not only deal with the question of distribution of food, but it will go into the question of procurement and production and will suggest measures for making our State surplus in food so that we can not only make our State self-sufficient but we can contribute our quota for the help of our neighbouring deficit States.

Shri JOGA KANTA BARUAH : মাননীয় অধ্যক্ষ ডাঙৰীয়া, গোন্ধাৰী ডাঙৰীয়াই টিংগুৰ কথা উল্লেখ কৰাত মই ভাবিছিলো তেখেত তালৈ কি জানি গৈছিলেই।

পাছত মনত পৰিছে। যোৱা ২৩ জুলাইত টিংখং মৌজাৰ টিপমীয়া গাৱঁত এখন সভা হৈছিল। তালৈ যোক মাতিছিল। মই তালৈ নগৈ কৈছিলো, বক্তৃতাৰে মই ভোক গুচাব নোৱাৰো। আৰু মই সেই দিনাই ডিব্ৰুগড়ৰ ডি, চি, ৰ ওচৰলৈ গৈছিলো। সেই সভাত টিপমীয়া হাই স্কুলৰ হেড্ মাষ্টৰ সভাপতি আছিল। তেওঁ এজন চচিয়েলিষ্ট। মই খবৰ পাইছো সেই সভাত যি বিলাক প্ৰস্তাৱ হৈছিল তাৰ লগত ঘৰলৈ নি পিছত লগাই দিছে যে “বাইজৰ দুখ দুৰ্গতি নেচাই স্থানীয় এম্ এল্ এ বহি খকাত গৰিহণা দিয়া হওক।” প্ৰস্তাৱ কাৰীৰ দুৰ্ভাগ্য মই সেই দিনাই সেই ঠাইৰ ডি, চি ক কৈ ৫,০০০ হেজাৰ টকা মঞ্জুৰি কৰি দিয়াৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰি দি আহিছো। কিন্তু দুখৰ বিষয় সেই ৫ হেজাৰ টকা আনিবলৈ যাওতে বাচত অহা যোৱা জিৰ কাম খাটিৰ বাবে হাজিৰা আৰু অন্যান্য খৰচ ধৰিলে ৫ হেজাৰৰ বেচি খৰচ হৈছে বুলি মোৰ অনুমাণ হৈছে। যোৱা কাতি মাহত যি বানপানী হয় সেই বানপানীয়ে আৰু তাৰ পাছত পোকে বহুতো খেতি নষ্ট কৰিলে। দিহিঙৰ দুয়ো পাৰে মঠাৰবি বান্ধি নিদিলে বাইজৰ দুখ দুৰ্গতিৰ সীমা নাইকীয়া হব। সেইবাৰ যি বানপানী হৈছিল সেই পানীয়ে পকা ধান নষ্ট কৰা মই নিজে তালৈ গৈ চাই আহিছো। ডি, চি আৰু মুখ্য মন্ত্ৰীলৈ সেই বিষয়ে বিপোর্ট দিছো।

Mr. SPEAKER : বৰুৱা ডাঙৰীয়া, আমি explanation বিচৰা নাই আপুনি গৈ চাইছে ভাল কৰিছে। তাত খাদ্য বস্তু ভালকৈ বিতৰণ কৰা হৈছে নে নাই সেইটোহে কব লাগে।

Shri JOGAKANTA BARUAH : তাত যে খাদ্যৰ অভাব হৈছে তাকেহে মই কবলৈ উঠিছো; আৰু তাৰ বাবেহে এইবোৰ কাম কৰিছো।

মোৰ কব লগীয়া প্ৰধান কথা হৈছে যে সচাকৈয়ে সেই অঞ্চলৰ মানুহৰ দুখে কুলাই পাচিয়ে নধৰা হৈছে। মতা মানুহবোৰ ঘৰত বহি আছে আৰু তিবোতা মানুহবোৰ ধান মাগিবলৈ ওলাই গৈছে এনে মানুহক গভৰ্ণমেণ্টে সহায় নকৰি নেখাই মৰিবলৈকে এৰি দিব লাগিছিল কিন্তু দেশৰ ভৱিষ্যত স্বাধীনতা ৰক্ষা কৰিবলৈ তেওঁ বিলাকৰ লৰা-ছোৱালী বিলাকক জীয়াই ৰখা আমাৰ দায়ীত্ব বুলিয়েই সহায় কৰিব লগা হৈছে। মোৰ মনেৰে তেওঁলোকৰ দুখ দুৰ্গতিৰ পৰিমাণলৈ চাই সেই অঞ্চলৰ বাবে যি ৫ হাজাৰ টকা মঞ্জুৰি দিছে সেইটো যথেষ্ট নহয়।

