

Proceedings of the Assam Legislative Council assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1919.

The Council met in the Council Chamber, Shillong, on Tuesday, the 10th April 1923, at 11 A.M.

P R E S E N T :

The Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Nalini Kanta Ray Dastidar, *President*, the Hon'ble two Members of the Executive Council, the Hon'ble Minister of Education and 36 nominated and elected Members.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

(UNSTARRED QUESTIONS.)

KHAN SAHIB SHARAFAT ALI CHAUDHURI asked :—

1. Are the Government aware of the fact that since after the opening of the Sylhet-Kulaura Branch Railway line the paddy crops extending over 20 or 25 miles from Barohal, Churkhai under Karimganj subdivision to Fenchuganj under sadr in Sylhet, are being damaged or washed away almost in every year by flood water of Manipur, Lushai Hills and Cachar during heavy rains owing to insufficient outlet of water under the Railway line in or near Ilaspur between Mogla Bazar and Fenchuganj ?

If so, have the Government considered the advisability of moving the Railway Company to take early steps to provide more outlets for flood water near Ilaspur ?

MR. A. W. BOTHAM replied :—

1.—Government are aware that in some years serious damage to crops has been caused in the area in question but they are not satisfied that this damage is wholly or even in a great measure due to the insufficiency of the waterways under the railway line. In 1916 the question whether any and if so, what additional waterways should be provided on the Sylhet-Fenchuganj section of the Assam-Bengal Railway was examined by a Committee of Railway, Engineering, and Revenue Officers under the presidency of Sir Robert Gales, Chief Engineer to the Railway Board. The Committee considered that the discharging capacity of the existing waterways on the Sylhet-Fenchuganj Railway could be greatly increased by opening out the approaches and outfalls and by enlarging the corresponding road openings to similar bed width and level, and that no further measures need be undertaken unless and until experience shows them to be necessary. In accordance with this recommendation the required modifications have been made in the railway and road bridge openings near Ilaspur and Government have no reason at present to believe that the existing openings are inadequate in normal years. It is impossible to prevent damage to crops being caused by exceptional floods.

SRIJUT BEPIN CHANDRA GHOSE asked :—

Indian
Engineer-
ing Service. 1. (a) Will the Government be pleased to state how many officers there are in the Indian Service of Engineers and of these how many are *bona fide* Assamese ?

(b) What qualifications are necessary for recruitment to the said service ?

Assam
Engineer-
ing Service 2. (a) Will the Government be pleased to state the number of officers in the Assam Engineering Service and the number of Assamese incumbents in the said service from the Brahmaputra Valley ?

(b) Have the Government left any provision for candidates qualifying from the Sibpur Engineering College with scholarships from the Government of Assam ?

(c) Is it a fact that in recruitment to the higher services preference is given to a Rurkee man over a Sibpur man ?

3. (a) Will the Government be pleased to state the percentage of Assamese (from the Assam Valley) in the two branches of the Subordinate Engineering Service in Assam ?

(b) Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table (i) the number of students (with their names and the year of success) from the Assam Valley who came out successful within the last 15 years from the different Engineering schools and (ii) of these how many applied for Government services and (iii) how many had been provided with posts in the two branches ?

(c) Is it a fact that there are cases in which preference has been given to outsiders over qualified Assamese candidates in filling up posts (vacancies) in the Public Works Department ?

If so, will the Government be pleased to give reason for such preference ?

(d) Will the Government be pleased to state the number of officers (with their names) who have already been thrown out of employment in the Public Works Department in giving effect to retrenchment ?

Of these how many are from—

(i) The Assam Valley,

(ii) The Surma Valley,

(iii) Other provinces,

and what is the length of service of each of them ?

(e) Will the Government be pleased to state separately how many officers there are after retrenchment in the two branches of the Subordinate Engineering Service from (i) Assam Valley, (ii) Surma Valley and (iii) other provinces ?

(f) Are the Government aware of the fact that many junior officers in the Public Works Department have been retained and confirmed in service while many senior Assamese officers have been thrown out?

If so, will the Government be pleased to state the reason for doing so?

MR. A. W. BOTHAM replied :—

1. (a)—Nineteen, of whom one is an Assamese.

(b)—The Hon'ble Member is referred to the rules promulgated with Public Works Department Notification No. 27 G./Estt., dated 5th March 1923, published in Part II of the *Assam Gazette*, dated the 7th March 1923.

Further particulars can be found in the Government of India, Public Works Department, No. 441 E.A., dated 16th July 1920, a copy of which was placed on the table in reply to a question asked by the late Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Ghanasyam Barua at the Council meeting, dated 14th October 1920.

2. (a)—Twenty-two, of whom two are from the Brahmaputra Valley.

(b)—Government do not guarantee any provision for scholarship holders, but their cases are considered along with others when vacancies are filled up.

(c)—The rules, under which Roorki men had preference over Sibpur, are now being examined with a view to revision, but no recruitment of any kind is contemplated at present.

3. (a)—The Subordinate Engineering Service is not divided into two branches. The percentage of Assamese (from the Brahmaputra Valley) in the Subordinate Engineering Service is 18.

The Lower Subordinate Service, which will gradually cease to exist, has 19 per cent. Assamese (from the Brahmaputra Valley).

(b) (i)—Government regrets that it is not in a position to answer this question. As the Hon'ble Member is aware there is no Engineering School in this Province and no return is made to this Government in respect of Assam students obtaining Engineering qualifications from schools in other provinces.

(ii)—The information cannot be supplied. When a post is vacant applications are called for and the best man is selected. No record of all the applications received is maintained.

(c)—The reply is in the negative if the questions refer to candidates with equal qualifications.

(d)—A statement is given below :—

No.	Names.	Native of	Length of service.
1	2	3	4
1	Dhiraj Mohan Majumdar	Other province	Y. m. d. 2 11 0
2	Bijoy Kumar Gupta ...	Ditto ...	3 2 0
3	Tara Charan Nath ...	Surma Valley ...	2 8 0
4	Darpanath Dutta ...	Other province...	3 8 0
5	Abinash Chandra Dutta...	Surma Valley ...	6 10 0
6	Narendra Lal Das ...	Ditto ...	5 2 0
7	Suresh Chandra Das ...	Ditto ...	9 2 0
8	Bhupendra Nath Sen ...	Other province...	5 0 0
9	Datya Narayan Ghosh ...	Assam Valley ...	7 6 0
10	Nanda Lal Majumdar ...	Ditto ...	3 3 0
11	Himanshu Ranjan Basu...	Other province...	1 0 0
12	Mr. F. H. Hodgkins ...	European ...	26 10 0
13	Mr. A. P. Jolly ...	Ditto ...	27 6 0
14	Rai Sahib Sarat Chandra Das.	Surma Valley ...	31 4 0
15	Babu Surja Kumar Chat- terjee.	Other province...	31 10 0

(e)— The number of officers in the Subordinate Engineering Service is :—

Assam Valley	...	...	11
Surma Valley and Hill Division	...	...	17
Other provinces	...	...	32
In the Lower Subordinate Service the number is :—			
Assam Valley	...	...	6
Surma Valley and Hill Division	...	...	1
Other provinces	...	...	24

(f)—No junior officer has been confirmed after the discharge of any senior Assamese officer. A few subordinates junior to those discharged, have been retained because their reports showed them to be better men. In selecting men for discharge the only question considered was efficiency.

MAULAVI SAIYID SAMIUR RAHMAN asked:—

1.—Will the Government be pleased to show a statement as to the increase and decrease of the population in Habiganj between the years 1911 and 1921? Sanitary condition in Habiganj subdivision.

(a) Are the Government aware that the sanitary condition of the Habiganj subdivision is worse than other years? If so, will the Government be pleased to state what arrangement they are going to make for its improvement?

(b) Are the Government aware that *kala-azar*, small-pox, cholera, etc., are victimising the people of Habiganj year by year? Are the Government taking steps to prevent this?

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

1. A statement is laid on the table.

	Population according to the Census of 1911.	Population according to the Census for 1921.
Habiganj subdivision	... 597,720	592,939

(a)—Apart from the extent of the prevalence of *kala-azar* brought to light in the recent survey and occasional cases of cholera, Government have no reason to believe that the sanitary condition of Habiganj subdivision has deteriorated of recent years. To deal with these epidemics an increase in the *Kala-azar* Medical Staff is being arranged for and the Director of Public Health has been asked to investigate the reasons for prevalence of cholera.

(b)—Yes, Government are aware of the endemic prevalence of *kala-azar* and cholera and the measures which are contemplated have been indicated above. The prevalence of small-pox has been met by an increased activity in the vaccination work of the subdivision.

MAULAVI SAIYID SAMIUR RAHMAN asked:—

2. Are the Government aware that there is no Honorary Magistrate in South Habiganj, while there are two such Magistrates in North Habiganj? If so, what is the reason? Honorary Magistrate in South Habiganj.

THE HON'BLE MR. A. MAJID replied :—

2.—Although the Habiganj subdivision was divided into two constituencies for the purpose of the election to the reformed Legislative Council, the division has not been recognised for other purposes. The Hon'ble Member appears to be correct in suggesting that there are two Honorary Magistrates sitting within the constituency of North Habiganj and none within the constituency of South Habiganj. Government are not aware of any special reason for this, but presume that had there been any necessity for the appointment of Honorary Magistrates within the constituency of South Habiganj recommendations to this effect would have been received from the local officers.

MAULAVI SAMIUR RAHMAN asked :—

Text-Book
Committee.

3. Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table the number of members of the Text-Book Committee of the Surma Valley during the years 1918-23?

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

3.—During this period, the number of members was eight, including *ex-officio* members.

MAULAVI RUKUNUDDIN AHMAD asked :—

Jorhat
Railway.

1. Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table the report of Mr. A. V. Hawkins, C.I.E., Deputy Traffic Manager, Eastern Bengal Railway, on the Jorhat Provincial Railway, if it has been submitted to the Government?

MR. A. W. BOTHAM replied :—

1.—The report, which has only just been received, is at present under consideration by Government who are not prepared to lay it on the table at the present stage.

MAULAVI ABDUL KHALIQUE CHAUDHURY asked :—

1. Will the Government be pleased to state—

Assistant
Masters of
Govern-
ment High
Schools.

(a) The number of permanent and temporary vacancies of Assistant Masters which occurred in the Government High Schools of the Province between 20th September 1922 to 15th March 1923, and the number of those vacancies filled up by each community Hindus and Muhammadans?

- (b) The number of permanent vacancies of Head Masters and Assistant Head Masters which occurred in the Government High Schools of the Province during the said period and the number of such posts filled up by Hindus and Muhammadans separately ?
- (c) The number of permanent and temporary vacancies of Deputy Inspectors of Schools which occurred during the last five years in the Surma Valley and the number of such appointments offered to Muhammadans ?
- (d) The number of Muhammadan and Hindu officers separately in class II(a), II(b) and II(c) of the Subordinate Educational Service ?

2. Are the Government aware that there is not a single Muhammadan Assistant Head Master in any of the Government High Schools of the Surma Valley and no Muhammadan Head Master in the whole of the province ?

Muhammadan
Assistant
Head
Masters.

Have Government considered the desirability of appointing Muhammadan officers to such posts whenever vacancies occur ?

3. (a) Are the Government aware that in the absence of a Muhammadan Head Master in a High School the interests of Moslem pupils and those of the Muhammadan candidates for officiating posts are overlooked ?

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

1.—The particulars will be collected and furnished in due course.

2.—The answer is in the affirmative.

Selection for promotion to the posts of Headmaster and Assistant Headmaster rests with the Director of Public Instruction, who reports that the cases of officers of all communities are duly considered on their merits when a vacancy arises. Government do not consider it advisable to order that Muhammadan officers should be appointed to such posts whenever vacancies occur.

3.—The answer is in the negative.

THE ASSAM LOCAL RATES BILL, 1923.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—Sir, in the first place the motion which stands in my name is not I think quite correct, or at all events there is a preliminary motion to be moved.

I beg, Sir, to move for leave to introduce the Assam Local Rates Bill, 1923. If the Council accord leave I shall then introduce the Bill. I say again, Sir, at present I am asking only for leave to introduce the Bill, and the Council by granting leave are in no way committed to the principle of the Bill, to the details of the measure, or to anything else. It will be open to them at a later stage to object to anything to which they choose to take exception. That being the case I should not ordinarily give more than the very briefest explanation. But hon. members of this Council are perhaps a little suspicious sometimes. They think that if an objectionable measure is coming up it is better to make an end of it right at the beginning than to take chances with it afterwards. Also from conversations I have had it is quite clear that there have been some misunderstandings about the Bill, and with the Council's permission I shall try to explain one or two of these. My own position in the matter is entirely disinterested. If the Bill is introduced and is subsequently accepted and passed into law, modified or not, none of the Departments for which I am responsible, in fact none of the Reserved Departments will benefit by a single rupee. The whole proceeds of the Bill, if there are any proceeds, will go to the Local Boards, so that the Member of the Government who is most closely interested is the Hon'ble Minister. The reason why I am in charge of the Bill is because we assess and collect the local rates along with the land revenue. The same staff do both duties. This is cheap and convenient and we propose to continue this system. I should like to say also that the Hon'ble Minister had nothing to do with the framing of the original Bill. That was done before he had taken charge of his office. As regards the present Bill which has been modified in many important respects, we have had the benefit of his advice and criticism, but the Bill was not framed by him.

Well, Sir, I shall take up as little time as possible, but I should like to give one or two explanations. The object of the Bill as stated is to increase the incomes of Local Boards by all legitimate means. That was the object of the original Bill, but when we circulated that we received an enormous mass of criticism and I must candidly admit that a great deal of that criticism was fully justified. The present Bill, I hope the Council will agree, is a much better measure. It is simpler, it is fairer. The Bill is not necessarily in its final shape even now. If leave to introduce the Bill is given the motion that will be made at the next session will be that it be referred to a Select Committee after, in the meantime, we have published it to ascertain what public opinion on it is, and at that stage the Council will have finally to decide whether to accept the principle of the Bill or to throw it out altogether. It is an attempt to assess the local rate at something nearer the actual value of lands than is possible under the present Regulation. We propose to work on the same simple lines that we follow at present. We are introducing no new machinery and no new troublesome returns.

As regards ordinary cultivation in the temporarily-settled areas throughout the province, that is to say, the five upper districts of the Assam Valley, the district of Cachar and the temporarily-settled portions of Sylhet and Goalpara, we are making no change at all. The rate will be levied at one anna in the rupee of the land revenue annually payable. The reason we make no change is because the land revenue of these areas is subject to periodical resettlement. They have all been resettled I imagine at least twice since 1879 when the Regulation was enacted, and therefore any increase in land revenue has been automatically followed by an increase in the local rate payable.

We propose to make a difference about special cultivation, and I almost blush after what we heard of the burdens the tea industry are already bearing at the idea of suggesting that they should add still another to their burdens for the good of the province and for local needs. I am encouraged, Sir, to make the suggestion by the fact that I believe the tea industry, while convinced of the injustice of the present position, are willing to take some additional burden for the good of the province. I take this opportunity, Sir, of stating publicly that the change we propose affects only special cultivation. There has, I think, been some misunderstanding because in the clause as now drafted there is mention not only of tea, coffee, and indigo, but of flax, jute and sugarcane. I would ask hon. members to read the next few words—"or such other crop demanding a special method of cultivation or process of preparation for the market." These words are intended to apply to all the different crops enumerated. We have no intention for a moment of putting a special rate on the ordinary cultivator who grows a little jute or who grows a little sugarcane or anything of that kind, and if the Council wish definite safeguards to this effect to be put into the Bill this can and will be done. We have had great difficulty in drafting the clause to give effect to our intentions. We want to enact, to take for instance jute, that only large estates which grow jute on a commercial scale and employ special machinery to manufacture and prepare it for the market, and similarly in the case of sugar that only large sugarcane estates which grow sugarcane on a commercial scale and treat the cane in factories should be specially assessed. I say again that the ordinary ryot, whether he grows rice or jute or sugarcane or any other crop, will not be specially assessed, that he will merely pay a rate assessed on the land revenue to which he is assessed.

I spoke just now, Sir, of the additional burden on the tea industry. I want only to add that in the neighbouring province of Bengal the tea industry has since the year 1880 been assessed to local rates at the rate which we proposed in the original Bill but have now slightly reduced. That is to say in Bengal tea is assessed as if the land revenue per acre of the cultivated area was ten rupees, so that cess is levied at the rate of ten annas an acre. We have now proposed in the Bill eight annas an acre. We propose that this rate should apply to all other special cultivation in the province.

We come next, Sir, to the permanently-settled areas. At present under a rather rough and ready system we assume that the land revenue on these areas is two rupees an acre and we levy a local rate accordingly, that is to say, two annas in the acre. In the Bill we do not propose to alter the method, but we do propose that the assumed rate of land revenue should be

three rupees and not two rupees. I would only say here that the two-rupee rate was fixed in 1879. I leave the Council to judge to what extent rents have increased since then, to what extent the price of agricultural produce has gone up, whether if two rupees an acre roughly represented the annual value in 1879 three rupees can be regarded as at all excessive in this year of grace 1923.

There is a provision in the Bill for assessing the rate on the annual value of fisheries and *bazars*. As regards this the provision is tentative. If strong and reasonable opposition is manifested the Government will be perfectly willing to reconsider the matter. But I may say at once that in the case of *bazars* which are already assessed at special rates under the Town Land Rules or otherwise and pay a land revenue at all commensurate with their value we should in no circumstances increase the assessment.

The proviso to section 7 has been widely criticised. Again I say this is not an essential part of the Bill as it will finally stand. As it is the proviso is purely permissive. It allows any Local Board, subject to certain safeguards, to ask that an additional rate should be imposed.

Another point of interest will be found in section 8 which substitutes for the present extremely complicated provisions of our Local Rates Regulation a rough and ready means of ensuring that everyone interested in land from the landlord down to the cultivating ryot pays some portion of the rate which is assessed. Our method has at all events the merit of simplicity.

I said at the beginning, Sir, that as regards this Bill I at least was wholly disinterested, that not a rupee would come to the Reserved subjects. I have seen it suggested that the idea of the Bill is to assist the Reserved subjects indirectly if not directly, that is to say, that by obtaining more money from local rates for the Local Boards we should deem it open to us to save money by reducing the grants which we give to them. Well, Sir, it is impossible for me to give any absolute guarantee. I cannot predict with certainty the financial position, neither can I speak for future Governments. But I can say this much, Sir, that so far as we as a Government are concerned, provided our financial position does not become even worse than it is at present, we have no intention of reducing our grants. In support of what I say I would point to the fact that both last year and this, though money was so scarce and every possible economy had to be undertaken, we have maintained at the figure of four lakhs our annual subsidies to Local Boards for the improvement of communications.

