

Proceedings of the Assam Legislative Council assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1922.

The Council met in the Council Chamber at Government House on Friday, the 8th September 1922, at 2 P.M.

P R E S E N T :

THE Hon'ble Mr. J. C. Arbuthnott, C.I.E., *President*, the Hon'ble the Finance Member, the Hon'ble two Ministers and 40 nominated and elected Members.

ELECTION OF KHAN BAHADUR MAULAVI MUHAMMAD BAKHT MAZUMDAR AS DEPUTY PRESIDENT.

THE HON'BLE THE PRESIDENT :—Gentlemen, His Excellency has approved the election of Khan Bahadur Maulavi Muhammad Bakht Mazumdar as Deputy President.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

(UNSTARRED QUESTIONS.)

SRIJUT BEPIN CHANDRA GHOSE asked :—

1. Will the Government be pleased to state if there is any truth in the report that an arrangement has been made to run daily mail steamer from Gauhati to Bahadurabad up and down? If not true, will the Government be pleased to state if it is in the contemplation of the Government to take steps to improve the communication between Goalpara, Dhubri and Gauhati?

Mall
Steamer
from
Gauhati to
Bahadurabad.

2. Will the Government be pleased to state how many temporary Upper Subordinates there are in the Public Works Department who are natives of the Province? Of these how many have been made permanent in the new Subordinate Service and how many are still temporary and since how long?

Upper
Subordi-
nates.

Why are not these temporary Upper Subordinates made permanent? Will the Government be pleased to take early steps to consider their cases?

MR. A. W. BOTHAM replied :—

1.—Government is not aware that any such arrangement has been made or that it is contemplated. The reply to the second part of the question is in the negative.

2.—There are now no Upper Subordinates in the Public Works Department of this Province. The number of temporary men who held posts corresponding to those of the old Upper Subordinates and who are natives of the Province, is seven. None of these have been made permanent because they constitute the balance of the natives of the Province left over after making the necessary number of permanent appointments from temporary men.

The number of natives of this Province who hold what corresponds to the old Upper Subordinates appointment is as before stated, seven. The dates of their first appointments to this Department are given below :—

1. From 11th October 1913.
2. „ 30th September 1915.
3. „ 23rd November 1915.
4. „ 30th April 1917.
5. „ 1st November 1918.
6. „ 25th April 1922.
7. „ 27th April 1922.

The reason why the men above referred to have not been made permanent in preference to those who have been made permanent is that they failed to earn as satisfactory reports on their work, from the officers under whom they served, as those who were made permanent. It must in justice however, be remarked that two of these seven men are very junior men.

Their cases have already been fully and personally considered by Mr. Desenne, the Officiating Chief Engineer, at the time when appointments were made, and Government does not propose to re-open the question.

SRIJUT BEPIN CHANDRA GHOSE asked :—

Goalpara
Municipal-
ity.

3. Will the Government be pleased to direct the Commissioner for a further grant of at least Rs. 1,000 to the Goalpara Municipality for the current year ?

In view of the fact that Rs. 500 which has been granted by the Commissioner to the Goalpara Municipality for improvement of communication is absolutely inadequate having regard to the area of the town and improvement works to be done ?

Veterinary
Assistants.

4. Has the attention of the Government been drawn to the repeated memorials by the Veterinary Assistants of the province regarding their pay and the prospect of their service ?

Is it in the contemplation of Government to consider their cases favourably at an early date ?

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA replied :—

3.—Government have no information regarding the amount allotted to the Goalpara Municipality out of the communication grant which was placed at the disposal of the Commissioner, Assam Valley Division. The Commissioner is in the best position to consider the respective claims of the Local Bodies concerned and is allowed full discretion in apportioning the grant.

It is open to the Municipality to represent their claims to him.

4.—Yes. The attention of the Hon'ble Member is drawn to the discussions on the subject in connection with a resolution moved by Srijut Lohit Chandra Nayak at the last Session of Council. Government remain of opinion that nothing further can be done in the matter at present.

SRIJUT BEPIN CHANDRA GHOSE asked :—

5. Are the Government aware that good deal of inconvenience is felt by the public of Goalpara for want of a Boarding house attached to the Government High School there ?

Goalpara
Government
High
School.

Will the Government be pleased to take early steps to erect Boarding houses, attached to the Government High School at Goalpara ?

6. Will the Government be pleased to state why notwithstanding the sanction of requisite money to construct the office building of the Deputy Inspector of Schools of Goalpara subdivision, the construction has not yet been taken up in hand and why the Government is paying Rs. 15 a month as house rent for an office of the Deputy Inspector of Schools ?

Office
building of
Deputy
Inspector
of Schools
of Goal-
para.

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR PROMODE CHANDRA DUTTA replied :—

5.—The answer is in the affirmative.

The School hostel was burnt, apparently by incendiaries, about 18 months ago, sharing the fate of the main school building which was similarly destroyed some years ago.

The Director of Public Instruction has asked the Inspector of Schools to submit proposals for the replacement of the hostel buildings destroyed and they will be considered when they are received in view of the funds at his disposal.

6.—The Hon'ble Member is misinformed. No allotment has been sanctioned for the construction of an office for the Deputy Inspector of Schools, Goalpara.

Government have rented a building for the office of the Deputy Inspector of Schools, because there is no public building in Goalpara in which the office can be accommodated.

SRIJUT BEPIN CHANDRA GHOSE asked :—

7. Are the Government aware that though the Landlord and Tenant Procedure Bill has not yet been discussed and passed, many letters purported to be issued under Public Demands Recovery Act have been issued to many tenants by the Bijni and Mechpara Court of Wards ?

Bijni and
Mechpara
Court of
Wards.

Will the Government be pleased to state the reasons as to why such step has been taken ?

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID replied :—

7.—The Public Demands Recovery Act is in force in Assam and has been utilised in the Court of Wards estates in the Goalpara district. The attention of the Hon'ble Member is invited to the speech made by Mr. Botham in the debate on the Assam Landlord and Tenant Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 1922, on the 29th of March 1922.

RAI SAHIB PADMANATH GOHAIN BAROOAH asked :—

Travelling
and halting
allowance.

1. With reference to answer given to the question put by me at the March 1921 Session of the Council, will the Government be pleased to now lay upon the table a statement, showing separately for each department of the Administration, as also for members of the Government as a body and the Legislative Council as a whole, the amount of travelling and halting allowance drawn during the years 1920-21 and 1921-22 ?

2. With reference to the Hon'ble the Finance Member's remarks made in the course of a speech during that Session, that, with a view to economy, the rules regarding travelling allowance would come under the consideration of Government, will the Government lay upon the table the text of any orders which may have been issued in this connection subsequent to that date ?

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID replied :—

1.—A statement is laid on the table.

Statement showing the amount of travelling and halting allowances drawn by the various Departments of the Government of Assam during the years 1920-21 and 1921-22.

Heads of charges or departments.	1920-21.	1921-22.	Remarks.
1	2	3	4
5.—Land Revenue ...	Rs. 30,866	Rs. 40,131	Includes travelling allowance of Director of Land Records and Agriculture.
6.—Excise—Excise Department.	32,521	40,566	Includes travelling allowance of Commissioner of Excise.
8.—Forests—Forest Department.	84,774	85,371	
9.—Registration—Registration Department.	2,609	2,114	
22.—General Administration.	1,35,706	1,47,350	

Statement showing the amount of travelling and halting allowances drawn by the various Departments of the Government of Assam during the years 1920-21 and 1921-22—concl'd.

Heads of charges or departments.	1920-21.	1921-22.	Remarks.
1	2	3	4
	Rs.	Rs.	
24.—Administration of Justice.	14,003	14,909	
25.—Jails—Jail Department.	2,135	3,240	
26.—Police—Police Department.	2,02,571	2,93,997	
27.—Ports and Pilotage	997	1,514	
30.—Scientific Department.	...	6,688	Travelling allowance of hydro-electrical survey officers.
31.—Education—Education Department.	66,306	72,436	
32.—Medical—Medical Department.	46,639	53,777	
33.—Public Health ...	25,925	36,707	Includes vaccination, sanitation and Pasteur Institute, etc.
34.—Agriculture ...	56,824	69,842	Includes Agriculture, Veterinary and Co-operative Credit Departments.
35.—Industries ...	6,733	6,004	
37.—Miscellaneous—Registration of traffic and vital statistics.	...	1,564	
41.—Civil Works—Public Works Department.	1,10,832	1,18,812	
47.—Miscellaneous ...	111	13,309	Includes travelling allowance of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee.
Members of the Government as a body.	19,430	40,048	
Legislative Council as a whole.	20,179	50,956	

N. B.—It must be remembered that the rates of travelling allowance are governed by the salaries drawn and that increased salaries tend to increase travelling allowance.

2.—A copy of the rules framed by this Government will be found in the Council Library and may be consulted by the Hon'ble Member. The attention of all controlling officers has recently been drawn to their duties when claims for travelling allowance are presented.

HAZEE MUHAMMAD ABDUL AHAD CHOWDHURY asked :—

Road from
Jaldhup to
Dhaka-
dakshin.

1. Will the Government be pleased to consider a proposal to construct a road from Jaldhup in Karimganj subdivision to Dhakadakshin in North Sylhet a distance of 8 miles with the necessary bridges?

MR. A. W. BOTHAM replied :—

1.—A road between the two places mentioned would be of purely local interest and Government would have no objection to the scheme being undertaken and financed by the Local Board concerned.

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY asked :—

Armed
Civil Police.

1. Will the Government be pleased to state :—
(a) the numerical strength of each rank, and
(b) the total cost in salary of the Armed Civil Police as it stood on the 1st July 1921 and 1922 respectively?

THE HON'BLE MR. A. MAJID replied :—

1. (a) and (b)—The actual strength of the Armed Civil Police on the 1st July 1921 was 3 Inspectors, 10 Sub-Inspectors, 93 Head Constables and 814 Constables. On the 1st July 1922, it was 4 Inspectors, 16 Sub-Inspectors, 92 Head Constables and 1,133 Constables. The approximate total cost of monthly salaries was Rs. 19,073 and Rs. 29,132, respectively.

MAULAVI ABDUL KHALIQUE CHAUDHURY asked :—

Collection
and
realisation
of
revenues.

1. Will the Government be pleased to state :—
(a) If there is any provision in the Assam Land Revenue Regulation to help the mauzadars or zemindars in collecting or realising their revenues or rents by employing Military Police?

THE HON'BLE MR. A. MAJID replied :—

1. (a)—Military Police are not mentioned in the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation.

MAULAVI ABDUL KHALIQUE CHAUDHURY asked :—

Superior
posts in
the Indian
Civil
Service.

2. Is it a fact that there are three superior posts in the Indian Civil Service which will be listed as open to the Assam Civil Service?

If so, when will these posts be filled up?

3. Is it a fact, too, that three Hindu Officers of Assam Valley have been recommended for the above-mentioned superior posts ?

If so, will the Government be pleased to take again into consideration in filling these posts up the claims of different communities of the two Valleys ?

MR. A. W. BOTHAM replied :—

2.—Two superior executive posts normally filled by the Indian Civil Service have been listed as open to the Assam Civil Service. In addition there is one listed judgeship in Assam to which members of the Bengal Civil Service (Judicial) are eligible. This service is a joint service for the provinces of Bengal and Assam. Of the two former posts, one has already been filled; as regards the second post the Hon'ble Member's attention is drawn to this Government's Resolution No. Apptt. 644-2552A.P., dated 8th May 1922.

3.—It is not a fact.

MAULAVI ABDUL KHALIQUE CHAUDHURY asked :—

4. In view of the fact that officers under Court of Wards are Government servants, will the Government please make some arrangements for the officers of a Court of Ward Estate when the estate is released ?

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID replied :—

4.—The officers employed on the work of estates under the Court of Wards are not all Government servants. Those who are Government servants transferred to foreign service retain a lien on their previous appointment and resume these when the estate is released. Those who are not are mere temporary employés.

MAULAVI ABDUL KHALIQUE CHAUDHURY asked :—

5. Will the Government be pleased to state if there is any truth in the allegation as published in the Provincial Newspapers regarding Political prisoners that there have been cases of violence committed by Jail officers in almost all of the jails in the province ?

If so, will the Government be pleased to cause an enquiry to be made into the matter and take immediate steps to put a stop to such conduct ?