বৰ দুঃখৰ বিষয় আমাৰ মানুহবিলাকে সদায়ে গভৰ্ণমেণ্টৰ মুখলৈ চাই থাকে। সকলো যেন গভৰ্ণমেণ্টে কৰি দিব এনেকুৱা এটা মনোভাব আমাৰ মানুহৰ মাজত বাঢ়ি উঠিছে। আমাৰ মুখীয়াল লোকসকলেও তাত যোগ দিয়া অতি পৰিতাপৰ বিষয়। বোম সাম্ৰাজ্যত বিদেশ লুটি লুটি বোমান নাগৰিকক ভোট দিয়াৰ নিচিনা ব্যৱস্থা আমাৰ সংবিধানত নাই। গতিকে চৰকাৰে টকা পইচা দি মানুহক সহায় কৰাৰ লগে লগে এই মনোভাব দূৰ কৰিবৰ কাৰণে বাইজৰ মাজত প্ৰচাৰ কাৰ্য্যৰ অতি আৱশ্যক তথাপি মই চৰকাৰৰ ওচৰত আবেদন কৰিছো যেন অনতি পলমে, অহা কাতি মাহৰ আগতে কমকৈও দহ হাজাৰ টকা মোৰ সমষ্টিত দি বাইজক সহায় কৰক। শেষত মই চৰকাৰক পুনৰ অনুৰোধ জনাও যেন, স্থানীয় অফিচাৰ সকলৰ পৰা ‘ৰিপোর্ট’ অথবা ‘ৰিকমেণ্ডেচন’ নোপোৱালৈকে অপেক্ষা নকৰি বঙা ফিটাৰ মেৰপাক ভাঙিবলৈ বাট নেচাই বতৰৰ আগ পষতেই অৰ্থাৎ কাতি মাহৰ আগতেই চৰকাৰে দুখ-দুৰ্দশা-গ্ৰস্ত বাইজৰ সহায়ার্থে অন্ততঃ দহ হেজাৰ টকা ‘বিলিফ’, দিয়ক অথবা ধন ধাৰলৈ দি তেওঁলোকৰ প্ৰাণ ৰক্ষা কৰক ইয়াকে কৈ মই মোৰ বক্তব্য সামৰিলো।

Mr. SPEAKER : Whether the Supply Minister wants to speak now or he will speak after Mr. Goswami.

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister) : I shall speak after Mr. Goswami.

Shri HAREHSWAR GOSWAMI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my Motion has ably justified its introduction and discussion in this House. Not that there is no problem to-day which demands the attention of the House, but there is a problem, as has been expressed in the speeches of the Members of this House. Nobody, in this House has said that there is no scarcity area in the State, but regarding the nature of relief and the expected Government relief, there is still a great amount of difference. As my Friend, Mr. Bhattacharyya has said, I do not want to make food a party problem, and I was really hurt when some of the speakers spoke that the Praja Socialist Party held meetings criticising the Government only, and did not offer any constructive suggestions. Sir, I have with me a copy of the resolution passed in a meeting in Kampur under the presidency of no less a person than Shri Haladhar Bhuyan, who was once the Secretary of the party in power and who had in that meeting suggested the remedies and how to find out ways and means for that. Now, I say that in doing that, surely we are not playing to the galleries. Sir, these copies of the resolution have been forwarded to the Minister of Supply and to the Minister in charge of Revenue also with their concrete suggestions as—

- (1) that these areas should be declared as scarcity areas with a view that in these areas no procurement should be done ;
- (2) that in these areas, at least 10,000 maunds of paddy should be given to the people free of charge ;
- (3) that in these areas there should be a remission of revenue and
- (4) that the issue of funds should be readily made available to the people in these areas.

Shri BIMALA KANTA BORA: What is the date of that letter?

Shri HAREHSWAR GOSWAMI: On 16th August 1953.

Shri BIMALA KANTA BORA: Before that date concession rate was given.

Shri HAREHSWAR GOSWAMI: If that was done, it was good.

Sir, whether 10,000 maunds were given, I do not know, but what I have learnt from the hon. Member including the Revenue Minister that only Rs. 5,000 has been allotted up till now, and that Rs. 5,000 was given also by way of reduction of price of paddy and rice.