I apologise, Sir, for taking up the time of the Council so long but I wanted the Council to understand clearly on what they are asked to vote.

MAULAVI MUNAWWARALI :—I ask your permission, Sir, to allow me to oppose the introduction of this Bill. The foremost ground, Sir, of my opposition is the question of ability and capacity of the people whom we are going to tax. Are the people in a position to be further taxed at this stage? I will say emphatically, most emphatically, that they are not. Sir, last year we passed the Stamp Act and the Court Fees Act and this in spite of the greatest opposition of the people. This year, Sir, the doubling of the salt duty has added to the penury of all India. It may be known to the hon. members of the House that each individual requires 10 lbs. of salt.....

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—On a point of order, Sir, we are not discussing the salt duty but the Local Rates Bill.

MAULAVI MUNAWWARALI :—I am, Sir, only discussing the position to which the people of this province would be reduced by passing this Local Rates Bill. I am not beating about the bush but showing our position and in so doing.....

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—If I may interrupt for a moment, Sir, I tried to explain to the Council that to at least a very large section of the community this Bill even if passed into law will not make the slightest difference. It is just possible that the consumption of salt in the permanently settled portions of the district of Sylhet might be affected, but this is not so as regards the temporarily settled areas. I cannot see what connection all this has with the present discussion.

MAULAVI MUNAWWARALI :—We are, Sir, considering the broad features of the Bill and if it affects the permanently settled portions of Sylhet district I do not think that it does not affect a very considerable section of the community. Sir, the effect of this Bill would be very disastrous. Our economic situation does not justify any further taxation. Now I think taxation is the last means to be tried for the improvement of the resources of a particular province or a particular Board, or whatever that may be. Are we justified in passing the Local Rates Bill? There may be necessity—necessity has no bounds—there may be necessity, I say, but have we tried all our means in the Local Boards to readjust our resources, to marshal our resources, to reframe our budget according to the light of the present circumstances. This we have not done. After we have done all these things in the Local Boards, after we have tried all the means to reduce our expenditure in every way and seen to it that there is no waste, I say after doing all these things if we find that we are running the Local Boards on a deficit then probably we might be justified in taking to fresh taxation. Now let us see what would be the position of the people. They will have to pay 50 per cent. more than they have been paying, at least in the permanently settled areas. That is not a very small burden. The effect of the great war is still telling very heavily on the entire society from top to bottom. Prices of things have gone so abnormally high. What would be, Sir, the cultivator's position now? The land which he cultivates does not yield the same amount of crop as it did before. The land is every year being subjected to the law of diminishing return. The cultivator does not get the same return to-day as he did before, and that is the law of nature, law of political economy. Now, Sir, the pest, water hyacinth, is gradually absorbing arable land every year from day to day and the land available for cultivation is being gradually diminished. So the amount of crop also that he grows is being diminished according as the land is being absorbed by the pest, water hyacinth. Again, Sir, he is to be taxed not only on the land that he actually cultivates but on the land already entered in the papers and according to which he is to be taxed. So it will be seen that he will be taxed for a land which yields him no produce. Again, Sir, the value of the land on account of competition, according to the law of demand and supply, the supply remaining constant while the demand increases daily, is daily increasing in spite of its diminishing return. It will thus be seen that the economic position is not being improved but every day, even taking all other things intact in spite of the

increasing value of the land, the cultivator or the landlord is not in a better position. We had, Sir, opposed the Record-of-Rights Bill and we did so not on principle but on the ground of inability and incapacity of the people. Times were much better, much better than the times are to-day. We did not pass the Record-of-Rights Bill.....

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—If I may again interrupt, Sir, the passing of the Record-of-Rights Bill would have involved the province in heavy expenditure. The passing of this Bill so far from involving us in any expenditure will, we trust add to the resources of the Local Boards.

MAULAVI MUNAWWARALI :—I do not know, Sir, in what way it might add to the resources of the country. The national wealth will remain constant. We did not pass the Record-of-Rights Bill because of our incapacity. Now we are in a serious situation and can we take to such a legislation which throws the entire cultivating community into a fix. Sir, it does not leave a single individual untouched among the lowest ranks nor does it leave the condition of the higher unaffected. I therefore, Sir, not only because the people are not in a position to be taxed at the present moment, not only because there is a strong resentment against taxation, but also because the measure is not justified in the light of my preliminary observations, in the light that the Local Bodies on whose behalf this taxation is to be undertaken have not tried all their means, have not come to a finding that they cannot run the local self-government without leaving the Board in a heavy deficit balance, beginning with a *minus* opening balance and closing with a greater *minus* balance, that I oppose this Bill. I oppose it also because it would be unfair on our part, it would be simply betraying the trust, the great trust that has been vested in us by the people whom we represent, if we allowed it to be passed. With these few words, Sir, I commend my opposition to the hon. House, to their most serious consideration and I hope that they will all agree with me when I say that it will be quite a disastrous step to take to a legislation like the one that is being urged.

THE HON'BLE THE PRESIDENT :—The question is that leave be given for the introduction of the Assam Local Rates Bill, 1923.

The motion was put and the House divided with the following result :—

AYES—23.

NOES—12.

Hon'ble Mr. W. J. Reid.	Maulavi Abdul Khaliq Chaudhuri.
Hon'ble Mr. A. Majid.	Maulavi Abdul Rahim Chaudhuri.
Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Promode Chandra Dutta.	Maulavi Akmal Hussain.
Mr A. W. Botham.	Haji Muhammad Abdul Ahad Chau- dhuri.
Mr. A. J. Lainé.	Maulavi Munawwarali.
Mr. J. R. Cunningham.	Khan Bahadur Muhammad Bakht Mazumdar.
Mr. J. N. Taylor.	Maulavi Saiyid Samiur Rahman.
Maulavi Rashid Ali Laskar.	

AYES—23—concl'd.

NOES -12—concl'd.

Maulavi Rukunuddin Ahmad.
 Srijut Bepin Chandra Ghose.
 Rai Bahadur Bipin Chandra Deb
 Laskar.
 Babu Biraj Mohan Dutta.
 Raj Kumar Chandra Narayan
 Sing.
 Srijut Dalim Chandra Borah.
 Srijut Lohit Chandra Nayak.
 Rai Bahadur Monomohan Lahiri.
 Srijut Nilmoni Phukan.
 Mr. A. J. G. Cresswell.
 Mr. W. D. Smiles.
 Dr. H. G. Roberts.
 Mr. E. S. Roffey.
 Mr. D. M. Somerville.
 Mr. D. S. Withers.

Munshi Safur Rahman.
 Khan Sahib Sharafat Ali Chaudhury.
 Rev. J. J. M. Nichols-Roy.
 Mr. R. N. Chaudhuri.
 Mr. E. H. Featherstone.

The motion was accordingly adopted.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—Then, Sir, I beg to introduce the Bill.

The Secretary then read out the title of the Bill.

LIST OF DEMANDS.

THE BUDGET—(Second Stage.)

GRANT No. 1.

(5.—Land Revenue.)

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :— I beg, Sir, to move :

“ That a sum not exceeding Rs. 13,84,000 be granted to the Governor in Council to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1924, for the administration of the Land Revenue Department. ”

We have two notices of motions for reduction.

RAI BAHADUR BIPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR :—Sir, I wish to withdraw the motion standing in my name.

With the permission of the House the motion was withdrawn.

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—Sir, the motion that stands against my name is this :—

“ That the demand for grant No. 1 under 5—Land Revenue of Rs. 13,84,000 be reduced by 5 per cent., i.e., by Rs. 69,200.”

Now, Sir, in this motion I have adopted a principle which I believe will not bring hardship to any particular item. I propose, Sir, that as far as practicable this five per cent. cut be made from all the items under this head. A few items which are non-essential may be omitted while a cut of five per cent. be made of all the other items. I have brought forward this motion out of a sense of duty to prevent the province from running into debt. In my budget speech I made it clear that it is the imperative duty of the Council to cut the budget by five per cent. It is important that we should now be free from debt and when the finances are made normal we shall be able to make progress in the improvement plans. I will now point out a few items which look questionable.

On page 25 there were 65 Sub Deputy Collectors in 1923-24. This year there will be 79, i.e., 14 more than last year. Why this increase in this year of financial distress ?

I find that Rs. 2,000 have been provided for the purchase of mules for the Subdivisional Officer, North Cachar Hills. Last year the amount of Rs. 1,600 was provided for this purpose. If some mules were purchased last year, why not let him get along with the mules already purchased instead of adding more ? It may be argued that this is a small amount ; but a little straw might break a camel's back which has already carried an excessive weight. If we save the thousands we save the lakhs.

On page 26, again, according to the last year's revised estimate against the item “ Clerks ” Rs. 40,700 were put, and in this year's budget for this item a provision of Rs. 46,752 was made. If my understanding is correct, this increased amount must either be for appointing more clerks which were not appointed last year or for increasing the salaries of the clerks remaining or already in service. Whichever of these may be right, why not postpone this increase until better times ? On page 29, again, in regard to the commission on land revenue collection, on poll, on house tax, on grazing, I want simply to ask a question—to whom are these commissions paid ? To the officers of the Government ? If so, why pay commission ? Why cannot these officers work without this commission during this time of hard financial circumstances ?

On page 30 the charge allowance of Rs. 1,800 was not in last year's budget. If any additional duty is meant to be given to the officers under the department in this page, let this amount be reduced.