THE HON'BLE MR. A. MAJID replied :—

5.—The Government have seen no such general allegations nor would they take action on them. They are always prepared to inquire into specific allegations of misconduct.

RAI BAHADUR BEPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR asked :—

Islamic
scheme of
Instruc-
tion.

1. (a) Has the attention of the Government been drawn to the unsatisfactory nature of progress with the Islamic scheme of Instruction in Primary and Middle Schools as stated by the Director of Public Instruction in the Provincial report on Education of the past several years ?

(b) If so, will the Government be pleased to state the period for which the scheme is likely to be continued ?

If this scheme has proved a failure, will the Government be pleased to consider the question of abolishing the post of Assistant Inspector of Schools for Muhammadan Education, which is being maintained primarily for the advancement of that scheme ?

Clerks of
Registra-
tion offices.

2. (a) Is it a fact that the registration clerk and muharrir have to do more work than the clerks of the Deputy Commissioner's office and other offices getting less pay in comparison with the clerks of the other departments ?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to state whether the services of the competent clerks of the Registration Department can be transferred to the Deputy Commissioner's office and other offices of the Government for their encouragement ?

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR PROMODE CHANDRA DUTTA replied .—

1. (a) and (b)—The answer is in the affirmative.

As regards the latter part of the question an explanation is required. The essence of the scheme referred to is that it allows the Muhammadan Community to arrange for the teaching in secular public schools of the rudiments of their religion. There is no reason at present manifest why any period should be set to the grant of this permission. Nor can the scheme be said to have proved a failure except in so far as it may have fallen short of expectations in popularizing the ordinary courses of instruction amongst the Muhammadan Community. In so far as it has been unsuccessful, in this respect its unsuccess pleads rather for the retention of the post of the Muhammadan Assistant Inspector than for its abolition. If the Honourable Member will refer to Section 12 of the Rules and Orders of the Education Department (provisional issue, 1922) he will find that the primary duty of the Assistant Inspector is not as he supposes the advancement of the scheme to which he refers but the encouragement of educational progress generally in the Muhammadan Community.

2. (a)—The standard of work required of clerks and muharrirs in Sub-Registry office is laid down in rule 9 (page 119) of the Registration Manual. It is not correct to say that the work is either heavier or more responsible than in district offices.

(b)—There is no bar to qualified clerks of the Registration Department being transferred to any other office.

RAJ BAHADUR BEPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR asked :—

3. Will the Government be pleased to state why the mauzadars of the Surma Valley are not allowed with the powers of mutation, etc., though the mauzadars of Assam Valley have been empowered with the same? Power of mauzadars.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID replied :—

3.—Land records work in Cachar is more complex than it is in the Assam Valley, and it has hitherto been thought undesirable to transfer it from the Sub-Deputy Collector to the *mauzadar*. The Hon'ble Member is doubtless aware that even in the Assam Valley *mauzadars* dispose of only uncontested mutation and partition cases.

RAJ KUMAR CHANDRA NARAYAN SING asked :—

1. (a) Will the Government be pleased to state if Revenue Sheristadars and Head clerks of district and subdivisions are, as a rule, subject to inter-district transfers? Transfer of Revenue Sheristadars and Head Clerks.

(b) If so, at what interval of time are they liable to such transfer?

(c) If the reply to the above is in the negative, will the Government be pleased to consider the advisability of transferring the above-named officers from district to district at the interval of every three years?

2. Will the Government be pleased to state what elephant mahals will be opened this year and whether experienced Assamese mahaldars will be granted advantage of catching elephants under the Forest Department? Has any of them been engaged this year? Elephant mahals.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID replied :—

1. (a) and (b)—There is no rule which requires the periodic transfer to other districts of Revenue Sheristadars and Head clerks in district offices.

1. (c)—The Government are not prepared to lay down any rule. The Commissioner of the Division is competent to transfer any ministerial officer subordinate to him should such a step be advisable in the interests of the public service.

2.—It is proposed to work the following mahals during 1922-23 :—

(i) Sadiya Frontier Tract—Mahals Nos. I(Khamti), II(Munan), III (Dirak) and IV(South Lohit).

(ii) Kamrup district—The Kulsi Mahal.

(iii) Balipara Frontier Tract—The Mahal lying between the Penchnoi and Bhorelli rivers.

(iv) Sibsagar district—The area south of the Kakodanga river and to the west of the Assam-Bengal Railway line.

(v) Nowgong district—Garuabokani, Myang and Doboka mauzas.

(vi) Lakhimpur district--The Upper Dehing Reserve (Western block) and the Dibrugarh Reserve.

Certain *mahals* will be worked departmentally, while others will be entrusted to selected *mahaldars* of whom at least some will be Assamese.

RAJ KUMAR CHANDRA NARAYAN SING asked :—

Revision of pay of Educational clerks. 3. Will Government be pleased to state when they are going to give effect to the scheme of revision of the pay of educational clerks for which a Budget provision of Rs. 8,000 was made in the last Council ?

4. Will the Government be pleased to state why such unusual delay has occurred in revising the pay of the clerks of this Department ?

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR PROMODE CHANDRA DUTTA replied :—

3.—The question of the revision of pay of clerks in the subordinate offices of the Education Department will be considered along with the case of clerks in other departments as soon as revised proposals are submitted to Government by the Head of the Department.

4.—The proposals of the Director of Public Instruction reached Government on the 2nd August last. These were returned to the Director of Public Instruction for submission in accordance with the account rules. This is a second revision of pay and delay in its disposal does not materially affect the clerks in the Education Department who, on the 1st April 1920, together with other clerks, received the benefit of a general 20 per cent. increase over their previous emoluments.

THE ASSAM MUNICIPAL BILL, 1922.

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA :—Sir, I beg to present the report of the Select Committee on the Assam Municipal Bill, 1922. I may mention, Sir, that it was my intention to have the Bill taken into consideration in this session, but our expectations about receiving replies from those whom we had asked for opinion were not fulfilled in time. There were many opinions still to come when the time allotted was over and we had therefore to extend the time for about two months more. That necessarily caused delay in the sittings of the Select Committee, and that is the reason of the delay which has occurred in having the report printed and circulated to the members before to-day. As, therefore, there is no time in this session, I do not wish to make any other motion in connection with the Bill during this session. The printed report of the Select Committee has been already laid on the table, and we shall have it printed in the *Gazette* as usual with the amendments proposed by the Select Committee. Then, I think, the members will have sufficient time to consider the amendments with the original Bill and I hope to be able to ask the Council to take the Bill into consideration at the next session which I hope will be in February next in connection with the presentation of the budget.

THE HON'BLE THE PRESIDENT :—Do you wish to move that the Bill be taken into consideration at the next session ?

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA :—Yes, Sir, but I think it is not necessary to put that question to the Council now. It is only the presentation of the Select Committee's report that I make now.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI :—Sir, we do not understand the position.

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA :—What is the point of the Hon'ble Member ?

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI :—I understand that the Bill will be postponed for introduction in the Council till the next session which is proposed to be held in February. Is it so ? We have had no time to read anything whatsoever. All I heard about it was that it was sent to the Select Committee and nothing was done there. We should like to know all about it.

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA :— Sir, there is no question of introducing the Bill again. It was introduced long ago. What I meant to say is that in this session the presentation of the report of the Select Committee is the final business with the Bill. The motion for taking it into consideration I hope to be able to make at the next session, and the Council I hope will be able to accept a motion then that the Bill be taken into consideration ; what I intend is that in the interval between this session and the next Hon'ble Members will have time enough to consider the original Bill with the report of the Select Committee and the amendments suggested by that Committee and that they will be fully prepared to take up the final consideration of the Bill at the February session.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI :— Sir, I understand that we shall have power to debate again on the Bill.

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA :— Certainly.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI :— That will satisfy us.

RAI BAHADUR KRISHNA CHANDRA CHAUDHURI :— Will the amendments be published ?

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA :— They will be published in the *Gazette*. The Select Committee has agreed that there is no need for further publication for eliciting public opinion, but we will publish the amended Bill in the *Gazette*. The Bill has not been so materially altered as to require publication to elicit public opinion again. The Select Committee has also recommended that there need not be such publication.

BABU KRISHNA SUNDAR DAM :— Sir, I wish to enter a word of protest against the remark of my friend Mr. Chaudhuri that nothing was done by the Select Committee. He levelled his uncalled for attack against the members of the Select Committee and said that nothing was done by them. At the same time his own admission was that he had not read the original or the amended Bill. I leave the Council in this state of things to judge the propriety of his remark about the conduct and capacity of the members of the Select Committee.

As to the procedure which has been suggested by the Hon'ble the Minister about taking the Bill into consideration in the next session, I think it will be better before that is done to publish the Bill again for eliciting public opinion.

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA :— I am sorry I did not follow the member. Will the Hon'ble Member repeat any remarks which I am supposed to answer ?

BABU KRISHNA SUNDAR DAM :— That is about eliciting public opinion. I am not very particular in insisting that it should be published for eliciting public opinion. I only make a suggestion. I suggest for the consideration of the Minister that the amended Bill be published and public opinion again invited on it, because on many material points there has been several alteration of the draft Bill. However, I do not wish to force a decision on the Hon'ble Minister. This is simply a suggestion. I leave it to the Hon'ble Minister to decide whether it should be published and public criticism invited on it. Beyond this I have nothing to say. In making the suggestion I cannot forget that there are members like Mr. Chaudhuri who will accuse the members of the Select Committee of not doing anything without themselves caring to know or say anything about the original or amended Bill.

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA :— Sir, I have already told the Council that I intend to ask the Council to take the Bill into consideration in the February session. At the present moment there is nothing in the rules which entitles the Hon'ble Member who has just now spoken to make any suggestion or motion either for republishing it for eliciting public opinion or to any other effect. If the Hon'ble Member refers to the standing orders of the Council, he will find that when I make the motion for the Bill to be taken into consideration it will be in the option of any member to move that the Bill be either recirculated for public opinion or

referred again to a Select Committee, and it will be for the Council then to decide whether the motion shall be accepted or not. So far as the Select Committee is concerned, they have recommended that there should be no republication, but it is in the absolute discretion of the Council to upset that decision and order that the Bill be republished for eliciting public opinion again.

The time for that motion will be when I move that the Bill be taken into consideration, and then there will be ample opportunity for the Council to consider whether such a step is necessary. The time allowed, therefore, is intended to make the members sure of the position and to judge whether republication is at all necessary. So far as I can see—at least in my personal opinion—there has not been any material alteration in principle or the main text of the Bill so as to warrant its republication again for eliciting public opinion. Ample publication was made and a large body of opinions received. They have been put on the table as appendices to the Report of the Select Committee. With regard to the few amendments made I hope Hon'ble Members will be in a position to know the opinion of the public during these months to make their deliberations in Council sufficient for the purpose of considering the Bill.

THE ASSAM PRIMARY EDUCATION BILL, 1922.

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR PROMODE CHANDRA DUTTA :—Sir, I move for leave to introduce the Assam Primary Education Bill, 1922. This Bill was prepared by my predecessor in office to give effect to the resolution of this Council passed during the first session of the Council, I believe.

THE HON'BLE THE PRESIDENT :—The question is that leave be given to introduce the Assam Primary Education Bill, 1922.

The motion was put and adopted.

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR PROMODE CHANDRA DUTTA :—Then, Sir, I introduce the Bill.

The Secretary to the Council then read out the title of the Bill.

RESOLUTIONS.

LEGISLATION FOR DESTRUCTION OF WATER HYACINTH.

KHAN SAHIB ALAUDDIN AHMAD CHAUDHURY :—Sir, the resolution that stands in my name runs thus :—

“ This Council recommends to the Government of Assam that legislation be undertaken for the destruction of water hyacinth in the Province. ”

Sir : the water-hyacinth which was quite unknown to our land first made its appearance at the time of the last European War. In the course of a few years, the luxuriant growth of this irresistible plant has already created havoc in the district of Sylhet and also in some other parts of the Province. The banks of rivers are full of this pest. *Haors* are fuller and in paddy lands and fields for grass nothing but water hyacinth in a particularly

beautiful crop can be found presenting a horrible aspect to the cultivators. Inroads of this pest, if not checked, will, I am sure, deprive the people of all their paddy lands and lands for growing grass, bringing distress and hardship to man as well as animals. I am aware that Government have been doing their very best by way of taking such steps as are practicable to destroy and prevent the spread of this plant, but the Government now seems to think that the measures for its extermination can best be taken with the concerted action of the village authorities and the panchayats and that it will take some years to put things in order. Money at present spent cannot be said to be spent wrongly, but the result of the expenditure is yet to be seen. Some sort of legislation therefore seems necessary to formulate the duties of the villagers. The village authorities and the panchayats with respect to the eradication and destruction from and the prevention of the spread of water-hyacinth, in the paddy fields and also in fields supplying fodder for animals. As to what sort of legislation will be necessary I cannot now give any indication, but I leave the matter to the consideration of the Government to decide what will best suit the needs and requirements in connection with this pest.