Sir, when there is a scarcity condition, even the India Government has accepted as a principle that food is the most important thing that must be supplied to the people and in the matter of food, if necessary, Government must subsidise. In many countries during the War and after, food was subsidized for a long period. In India, subsidy was to the extent of Rs. 200 crores. Sir, here,

when we have ample quantity of food, it is really unfortunate that there should be scarcity in certain areas, whether it is due to the vagaries of nature or due to some other causes.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think you have forgotten the theory of Supply.

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: I am coming to that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are advancing new arguments.

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: Sir, I am not advancing new arguments. From arguments advanced by my Friends, I find there is a great amount of complacency. In that area, Government appears to think that enough has been done for the people. But my argument is that even at a great cost we should rush food to those areas, because the scarcity condition is dangerous to the areas also which are plentiful in the neighbouring areas. Secondly, it has been suggested that a lakh of rupees is given as Test Relief, but it has not been stated how many people had been employed there. From Dhubri to Tingkhong areas, everywhere, we have heard that there is scarcity of purchasing power among the people. We must increase the purchasing power of those people. Unless we can solve this, this problem will remain as chronic as ever.

In Cachar District, we have heard that no relief has been given. Regarding the Hills, I have not heard what has been done. It is not a problem of today, but it has been a problem for the last 3 or 4 years *i.e.*, since the partition of India. These border areas have been going without food and in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the people have been going without food and living on roots and other things. The food should be readily made available to these people. If we cannot do so, the next alternative will be not to allow them to live in scarcity, but to give them food even at a subsidized rate, otherwise the food policy will have no meaning. It has also now been admitted that in certain areas there is enough rice and paddy and unless the cordon system is removed, it will not be beneficial. When we have really been able to procure rice and paddy to the tune of 1,60,000 tons for this year which is almost double the quantity that we need, it is necessary to remove these restrictions.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is it almost double?

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the actual need?

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: It will be something like 70,000 tons or may be smaller.

So, Sir, when we have been able to procure this quantity, it shows how people are co-operating with the Government in this drive. It is useless to say that people are not co-operating when they are actually co-operating. It should be the aim of Government to see whenever any people suffer, Government help must rush to those people or the areas where they live. With these words, the whole

purpose of the Motion was not just to condemn the Government but my whole purpose was to raise a discussion how to better the food situation in the State. My friend, Shri Narnarayan Goswami misunderstood me completely when he asked me to withdraw the Motion as if there is no necessity to discuss the food position! We have seen, Sir, there was ample necessity for it. After this helpful discussion I hope the Minister of Supply and the Minister of Revenue will see that sufficient relief is rendered to these areas. We have crossed the first hurdle. In the Procurement Committee I have myself advocated that procurement should remain at least for 2 or 3 years more *i.e.*, so long as we do not get over this crisis. So long as we get these lean years it is necessary that there should be some kind of procurement. But side by side also there should be a policy of gradual removal of the irksome restrictions which hinder both procurement as well as relief to the people.

With these words, I hope that both the Supply Minister and the Revenue Minister will see that these scarcity areas do not remain in Assam. After crossing this first hurdle perhaps next year we shall see that Assam will not only be self-sufficient in food, but will also be able to export rice and paddy to other States and get from them other necessary articles in exchange.

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have heard with rapt attention the speeches of my Friends who took part in the discussion of this Motion. Sir, as usual the Government have been accused by the Opposition Members for several laches. From some Members it came as a general attack on that Government as a whole were sleeping; that they were called to the needs and difficulties of the people, that they neglected their duty and they reminded us through their speeches that we should wake up and try to remove the difficulties of the people. Sir, even the Leader of the Opposition has just now accused us of complacency. Certainly, Sir, if the Leader of the Opposition, or for that matter of that any Member of this House, feels that we are complacent he has a right to say so. But, Sir, what is the actual position? Are we really suffering from complacency, or my Friends in the Opposition—of course not all but some of the specially towering ones—think that they monopolise all the commonsense and intelligence, that they and they only possess ears and eyes to hear and to see the distress of the people and that we, who are sitting on this side of the House, have got neither ears nor eyes and have completely lost all senses! That seems to be their idea as they have spoken in that strain. But I want to make absolutely clear that we are not suffering from complacency, rather my Friends are suffering from complacency and vanity dreaming of a false sense of monopolising all the intelligence of the world as if they understand everything and no one else, specially the Ministers,