Page 32 again. According to last year's revised estimate the amount spent for Surveyors and Tracers was Rs. 4,400 for 14 officers. There are this year 13 of these officers and the amount to be spent for them is almost double the amount of last year. This is questionable. Why this increment ? The same remark applies to the item “ Computers ” under this head.

Page 33. The lump provision for one Assistant Settlement Officer of Rs. 1,500 is a new item. I suppose this item with several of the other items I have questioned above is for the purpose of *Ilam* Settlement in Sylhet. The question is why more than 3 Settlement Officers and 1 Assistant Settlement Officer are necessary to do the work? Then the items 'Petty Construction and Rewards' are questionable. Why cannot a reduction be made in these?

Page 35. The provision of Rs. 25,680 for travelling allowance is also questionable. Why cannot this be reduced? Again why an increase this year in the field allowance of Supervisor Kanungos? I question the advisability of giving rewards. Against item 'Rewards' a sum of Rs. 7,150 is put. Then the total contingencies under 'Land Revenue' amount to Rs. 13,233. This can be reduced. In another department, on which I shall have an occasion to speak afterwards, the item 'Contingencies' amounts to over two lakhs. I will read a few words from the Report of the Bengal Retrenchment Committee in connection with contingencies.....

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—Sir, I think that every member has got a copy of the Report of the Bengal Retrenchment Committee. If the hon. member will mention the paragraph to which he refers other members will be able to look it up for themselves. I say this, Sir, merely to save the time of the Council.

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—Paragraph 450 (b), page 147 of the Report. You will find that the contingencies are very seriously criticised by this Committee. I suppose I have to ask the hon. members to read for themselves what they may find here in this paragraph. I am afraid every hon. member may not have a copy. If I read a little, I think it will help them. I will now read this portion :—

“The fact that the budget estimate is based on the figures of the actual expenditure of the preceding three years, offers an incentive to spend as much as possible, and officers feel little compunction in disposing of their balances at the end of the year, despite the rules against that practice, and the waste it entails. In two instances one-third of the total annual expenditure was incurred in the last three days of March 1921. In another case, Rs. 2,000 were spent on furniture and stationery on the last day of the financial year, some of the articles being ordered by wire to avoid lapse. Among the items purchased were an inkstand for Rs. 24-7 and two timepieces for Rs. 195. A further instance is the purchase of 15 milch cows at a cost of Rs. 3,585.”

This may not apply to the contingencies that we find in the Assam budget, but I am afraid something like this might also occur in the contingencies in this budget. Now, Sir, the above are a few of the items under Land Revenue which are questionable. I think the Hon'ble the Finance Member will be able to give some explanation in regard to these items, but whether the explanation is satisfactory or not I submit that a cut of 5 per cent. can be made from all the items under this head. No one will suffer seriously. There will be some inconvenience, I admit, but it is better to have some inconvenience than to run into debt.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—The motion for reduction, Sir, is in a form that is new to this Council. I said in replying to the budget discussions that a method of this kind of reducing every expenditure budget by five per cent. had at least the merit of simplicity. But I said also, Sir, that I trusted the Council would not follow this method. And I told them that we had been driven by sheer necessity to apply this drastic and unscientific method ourselves, and had encountered the very greatest difficulty in so doing.

I shall have a word or two to say on the general question, but must begin by protesting in the most emphatic manner against the method adopted by the hon. member. He gives us notice of a general reduction of five per cent. of the demand. He then goes through the detailed estimates, and without giving us the slightest notice of his intention picks out individual items which he calls questionable. I am glad to say, Sir, that no other hon. member has treated us in this manner. We have always received due notice of motions to reduce, and if specific items are regarded as questionable we have received notice of motions either to reduce or to omit. If our explanation is accepted the motions are withdrawn.

Well, Sir, I cannot without warning undertake to deal fully with all the items mentioned, but I can say that the hon. member has been singularly unfortunate in the selection of at least one or two of them. He repeated a mistake which I think has been made before about the number of Sub Deputy Collectors. On this point Mr. Botham made a definite statement in the course of the budget debate and I imagine it was after hearing this statement that my hon. friend Rai Bahadur Bipin Chandra Deb Laskar withdrew the motion of reduction of which he had given notice under this specific head.

Then, Sir, the hon. member questioned the provision of Rs. 2,000 for mules for the Subdivisional Officer of the North Cachar Hills. Why should we provide the Subdivisional Officer with mules? The reason I believe is that he has to tour along rough hill tracks in sparsely populated country where it is difficult to get coolies to carry loads, and where the carrying of loads for an officer on tour is a matter of hardship to the people who carry them. Nor is the hardship always made up by the comparatively high rates of wages that are paid. That is why we provide mules for the Subdivisional Officer. It is not to add to the comfort of the Subdivisional Officer. It is not to enable him to travel in luxury.

I am not sure that I have noted all the items to which the hon. member called attention. He was against giving commissions for collection of land revenue. Several of the members of this Council are *mauzadars*, and we all know that they are not ordinary Government servants, they receive no pay. If they are not to be remunerated by a commission on the revenue they collect are they to receive nothing for the valuable services which they render to the Government?

Again in the matter of the travelling allowance, field allowances and good conduct allowances given to Supervisor Kanungos, many of us know what duties these officers perform. We know what the so-called rewards are—a certain small percentage of the number who do exceptionally good work

receive small rewards on that account. The only alternative would be to raise the pay of the Supervisor Kauungos all round. Does the hon. member think that that would mean a reduction of expenditure?

Then as regards contingencies the hon. member read an interesting extract from the Report of the Bengal Retrenchment Committee. He was good enough to say that possibly all the instances of waste and misapplication of Government money that that Committee had found would not be found in Assam. I can only assure the Council that with the allowances that we make at present for contingencies I know of no officer who at the end of the year has any money to spend unwisely or improperly. Most officers find it very difficult to balance accounts and pay the absolutely necessary charges they have had to incur. All the same when we received the Report this chapter is one which we took up specially. As a matter of fact we are making enquiries to see if by any chance any reduction in the contingencies is possible.

So much for details, Sir. On the general question of this five per cent. reduction I appeal to the Council as business men to say whether this is a business proposition. It is all very well to say that this reduction will not hurt anybody. Would it not hurt, would it not seriously inconvenience a prudent householder who had already made out his family budget to reduce it by five per cent.? In fact to make the cases parallel we should have to consider a prudent householder who had already cut his family budget down by five per cent. Would it hurt him not at all, would it inconvenience him not at all to cut yet another five per cent.? I submit that we put details of our expenditure as clearly as possible before the Council. We have gone further this year. We have given new statements. We have I think the right to ask that if an hon. member thinks that a reduction is possible under a certain head he will indicate with some precision where and how that reduction should come.

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—Sir, I have heard what the Hon'ble Finance Member has said on the subject and I want to say a few words in reply. In my understanding I do not think the Finance Department has been treated in any way badly by my giving this amendment for I believe any member has a right to pursue any course which seems to be the right course in order to bring the province into a financial equilibrium.

Now the second point is the question of mules. I questioned this item not because I considered that these mules were not necessary, but because I saw in last year's budget that there was a similar provision, and I thought that probably they had already been bought and the Subdivisional Officer can get along with them now. And then, again, regarding the commission of mauzadars for collecting land revenue, I asked a question whether there was any Government officer collecting the taxes, and if that be the case, then I asked, why not let them collect the tax without any commission? I did not say anything about mauzadars. Now in regard to the question which the Hon'ble Finance Member asked, whether it would not inconvenience anybody to cut further a family budget if it had already been cut by five per cent.? In my speech I already admitted, Sir, it would be inconvenient. But the question before us is whether we would rather suffer inconvenience

or run into debt, from which debt if we once incur we may not recover for some years to come. I, for one, think that it is better to suffer some inconvenience than to run into debt. For this reason, I think, that the hon. members of this House will consider that this proposition is reasonable. If it is carried it will show that it is our desire that the budget should be cut and that the expenditure should be lessened. It does not seem to me to be impossible to make this cut from this head.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I tried to put my case clearly, Sir. I thought the hon. member said his suggested reduction would not inconvenience anybody. He certainly said it would not hurt any one. He says he admitted that it would cause inconvenience, and if I misrepresented him I beg the hon. member's pardon.

As regards commission, Sir, I tried to explain that the item of commissions relates only to *mauzadars* who are not ordinary Government servants. They receive no salary but are remunerated by a commission on their collections.

The motion was put and negatived.

The original motion was then put and adopted.

GRANT NO. 20.

(Provincial Advance and Loan Account.)

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I beg, Sir, to move :

“that a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,50,000 be granted to the Governor in Council to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1924, for the administration of the Provincial Advance and Loan Account.”

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—Sir, after seeing the attitude of the Council I think the best way will be for me to withdraw this amendment, and I accordingly do so.

The motion was withdrawn.

The original motion was then put and adopted.

GRANT NO. 7.

(22.—General Administration.)

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I beg, Sir, to move :

“that a sum not exceeding Rs. 18,58,000 be granted to the Governor in Council to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1924, for the administration of the head ‘22—General Administration.’”

There are several motions for reduction.

MAULAVI ABDUL KHALIQUE CHAUDHURI :—Sir, I beg to move :

“that the salary of a Minister be fixed at Rs. 2,500 per month with effect from 1st April 1923.”

Sir, there were hot discussions more than once in this Council about the reduction of salaries of Ministers. I was all along against the reduction. Now, Sir, the financial condition of the province has much changed, the province is on the verge of bankruptcy. The circumstances have changed and

I cannot but change my opinion too. The hon. members are quite aware of the discussions made on this subject on the previous occasions. I think to recapitulate them is a waste of time. I only add here a few words in my support.