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA :—Sir, I have not clearly understood from the mover's speech whether he wants legislation to regulate the action of the village authorities and panchayats to whom some money has been made over this year as an experimental measure to help them in trying to deal with the pest, or he wants some law by which the people should be compelled to eradicate and destroy all the water-hyacinth that may be in or about their lands. The question of effectively dealing with this weed has engaged the serious attention of Government from a long time, and if legislation were capable of settling the matter there would not have been a more delightful task for the Government to undertake than the introduction of such legislation. The Hon'ble Member has himself testified that the propagating power of the plant is almost fabulous, and in the records that we have, it is said that the plant can propagate itself 1,000 to 1,200 times annually under favourable conditions, so that, if we destroy even 999 plants out of 1,000 all the labour is lost. The question is of complete eradication. If the plant were confined to a particular locality, and there was no likelihood of its coming in again, even then we might perhaps contemplate some sort of legislation to compel the people to destroy it at all cost. But, as the Hon'ble Member is aware, in a place, for instance, like Sylhet, where there are numerous water-ways and channels which cannot, by any artificial means be controlled, and which always bring in fresh supplies of water-hyacinth from other parts of the country into it, the growth or spread of the plant hardly depends on the will of the people. How could he possibly in such cases make the people alone responsible for its existence or expect to compel or enable them by mere legislation to effect its complete destruction? Government are of opinion that any legislation for the eradication of the water-hyacinth is impracticable in the places in which it has already spread widely and places connected with water-ways which bring the plant every year in enormous quantities from other parts of the country. Government are at present considering some legislation to prevent its spread to such parts of the Province in which it does not exist now, and I hope I shall be able to present that Bill to the Council before long. Further than that Government do not think they can do anything in the way of legislation. The Government themselves have not so far been able to cope with the magnitude of the problem, and I think it will be a ridiculous performance on the part

of the Government to ask the people and the poor cultivators to undertake a task in which Government with all its resources have not been able so far to be successful.

In fact legislation has been already tried in some places and found to be futile. In Burma an Act was passed with the object of destroying water-hyacinth, but it proved a dead letter. In Bengal some district Boards passed some bye-laws under the Local Self-Government Act with the same object. We have no definite information as to the results but from what we see in the papers about the state of affairs there, it seems clear that they did not prove a success either. The efforts that Bengal is still making in investigating means for destroying the plant and so far without any success clearly shew that no cure was found in those bye-laws. In our case also I do not think we can expect any better results by introducing legislation with a view to compelling the people to destroy all water-hyacinth on their land under penalty. If, however, the Hon'ble Member only suggests that if we continue to grant money to the Local Bodies as we have done this year—and as I have already indicated this year's allotment is only by way of an experiment and we shall decide later (after we find out what benefits it has really conferred on the people) whether it should be continued Government should undertake legislation for regulating the method of work by the Village Authorities, Local Boards, Panchayats, etc., the suggestion will be carefully considered and any possible action taken.

MR. A. J. G. CRESSWELL:—Sir, I strongly desire to support the motion before the House. Usually when speaking in this Council I have some knowledge and acquaintance, often combined with personal experience with the subject, so that although there may be difference of opinion I do not look to be materially contradicted. This however is a subject with which I have no actual experience, beyond a certain amount of time I have now and then been able to devote I therefore clearly admit that with regard to remarks I may now make I am open to correction. Some 5 or 6 years ago I was at Chandpur where the water-hyacinth as everybody knows is very abundant. I was interested at that time in finding, if possible, a means of converting it into a form of potash which might commercially be used not only for tea but for other crops in this Province. I regret to say the potash that was obtained was found to cost rather more than potash procured elsewhere while it also had some slight peculiarity in that it was not quite so easily assimilated by (I say the tea plant because that was the plant I was most interested in) as with potash obtained outside. This however is a case where our Scientific Department could doubtless find a solution. At the time of making some enquiries in the south of Sylhet and Bengal—it was pointed out to me by people who knew the weed or demon, as I call it, that it was not likely even to do much harm in the upper reaches of the Surma Valley as it always went down stream, collecting in backwaters. I regret to say I have formed the opinion that this demon is in its habits somewhat like certain fish that invariably travel up stream in order to spawn. The water-hyacinth is not really fond of very deep water and, in order to propagate, creeps up stream endeavouring to get on a higher level. My friends in the Assam Valley perhaps due to the constituents of the water coming down the Brahmaputra, and the composition of the silt deposited, have not so far suffered to the same extent as we in the Surma Valley are daily beginning to do (in fact we have already suffered to a great extent). The

free growing nature of this weed is such that in other countries it has shown itself easily able to adapt itself to other conditions, since I have no hesitation in saying that if steps are not taken to check its advance, we may eventually find this demon following in a much greater measure the *aquatum* which 35 years ago was hardly known in this Province but to-day is ruination to every body who owns a Sunkhola or grass patch in the Surma Valley. This weed or demon is often for the first time noticed in a backwater or borrow pit where it rapidly increases and increases. On asking the people if it does any harm one is casually told—Oh yes, all that land was our grazing ground some few years ago. Has it done much damage to rice lands—no, not much—yes in certain places. One goes to the same place after a few years, when instead of *dhan* land there are acres and acres covered with this demon. The mover suggests legislation, and when we talk of legislation it necessarily involves penalties, but penalties need be heavy only for serious offences, as when one man robs another. In this matter we are not asking for severe penalties, but for some measure to bring about the fulfilment of an object. We must not be content to annually provide a little money in order to pay to destroy the weed but we must adopt methods that are used in other countries to prevent the spreading of various forms of pests. We must have something in the way of a law. In this case we should not require severe penalties or punishment for those who refuse to assist in preventing the spreading of this demon, but only some form of compulsory co-operation, and this I believe may be brought about at least in districts where this demon is beginning to do so much damage. As the Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture has said we cannot at present spend lakhs and lakhs. There is no question of spending lakhs—but I consider a great deal more can be done to prevent the whole of our lands eventually being lost which in the areas at present largely affected is likely—and this can only be achieved by formulating a suitable plan of action. I might suggest that Government start to put the destruction of this pest to some use by obtaining from it potash, which although it will not sell for the same price as potash from outside—will if properly managed probably find a market close to where it is produced when the saving of freight, and quick delivery may assist the sale. With these words I strongly support the resolution.

KHAN SAHEB ALAUDDIN AHMAD CHAUDHURY :—Sir, I have already said I did not know what shape this legislation will take and I left the matter to the decision of the Government to see what provisions would possibly be the sufficient safeguard. I know what the local bodies are doing at present and the Government will gradually know our difficulties arising from the want of sympathy of the village people and the sarpanches. I, as Chairman of the South Sylhet Local Board, can inform this Council that with the money which was given by the Government some bamboo fencings were constructed in suitable places at the selection of the villagers themselves, but who is to look after the up-keep of these fencings? They are left to the mercy of the villagers, and I have already got information that some of the bamboos have already been taken away. So if we spend money and if we leave it to the mercy of those who have no sense of responsibility, then what would be the result? So my suggestion was that some sort of legislation in order to formulate the duties of the villagers and sarpanches and the Village Authorities is necessary. Of course what Mr. Cresswell has said some penalty is required so that we may have a compulsory co-operation, and this the village

people must understand that it is their duty to do so. Of course I agree with the Hon'ble Minister that to penalise the people for non-compliance of the orders may go hard with them, but at present the situation is very deplorable; they do not know even that this pest will harm their country and bring it to rack and ruin.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I confess, Sir, to finding it difficult to understand on what issue exactly the Council is going to be asked to vote. I have read the resolution carefully and listened to the speeches and still I am by no means clear. The recommendation is that legislation be undertaken for the destruction of the water-hyacinth. Well, Sir, I have read of various expedients which have been tried, of poison gas, of taking out cattle to eat the weed, of using live steam, but I fail entirely to see how legislation can effect this destruction. I am speaking in no frivolous spirit. I have seen personally a great deal of the ravages of this pest and been startled by them, but frankly I have not heard of any feasible means of dealing with the pest. I think the Hon'ble Minister told the Council that researches have been undertaken in Bengal of which we do not yet know the result. I read recently in the papers, and no doubt other members of the Council have read it too, an account of a speech or interview, I forget which, by a very distinguished Bengali scientist. His opinion was that at present we do not know really enough about it. We do not know the best way of eradicating it. I put it to the Council—when we know so little about the pest is this the time for undertaking legislation? The Hon'ble Mover has given us no indication of the kind of legislation he wants or what he wants to prescribe or what he wants to penalise. The Hon'ble Member who supported him said :—“Have legislation but do not have penalties or at least do not have severe penalties.” I confess, Sir

MR. A. J. G. CRESSWELL :—I did not say, do not have penalties. I said penalties are not required to be very severe for the infringement of the law. That was what I meant to say. There may have to be penalties if legislation is undertaken because people may refuse to carry out the orders, but those penalties should be in a very mild form.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I apologise to the Hon'ble Member, Sir, if I have misunderstood him. I thought he said :—“Do not have penalties, or at least do not have severe penalties.” I think that is very much what he has said now. In any case, Sir, as a Member of this Council I say frankly that I do not know what the precise issue is on which our votes are asked. It is a matter of extreme difficulty to vote in this uncertainty.

MAULAVI RASHID ALI LASKAR :—I beg to say a few words in support of this resolution. First of all from the reply of the Hon'ble Member in charge I am much depressed to understand the real nature of the situation we have already arrived at. From the tone of the reply of the Hon'ble Member in charge it appears to me that the district of Sylhet is doomed. There is no remedy so to say, and only the other parts which have not as yet been affected could be saved from the spread of this evil, but as for Sylhet it is doomed; we may lay out some money and see if Local Boards or Village authorities can do something for this. I say Sylhet and especially Sunamganj and South Sylhet subdivisions are not as yet doomed and the demon has not spread so much as in Burma or as in Lower Bengal, and I think the position is not hopeless. Then as for the

wordings of the resolution I see that it is objected that it is not clearly understood. I ask are the Government simply to act according to the terms of the resolution? The suggestion is that Government should frame some such laws, of course in consultation with the entire country, in consultation with all the members and if required in consultation with experts also as to how to meet this scourge and as to how to frame some such laws as may cope with or destroy this demon. That is only a suggestion. And if the help of the Village authorities and Local Boards are not encouraging surely the resolution means some such legislation to compel them, if compulsion is required. Compulsion in itself is not so much repressive and undesirable, because if all excepting one or two of the villagers co-operate with one another in clearing their lands and these one or two lands are covered with water-hyacinth the co-operation of all the others would be simply useless. So some such legislation is required to formulate the action not necessarily to penalise, but to formulate the actions as to how this evil is to be eradicated. If Government, as is suggested, fails in their duty, how can the individuals, the poor people, cope with this demon where Government itself is failing? I say where each man, each individual clears only a small bit of his own ground, which is to his own interest—and he may with a little encouragement and at the same time with some compulsion where necessary easily clear it—will be an easy thing. But if Government is required to do this whole work necessarily lacs and lacs of rupees will be required.

As for the experiment in Bengal I am afraid when the experiment will come out successful, I think the entire province of Assam will become entirely occupied by this demon. It will be too late then perhaps. Then, again, Sir, as for this demon, to me it appears, if everybody is required to clear his own field he might easily do this. Then there are the remaining portions which are nobody's land, so to say, or waste land. It is only for this that Government will be required to spend some money. In this way the entire country may be easily cleared in a year's time. It is not altogether impossible. Then again, another question is that the problem is a local one, and why for one subdivision the public exchequer of the entire province should suffer. I say the question is not a local one. Is it wise for one to say when he sees one house in the extremity of the line on fire, why he should co-operate with the man whose house is on fire. It is foolish on his part to say so and sit idle because the fire will spread and demolish and destroy the entire line. In a few years time the water-hyacinth has spread so far that it has gone up to Cachar district. Though we sitting on the heights of Shillong may feel secure and though the Assam Valley is not as yet affected by this demon I think it may not take much time when the entire province will be fully occupied by this demon.