Sir, it would have been better if my Friend, the Leader of the Opposition, instead of moving this Motion styling it as the food situation in Assam be taken in to consideration, would have titled it as economic condition of the people of Assam be taken into consideration. I hope you will agree with my contention, Sir, as at certain stages you had to pull up some of the Members, who were going astray by saying something which had no relevancy with the subject. At times your task became rather difficult because my Friends in the Opposition were out of gear altogether. The other day, we saw how, while discussing about free supply of grass to the cattle, the question of milk came in and from milk to the food problem and then to opening of reserves and a suggestion was made that in the flood-affected areas all the reserves should be thrown open for regular supply of milk as if the bulls of this State also give milk! (Interruptions).

Mr. SPEAKER: He is not giving way.

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister): Sir, this sort of argument reminds me of a Bengali saying "ধান ভান্‌তে শিবের গীত" I do not know whether my little friend, Shri Ranendra Mohan Das, will stand up and say that Siva is the God of Gods and so he may be dragged in anywhere and everywhere. In the name of food we go to the pasture field, then to paddy field, then to grass for cattle, then to the purchasing power, then to storage godown and where not? (Interruptions again). Sir, I do not understand the meaning of this row. You certainly remember, Sir, that some of the Members roamed in their imagination from this House to pasture ground, reserve forest and many other possible and impossible zones.

Now, Sir, I have said, if the Motion was to discuss about the economic condition of the State that would have suited my Friends best, who traversed through so branches of so many departments. So far as this Motion is concerned, of course my Friends in the Opposition have pointed out about sugar, *atta*, rice and paddy and they had not gone to pasture ground from there to milk, from milk to cow, from cow to bullock, from bullock to plough and so on and so forth like the other Resolution. Any way, Sir, it was mentioned that there are some scarcity pockets in the State.

Mr. SPEAKER: They mentioned Cachar, Nowgong, Kamrup and Dibrugarh.

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister): Sir, I will go a little further and say that practically in every district there is a deficit pocket. All the places are not self-sufficient. Where in a particular district the people have taken up jute cultivation, that area is certainly deficit so far as food grains are concerned. There is no denying the fact that there are deficit pockets in all the districts. There are, of course, reasons for that. It was very ably put by one of the hon. Members that it should not be

the idea that everybody should take to one kind of crop, rice, paddy, only. We want that other things should also be grown.

Now, Sir, another charge levelled against us was that rice was not rushed in the way it should have been done. That is not a fact, Sir. As soon as we hear from any source whether from a resolution in a public meeting, or from some hon. Members of this House—it does not matter to which Party he belongs to—or from a Government Officer, or even from an individual or public men who are not Members of this House, that there is scarcity in any area, we at once contact the Deputy Commissioner or Subdivisional Officer concerned for immediate necessary action to remove the scarcity. In this connection I should like to say that there is a standing order wherein it has been stated that whenever a Government officer will hear that there is scarcity in any particular area at once some officer should be deputed to enquire into the matter and to open necessary and adequate cheap-grain shops. It may be asked Sir, why an enquiry should be made, or some Friends might say 'can't you believe so and so's statement? But, Sir, an enquiry is not to ascertain the scarcity position but only to know how many people are affected and what will be the requirement. So, for all this an enquiry is necessary. On the very beginning some preliminary enquiry is made and cheap-grain shops are opened. But it so happened sometimes that at some places there was no shopkeeper because where people consume their own paddy there was no cause for having some one in the line for opening a cheap-grain shop at once. So when a scarcity occurs in such an area it becomes very difficult to open a cheap-grain shop all on a sudden. In such cases the people are called and they select some one from amongst themselves and then a shop is opened. All this naturally takes some time. For the information of my Friends I can say that only in the district of Cachar alone more than 250 cheap-grain shops have been opened during this year.

Shri RANENDRA MOHAN DAS : Up to which date, Sir?

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister) : The report dated 31st July, 1953 discloses that 264 shops were opened up to that date in the district of Cachar.

Maulavi Muhammad. UMARUDDIN : What is the total quantity of rice allotted?

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister) : I am not going to answer that question, Sir. It is not a Question hour. If such indulgence is given to my Friend there will be no end of it.