Sir, we are seeing from some time past that, in the absence of one of the Ministers, the other in addition to his own duties is satisfactorily discharging the functions of the absent one. At present Government has kept the post of the late Minister for Local Self-Government unfilled and the Minister for Education in addition to his own duties has accepted the portfolio of the other. We take this as proof that Ministers have less work to do.

Now, Sir, the question is what amount can be voted for the salary of the Ministers in lieu of their work. The verdict of the people demands the reduction and the financial stringency of the province too requires this reduction. The Provinces of Bombay and Bihar and Orissa have already reduced the salaries of their Ministers. We think, Sir, that, in consideration of the financial crisis of the province and the works of the Ministers they have to do, a fixed salary of Rs. 2,000 per month is more adequate. But, Sir, in consideration of their high status in the House and in consideration of the unnecessarily large salary we are bound to pay to our Councillors, I propose, Sir, that the salary of the Ministers be fixed at Rs. 2,500 per month with effect from the 1st April 1923. And I venture to say, Sir, in the words of the Hon'ble Minister Rai Bahadur Promode Chandra Dutta "that the salary of a Minister be fixed at Rs. 2,500 and this is enough."

With these words I place my motion before the House for its serious consideration.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—Sir, on this occasion I do not propose to repeat arguments with which the Council are already familiar. We have discussed the question of the salaries of Ministers on two occasions. It is, as I told the Council on both occasions, their undoubted prerogative to decide what salaries the Ministers shall draw. But I would ask the Council, Sir, as reasonable men, whether this is the time to effect a reduction. The hon. mover referred to the decision announced yesterday by His Excellency the Governor that until after the elections there will be one Minister and not two. We have, therefore, one Minister doing the duties of two men, and those duties I can assure the Council are sufficiently onerous. Is this the time, Sir, to make a reduction? Is it fair? If economy is the motive then there will clearly be an economy owing to the fact that for these months only one Minister will be drawing a salary, and I am prepared to accept a reduction of Rs. 30,000 in the demand in view of the fact that there will only be one Minister. I would beg the Council to make no change now. When His Excellency has finally decided whether we shall have one or two or three Ministers, then by all means let the Council exercise their prerogative. Let them decide what they will pay the Ministers. Let us not have an annual—I cannot help calling it an undignified dispute as to what the figure should be.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI :—Sir, I have got a similar motion standing in my name. I should like to know whether I would be given the opportunity later on of moving the motion or whether it would be taken up simultaneously with the present motion before the House.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID:—The hon. member's motion is identical in terms, and under our rules it is automatically withdrawn.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI:—Very well, Sir. I will now proceed to discuss the motion before the House. I have listened, Sir, with the very greatest interest to what has just been said by the Hon'ble the Finance Member with respect to His Excellency's utterance that till the ensuing election the present vacancy of Minister will not be filled. As I understand the position two Ministers were appointed under rules and one of them under vacancy is to be appointed with the option of His Excellency the Governor.....

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID:—I thought, Sir, every one knew that the number of Ministers is a question for His Excellency's sole decision. He may appoint one, two or whatever number pleases him. There are no rules fixing the number of Ministers.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI:—Now the proposal is to make a definite reduction in the salaries of the Ministers. I do not know whether the Minister present in the House would want to say anything in this respect, because I would like to know his opinion in the matter first (*laughter*). It is generally the practice of this House that when a motion of this kind is made the Finance Member takes up the opposition and we do not know directly what opinion is held by the person in question. However I do not know whether it is the correct procedure, but on the whole I would say that a question of this kind was asked as early as 1920-21 during the budget discussion by Mr. Cresswell, who brought a motion for the reduction of the salaries of Ministers for reasons which were then expounded. Then later I understand similar motions were made, but unfortunately no reduction was effected. At any rate this time the same motion is coming up because of the serious financial crisis involved. The country at large is suffering from pecuniary difficulties and the present crisis has almost reduced the people to a point of starvation. The budget as we find is every year taking huge proportions, increasing by leaps and bounds, and the Government is unable to pay and maintain the people under it. The position being such, is it enough I ask, Sir, now to propose to retain the same salaries which were proposed years ago? I would say as one man that it should be reduced. Only the other day a motion was brought forward to the effect that one of the posts of Executive Councillors be abolished. Arguments were advanced that it would not be wise to abolish the posts of Councillors or Ministers, but to reduce their salaries. The hon. members who made such arguments will, I trust, be consistent on this occasion and I will for my own part be consistent myself. It is a general question affecting the pockets of everybody down to the humble peasant because the rate-payers' money will have to be used for the upkeep of the Government officials. The arguments have been advanced that for Europeans and Indians to ask for similar salaries for work of a similar nature would not be justifiable, inasmuch as Europeans have to live under different circumstances from those under which Indians have to live. We can quite remember how we appreciated these arguments when they were urged here. In the circumstances I do not for a moment think that the opinions of those gentlemen will have changed now. Then, Sir, if I can judge from the attitude of the Council and the opinions that were expressed a few days ago, not more than two days ago, I am sure that my proposal

would be favourably accepted by the House. If there had been a difference in their attitude within a few hours it is not for me to explain that. But I certainly hope that they will keep up their attitude and show a bold front. The matter does not require to be dealt with longer. This matter is understood by everybody and so there are only very few things to say for or against. It is only the sentiment which is affected here. Excepting the sentiment there is nothing whatsoever which can justify the maintenance of the same salary, regard being had to the position of the country. Due to economic causes practically no money is in the pockets of the agriculturists. The agriculturists are the persons from whom in one way or another we get our subsistence. The zamindar as a rule gets his rent from the agriculturists and from the zamindar the money goes to the Government and from the Government the money goes to the pockets of the officials.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID:—From some zamindars very little money goes to the coffers of the Government.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI:—Then the traders have to trade on the produce of the cultivators. Then for the maintenance of the lawyers money has to come out of the savings of the cultivators. In fact practically all, even the members of this Council, depend to a certain extent upon the cultivators. Now, Sir, if the position that Europeans and Indians stand in different positions is accepted at least in emoluments though not in rank, if it is the position that the House has already committed itself to, or at least most of the members have expressed in one way or other, and if the agriculturist cannot pay anything more and if the budget remains in deficit, in these circumstances will it not be quite right that the Minister's salary should be reduced? After all, what is the Minister's work? Can you or I not become a Minister? Can't we do the same thing, this routine work which the Minister does. It is nothing but routine work which everybody can do. There is nothing in it. No supernatural improvement has been made in these three years and nothing has been made or done for the amelioration of the condition of the people. When the Reforms were going to be introduced we were told we would be living under a new Heaven and on a new Earth. Where is the new Heaven and the new Earth? We are labouring under the same difficulties and our position is worse. Having now a picture of this kind, a very painful picture, will it not be worth while for us to consider for a moment our position afresh? We find that there is not much work of a supernatural kind. Even though the work that an Indian does is the same as that which a European gentleman does, I think he can accept less salary and I would therefore suggest most earnestly that the salary of a Minister be reduced to the amount I propose, *i.e.*, Rs. 2,500 and not Rs. 3,500.

In the meantime, Sir, a slip has been passed on to me—I do not know who has done it—and from that slip I understand that the Minister is ready to accept Rs. 2,500 (*laughter*). Well, Sir, I am not inclined to speak today, as I am not in quite good health as the Hon'ble Mr. Majid will bear me out, and I therefore hope that the House will accept my motion.

MR. E. S. ROFFEY:—Sir, I strongly oppose this motion. When a similar motion was before the House last year I voted in favour of it, but as circumstances have changed considerably since then and we have been informed that the Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Promode Chandra Dutta is going to do the

work of two men I consider it is a very poor compliment to him to now suggest that his salary should be reduced. I could understand a motion to increase it but not to reduce it. Under these circumstances, Sir, I would ask the House to show by their votes that they are opposed to this motion.

MR. A. J. G. CRESSWELL :—Sir, having been one of those who supported this resolution in the past I find myself to-day in rather an awkward situation having listened to the remarks made by the Hon'ble the Finance Member. I personally have always advocated that the remuneration of Rs. 2,500 per month is sufficient, but I should be the last person to suggest that if one Minister is to do the work of two Ministers his pay should be reduced. This I am by no means anxious to do. It is not within my scope to know as to when His Excellency may appoint another Minister. But on a matter of principle alone I support the resolution.

MAULAVI RASHID ALI LASKAR :—I had a mind to sit silent, Sir, but seeing the trend of the motion I cannot help adding a few words in this connection. First of all, Sir, I wish the Council which consists of members sent by the entire population of this province for the work of legislation, for discharging most difficult tasks, to consider if it would look well if their decision will not last for more than a year. If it will not last for more than a year then the meaning of 'precedent' is entirely lost. Then, again, this course would make the post of a Minister most uncertain and will be shaken every year if at the time of every budget we shake the pay of a Minister. I think competent persons would in that case think twice before aspiring for this shaky position. Then again, Sir, the motion as it stands resembles a resolution, and not a motion so to say, and it appears to be wider in its scope than the budget. What is the budget? It asks for a grant for this one year only, but the motion appears to decide something permanently. So the motion appears to be wider in its scope than the budget. The motion as it stands, again, appears to be not so economical in its bearing. If the motion is carried at all, what is the economy we get? Actually we are getting now a saving of Rs. 3,500 every month at least for the remaining nine months. This will not enable the House now to come forward to advocate the saving of Rs. 20,000 a year instead of the saving of more than Rs. 30,000 a year. Then, Sir, from what we have already heard in the Darbar Speech of His Excellency I think it is worth while to wait for a few months and see what it comes to without coming to a certain decision now at the time of asking for the grants. So I oppose this motion.