Now, as for legislation it appears that the Government is not so much sanguine about eradicating this evil, or thinks perhaps that it would require a very large sum of money. It appears to me in this light, I may be incorrect. But I think when the entire province will be affected by this demon it would be incumbent on the Government to do something. Government will be obliged to cope with this demon and pass some legislation. There will come a time like that, and perhaps at that time Government will have to go for borrowing for combating this demon, and it can be easily coped with now

even with a small portion of our income. So I beg to support the resolution and beg to draw the serious attention of the House to the necessity of some legislation, a legislation after consulting the entire country, the Council, or afterwards even after consultation with experts, the Government may think necessary to pass for combating this demon.

BABU KRISHNA SUNDAR DAM :—Sir, as one coming from the area in which water-hyacinth is at the present moment doing so much damage I think it my duty to support the resolution which has been brought forward by the Hon'ble Khan Sahib. Those who have heard the Hon'ble Mr. Cresswell in all that he said about the danger and damage to pasture lands, fisheries and navigation will at once see the immediate necessity for doing something to stop the further progress of this pest. I am afraid that my friends of the Assam Valley will not fully realise the real nature and extent of the danger with which we are now faced. But I can assure them as the Hon'ble Mr. Cresswell has assured them that if they neglect this pest of our Valley any more, in no time will they find themselves in its grip, in the same difficulties with which we are now struggling. The necessity for the legislation has arisen I believe from the fact that we cannot any longer leave things to the spasmodic efforts sustained by occasional budget grants by Government. Something deliberately, systematically and continuously must be done. I think that is what is meant to be attained by this legislation. As to the kind of legislation of course there may be no question that here anything cannot be done for certain to provide for the destruction of the water-hyacinth by scientific methods. That is out of the question. The only alternative with which we are left is that this must be done with simple rural devices. Destruction must be attempted by manual labour in the ordinary simple villagers' ways just as the people of the place to which the Hon'ble Mover of the resolution belongs are doing at this moment. So we need not talk or think much about the scientific methods and researches which are now going on in Bengal and elsewhere. If we are left to wait for the complete results of those researches, I do not know when we shall discover and apply the remedies and destroy the pest. Perhaps by that time our condition will be hopeless as Maulavi Rashid Ali Laskar said. So much as to the immediate necessity for undertaking legislation to destroy this pest. As to the details of the legislation we need not be deterred by considerations of compulsion, penalties and fines. Here we are to have a legislation just as we have relief legislations for epidemics and famines. With these words, Sir, I support this motion.

SARDAR BAHADUR ANJAB ALI KHAN (spoke in Urdu to the following effect) :—I am making a statement in this Council of what I have heard and seen about "German-fena." As the Government are aware there are many "*bhils*" (swamps) in Hakaluki Haor and much income is derived from it. In that direction I have twice again seen that "noh-fena" has spread. Owing to the gradual spread of "noh-fena" fish will begin to disappear as it cannot live in it. This will consequently reduce the income and Government should consider what steps would be necessary to remove the "noh-fena." Big boats have stopped plying into them and this means a loss in the boat trade. Then again during inundations the "noh-fena" will spread into fields and cause great damage. Zamindars and cultivators are therefore advised to do their best to remove this "fena" and also help Government towards that end.

RAI BAHADUR BEPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR :—Sir, I saw the water-hyacinth at Silchar in one or two places. This is a very injurious plant. Within two or three years it will spread in the whole district, if not destroyed. I saw this injurious plant first in the Habiganj subdivision. Everybody says that it is injurious to the paddy fields. Hence early steps should be taken to destroy it. If the paddy fields are damaged it will be difficult for the rayat to pay Government revenue. Therefore early steps are absolutely necessary. If there cannot be a legislation at present for the subject an enquiry should be made as to what can be done for the destruction of this plant.

SRIJUT NILMONI PHUKAN :—Sir, we from the Assam Valley are as much concerned with this problem as my friends from the other valley. I have no personal knowledge of this pest, but so far as I can gather from the reports and from the questions which have been raised from time to time in this Council and other Councils also, and from the legislations which have already been enacted in different provinces, I think this is a problem really requiring the serious attention of both the Government and the people concerned. I hear that the pest has already made its appearance in some quarters of this valley too, and if I am correctly informed, recently there was a report at Dibrugarh that this pest has been imported there in connection with the trade in tortoises, which is a regular trade from Sylhet to this valley. I hear the people generally use this plant in packing these tortoises. I do not know how far that is true. Even if we are immune at the present moment we should not think that this pest has no real danger for us. We are as much afraid of these pests as our friends of the other valley. I am sure the Government is also trying its best to destroy this pest from the other valley as far as possible. We know that Government is spending every year a certain amount in checking this pest to a great extent. But what I find from the resolution is that the mover is perhaps thinking of some sort of preventive measures to be taken by the Government and also some sort of ready co-operation to be given by the people themselves in preventing this pest spreading further. If this resolution means that the pest is only awaiting a legislative stroke and that the danger will be ended by such a stroke,—if that be the case, I am also hopeless about that, because we have found from experience that such legislative measures have already failed in different provinces more or less and now those Governments are thinking of some sort of scientific treatment. It requires a cure no doubt, but it is past ordinary cure. There must no longer be treatment by mere enactments. It must be scientifically handled and a scientific remedy must be found out. The House will perhaps remember the other day the great scientist Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose has explained the matter very clearly and has announced that he is thinking of finding out a scientific cure for this pest. I think if our provincial Government joins in this scientific enquiry there will be some benefit done to the province. At the present moment what the Government or the people can do is, to my mind, to check this pest as far as possible. I think the Hon'ble Minister has already indicated the line in that way. If I understood him correctly he proposed to introduce some Bill in the near future that will not let this pest go any further. If that is the intention of the Government and also of the mover we are at one, and I think either the Government may accept the resolution in that light or the mover may withdraw the resolution on that assurance.

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—Sir, I do not see that there is very much difference of opinion regarding this question. That the water-hyacinth is a pest the Government as well as the people acknowledge, but the question is how to destroy it. The Government are as willing and anxious to destroy it as the people. I see that the only way to solve the problem to some extent for the present is to introduce some sort of legislation, as the Hon'ble Minister has already said that he will do for the Assam Valley, in order to stir up the people to co-operate in certain localities to destroy this pest. There are some localities in the Sylhet district in which this pest is not in existence and there are other localities in which it is abundant, and when the legislation regarding the Assam Valley will be introduced something may be done regarding the places in the Surma Valley where this pest is not in existence to prevent its introduction. And as far as the destruction of this pest in places where it exists goes I think the Government may do something in order to encourage the people, or to make the people work to destroy it because there are many people who will not do anything to destroy it. Though they may see that their paddy fields are destroyed by the pest, yet they will remain idle in their homes. If there is some legislation to the effect that this pest must be destroyed as far as possible by the co-operation of the people, the people will be set to work, and in that way there will be a great deal of benefit done to the country. If we wait until some scientific remedy be found to destroy it, then that time may be very far off, and it may not be in our own age. Something must be done now in order to save the country from the greater damage to be wrought by this pest. I think the Government can do something by legislation to urge co-operation for the destruction of this pest. The legislation need not be very elaborate. I suppose some clauses may be put in the legislation that will be introduced for the Assam Valley that will also suit the Surma Valley in this respect.

MR. W. E. H. GRAYBURN :—Sir, Mr. Phukan just now rather startled me by saying that this weed is being removed from one valley to another in the form of packing materials. This matter was brought forward in Calcutta I think, last year. There was then a suggestion that the sellers of the flowers of this pest should be prosecuted. Cannot the Government do something to prevent this pest or weed being removed from one district to another? If it propagates as rapidly as the Hon'ble Minister said, we should soon be in trouble in the Assam Valley if people removed it from one place to another.

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA :—Well, Sir, I presume there is nobody else to speak, and I wish to say a few words in final reply. I must confess that the debate that has followed the preliminary reply that I gave does not seem to have made matters advance very much. Mr. Cresswell has suggested that what is being done in other countries may be done in ours also. That is what I understood him to say. Now this pest has really made its appearance in selected areas in all parts of the world. From the United States of America to the islands of the Indian Ocean there are countries which are severely complaining of the mischief done by this weed, but so far nowhere has any remedy been found except haphazard remedies entailing cost of immense money and without appreciable results. If we were possessed of such funds Government would delightfully allot any amount for such expenditure, but as Hon'ble Members are aware we are so short of funds that even the amount that has been allotted this year was

questioned in the Council. Hon'ble Members are also aware that many of our important projects have been held up for want of funds. Still the problem of water-hyacinth has so influenced Government that it could not consent to remain idle without spending some money after it. As I have said if the experiment made this year is found to be hopeful or successful more efforts will be made by Government in that direction. But the expenditure of money is a question of the provincial resources, and to the extent that the Council is prepared to vote for the purpose and the exchequer of the province allows, Government will be only too glad to spare the money that is wanted for undertaking a campaign against water-hyacinth on any lines so far known. But as I pointed out in the previous sessions of the Council, the question of eradicating the plant by mechanical means will involve such a large amount of money that our poor Province cannot expect to invest here in scores of years. The only other way is to interest the people in the affair, and in order to make the people take that interest, Government made a small effort this year by allotting a sum of money to the Local Boards to influence the villagers in the matter. I have learned in the course of the debate that the villagers are not willingly co-operating or if some are co-operating others are not. The fences or stockades that have been made are being stolen in pieces. Well, these are contingencies which we have always to meet in our efforts in all directions for local improvement. The fences of the Local Board tanks are always a prey to the villagers. Soon as they are fixed up you cannot leave them for a month or two without the risks of being pilfered. The buckets in the wells and tanks undergo a similar fate. If we could prevent this by legislation, of course legislation will be very welcome, but is legislation alone, I ask, sufficient to cure all this? The enforcement of such legislation will require a large staff—in fact perhaps a larger staff than our Police budget can now contemplate—to see that every tank and fence is kept safe. So, these are imaginary methods which do not come to any practical use. Mr. Cresswell, I think, suggested that we should have some legislation for compulsory co-operation among villagers: in other words that we should enact compulsory labour for this purpose. Whether such legislation will meet with the wishes of the country I cannot possibly say at this moment but if Hon'ble Members are anxious to have such a law, and if such legislation is at all possible, Government will only be too grateful to see any private member introducing a bill on lines that he thinks will be feasible. To the Government so far no sort of legislative measure has suggested itself whereby we could successfully tackle the problem of eradicating the weed. There is another suggestion, namely, that if we wait for the result of scientific researches the whole country will be undone and we should not wait for it. But if researches have not produced results in other countries, and so far their efforts are only confined to spending as much money as they can,—I do not think we could do any better. Even if scientific researches have failed to discover a remedy, I do not know how Hon'ble Members can expect this Government to find means which researches all the world over have failed to find, by introducing legislation, to cure an evil which has baffled all the efforts of great scientists as also the efforts of many richer countries than this country of ours. Mr. Nichols-Roy, if I understood him aright, suggested that some legislation is contemplated for the Assam Valley. I fail to understand where he got this information or what he meant. I pointed out in my previous speech that Government is contemplating some legislation—in fact the drafting of the Bill is already in

hand, to prevent people from exporting or importing the plant to places where it does not at present exist. I think some provision might be made also to compel people to destroy it in localities where it has made its first appearance or which are not exposed to uncontrollable water channels like the lower part of the Surma Valley. That legislation will not be for this valley or that valley, but for the whole province. But the proposed legislation does not wish to go the length of asking the people to do something which natural causes beyond control make it impossible for them to do. It is impossible to ask people by legislation to control the growth or spread of the weed in places where fresh supplies from other parts of the world are brought in by rivers. In such cases all efforts will necessarily have to be made on the lines which have been so far adopted in other countries also, *viz.*, by spending what money we can to remove or destroy it as far as we can by physical force. I wish to point out, as was also pointed out by my Hon'ble Colleague the Finance Member to whom I am grateful for taking part in this debate—that the resolution in its present form suggests nothing which the Council can accept. It suggests that legislation be undertaken and that for destruction of the water-hyacinth. I have already said that any legislation for destruction has not at all struck Government as yet and Government are at a loss to find any means of legislating to that effect. The legislation that we are going to undertake I think is all that can be done at the present moment. If there is any means of such a legislation as is proposed it is open to any of the Hon'ble Members to come forward with his own proposals and Government will be only grateful if anybody suggests the lines such legislation should take. The resolution in its present form, I submit, therefore, cannot be accepted, but Government will be always prepared and glad to receive any useful suggestions either for legislation or for destruction of the plant in any other way within the means at our disposal.