Shri RANENDRA MOHAN DAS : On a point of information

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister): (I am not giving way). Sir, I am trying to explain the exact position because my Friends in the opposite have given incorrect information to the House. This is a very mild term I am using, Sir, although I can use a much stronger term, I will not use it. I must be allowed to say my say uninterrupted. My Friends in the Opposition benches got ample opportunity to speak anything they liked, because in the course of this food debate they have brought all imaginable and unimaginable charges against the Government and so my Friend, Shri Bimalakanta Bora, has rightly remarked that any stick is good enough to beat the Government.

Now, Sir, as soon as we heard at a certain period that there was a necessity of bigger supply than what we were doing in Cachar district, rice was rushed there very quickly according to the demand of the local authorities. Not only that, there is a stock in the town of Silchar itself of paddy which was procured from the district. So there was no question of food scarcity at any stage, it was once a question of bigger supply. There was no time when there was any chance of people going without food due to scarcity of food stuff. There was a reserve stock in Silchar for emergency. That stock we did not like to touch as we wanted to keep a good reserve then. In other Subdivisions also there were reserve stocks. A regular supply was maintained all through from this side of the State. There was no question of scarcity. As regards the delay of a day or two I do not say that there was no delay which is inevitable. But I have stated the reasons why it was so. Some of my Friends who criticised us come from that part of the State, they could have easily brought to our notice that the price of rice went from Rs. 30 to Rs.40 per maund.....

Shri RANENDRA MOHAN DAS: Several telegrams have been sent to Government, but no effect.

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister): Sir, may I enquire whether my Friend, Shri Das, sent any telegram to this effect and to whom and on what date? I am sure he did not. Sir my Friends lost sight of the fact that the rise in the price of rice at a certain period may be due to various factors and not due to scarcity alone. For example, for a particular good variety of rice the price may be high, or that there are times in a year specially during the rainy season when people take to cultivation and sometimes they cannot dry their paddy for husking for want of sunshine and there may be short of supply. I do not know whether my town friend like Shri Ranendra Mohan Das knows of all these things or not. Besides this, during the rainy season people go to the field for other profitable avocations and naturally every year there are times when the price goes higher up. Then about certain allegations made by my Friends regarding some newspaper publication expressing the views

of the President of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee. After reading the newspaper report I was rather surprised, but as I know that sometimes the reports are not just to the point and also do not convey the exact state of affairs, which is quite natural too, I contacted my Secretary and Director of Supply and I learnt that we had adequate stock of foodstuff in Cachar to meet our current demand and we were replenishing the stock all along. I thought I must issue a statement to clarify the position. So after ascertaining the position here I contacted the Subdivisional Officer of Karimganj over the phone when he told me that he had his stock, but the difficulty was the low purchasing power of the people.

Shri RANENDRA MOHAN DAS : On a point of information, Sir. The Congress President himself was visiting that area and after that he issued a statement that there had been a scarcity and simultaneously with that we saw a statement from the Supply Minister that there is enough rice in Karimganj and that there is no scarcity in the area. We want clarification for this, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER : He has replied to that.

Shri RANENDRA MOHAN DAS : But we want further clarification.

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister) : I am just going to further clarify that point, Sir, but it seems that my Friend suffers from something and requires too much clarification and he becomes impatient. That is the difficulty, Sir. I was just going to clarify the position further knowing as I do about the difficulty of my Friend, Shri Ranendra Mohan Das, regarding understanding unlike others, when my Friend took his stand being impatient, I was explaining that the scarcity was not actually there in the district but the reason is that the people have lost their adequate purchasing power. At some places in the deficit areas some people are not in a position to purchase the commodity even at the rate at which the Supply Department was selling through cheap grain shops. There is no denying the fact that there are many deficit pockets in the district and naturally there are temporary rise in the prices for some small and urgent deals. Whenever such rise is brought to our notice we bring down the prices by opening cheap-grain shops. Afterwards I went to Cachar and before my departure I discussed the situation with my colleague, the Minister for Finance and Revenue regarding some relief to the really deserving people. He was pleased to sanction certain amount both for agricultural loan and for gratuitous relief. On my arrival there, I consulted the Deputy Commissioner and the Subdivisional Officers and enquired of them what was their immediate and minimum requirement. When there is a genuine necessity we should certainly try to meet it as far as possible. Government