SRIJUT NILMANI PHUKAN :—Sir, the House will forgive me if I say that we are every year taking up the question of Minister and his salary light-heartedly. I remember the Hon'ble Finance Member to have said in the budget discussion of the last year that this question should be settled once for all. I also say—if I do not go to that length—at least I should say the same question may not be raised every year during the life-time of one Council. A Minister ought to know in the morning what will be his bill of fare in the evening. I have been opposing such resolution from the very beginning. I have not been able to change my belief as yet. But in to-day's discussion I want to make my position clear. Perhaps the House will excuse me if I deal with the matter a little. The reasons for not reducing the Minister's salary this year have been adduced both by the Hon'ble Finance Member and my friend Mr. Roffey. With due respect to their reasons I should like to say

that because more portfolios have been added to the Minister for Education I do not think that should be the reason for not reducing the salary. I believe and perhaps I am not wrong in my belief that the Hon'ble Minister himself never expected any remuneration for this extra work because it was open to His Excellency to appoint another Minister in place of the late Rai Bahadur and I cannot say that His Excellency did not fill up the vacancy on the ground that there might not have been another man who could take up the portfolios. I am glad to note from His Excellency's speech last morning that it is only for sheer economy that he has been advised to do that. And I am also happy to think along with the people of my Valley that he has quite diagnosed the situation and I must frankly say the conditions of both the Valleys are so peculiar that at least in this province we shall not be able to do without two Ministers. I frankly say this. Personally I never for a moment hesitate to leave the interests of this Valley entirely in the hands of the present Minister. That is not the question. The Minister himself from the other Valley may not always be acquainted with the sentiments and conditions of this Valley. So on that very ground I do not see any reason not to move the reduction of the salary. But my position is clear that this question of the salary of the Minister should not come oftenest in the Council and I must not deal with it light-heartedly as regards the posts of Ministers. What was the outcome of the resolution of one of my friends for the abolition of the post of one Minister? Absolutely none. So this is not the place to treat our Ministers so light-heartedly, and as my hon. friend, Mr. Smiles, the other day said we must not grudge a few thousand rupees here only to lose a few lakhs somewhere else. I cannot rush into the belief that the position of the Minister is more ornamental than real. In the present circumstances he might not have been able to do much due to various causes, but certainly if Reforms mean anything he will have to seek for a policy which will have far-reaching effects in the country in future. So I do not think we should grudge this amount at least for this year for the same reason which the Hon'ble Finance Member and the hon. Mr. Roffey have adduced.

BABU KRISHNA SUNDAR DAM :— Sir, I thank my hon. friend Srijut Nilmani Phukan for the frankness with which he has dealt with the question. I confess I have not understood what he means by approaching the question very seriously. One member of the Assam Valley has approached this question purely from the financial stand-point and Mr. Phukan has approached this question rather from the point of view of Valley considerations than from any other thing and there is also to be added to this question the question of communal considerations. So all these three questions have to be taken together in giving the correct decision of the Minister's salary. On this point I should like to say at the outset that we should speak out what we have got to say with full publicity, with full notice to those who have sent us here instead of approaching higher authorities by a deputation in an unrepresentative and unauthorised capacity. The country should know the way we want to proceed—whether on Valley considerations or communal considerations or purely on financial considerations and I have not perfectly understood Srijut Nilmani Phukan as to what should be his guiding policy in this matter. We have heard the question argued from the stand-point of financial difficulties and from Valley considerations and perhaps there will be some members of the Muhammadan community who will say that they want to proceed on communal consideration and from these three stand-points it may

be necessary for His Excellency the Governor to have three Ministers. So I do not know how this political question of the province of Assam will be solved. So far as the present arrangement goes we cannot but offer our hearty thanks to His Excellency the Governor for making what economy is possible in the present circumstances. But it is not a question of temporary arrangements. As for myself, Sir, I have always supported the view on the assumption that there will be two Ministers, like my friend, the hon. Mr. Cresswell that the salary of each Minister should be Rs. 2,500. If His Excellency for any reasons during the second Council of the Reforms thinks that there should be three Ministers, I shall have to come forward with motions—if I have any chance of being returned to the Council—for reductions in the provision of Rs. 2,500 for each Minister. So we have to change our views according to the number of Ministers which we require for this province. And so the difficulty lies here what should be the number. His Excellency has not been pleased to make any final statement as to what should be the number. As the Hon'ble Finance Member has said there may be two Ministers, three Ministers, four Ministers, five Ministers—nobody knows. Of course if we proceed purely on personal considerations the larger the number of Ministers, the better for the Council (*laughter*). So these are the difficulties which enhance the seriousness of the question.

Mr. Phukan has approached this question from Valley consideration. He has approached the question simply from that stand-point. There are some members who would approach the question on communal consideration. If we were certain of the stand-point from which we should consider this question, then can we come to one decision. Otherwise there is absolutely no chance of coming to a decision. So in this view of the matter, simply on a question of principle, and on the assumption that there would be two Ministers I ~~cannot~~ support this motion on the ground which has been stated by my friend on the left.

BABU HIRALAL BOSE:—Sir, in view of my submission to the Council the other day regarding the salaries to be drawn by Ministers I ought to say a word on the subject. Of course we have heard the Hon'ble Finance Member the other day regarding the number of Ministers to be entertained during the rest of the year and we have yesterday learnt from His Excellency the Governor that for the remaining portion of the year he is not going to appoint another Minister. In my humble opinion, Sir, it is rather to be considered as if we have no power to criticise, that we are to be satisfied with the number of Ministers which under the Statute His Excellency the Governor is pleased to appoint. But I think it should be rather appropriate, as it strikes me, to say that it would have been far better if, instead of diminishing the number of the Ministers on the Cabinet, the salaries were reduced because it is a question of policy, because if the number is reduced the representative and democratic form of the Cabinet is also reduced. We see that we have no hand in the matter. It is entirely within the discretion of His Excellency the Governor. So when His Excellency has decided to retain only one Minister for the remaining portion of the year and when the Hon'ble Minister is to discharge the duties of both the Departments, in spite of my previous opinion expressed in this Council, I think his salary during the remaining portion of the year should not be reduced. On that principle only I oppose the reduction.

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—Sir, I have a motion under this head which I would like to withdraw and I want to speak a few words regarding the salary of the Ministers. Under the motion which I intended to move I wanted to speak a few words regarding this question of the salary of the Ministers. In the last Council or in one of the previous Councils I supported a motion of this nature, and I am still inclined to support it now on the question of principle. It has been said that this kind of motion ought not to be brought in the House again and again, but I am afraid that the motion will again and again be brought into the House unless the salary of the Minister is fixed. And if it be fixed now at Rs. 2,500, I am almost sure that the question will not come up again because it seems to be the sense of the general public that the salary of a Minister should be reduced, and it seems also that the Council will be satisfied if the salary be fixed at Rs. 2,500. Now, in regard to the present Hon'ble Minister I believe that there is no one here who wants to undervalue his work. It is highly appreciated, and I have no doubt that he has very heavy duties to perform on account of the extra work that he has to do owing to the decease of the late Hon'ble Raj Bahadur Ghanasyam Barua. No one wishes now to reduce the amount he is getting, but let the extra Rs. 1,000 be in the form of a duty allowance and not in the form of salary, for the time that he has to perform these extra duties. The very fact that the question has been raised again and again shows that no satisfaction will be arrived at until this matter is finally settled and the salary is reduced. For this reason, Sir, I believe this question of salary should be settled and the salary of a Minister fixed at Rs. 2,500. Even if there be only one Minister, I think the salary should be fixed at this amount. The less the salaries of the Cabinet the better it will be for the country. I believe that the salaries that have already been given to the Members of the Cabinet are quite high in comparison with the salaries of such kind of officers in other countries. One of the hon. members in one of the previous Councils said something to this effect which I am not going to repeat, but I think the salaries of both the Ministers elected by the people should not be so high as they are, especially at this time. If this heavy salary be reduced it will be a great relief to the province. We have already been crying against the administration as being topheavy, that the Ministers are very highly paid. There have been talks against fat salaries. I think it is only fitting to the poor province of Assam that the Minister's salary be fixed at Rs. 2,500. For this reason I support this resolution.

SRIJUT LOHIT CHANDRA NAYAK :—Sir, I am quite at one with many of the remarks that have been brought to the fore by Srijut Nilmani Phukan and the sentiments of the Assam Valley have found eloquent expression through the lips of my hon. friend just referred to. There is no use disguising the fact that we are in this Council not so much guided by the financial consideration of the province. It has been rightly remarked by my hon. friend that one Minister will not do for both Valleys, though it has been suggested to be a temporary measure by His Excellency the Governor of course it may be so for the present having regard to the financial stringencies that we have to face yet. I beg leave to say that such a heavy burden should not have been placed on one head, on one Minister, by the addition of another portfolio which was carried on so ably by the

late lamented Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Ghanasyam Barua. Now, Sir, in the first year of my Council life, I with the hon. Mr. Cresswell and eight other hon. members I believe supported a resolution for the reduction of the pay of the Minister and in the second year I was in a draw, *i.e.*, I reserved my vote on the subject. Though I would like now that the Minister's salary should be fixed at Rs. 2,500 yet having regard to what the Hon'ble Finance Member said I am in a position to suggest that for the present we need not insist on Rs. 2,500 because the present Minister has to do more duties than were legitimately meant for him. So, Sir, as a matter of principle I am for supporting the amendment, but having regard to the present exigencies of the case I oppose the motion.