Sir, in conclusion I wish to say that Government cannot accept the resolution as it stands.

The resolution was put and a division was taken with the following results :—

Ayes.

1. Maulavi Abdul Khalique Chaudhuri.
2. Maulavi Abdul Rahim Chaudhuri.
3. Khan Sahib Alauddin Ahmad Chaudhuri.
4. Sardar Bahadur Anjab Ali Khan.
5. Babu Har Kishore Chakrabarti.
6. Mr. R. N. Chaudhuri.
7. Mr. A. J. G. Cresswell.
8. Babu Krishna Sundar Dam.
9. Rai Bahadur Bepin Chandra Deb Laskar.
10. Babu Biraj Mohan Dutta.
11. Mr. E. W. Hobson.
12. Mr. A. Moffat.
13. Maulavi Munawwarali.

Noes.

1. The Hon'ble Mr. W. J. Reid.
2. The Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Ghanasyam Barua.
3. The Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Promode Chandra Dutta.
4. Mr. A. W. Botham.
5. Mr. A. J. Lainé.
6. Mr. J. R. Cunningham.
7. Khan Sahib Abdul Latif.
8. Rai Sahib Padmanath Gohain Barua.
9. Srijut Siva Prosad Barua.
10. Babu Hiralal Bose.
11. Srijut Bishnu Charan Borah.
12. Rai Bahadur Manomohan Lahiri.

Ayes—*concl'd.*

14. Haji Muhammad Abdul Ahad Chaudhuri.
15. Khan Bahadur Muhammad Bakht Mazumdar.
16. Maulavi Saiyid Nurur Rahman.
17. Maulavi Rashid Ali Laskar.
18. Rai Bahadur Nalini Kanta Rai Dastidar.
19. Rev. J. J. M. Nichols-Roy.
20. Mr. W. E. H. Grayburn.
21. Babu Ramani Mohan Das.

Noes—*concl'd.*

13. Srijut Lohit Chandra Nayak.
14. Srijut Nilmoni Phukan.
15. Mr. E. S. Roffey.
16. Dr. H. G. Roberts.
17. Raj Kumar Chandra Narayan Singh.

The Ayes being 21 and the Noes 17 the resolution was carried.

SUBORDINATE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE.

RAI BAHADUR NALINI KANTA RAI DASTIDAR :—Sir, the resolution which stands in my name is :—

That this Council recommends to the Government of Assam that the Subordinate Educational Service be re-organised as follows :—

Class I—Rs. 75—5—100—10—150—10—200 with efficiency bar at Rs. 150 and that effect be given to the above portion of the scheme by at once raising the pay of those who have put in—

5 years' service to	...	...	Rs. 100
6 " "	...	...	" 110
7 " "	...	...	" 120
8 " "	...	...	" 130
9 " "	...	...	" 140
10 " "	...	...	" 150

Class II—

- (a) *Rs. 150—10—240*
- (b) *„ 240—10—300*
- (c) *„ 300—20—400*
- (d) *„ 400—20—500*

The resolution that stands against my name refers to a subject which was taken up by this House at about this time last year. The majority of my Hon'ble colleagues were so much impressed with the illiberal treatment accorded to the officers of the Subordinate Educational Service measured in terms of their present remuneration and prospects, their responsibility and hard work as makers of men, their unique contribution to the national uplift, and their struggle for existence against a severe economic strain, that the strong feel-

ings of some of the members found expression in a number of resolutions and amendments which unhappily created divisions in the camp ranging the adherents around this or that motion, and to the universal surprise and regret, worked out the defeat of all. However deplorable the result the debate leading to it pointed unmistakably to a singular unanimity of the House in two side-issues, namely, (1) the pay and prospects of this Service are extremely poor and (2) its early re-organization is called for in the interest of education. This attitude of the House coupled with my strong conviction about the justice of the cause has urged me to reintroduce the subject in the current session without any apology. The facts and arguments adduced in the course of the last year's debate on the like motions are applicable with equal force to the one under discussion and I can do no better than allude very briefly to some of them so that my Hon'ble colleagues may find materials wherewith to refresh their memory. Upon the secondary school teachers mainly falls the most delicate and responsible task of building up true and loyal citizens. It is idle to expect whole-hearted work from men whose attention is occupied with bread problems. Teachers are human beings and cannot rest satisfied with their hard lot when men of similar or even inferior qualifications fare better in other departments of Government. The training of teachers, increase of inspection, liberal expenditure on buildings and apparatus are equally useless unless service can assure zeal in the existing incumbents and attract men of the right stamp for future enrolment. Fully alive to the necessity of offering better prospects to the teaching profession the Government of India so far back as in 1913 laid down the general policy to constitute a graded service for the teachers of English from Rs. 75—400. The Director of Public Instruction of our province framed his first scheme very nearly in the same line but had to modify it from time to time on the most amusing plea of lack of funds and ultimately arrived at one with a limited time-scale less attractive than the old graded service replaced by it. I for one fail to see any force in the financial plea when it did not prove a bar to the re-organization of other services with a liberal increase of emoluments to 100 or sometimes to 150 per cent. The starting pay of a Sub-Deputy Collector of equal qualifications rose from Rs. 50 to Rs. 150 ; that of a Sub-Inspector of Police, generally a matriculate, from Rs. 30 to Rs. 80, and of a Sub-Assistant Surgeon, generally with the initial qualification of a Middle English leaving certificate from Rs. 25 to Rs. 75. I need hardly mention the increase given to the Public Works Department the unique proportion of which lately attracted the notice of this House. I must not be understood to question the wisdom of the policy which guided the re-organization of the services. Even a more liberal award would not have been out of proportion at a time when the cost of living ran so abnormally high, but justice demands that the teaching profession which is engaged in construction of the frameworks of the materials for other services should be treated in the same generous spirit. The utterly inadequate character of the relief offered to the teachers under the so-called re-organization of 1921 was also recognised by the present head of the Education Department as will appear from the following extract from a letter addressed by him to the Government "In submitting these proposals" said the Hon'ble Mr. Cunningham, "I wish to make it clear that the re-organisation is already out of date and revision will be necessary as soon as Government can find funds for the purpose. When financial hopes ran high some 8 or 9 years ago, I advised in the general programme of educational advance outlined in my printed note of 19th October 1912 that

the ordinary ranks of the service should be paid from Rs. 75 to Rs. 250, and the commissioned ranks from Rs. 150 to Rs. 400. By the close of the following year hopes being somewhat dashed I moderated these recommendations in paragraphs 11 and 22 of my letter No. 491, dated the 7th December 1913, but still retained the limit of Rs. 75 and Rs. 400. In my letter No. 160, dated the 31st May 1916 (paragraph 18), written during the war, I had to come down to the present limits of Rs. 50 and Rs. 350. Since that date on which the proposals now sanctioned were put into shape circumstances have changed. The cost of living has very greatly increased. The pay of every service has been or is about to be improved. The rates which seemed meagre in 1916 (*vide* paragraph 12 of my letter No. 160 before referred to) now seem quite inappropriate. And it will be necessary to consider at a very early date the propriety of raising the initial pay to at least Rs. 75 and developing the limits to correspond. We cannot expect graduates in the Education Department to be content with Rs. 50 a month when they see men of similar qualifications starting on Rs. 150 in the Subordinate Executive Service and undergraduates starting on say Rs. 80 in the police. A stronger and more influential testimony to the pressing need of effecting an early improvement of this service cannot even be conceived.

I do not like to enter into a comparison of the emoluments offered to our teachers with those obtaining in other provinces in India for the obvious reason that the conditions calling for action and financial capacity to give effect to a scheme are not identical everywhere. But I cannot resist the temptation of making a passing reference to the Bengal scheme brought into effect from September 1912, as Bengal is our next-door neighbour and we have rightly and faithfully copied that province in determining the pay and prospects of other services. Pending the re-organisation of the Subordinate Educational Service, Bengal arranged for a wholesale promotion in 1919-20 so that every officer secured a lift to the next higher grade in the cadre. In introducing re-organisation since September 1921 an increase of 33½ per cent. to the then existing pay was added thus bringing the total increase to more than 75 per cent. (rising in several cases to about 90 per cent.) in the case of the Assistant Masters, Sub-Inspectors and Subdivisional Deputy Inspectors while the headmasters of High Schools and District Deputy Inspectors were taken into Bengal Educational Service. The pay of the Subordinate Educational Service now ranges from Rs. 75 to Rs. 200 with an efficiency bar at Rs. 150. A comment on the discouraging contrast which marks the service of our province where the officers are of equal merit and status appears to me to be quite superfluous."

In framing the scheme which I have now the honour of placing before the House I could not overlook the financial limitations of our province and had therefore much against my will to postpone proposing Assam Education Service for our Headmasters and Deputy Inspectors who by their attainments, ability and meritorious service pre-eminently deserve to be there. The question is one of vital importance and may come up before the House as soon as the resources of the province can admit of its consideration.

Everything considered, I have no hesitation in saying that the re-organisation scheme proposed by me is a modest one and I am perfectly sure it will receive a sympathetic consideration at the hands of my Hon'ble colleagues.

RAI BAHADUR AMARNATH RAY :—I need hardly say, Sir, that I am in entire sympathy with the object of this resolution. I feel for the teachers of our boys and know how hard the times are. In September last this very resolution and a few more ambitious ones relating to the same matter were brought up before this House, but thanks to the inability of the defenders of the teachers' cause to come to an agreement and to the attitude of hostility taken up by some of my mauzadar friends all of them were lost. All that I could do in the unfortunate temperament of the House was to record my vote in favour of every one of the resolutions. Then again in March last, while opposing the increase of pay of Inspectors of Police, I reminded the House that the stronger case for increment of pay of the members of the Subordinate Education Service has been thrown out by them on the ground of financial stringency.

Now, Sir, the proposal we are discussing to-day was brought up before the House just a year ago by my Hon'ble friend the member for South Habiganj recently translated to the benches opposite to the delight of us all. My Hon'ble friend was shaping quite well as a leader of the opposition and was responsible for the defeat of the Government on more than one momentous issue. Let us hope, however, that he will be as good in fulfilling as he was in destroying. His attitude towards the present proposal will be an acid test of his sincerity of purpose. His ability to give effect to it will be taken as a measure of his success.

Sir, things have changed a good deal since September last. The financial position is more difficult. Fresh taxation has been resorted to for meeting current expenditure and we believe we have not seen the last of it yet. If the Hon'ble Minister can persuade the Hon'ble the Finance Member to give him for the present scheme of revision of pay the better part of two lacs of rupees every year by effecting retrenchments in the reserved departments that will redound to his lasting credit. But in every Government the master of the purse is the most difficult person to deal with. If however the proposal is to be financed by fresh taxation I am sure the country will be in no mood to assent.

But at the same time I cannot reconcile myself to the idea that the poor teachers should be relegated to the cold shade of neglect indefinitely. It behoves the Council to give them hope for the future at least. I beg leave, therefore, to suggest an intermediate course and I hope it will be acceptable to both the Ministry of Education and this House. My suggestion is that this resolution may be adopted by the Council and accepted by the Government on the understanding that effect will be given to it when funds permit. I hope the Hon'ble Mover—I see he has left his place—will be permitted to amend his resolution by the addition of a proviso to this effect if he accepts my suggestion. The result of this compromise will be that the members of the Subordinate Educational Service will have an assurance that the scales proposed—liberal ones as they are—will be given effect to at the earliest opportunity and that the claims of no other service will be entertained till they have got their due.