will never shirk its responsibility. Sir, when we receive any requisition from the district or subdivisional authorities regarding the necessary help to be given to the people in the shape of loan or gratuitous relief certain amount is sanctioned at the very beginning and then on receipt of the fuller report the grant is increased under different heads. Now, Sir, there is a charge that the full demand of the public was not sent to the Deputy Commissioner or to the Subdivisional Officers. It is necessary to state in course of this debate, though it has been made clear by my hon. Colleague to some extent that we are to rely on the report of the local authorities also. But if there are differences between the statements of a public representative, like my friend, Mr. Das, Mr. Bhattacharyya or Raja Saheb, and that of the Deputy Commissioner or Subdivisional Officer, certainly we make further enquiry and try to find out the exact position and then do the needful. You also realise, Sir, that we cannot overlook or reject the recommendations or statements or report—whatever you may call it of the local authorities concerned. If we do not give due consideration to such reports, then the administration cannot be run. If we find ultimately in any case that there was some exaggeration from any side, we overlook it taking the gravity of the situation into consideration. This is not an uncommon thing. If we hear of any distress or difficulty from the public which have not come from the Deputy Commissioner or Subdivisional Officer of the locality we enquire of the Officer concerned why such an information did not come from him. Such cases are very rare and that also due to preliminary enquiry which takes some time. But I cannot agree with the view expressed by my Friend that unless something is heard from the Officers, Government do not take any step. The local Officers are the representatives of the Government and they take immediate necessary steps to give relief to the deserving sufferers in case of any calamity. It is the duty of all to inform the local authority first, but very often nowadays the matters are brought to the notice of the Ministers at the first instance by scrappy telegrams which in my opinion is not the correct procedure. It is the duty of the Deputy Commissioner to put things in order and he is to report to the Government that such and such area is undergoing certain difficulties and that grant of some amount was immediately necessary. After all the Deputy Commissioner is a human being. He cannot allow people to die before his eyes. Our Officers have got hearts and sympathy for the suffering people though they may not mix with the general public so freely like my Friend, Shri Bhattacharyya or Shri Das. Every Officer has connection with the administration in some way and has the responsibility to do something for the benefit of the people; now the Officers are our men.

With regard to Aus paddy the Government was accused that we are not procuring it and that the price has gone down in certain places. Sir, I admit that price has gone down in certain places.

At the time of procuring the winter paddy also we took some time. The reason, was explained by me. However for the clarification and refreshing the memory of my friends in the Opposition I may repeat the cause briefly which is this, that we do not like to purchase raw paddy which cannot last long. It is known to the hon. Members that Aus is a variety of paddy which deteriorates quickly even if it is properly dried, and it cannot be kept long as we can do in case of Sali paddy. If the Aus paddy remains a little raw at the time of purchasing and not properly dried, it is certain that there will be some sort of fermentation in the godown. After purchase the paddy will have to be kept either in the Government godown or in the godown of the miller. When we purchase paddy we purchase it from different persons, but they can keep the paddy for some time with them and sell the same when properly dried which is easy for them. We think that if it remains with the cultivator for some time, certainly he would not die of starvation, as some of my Friends want to prove it. By keeping the paddy in his own godown the cultivator will never die of starvation or for the reason that he cannot purchase other essential things for a few days. By purchasing raw paddy we cannot allow it to get fermented in the godowns and thus create a situation for my Friends to criticise and condemn the Government on a just cause. My Friends in the Opposition condemn the Government for nothing on imaginary, false and unjustified grounds in case they get a real ground, it is needless for me to say what they will try to do. We are quite alert on that point and we cannot waste public money by purchasing half-dried Aus paddy. In such matters we are to take the advice of the Agriculture Department and also of the experienced officers who are serving in this Department. I admit that inspite of our best efforts there is some loss here and there, which is inevitable. Some of my Friends who keep paddy in their own stocks have experience of this and they know how the paddy goes out of condition if it is not properly dried, after being kept for a long in the godown in heaps. We should try as far as possible to prevent all sorts of wastage and damage in this regard and we should try to purchase the paddy in such a state so that both the cultivator and the Government do not stand to lose. As a matter of fact I may state for the information of my Friends that it is practically decided that Government is going to purchase Aus paddy as far as the definite requirement demands. The point is that Government do not like to purchase raw paddy available in certain areas. There are certain areas where the Aus paddy can be harvested earlier than other areas. So Government cannot begin at random and at any time and for any quantity however small. They must formulate some schemes and according to the fixed policy of the Government this has to be done. If we do not know the exact, nay even the appro