SRIJUT DALIM CHANDRA BORAH :—Sir, I beg to say a few words on this resolution. It is very well known to every Member of this Council that it is a very old and hackneyed question and we have dealt with it so often that we are tired of it. I am surprised and at the same time I am glad that some of the hon. members who were in favour of Rs. 3,500 as the salary of the Minister about a year ago have since modified their views, and there is reason probably for them to make such a change of views. Of course there may be a charm in the post and this charm acts in different ways on the minds of different persons of different temperament. I advocated the reduction of number of Ministers in my last budget speech but I do not remember to have made any suggestion as to the reduction of the salary of the Ministers then. Some hon. members in advocating a reduction have made some remarks, but I need hardly say that in whatever we say in this House we must be very courteous. Mr. Chaudhuri—I may be excused if I am wrong—made some remarks and asked what work the Minister had done. He was wrong in expecting that the Minister would convert the earth into heaven. Whatever work is done is known to us all, and we ought not to attack him in a merciless and discourteous way. Since we have been dealing with this question from time to time and just at the time of the budget discussion it is better that it should be settled once for all. I cannot attach any importance to the opinions expressed by some hon. members who are not satisfied with the motion. We may raise the question when occasion arises. The consideration is not the amount of work freely and voluntarily undertaken by the Hon'ble the Minister to perform, but it is the value to be attached to the post and if the public opinion is invited I am sure that the majority will be in favour of a reduction. So on this ground I support the resolution moved by my hon. friend.

SRIJUT BIPIN CHANDRA GHOSE :—Sir, I would like to say a few words in connection with the motion before the House, unpleasant though it is. When a similar motion was brought before the House during the budget discussions of last year some of the members urged 'what have the Ministers done for us till now'. To that my reply is that we have got many things from them. We are not to question what they have done. We must be satisfied with what little we receive at their hands and we must be grateful for their services, but the question is whether our present financial condition compels us to reduce the salary of the Ministers. Now the thing is why at every budget discussion we come with such a motion as the reduction of the salary of the Ministers and not of other members. We would have moved for the reduction of the salaries of the Executive Councillors, nay even of His Excellency the Governor also, had we had the

power to do so, but we are handicapped, so we come here with resolutions for the reduction of the salary of the Ministers which is a voted one, and we have every right to discuss that subject whenever occasions arise. Now, Sir, one point has been suggested by the Hon'ble the Finance Member, and it is this that at the present stage we are not to discuss the matter, or push the matter any further, because there is only one Minister at present and he has got to do certain extra works. True, but my reply to him is that for the extra work, as has been suggested by my hon. friend Rev. Nichols-Roy, some extra allowance may be granted to him, and I would have no objection to allowing him to draw Rs. 3,500 a month, i.e., Rs. 2,500 as pay and Rs. 1,000 as allowance.

So, Sir, the question or motion as it appears before the House should be settled once for all and because similar motions are repeatedly urged before the House it is evident that hon. members want that some sort of decision should be arrived at with regard to the salaries of the Ministers. I therefore consider that the present is the proper time to decide the question, especially when other provincial Legislative Councils are thinking alike. In my opinion therefore we should settle this question once for all. A similar motion was put before the House and I supported it. This year too I am glad to state I still hold the same opinion. With these few words, Sir, I beg to support the motion moved by the hon. member Maulavi Abdul Khaliq Chaudhuri.

MAULAVI ABDUL KHALIQUE CHAUDHURI:—Sir, I have observed the great energy which has been evinced in the unusual enthusiasm with which the members of the House have opposed the resolution. At all events I venture to submit that I did what I thought was my duty and now I leave it to the Council to decide what is theirs.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID:—If I may say a word or two in reply, Sir, though there is very little left for me to say, the majority of the speakers have dealt in the fairest way with the question. Some of them have said frankly that their principles, their views are unchanged, but that circumstances have changed and the present is not the occasion to press the views which they held and continue to hold. I was disappointed to find Mr. Cresswell, who has experienced the same difficulty as many others, proposes to solve the difficulty by supporting the motion. I was hoping that the line of argument he had followed would lead him to oppose the motion on his own arguments.

I say again, Sir, that surely this is not the time at which to decide finally what the salary of the Minister shall be. That the Council has the right to decide at any time. His Excellency the Governor told us that until the next election was over we shall have one Minister. He also said that he was anxious to know what public opinion in the matter was. He said, I think, that he would be glad if the electors could pronounce an opinion upon it in the course of these elections. At all events no one who has listened to the debates in this Council can doubt that there is a very strong feeling that one Minister is not enough for the province, that it would be better to have two or it might be three. I urge again on the Council to let this question first be decided. The decision rests with his Excellency, but I need hardly assure the Council that the expressed wishes

of the Council and the electors of Assam will carry the very greatest weight with His Excellency when he comes to decide. And when that question has been settled let the Council decide what the pay of the Ministers shall be. It is not surprising that many people should think that two or three Ministers on Rs. 3,500 a month are a bigger proposition than the Council can approve or the finances of the province permit. But I say, again, Sir, is it fair, is it right when one man has taken on the burdens of the two posts, to reduce the pay? There is nothing sacred in the figure of Rs. 2,500 any more than there is in the figure of Rs. 3,500. What the Council will vote ultimately I am not prepared to forecast. I think I can say that when the time comes the Council themselves will do it. The official members will take no part in the voting. One hon. member said "Don't keep the salary at Rs. 3,500. Reduce the salary. Give the single Minister a duty allowance." Well, Sir, that is based on the usual argument which a good many of us here adopt that 'what I think ought to be the salary must be the salary. If you are going to give more than that, keep my figure as the salary and give a duty allowance.' Again I ask why we should assume now that Rs. 2,500 is the correct salary which will ultimately be fixed for the post? Why although for the present we are prepared to give a total sum of Rs. 3,500 should we class a thousand rupees of this as a duty allowance? That is all, Sir. We do not ask the Council to vote on what the ultimate number of Ministers shall be or what the ultimate pay of the Ministers will be. And I would remind the House of the offer I made, which will be carried out no matter how the vote goes, to reduce the demand by Rs. 30,000 as an economy which will result from there being only one Minister till after the elections.

The motion was put and the House divided with the following result :—

Ayes.	Noes.
13.	19.
Maulavi Abdul Khaliq Chaudhuri.	Hon'ble Mr. W. J. Reid.
„ Akmal Hussein.	„ Mr. A. Majid.
Haji Muhammad Abdul Ahad Chaudhuri.	Mr. A. W. Botham.
Maulavi Saiyid Samiur Rahman.	Mr. A. J. Lainé.
Munshi Safiur Rahman.	Mr. J. R. Cunningham.
Srijut Bishnu Charan Borah.	Mr. J. N. Taylor.
„ Bipin Chandra Ghose.	Khan Sahib Alauddin Ahmad.
„ Dalim Chandra Borah.	Khan Bahadur Muhammad Bakht Mazumdar.
Babu Krishna Sundar Dam.	Maulavi Rashid Ali Laskar.
Rai Bahadur Monomohan Lahiri.	Khan Sahib Sarafat Ali Chaudhuri.
Rev. J. J. M. Nichols-Roy.	Rai Sahib Har Kishore Chakrabatti.
Mr. R. N. Chaudhuri.	Babu Hiralal Bose.
Mr. A. J. G. Cresswell.	Srijut Lohit Chandra Nayak.
	„ Nilmani Phukan.
	Mr. W. D. Smiles.
	Dr. H. G. Roberts.
	Mr. E. S. Roffey.
	Mr. D. M. Somerville.
	Mr. D. S. Withers.

The motion was accordingly lost.

The Council then adjourned for lunch till 2-30 P. M.

The Council re-assembled after lunch at 2-30 p. m.

GRANT No. 7.

22.—*General Administration*—contd.

RAI BAHADUR BIPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR:—Sir, the motion that stands in my name is this:—

“That the sums of Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 7,000 provided for travelling allowance for the Members of the Executive Council and Ministers respectively be reduced to Rs. 2,500 and Rs. 3,500 respectively.”

Sir, there was a motion in the Council meeting of the 22nd March 1922 for not giving travelling allowance to the Hon'ble Members of the Executive Council and Ministers. The experience of the past two years has shown that the Hon'ble Ministers are not practically required to do much touring and I am not aware that as a result of their inspection they have done any improvement in any of the departments under their charge. The Hon'ble Ministers have taken no steps to improve the industrial and economic condition of the people or for their training. I find nothing worth mentioning that they have done. They seem to be going on with the usual Secretariat work. I am sorry to say that Cachar has not yet been favoured with a visit by the Hon'ble Minister for Local Self-Government. It was however very kind of the late Hon'ble Minister for Education and Medical and the present Minister in charge of these departments to visit Cachar. As long as other officials such as the heads of departments and the district officers continue to inspect the offices of the Local Bodies, schools and medical institutions it is hardly necessary for the Hon'ble Members of the Executive Council and the Ministers to make a thorough inspection of offices if they have got no power to improve matters in any way. I have very carefully considered this matter and I am decidedly of opinion that in these days of financial stringency the provision made on account of their travelling allowances may safely be cut down to half. This reduction will not affect the efficiency of the administration. Again one post of Minister has been reduced by His Excellency, I mean temporarily at least.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID:—I was not clear, Sir, when I first read this resolution what the intention of the hon. mover was. He might have meant either that he did not want Members of Council and Ministers to tour as much as they are doing, or he might have wanted to suggest that the budget provision made is excessive. We had a discussion as he said a year ago, and I then explained to the Council that neither the Members of the Executive Council nor the Ministers draw anything in the way of travelling allowance when they go on tour. Their expenses are paid, that is to say their railway steamer and motor fares. Also their servants are carried at the cost of the State and so is their personal luggage. If any members of their families accompany them they have to pay fares for those members like ordinary passengers. While they are on tour or while they are halting they draw nothing.