Mr. J. R. CUNNINGHAM :—Sir, I find myself in a somewhat difficult position in rising to oppose this resolution which has just been most strongly supported by the quotation of my own words from the other side of the House. But the appearance of contradiction is possibly no more real than in the case of Rai Bahadur Amarnath Ray who has just confessed to having supported six contradictory resolutions in course of the one debate.

There are two main grounds on which the resolution has to be opposed. In the first place it is inopportune and in the second place it is open to exception on points of detail.

That it is inopportune will be obvious from the state of the finances of the province. And it will be remembered as affecting the urgency of the demand that these officers have not in fact been left, to quote Rai Bahadur Amarnath Ray, in the cold shade of neglect. The officers in class II have benefited very substantially in the recent reorganisation and the officers in class I have benefited of late to the extent of at least 20 or 25 per cent. of their grade pay.

Now, to come to the question of detail—the points of detail which render the resolution unacceptable. In the first place, I should take exception to the scale in class I starting from Rs. 75 and rising to Rs. 200, within the short space of 15 years, that is to say, within half of the period of an officer's service, with the result, in the case of an officer not selected for one of the superior posts provided for in the higher class that he would find himself in the middle of his service with nothing further to look forward to. Objection may also be raised to this short run from the minimum to the maximum on account of the unduly heavy burden which it must lay on the finances of the province on account of pension charges. These charges have been omitted from the calculation of the cost of the scheme which I have worked out at roughly one lac and thirty-five thousand rupees. Now I do not.....

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY:—Does Mr. Cunningham mean to say that this scheme will cost one lac and thirty-five thousand rupees?

MR. J. R. CUNNINGHAM:—The average recurring cost of the scheme will be one lac and thirty-five thousand rupees, independent of pension charges.

RAI BAHADUR NALINI KANTA RAY DASTIDAR:—Every year, I believe?

MR. J. R. CUNNINGHAM:—Yes, annually. Now, despite its cost, partly on account of the short period intervening between the minimum and the maximum pay, the scheme is I think so framed in detail as to ensure that dissatisfaction will be renewed shortly after its introduction. In this connection I advise that it would be more satisfactory if such resolutions were couched in more general terms, the working out of the details being left to those who are experienced in such matters. It seems inexpedient that such particulars as are embodied in the resolution which has just been moved should be the subject of extemporary debate in council which might more suitably concern itself with general principles and broad issues. I may read in this connection from a manual which is entitled to particular respect in this council. I refer to the Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms. The passage in point is in the following words:—

“The method of attempting to control the executive by direct orders on points of detail appears to us to be wrong in principle. This way of conducting the public business was no doubt well known to the legislative assemblies

in the old city-states. But it is inapplicable where a country is too large for the people to come together; and it has come to be generally regarded as inapplicable also in deliberative assemblies in modern countries where the business of Government has grown complicated. The reasons are apparent. A deliberative body cannot suitably deal with details, because its constitution unfits it for such work. Individually the members may express the most involved opinions, the most complex and divergent sentiments, but when it comes to voting the body can only vote yes or no. It has to adopt or reject whatever propositions, original or amended, are laid before it.If proposals once carried in the assembly are to be effective, then their wise and accurate formulation becomes a matter of supreme importance; and no one but the authorities responsible for the administration has the knowledge to undertake this."

An example is given a little lower down where it is said: "It is proper, for instance, that resolutions should deal with the administration of the Arms Act, but not with its application to an individual."

The application of this principle to the resolution before the Council is I think obvious and forceful.

Now, again, considering the question of funds Rai Bahadur Amarnath Ray made a suggestion, a very moderate and reasonable suggestion, it seemed; but the objection to it is that if it is accepted, it means that we are counting our chickens before they are hatched. We are definitely saying to the Subordinate Educational Service at some date, which is indefinite, we propose to give you a sum which is definite, when we do not know whether we shall ever be able to do so or not. That is surely, Sir, to hold out hopes which may be falsified. The funds available for new educational expenditure are likely to be limited for some time to come; the demands on the other hand are unlimited. We must remember that we are already committed to obligations involving charges which have not yet been provided for. I am particularly referring to the charges involved in the provincialisation some years ago of a considerable number of high schools. The measures then undertaken more than doubled the cost and more than doubled the number of members of our educational services. These members entered at the bottom of the scale and have in due course to be provided for on the maximum of the scale on which they were brought in. That obligation continues, it adds annually to our budget, and it has not yet been fully covered. There are other rival claims which have already been established and which are entitled to the most sympathetic consideration. I mention only a few. The first is that in regard to which a resolution is going to be moved by Mr. Phukan, namely, the Resolution relating to the pay granted to teachers in aided schools. Now, the lot of our teachers in the Subordinate Educational Service in Government schools is prosperity itself when compared with the lot of the men in aided schools, and the cost of improving the pay of teachers in aided schools must be taken into account before we face this new expenditure of close on a lakh and a half on the pay of our school masters. There is also the question of the extension of the grant-in-aid list. The fact that many unaided schools are at present struggling along in the hope of help from Government is familiar to us. And there is the completion of the programme of provincialisation undertaken many years ago. To complete that programme the High Schools at Sunamganj and Hailakandi have to be provincialised.

Having regard to all these considerations, Sir, I am authorised to state to the Council that while the resolution cannot be accepted as it stands, because funds are wanting and because the details of the resolution are open to objection, Government agree that some improvement in the pay of the Subordinate Educational Service is advisable, and I am to state to the Council that they will be ready when the financial crisis is relieved to reconsider the pay and prospects of that Service with a view to reorganisation on lines as liberal as the needs of the situation, the pressure of other claims and the state of the finances of the province permits.

BABU KRISHNA SUNDAR DAM :—Sir, a similar resolution stands in my name also. As I am going to support Rai Bahadur Nalini Kanta Rai Dastidar, I should like to say that the resolution which stands in my name may be withdrawn.

THE HON'BLE THE PRESIDENT :—It is deemed to be withdrawn under Standing Order 32. The Hon'ble Member can speak in support of the resolution.

BABU KRISHNA SUNDAR DAM :—Sir, I believe I cannot usefully add anything to what has been said by the Hon'ble Mover of the resolution. I shall only try to say something by way of reply to what has been said by Mr. Cunningham. In the first place, when sometime back this Council had to deal with a similar resolution the Hon'ble Minister then speaking for Government although he said he could not give us what was asked, he still offered us his sympathy with the schoolmaster's cause. But this time, I regret to observe that we have failed to get both sympathy as well as silver from the Government side. They have plainly told us so, and that is mainly on two grounds : one, that the time is inopportune, the financial difficulties of the Government are enormous, and the other that the details of the proposal are open to objection. As to financial difficulties, Sir, this is a repetition of the official argument which was advanced in the last September session. We know, and we do not dispute the fact, that Government is confronted daily with enormous financial difficulties. It is a fact too well known to us. But the question is whether these financial difficulties of which Government are complaining are difficulties of their own creation, created by their own free will, which they might very well avoid, or difficulties for which they cannot be held responsible. On behalf of those whom I represent, I say that the present financial difficulties of the Government, difficulties which have brought them almost to the verge of bankruptcy, are the result of unnecessary and extravagant expenditure. Government cannot at least take the credit of listening to our proposals for retrenchment. They have not listened to our recommendations in regard to cutting down extravagant expenditure and increases of salaries in many departments. All the present difficulties of the Government have arisen on account of actions contrary to the advice and admonitions given by this Council and contrary to the recommendations of the Retrenchment Committee. Therefore this Council cannot be asked or expected to accept the pleading of financial difficulties put forward by Mr. Cunningham. Money we believe can still be found for the expenditure involved in this resolution, as for certain other purposes, by economy. It is not that revenues can be increased only by asking people to pay more and more taxes. Money can be had also by resorting to economy. Well, we believe really there is room for economy elsewhere and in that view of the matter we are asking Government to give effect to this resolution. There

are many proposals still before the Government for economising expenditure, and if the Government listens to the advice of this Council and the recommendations of the Retrenchment Committee, the money necessary for giving effect to this resolution will be easily forthcoming.

Now, Sir, the Hon'ble Member replying on behalf of the Government has also raised his objections to the details of the proposals and has cited extracts from rules relating to this matter. Certainly it is not advisable that this Council should go into details, but Government will realise that the movers of this resolution have been forced to go into these details because Government would do nothing and take no initiative if even now Mr. Cunningham repeats for the consolation of the school masters his own encouraging words which were repeated by the Hon'ble Mover of this resolution that might be a good ground for us to withdraw the specific proposals touching details. But Mr. Cunningham is silent on that point. Even if he accepts the principle of the resolution that the school masters are in need of improvement of their pay and prospects the Council might seriously consider whether it should commit itself to the specific proposals embodied in the resolution.

MR. J. R. CUNNINGHAM :—Sir, may I rise on a point of explanation: the Hon'ble Member has said that the reply given was entirely unsympathetic and that all reference had been omitted to the improvement of the prospects of the Subordinate Educational Service. Possibly I was not clearly audible at the end of the Hall but the assurance which I gave on behalf of Government was that it agreed that some improvement was advisable and I was desired to state to the Council that Government would be prepared when the financial crisis was relieved to reconsider the pay and prospects of the Subordinate Educational Service with a view to reorganisation on lines as liberal as the needs of the situation, the pressure of other claims and the state of the provincial finances permitted. I think, Sir, that that is both a sympathetic and a reasonable offer.

BABU KRISHNA SUNDAR DAM :—Yes, but here the question arises when will this assurance be acted upon; we find that the other departments are forward and fortunate in getting priority in respect of their claims. We cannot be hopeful about the good results of this assurance. What we want is that the demands of the Director of Public Instruction should have priority over those of the other departments, *e.g.*, Police, Forests, and so on. Up till now we have found that whereas officers of other departments have been getting increments to the extent of 150 per cent., 200 and even 400 per cent. as I was told by somebody.....

THE HON'BLE MR. REID :—Would the Hon'ble Member condescend to specify the fortunate individuals who have had an increase of 400 per cent. in their pay and to say in which Departments they are to be found?

BABU KRISHNA SUNDAR DAM :—I was told, Sir, that this was the case in the Public Works Department; that the overseers who were receiving Rs. 100 are now getting Rs. 500. Not only in the Public Works Department but also in other departments I think they have got an increase of 150 per cent. All we want is that the case of the schoolmasters should be considered before that of any other departments as soon as the financial stress is removed. But the assurance given by Mr. Cunningham is I must say, Sir, not sufficiently clear and encouraging.

Now, Sir, I shall not say much about the real economic necessity of the schoolmasters which demands an increment of their pay. Mr. Cunningham says that the present demand for an enhancement of their pay is not so urgent and reasonable and that already substantial remunerations have been granted to them : if I heard him aright, I think he said so. But in spite of all these remunerations, Mr. Cunningham knows better than myself that his subordinates are not getting as much as their compeers in Bengal, the Punjab and the Central Provinces. I have been told that formerly the schoolmasters were getting Rs. 50 for the start and that in the course of time all of them got Rs. 250 but now under the two classes which have been introduced their prospects have become worse than before. Under the former scheme the subordinates could expect in the ordinary course to rise to Rs. 250 but now it is not possible for most of them to do so. Now, Sir, it will be too cruel for the Director I believe to ask the schoolmasters not only to teach plain living and high thinking, but also to actually practise plain living and high thinking, when the same precept is not observed in any other department. The school masters are not at all a prosperous lot of people as we all know. I have heard Mr. Cunningham urging another argument that there is a proposal for the provincialisation of the Sunamganj High School and that this also demands some expenditure of the provincial revenues. This is to my mind not a convincing argument, as I consider that the provincialisation of the Sunamganj High School is not so urgent as the enhancement of the pay and prospects of the schoolmasters. I do not know on what grounds Mr. Cunningham bases his argument that the provincialisation of the Sunamganj High School is urgent.

With these few words, therefore, I beg to support the resolution.

MAULAVI ABDUL KHALIQUE CHOWDHURI :—Sir, a similar Resolution No. 5 on the list stands in my name. The Hon'ble Mover ably puts his resolution before the House. I think I have nothing more to add. I only invite the attention of Mr. Cunningham to his letter No. 16, dated the 11th January 1921, in which he rightly said :—

“ We cannot expect graduates in the Education Department to be content with Rs. 50 a month when they see men of similar qualifications starting on Rs. 150 in the Subordinate Executive Service and under-graduates starting on, say, Rs. 80 in the Police.”