ximate quantity of paddy that will be available in an area, some idea at least of the available quantity that we can procure must be had before we start purchasing it becomes difficult for us to allow procurement without having some idea of the availability and normal need of the locality. So, Sir, we are collecting figures from different districts. We are getting encouraging reports only from Kamrup area which includes Mangaldai Subdivision. From Nowgong and Cachar we have decided not to purchase anything as this may cause difficulties to the rural consumers. From Cachar district, however, we can procure Aus rice from 80 to 90 thousand maunds. Because that district is being fed from the supply sent from this part of the State, we have decided not to procure there. But we are going to procure in the Gauhati zone. As already mentioned, we are not going to procure in Nowgong also because of its deficit pockets. Excepting these places we shall procure from any other places provided the quality is good and available quantity justify the procurement. Otherwise we shall leave it for the local people.

Now, Sir, regarding the starvation deaths, my Friend, the Finance Minister, has ably met it. I do not want to take much time of the House because I know that I shall not be able to put it more ably. But in this connection I would like to say a few words to show that how worthless and imaginary the simile that was put before the House by my Friend, Mr. Bhattacharyya, regarding the starvation death. Sir, he put it in such a way as if he was seeing the picture before his very eyes. He gave a description as to how people die of starvation inch by inch. He said that the "death cannot be just like that of a bullet shot" as if he had seen many persons dying before his eyes by bullet shots! "It is not a case like that but gradually, inch by inch". Not the whole body died at a time but the person died inch by inch. Some of the Members might not have fully understood the implication of what he said. But just to remove any misconception I would say that my Friend, Mr. Bhattacharyya, had never seen a man dying inch by inch before his eyes due to starvation nor by bullet shots instantaneously. Therefore I say that the picture he wanted to paint is not a real picture based on his personal experience, but this is a picture painted from his wild imagination. Let him deny it. I pause for a reply. He has not got the experience of either.

Now, Sir, another wild charge that has been laid at our doors is that there was no co-ordination between the Supply Department and the Public Works Department in the matter of giving employments to the people. Sir, it would be a news to the Members of this House to know that for Public Works

Department very recently we had to recruit labourers from other State such as from the district of Santal Paragana, in Bihar in two batches ; first batch consisted of 250 and the second also of the same size. Very recently we did recruit labourers from Bihar, and why ? My Friend said that those who do this kind of labour such as field work, earth cutting, jungle clearing etc., may be obtained locally here which is not always correct. I am not minimising the gravity of the unemployment situation. We admit that there is unemployment. We are quite alive to this and we are providing this type of work to local labourers. But the problem is of such a magnitude that no Government can solve this problem immediately or very soon unless it does with the help of a proverbial magic wand. I do not know whether my Communist Friend has seen or possesses any such thing. Now, Sir, I will refer to a story by way of illustration to refute the unkind and unfair charge against the Congress organisation.

Mr. SPEAKER : No story please.

Shri BAIDYNATH MOOKERJEE (Minister) : I feel tempted to refer to it by way of illustration, Sir, and that too very briefly.

A poor man went to the Court to file a petition before the Munsif without engaging any pleader. The Munsif asked him to obtain the endorsement of a pleader on the Vakalat or agentnama. The poor man replied that he tried to have the same from some pleaders but failed as he could not afford to pay the demanded fees as the pleaders wanted Rs. 2 to put in his signature. The Munsif asked the man to obtain the signature of one of those pleaders who were sitting under the thereby banyan tree on payment of annas four. Off went the poor man with the petition and implored a pleader to endorse the petition offering annas four saying what the Munsif advised him to do. The pleader got very much annoyed and retorted, by saying, "Tell the Munsif that the pleaders who used to put in their signatures on receipt of annas four have all become Munsifs !"

Shri RANENDRA MOHAN DAS : Now the pleaders have become Ministers.

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Sir, the Congressmen like my friend Ranendra Babu who joined the organisation for selfish motives have left Congress and joined the Opposition. Sir, the criticisms to be worth the name should be helpful and constructive. Fair and constructive criticisms are always welcomed. But

in this House now-a-days the criticisms have become so cheap that they are not worth a pie even. Criticism for criticism's sake is not fair. That degrades a person and make him mean, vain and fault finding.