With these words I beg leave to withdraw the resolution in favour of the Hon'ble Mover.

THE HON'BLE THE PRESIDENT.—Under Standing Order 32 which the Hon'ble Member does not seem to have read, the President decides in the case of identical motions and resolutions. I have invited Rai Bahadur Nalini Kanta Ray Dastidar to move his resolution and the other resolutions are deemed to be withdrawn.

KHAN SAHIB ALAUDDIN AHMAD CHAUDHURI :—I was, Sir, one of those who had advocated the cause of the increase of pay and prospects of the Subordinate Educational Service in moving a resolution in September last in this Council Chamber. Unfortunately, though some of the members were at one with me in thinking that the teachers were paid much less than they

deserve, the resolution failed as we could not agree on some minor details, but the fact remains unchanged that almost all the members seriously considered that the prospects of the teachers of the Subordinate Educational Service ought to be raised. The scale proposed by the Hon'ble Mover seems quite to tally with the scale given by the Government of Bengal, and I do not see how it is in any way objectionable. It is only a modest and reasonable resolution and ought to be supported. The Hon'ble Mr. Cunningham does not say that the teachers do not deserve an increase of pay, but only opposes the resolution on the ground of financial stringency. This is a general all-round objection put forward by Government and I think that if the authorities themselves want to consider the matter as seriously as we do, they will in the near future be in a position to find the money some way or other.

With these few words I strongly support the resolution.

Mr. R. N. CHAUDHURI:—Sir, may I speak a few words on this resolution? It is rather perplexing to understand what is the main object of this resolution. The details seem to be enormous as Mr. Cunningham rightly pointed out and he technically objects that he cannot accept it on that ground also. However we must think rightly if we can think it out at all. I was approached on this subject by some teachers and as they say I believe that their cause is a righteous one although it may not be proved to the satisfaction of this Council to be right. There are 3 classes of teachers as I understand. They are in the Subordinate Educational Service and not in the Provincial Service of Assam. The main grievance of all these 3 classes is that they are not promoted to the Provincial Service. That means they do not get higher pay from the beginning or to start with and ultimately after some years of service by a process which we do not understand they just get a sort of increment. However that might be a matter of detail and a question between Mr. Cunningham and the teachers. But on principle we find the resolution to be sound and practicable and according to our commonsense we will exercise our discretion of vote. In Bengal and in other provinces there have been revisions and reorganisations of pay or salaries, or whatever you might call them, in respect of those teachers whom we term very poor. When in the other branches and departments of Government there have been revisions, redistributions, readjustments, reorganisations and all sorts of things have been done after the war and it is quite natural that they also have some expectation that there should be some reorganisation, but I was told again that there was a reorganization after the war or during the war. That reorganization gave them some benefit for the time being as I understood them rightly, but during these present hard days of living it seems they are not able to cope with their difficulties by the present pay which seems to be quite inadequate. It is a matter for this Council now to see whether as framed this resolution can be accepted. I find that I cannot get very much information from it as it is framed, but all that I can say is that I am for the poor teachers. There is no doubt that money should be forthcoming as it was forthcoming for the other services with salaries increased. It is for the Secretariat to find out how their services or merits are to be calculated, that is a detail we do not wish to enter into, but what I say or must say is that there is a grievance and a right grievance, and all that I can do for them is to support this resolution.

BABU BIRAJ MOHAN DUTTA :—Sir, I rise to support the resolution moved by Rai Bahadur Nalini Kanta Rai Dastidar. I myself was to move a similar resolution in this House to-day, but which for some reason or other is not on the agenda. The fact that the Subordinate Educational Service is to be reorganised and improved was fully discussed and considered by us in the past is known to all. It is therefore needless for me to take up much time of the Council by unnecessary statements, and hence I am keeping myself within limits by touching on some salient points.

The House will be at one with me when I say that the old Assam Administration itself felt the advisability of increasing the maximum scale of pay of Deputy Inspectors and accordingly in strengthening the inspecting staff it was fixed at Rs. 250 in 1905, at a time when that allowed to those of the Subordinate Executive Service members did not exceed Rs. 200. This was also the case in 1913 when the scheme for reorganisation of the Subordinate Educational Service, which was given effect to from 1921, was under consideration. Hence it is natural for the members of the Subordinate Educational Service to feel discontent when they see liberal treatment accorded to those of other departments many of whom were far below them in the matter of scales of pay at least.

The minimum proposed for the quality of men is certainly not excessive when Headmasters and Deputy Inspectors in the sister province are in the provincial cadre, the maximum also is not quite enough.

There appears no reason why the whole length of services of a member of the Service should not be taken into consideration allowing him to earn increments in his own class or sub-class.

As regards funds Mr. Cunningham says that owing to the financial stringency he cannot give any increase. I do not find any reason why this cannot be done in improving the Education Department officers when this Administration has been meeting heavy expenditure on pay on reorganization of other departments, some of which have been allowed more than one revision in the scale of pay.

In conclusion I appeal to this House to accord their full support in passing of the resolution which is nothing but moderate and reasonable.

RAI BAHADUR BEPIN CHANDRA DEB LASHKAR :—Sir, the increment of the pay of the Subordinate Educational Service is absolutely necessary. There was a proposal that a deputation would wait upon His Excellency about the matter so I withdrew my resolution formerly about the same subject. I thank my Hon'ble friend Rai Bahadur Nalini Kanta Rai Dastidar for his kindly moving this resolution again. Our poor teachers are anxiously waiting from a long time for the increment but again and again they were disheartened. I feel pity for them and so I heartily support this resolution.

SRIJUT NILMONI PHUKAN :—Sir, I want to speak a few words on the subject. I need not detain the House for a long time because it is a subject which is well understood by everyone and which has been brought before this House several times. If the old wrong has not been righted as yet, it is not the fault of the teachers. It may be due to economic reasons,

it may as well be due to the past neglect—if not neglect, some indifference—on the part of Government. It surpasses my understanding how when under the same stress of economy other services were reorganised several times the cause of the teachers alone was allowed to suffer till now. I admit and I quite appreciate the difficulty in which the Government have found themselves now, but I cannot for a moment persuade myself to believe that if Government took up this cause in time the case of the teachers would have been so deplorable to-day. I understand the other services manned by men of equal qualifications have been organised rather reorganised in the course of these few years when there was economic stress everywhere ; and, actually in some departments, the officers are getting in many cases 100 per cent. to 200 per cent. more than they used to and I have just now heard from one of my friends that in the Public Works Department this increase was two-fold or three-fold—but this statement was challenged by the Hon'ble Finance Member. Whatever that may be it is clear that the case of the Education Department was not considered equally when these departments were reorganised. Even after this economic stress, if new projects, new schemes, have been taken up by Government why the questions of the schoolmasters who were crying hoarse over their lot were not taken up in right earnest? It is not the fault of the teachers to say at this belated hour that they were not properly fed by the Government for the services they have rendered to the country by taking up the charge of the children of the soil whom the Government expects to be honoured citizens in the future. If that be the case it is not the fault of the teachers now to blame the Government, if I may be permitted to say so, for this shabby treatment up to this moment.

I now quite appreciate the difficulty of the Government at this moment, if I am rightly informed by Mr. Cunningham that this scheme if accepted by the House will cost the Government at least Rs. 1,45,000 more for Government schools alone ; besides, in addition he will have to do justice to other teachers in other schools. If the Government has come to this plight this is also to be taken into consideration by the House at this very moment. I do not think for a moment why a starting pay of Rs. 75 will be more than enough when in other services men of even lower qualifications begin at Rs. 150 and Rs. 200. This I cannot say is much in the case of teachers and if the teachers now begin at Rs. 75 and some of them end their career with Rs. 500 I do not think that that will be too much for an educationist. Because if men of similar qualifications aspire to at least double the amount at the end of their career why these teachers who are as honourable, if not more, than their colleagues in other departments of Government should not aspire to this. But as the Director of Public Instruction has already pointed out I am a little diffident. I cannot say conscientiously, when the Government has come to this plight, that we can force the hands of the Government to that extent at this very moment. Of course I should be the last person, rather I should consider it a sacrilege on my part, not to feel for the poor teachers. But when the Director of Public Instruction has already given an assurance, and I believe he is always anxious to do some justice to the teachers who have not been equally considered with other officers in other departments, I fully believe if this resolution comes in a proper form again, let us hope in the next session of the Council in January or February, there will be enough time to reconsider the whole subject by the House again. I am sure the House will not hesitate to show the same consideration, the same

sympathy for the poor teachers, and I have no reason to believe the sympathy of the Government will flag in the meantime and they will not receive proper consideration at the hands of Government. Really I do not find my way to see how if this resolution is accepted at this moment the scheme be given effect to at once by raising the pay of those who have put in such and such service. If the resolution is carried and carried with a purpose, and if the Government is to give effect to this, I do not know how at this very moment such a big amount will be forthcoming. We are to see to that as well. So let us not be misunderstood on both sides. Let us with all earnestness press this question before the Government, and let us all sincerely hope that by the time the next budget is prepared the best consideration will be shown by the Government to this resolution. So I suggest that this resolution might be brought forward in a more convenient form, and with this idea in my mind I should like to suggest to the House if it will not be prudent to withdraw this resolution in the present form and press for it again in the next session of the Council if in the meantime we do not find that the Department is taking the matter seriously and also the sympathy which has been shown from time to time has not been materialised to a possible extent.

RAI SAHIB PADMANATH GOHAIN BARUA :—Sir, the subject-matter of the resolution is as old as the Council itself. The question in regard to the pay of teachers was raised in some form or other in this very chamber in the first meeting of the first Council, and I had the pleasure to move that subject. At first this question was brought before the Council in the form that the starting pay of the graduate teachers should be fixed at Rs. 75, when, if my memory serves me, at that very outset the head of the department took up the position that owing to the financial difficulty he could not take up the subject in a way to meet the wishes of the people. Since then this very subject has been passing from one hand to another at different sittings of the Council in different forms and yet the grievances of the teachers were not redressed up till now. The question has now become so deep and wide that I am afraid it affects the very life of the teaching staff. It has been felt by the teachers much more seriously since the recent reorganisation and revision of pay of the other departments of Government when we expected that something would be done for the amelioration of the condition of the poor teachers by increasing their pay to a reasonable extent. But I regret to have to note that in comparison with the increments made in the scale of pay of the other departments that of the teachers was practically left out. What they have been given in shape of increment is certainly not sufficient to improve their present wretched condition. I, as an old retired teacher, have been very well aware of the pecuniary position of the Assam teachers, past and present, and I sincerely feel for them. I know their condition, internally and externally, and I am strongly of opinion that the present pay offered to them is hardly adequate to improve their position materially. And, if we do not mind to improve matters relating the pay-scale of the teachers and thereby to ameliorate their condition, I doubt the wisdom of lamenting over the fact that teachers of our schools are not up to the mark. To be up to the mark, I think, Sir, the teachers should be well fed and well clothed. The present scale of pay is surely inadequate for the purpose and if we do not improve the situation we cannot reasonably expect to have teachers to be up to the mark. So, by all means we should see our way to increase the pay of

the teachers to a reasonable limit, if not according to the scale proposed by the mover. If we fail to do so, while the Government has been doing justice to the other departments, may we not come to a conclusion, Sir, that we are practically pouring water on the branches and leaves while the root has been left out uncared for? The present form of the resolution might seem to the head of the department to be on too high a scale. If so, we are prepared to accept for consideration any moderate scale that might be suggested by him or the resolution in its present form must be carried by overwhelming majority if not unanimously. We hear Sir, much of the financial stringency and its end is not still in sight. It will, I am afraid, continue for some time,—for some years to come, and I fear by that time the patience of the teachers will be hopelessly broken down. I reserve my comment on the arguments offered by the mover and his supporters on one side, and the head of the department on the other,—one crying for an adequate provision for the poor teachers and the other declining it on the plea of financial stringency. But I should like to urge that the matter should not rest here. The people and their representative members should not leave it alone and they should continue to press the matter till an adequate provision is made for the poor teachers. And, on the other hand, it is to my mind desirable that some means be adopted to have the problem solved at the earliest possible moment. In conclusion I say that the present financial stringency should not be allowed to stand on the way, and the golden maxim “Where there is a will there is a way” to be adhered to. If we wish sincerely a way will be open naturally. With these few remarks and with a fervent hope that the resolution will be given due consideration and will be accepted by the Council at least in a reasonably modified form I beg to support it with all the emphasis I could command.

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—Sir, I was one of those who introduced a resolution of the same nature in the September Council last year. I have always been in favour of increasing the pay of the teachers because I know that they have been very poorly paid, probably they are the worst paid people in the service of the Government. In comparison with the other services we find that the teachers, many of whom are graduates, are paid very poorly. The Director of Public Instruction himself acknowledged this fact and wanted to reorganise the scale of pay of the teachers several years ago; and it is a pity that it has not been reorganised even up to the present moment—though it has been reorganised to some extent yet not even according to the scale that was proposed by the Director of Public Instruction a few years ago. And when we consider that many other services have been reorganised and re-reorganised and that this service has not been reorganised in such a way as to give some satisfaction at least to these teachers we are at a loss to know why the Government has given a liberal scale to the other departments and this department has been denied the same privilege. The difficulty of the resolution, I see, is with the details. The details are only meant to make the Government feel that it is necessary to reorganise this service according to the time-scale, the benefit of which has been given to the other services. When all the other services have got the benefit of the time-scale why should not this service also get the same benefit?

Now, Mr. Cunningham has already proposed that the Government will reconsider about the reorganisation of this service. I wish he had definitely stated how that consideration would be, whether the pay would begin from Rs. 75

and the maximum would be according to the scale written here if the details be withdrawn from the resolution. If that had been stated then we would understand how to vote in this matter. We would gladly receive the proposal of the Government if the Government object only to the details and do not object to the main part of the resolution. But the fact remains the same, that the reorganisation of this service needs to be done very soon because there is dissatisfaction all over the country regarding this, as it is a known fact that in many other services the officers have been paid very liberally while this service has not been yet properly treated.

I believe, Sir, that this resolution may be carried in the House and that effect be given to it when funds are available ; and we would ask the Government to do all that it can possibly do in the way of giving relief to these officers as long as this resolution is not put into effect in the way that it has been put before the Council, because we know that the Government has sympathy for this service and it will do all that it can. Though this resolution if carried may not be put into effect soon, yet it may be carried now in the House so that in time when funds are available the teachers may get the salaries as stated in this resolution.

SRIJUT BEPIN CHANDRA GHOSE :—Sir, I beg to add a few words in support of the resolution. The subject-matter of discussion before the House is one of great importance and deserves full sympathy of all the Hon'ble Members. We will be doing injustice to our teachers if we do not consider their case carefully and with some interest. It has rightly been said by one of the Hon'ble Members that these teachers are the worst paid of all Government servants although we are getting the most useful service from them. These teachers are, if I may be allowed to use the expression, the builders of our nation. We send our children to the schools and they send them back from the forge of schools purified and well prepared for the difficulties of the world. Now, Sir, due to the rise in the prices of foodstuffs and other necessaries of life, the present salaries drawn by these low paid teachers are quite inadequate to meet their expenses. Now to do justice to them it should be our bounden duty to improve their scale of pay.

Sir, the only difficulty that stands in our way is, as I understand from the discussion of the House, the financial difficulty. Now, Sir, a similar resolution was moved a year ago in this House and the question of the same financial difficulty arose at that time also, and I understand the same difficulty now stands in our way, and I am sure that the same difficulty will stand in future also and it is sure to continue with the same speed. So, we need not care for the financial stringency. Money must come out, and we must find out means to get money any how. All other departments have got their proper salaries and no question of financial difficulty arose in their case, but when the poorly paid teachers have come with their prayer to get their salaries increased we are putting forth the question of financial stringency. Now, Sir, the question of financial difficulty will never be over, and we need not bother about that. We must find out certain means in order to increase the salary of these teachers. With these few words, I beg to support the resolution wholeheartedly.

MAULAVI RASHID ALI LASKAR :—May I know, Sir, whether the discussion will be continued to-day or postponed for to-morrow? It is 5 o'clock.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—We have got a lot of business to-morrow, Sir.

THE HON'BLE THE PRESIDENT :—I think we can sit a little later this evening. There was no morning session.

MAULAVI RASHID ALI LASKAR :—Sir, I have a few words to say in connection with this resolution. First of all I am sorry for the poor teachers if in spite of their claiming almost all the Indian members of the Council as their students they cannot get their salaries increased. But I see a few points standing against the case of the teachers.

First of all it appears to me that the number of Government High Schools in the province is only about one-third of the number of High schools in the province. These Government institutions were started with the apparent object of indicating to the people the types that they should follow. Now, if the salaries of the teachers of Government High schools only be increased then the lot of the teachers in Aided and Un-aided High schools will look all the more miserable, and either the private and Aided High Schools won't get good teachers or the public will be in great difficulty to finance private institutions. That would be the first difficulty.

Another thing I find against this motion is this. From the speeches already delivered I find that the question is more of a sentimental nature than of intrinsic merit. The argument is more of this nature: that such and such departments have got increases in a greater proportion than this department. That is the main point of the argument. I think this department should establish their own case independent of reference to other departments. I understand, Sir, that only six or seven months back they got some increase. So soon after getting that increase they are again clamouring for another increase. This also goes against their case. It is said that with dissatisfied teachers we cannot get good training for our future generation, and thus we would not get our future nation well built. Sir, I think that that is not a very good argument because that is simply looking at the question from the mercenary point of view. As soon as they reach the top of their grade, they will again hanker after more increase. That is simply looking at the question from the mercenary point of view.

Then another point is that there are certain pursuits in life which people seek not so much in consideration of their money value but also in consideration of peace and happiness in life. This consideration cannot be weighed in the balance of economy or in the balance of rupees, annas and pies. We cannot compare this Education Department with clerical or ministerial departments and say that their salary is such and such. Besides, there is the labour point of view. I think that of all the services the Education Department demands the least labour.

Another difficulty was mentioned by Hon'ble Mr. Cunningham and that is that some schools, private and aided, have of late been provincialised, and that if the scheme of provincialisation is to be completed then the teachers of our private and aided schools will also have to be provided on the same scale as the Government teachers, and that therefore schools which have yet to be provincialised would not be provincialised on account of the increased cost. That also goes a bit against this resolution. Then, as for the comparison with the increase of pay in other departments I for myself think that the increase of the salaries of most of the departments was objectionable, because although the prices of necessaries of life have increased did we consider at the time of increasing the pay of the officers and other Government servants as to who was to pay for the cost? It is the poor cultivators and tax-payers that have to pay for it. Have they also got their incomes equally and proportionately increased? Certainly not. This I think goes against the present resolution.

But one thing I find very confusing and unintelligible, and that is why when other departments got the benefit of increase and readjustment, should this department alone have remained unblest. What fault has been committed by the people of this department that they alone should not get any benefit from the general increase. It might be said that only 7 or 8 months back these people got their increase. But I hear that this scheme was matured long before the war started and long before any increase was dreamt of in other department. It looks awkward to me that on the pay day when the employer calls all his employees and passes them one by one through the gate giving them their proper dues, but when coming to the last says to him: "No. You won't get your pay, because I have nothing left." This does not seem a wise and sound policy on the part of the Government. These unfortunate teachers see that increases are given below and above, but that in the middle they remain unblest. What would they think of their position? The Provincial Educational Service have got their increase and the people lower down have got their increase, but only the Subordinate Educational Service have not got any increase. That seems queer to me.

If the Government accept this resolution only on the express understanding that they would raise the tuition fees, or if the result of forcing this resolution on the Government would be to compel them to increase the tuition fees and then give increased salaries to teachers, I for one would stand against this resolution, because at the sacrifice of the students and at the sacrifice of the spread of education we do not like to rear up a class of highly paid teachers. I am against it. But if the teachers can be paid increased salaries otherwise than by increasing the tuition fees, I would stand up first and strongly support the cause of the teachers on that understanding. Looked at from all sides I do not know what to do, whether to support the resolution or to go against it. Any way I gave my idea.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID:— Sir, we all listen with pleasure to the finished oratory of the Hon'ble gentleman opposite me, and we admire his well-turned phrases. But I am sure that he would be the last to wish us to take them too seriously. When he said, if I heard him aright, that the Council would form its opinion of the new Minister on his handling of this

resolution — I think he spoke of an acid test of his sincerity — and when he said that my Hon'ble Colleague's success would be measured by the amount that he extracted from the Finance Department, I was convinced that he was merely using a figure of speech.

Well, Sir, the Rai Bahadur went on to support the resolution but he supported it with certain modifications. He said we probably wanted about two lakhs of rupees for the purpose, but that the money must be got without taxation; that he, personally, would be satisfied if the recommendation was that this sum was to be procured at the earliest possible moment. I have listened carefully to the debate, Sir, and it seems to me that there are two proposals before the Council. One of them is a very detailed resolution proposing an exceedingly detailed scheme which has been condemned as unsound in many particulars by the head of the Education Department, and which, speaking for the Finance Department, we should have to condemn on these and on other grounds. One Hon'ble Member told the Council that no sympathy had been manifested, but I think that, after hearing a further explanation, he withdrew this accusation. Why, Sir, should the Council assume that the Government bear malice towards teachers, that they are willing to do something for every other service in the Province, but that the very name of teacher upsets them, and that they will do nothing for these people? I submit, Sir, that none of the dealings of the Education Department with the teaching staff and none of the shortcomings of the hardhearted Finance Department lend any warrant to such an accusation.

I do not propose to follow those speakers who made light of the financial stringency. It would not become me to do so. Nor, I venture to think, will any Member of this Council who sees the figures that I shall in a day or two have to place before them agree with such a view. We have as I said on the one hand a detailed scheme which is criticised by people who have a right to criticise. We have on the other hand what I think—the case is not mine—to be an exceedingly fair offer. I am not in the secrets of the new Minister, but I cannot help feeling that if such an offer had been made when, as a private member of the Council, he moved his resolution on the subject, he would have been strongly tempted to accept it if indeed he had not accepted it. As I read the issue before the Council it is this. Are we to vote for the scheme which appears here, or are we to accept the offer made by the head of the Education Department on behalf of the Government? This I shall read once more.

“The Government agree that some improvement is advisable and will be prepared, when the present financial stress is relieved, to reconsider the pay and prospects of the Subordinate Educational Service, with a view to re-organization on lines as liberal as the needs of the situation, the pressure of other claims, and the state of the provincial finances permit.”

One last word, Sir. I beg the Council not to accept the doctrine that the case of no Service is to be considered that no project however useful in itself is to be even examined by the Council until money has been found for this detailed scheme framed to benefit the teachers.

The resolution was put and a division taken with the following results :—

Ayes.

1. Babu Ramani Mohan Das.
2. Rai Bahadur Bepin Chandra Deb Laskar.
3. Babu Biraj Mohan Datta.
4. Maulavi Akmal Hussein.
5. Maulavi Munawwarali.
6. Haji Muhammad Abdul Ahad Chaudhuri.
7. Srijut Lohit Chandra Nayak.
8. Maulavi Saiyid Nurur Rahman.
9. Rai Bahadur Nalini Kanta Rai Dastidar.
10. Maulavi Abdul Khalique Chaudhuri.
11. Maulavi Abdul Rahim Chaudhuri.
12. Khan Sahib Alauddin Ahmad Chaudhuri.
13. Rai Sahib Padmanath Gohain Barua.
14. Babu Hiralal Bose.
15. Srijut Bishnu Charan Borah.
16. Babu Har Kishore Chakrabatti.
17. Babu Krishna Sundar Dam.
18. Srijut Bepin Chandra Ghose.

Noes.

1. Mr. A. Moffat.
2. Khan Bahadur Muhammad Bakht Mazumdar.
3. Mr. E. S. Roffey.
4. Rai Bahadur Amarnath Roy.
5. Mr. W. E. H. Grayburn.
6. The Hon'ble Mr. W. J. Reid.
7. The Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Ghanasyam Barua.
8. Mr. A. W. Botham.
9. Mr. A. J. Lainé.
10. Mr. J. R. Cunningham.

The Ayes being 18 and the Noes 10 the resolution was carried.

The Council was then adjourned to Saturday, the 9th September 1922, at
11 A.M.

11th September 1922.

S. E. STINTON,
Offg. Secretary to the Legislative
Council, Assam.