Regarding co-ordination, I can boldly say that whatever we do we do it in a co-ordinating spirit. We have full faith in our Leader. There is full co-operation and co-ordination amongst the Ministers. If my Friend has the real good of the country at his heart, let him go to the countryside and give this news to the people that the nature of work mentioned by him namely earth work etc., are always offered to the people of the State, but unfortunately in many places workers for such works are not available. Now, Sir, it is very easy to play to the gally and to talk all sorts of nonsensical things.

Shri RANENDRA MOHAN DAS: We are playing to the gally, he is playing with the lives of the people.

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister): Here is another instance of stupid allegation. Then again with regard to the question of advance payment for pumps which has been raised by one of my Friends, alleging that before a pump begins to operate in a particular area, people are charged for the same, I may inform the House the exact position in this connection. The fact is that some earnest money is taken from the people just to find out their earnestness and the real position so that Government may find out whether one or more pumps are necessary, how many people want the pump etc., but if in any particular area Government find that the people are not in a position to give the earnest money, Government consider the matter on its own merit and see if the condition can be waived or not. In deserving cases this condition has been waived. I am saying this after enquiry. I have seen with my own eyes how nicely these pumps are working in those areas which are suffering from drought. So the relaxation of this term is in practice. Sir to put this matter in the way it has been done is not fair. That is a traversing of truth. Sir, if some one not being satisfied with any decision of the Government as it is not his liking go to any of my Friends of the opposite benches and not to something accusing the Government into their ears, our Friends, the Opposition members, welcome it. He considers the day an auspicious or a 'Suprabhat' good morning—for him because he heard something against the Government, does not matter though the allegation is false. Of course it is better than wild imagination of such Friend.

Mr. SPEAKER : One matter—a suggestion was put forward by Mr. Hazarika. What is your opinion on this ?

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister) : I am coming to that, Sir. That is a good suggestion, no doubt. But there are some practical difficulties which are known to my Friend Shri Hazarika. There are two different types of views and both of them deserve consideration. One section is of the opinion that rice should be milled and advocate for the opening of more mills to facilitate husking. The other section advocates husking of paddy by Dhenki. Both these groups have their own reasonings to support their view points. This matter was represented to me personally by Shri Hazarika about two months ago while I was at Nowgong. He wanted that the Supply Department should give paddy to those who used to husk paddy formerly when the mills were not so much in prominence, so that after husking the paddy by Dhenki they would give us the rice. I told him that the best thing would be if the requisite amount is kept in deposit with Government or cash payment is made by those who want to take the paddy the matter would be easy otherwise Supply Department could not issue paddy on loan. After husking the paddy whatever rice one gets, he or she may sell the same according to Government direction and naturally there would be some profit and with that margin one could maintain oneself. With the capital another maund of paddy should be purchased so on and so forth. In this way one can easily take up Dhenki husking. I told him that Supply Department was not in a position to give anything on loan unless it was done with the concurrence of the Finance Department. I gave him that hint. I hope my position is quite clear now. If the Supply Department gives some quantity of paddy on loan without taking any money from some one and if that person does not subsequently make any payment, the Supply Department will be held responsible for the amount not only that such of paddy without any security or without Finance's concurrence will be irregular and the officer issuing such order will not only be responsible for the money but also answerable for his irregular action. Of course there are persons who welcome Dhenki Chhatta rice, but their percentage is not very high. Other people prefer milled rice because the percentage of broken rice is not so high as in case of Dhenki-Chhatta rice.

Mr. SPEAKER : It may be in demand in the Shillong Hotel.

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister) : Not always, Sir. We kept Joha rice in ration shops, but it has become difficult to sell them. Some times there is a demand and sometimes there is none practically. But when the suggestion has come from you, Sir,

certainly I shall make enquiries this evening through our officers if there is a real demand. If after enquiry it is found that there is a regular and substantial demand and the Hotel keepers take their monthly requirement at a time, necessary arrangements will then be made. If the quantity is small, there will be difficulty.

Then, Sir, my Friend, Shri Ranendra Mohan Das, said that when the food situation has improved controls and cordoning should be abolished.

Shri RANENDRA MOHAN DAS : Gradually.

Mr. SPEAKER : Mr. Mookerjee, how long will you take to finish your speech ?

Shri BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE (Minister) : I have finished only one-third, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER : In that case you can continue on Thursday.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 10 A.M. on Thursday, the 3rd September, 1953.

Shillong
The 6th February, 1954

R. N. BARUA,
Secretary,
Legislative Assembly, Assam.