Well, Sir, from the speech of the hon. mover I understood him to hold that there was no need for much touring, that he did not see what good it did if Ministers and Members of the Executive Council went about, that if they found things wrong they could not put them right. Well, Sir, I am not prepared to admit that. I think that any of us who found anything

wrong could and would do something to put it right. But almost in the same breath the Rai Bahadur went on to attack the Hon'ble Minister for the fact that he had not yet visited Cachar. This seems to me a little inconsistent. I certainly cannot say that the provision made is absolutely correct. It is possible that as we are to have only one Minister temporarily we could do with a little less than the sum provided for Ministers. It is equally possible that tours of Members of the Executive Council might cost more than they have done, because my Hon'ble Colleague owing to reasons of ill-health was not able last year to tour as much as I know he wished to do, and that we have not provided enough. But I should like the Council to indicate when dealing with this resolution whether they do not wish us to tour or whether they think that we should continue to tour. For myself I value very greatly the opportunity that these tours give of seeing local conditions, meeting local people and getting first hand information on pending subjects of interest. If the Council think that tours are a waste of money and that we had better stay here let them say so. Life is certainly pleasanter in Shillong during the next few months than it is touring down below. But let the Council decide.

MR. W. D. SMILES:—Sir, I beg to oppose this resolution. I should like to see our Executive Councillors touring far more, there is nothing that would please me better than a visit from them during the months of August and September, and I am sure we would then get more money for communications. It is said 'a rolling stone gathers no moss', perhaps they gather only travelling allowance. In a climate like Assam we cannot afford to have moss growing on any of our officials.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI:—I also, Sir, have got a motion of this nature but the figures are different. In my motion I have got it that the lump provision of Rs. 15,000 for tour programme of Members be reduced to Rs. 12,000.....

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID:—May I ask, Sir, if the hon. member will be so kind as to indicate to the Council where the provision of Rs. 15,000 is to be found. I myself have entirely failed to find it.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI:—Sir, I think that is my mistake. There was a figure of Rs. 1,500 and I understood that it was for tour expenses for Members also, but that is a matter of detail I suppose. I don't think that it is an important item. Had it been an important item I would have tried to enforce it.

The motion was put and negatived.

RAI BAHADUR BIPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR:—Sir, I wish to withdraw the following motion standing in my name in favour of the one standing against the name of Mr. R. N. Chaudhuri. I shall support his motion. The motion I want to withdraw is as follows:—

"That the sum of Rs. 16,000 provided for the steam boat 'Kestrel' be omitted."

With the permission of the Council the motion was withdrawn.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI:—I understand all right, Sir, this item of Rs. 16,000 mentioned in my motion. I shall refer you, Sir, to page 105 of the budget for the year 1923-24.....

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—The hon. member will find the figures on page 50 of the detailed estimates.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI :—Thank you, there are also figures regarding the steam boat "Kestrel" on page 105.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—Sir, I intended to help the hon. member, not to mislead him.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI :—Sir, the main point of my bringing this resolution is nothing but to point out that this item of "Kestrel" was omitted by a resolution which was carried by an overwhelming majority in this House in 1921-22 during the budget meeting of this Council just after the inauguration of the Reformed Council. The resolution was opposed strenuously by the official members. Hence there can be no question that the resolution was not passed to omit the expenses for "Kestrel". Then the question arose as to the necessity of maintaining the steam boat "Kestrel" because at that time I can very well remember that my arguments were that the Commissioner who had the "Kestrel" in his control at that time had used it also for purposes other than on official duty and when there were mail steamers and other kinds of conveyance for touring purposes, "Kestrel" was superfluous and was not necessary for the real purposes of administration. The House had the good sense to adopt the resolution without asking for a division and I do not know how if the resolution had been given effect to, this "Kestrel" comes again under the administration under which it was existing then. I know and I understand to respect a resolution which has been carried and I know and I understand that if a resolution is carried, effect would be given unless of course it is vetoed by His Excellency the Governor. I cannot understand how it can appear again under the same administration. The boat was used by the Commissioner then, you all know. If anybody has no knowledge of it, he might take it from me that it was so. Now I understand that the boat is proposed at least to be used by the two Councilors and two Ministers. There is one item which makes a person confounded to find that the figures are not on the side of voted one. There are two columns provided in every page of the budget and I find under this head 4,536, 900, 2,600, 500, 3,000, 4,000 in the first column and in the second column 4,536, 900, 10,100. Under the circumstances I understand the amount of Rs. 16,100 is within the power of this Council to vote.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—Yes, it is so.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI :—If that is so, would this Council having regard to the fact that one or two years ago the item was omitted by a resolution passed by this Council allow it to come up for the second time? There is then no good of having a resolution passed altogether. If this resolution was passed, I cannot understand how it can come up again under the same administration. Well, the question before the House then is whether the House will go into the merits of the question again and whether the House will allow such a thing to be repeated. As to the merits or demerits of keeping "Kestrel" it remains very much or very little for me to say. But the thing is and my whole point is that a resolution once passed, the boat once knocked off, it cannot again survive (*laughter*). Under the

circumstances I should say that there were no good grounds for its allowing to appear again. I will simply say and that on principle that a resolution, if passed, should have its effect and under the circumstances "Kestrel" cannot appear again, "Kestrel" ought to be destroyed (*laughter*).

MAULAVI MUNAWWARALI:—Sir, I beg to oppose this motion. The hon. mover seems to be under a misunderstanding. He thinks that the "Kestrel" was knocked down for ever. He forgets that she revived the very third day of her demise (*laughter*), that she has been alive till now. It was, Sir, last year that I proposed to knock down the "Kestrel" once again, but the motion was defeated by a majority in the Council. I have since then been convinced that the Kestrel is a necessity and she is utilised in a better manner nowadays than she used to have been before. The Hon'ble Members of the Executive Council and the Hon'ble Ministers are the four high officials who have been constantly using the "Kestrel," and it would be bad economy to knock down the "Kestrel". My friend wants to destroy the "Kestrel," but "Kestrel" cannot be destroyed without bombardment (*laughter*).

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID:—I am greatly obliged, Sir, to my friend, Maulavi Munawwarali for the reply that he has given which makes my task a light one. I understand that the hon. mover of the resolution is concerned with a question of principle, a constitutional question, and that he thinks little of the merits of the case. If I dare to make a suggestion it is that if he found it possible to attend our meetings more regularly than he does he would be better aware of what happens. In fact I might go further, Sir, and say that if the hon. member could find time to read the proceedings of this Council when he is unable to be present he would be better acquainted with what happens. I know that the Council must be tired of the 'Kestrel' and I shall be as brief as I can. If he will look at the proceedings of a meeting held in March 1921 he will find that I moved that the sum of Rs. 11,000 by which the recent vote of the Council reduced the demand under the head "22—General Administration" representing the cost of the steam launch 'Kestrel' be added to the demand under the head '41—Civil Works.' This motion was accepted by the Council, and that is the reason why the unfortunate 'Kestrel' is still in existence, not in defiance of the vote of the Council but by a definite vote of the Council.

The hon. member said that he was moving on a question of principle and not going into the merits of the question, so I need say very little. I explained matters fully last year. I do not for a moment argue that the 'Kestrel' is so complete a necessity that the Administration would come to a standstill without her. But I said and say again that every busy officer, particularly officers who tour in the rains, finds that she is a very convenient and economical—at least economical in the matter of time—means of moving about; that she made it possible for us on these benches to travel in the rains, to visit stations, to work while travelling, to have files and our stenographers with us, to feel that we were not wasting our time. I said then and I say again—and I know that my Hon'ble Colleagues agree with me—we cannot undertake to tour in the rains if we have to travel by despatch steamers and trains. If the Council would rather that we did not tour that is another matter. I confess I have been looking forward to doing in the month of June an extensive tour in the Assam Valley and to visiting

all the headquarters stations. Without the 'Kestrel' it will be extremely difficult to do so. Sir, the 'Kestrel' has been of great use to all of us in the Government and that is the only reason why we ask to be allowed to keep her.

SRIJUT LOHIT CHANDRA NAYAK :—Sir, it goes without saying that touring is very necessary on the part of the Ministers and the Executive Councillors so that they may be in touch with the under-currents of thought in the minds of the people. And it also goes without saying that a good deal of things are brought to the notice of the Members and the Ministers when they tour and if touring is necessary, then a conveyance in the shape of "Kestrel" to do touring is also absolutely necessary. I am sure, Sir, that if a Member or a Minister would have been graciously pleased to go to Barpeta from Sorbhog station and had to cross the river 'Beki,' I am sure in that case it would have struck them that as Barpeta is a place of great religious centre and of commercial activity, that it should be linked in a short time with the nearest railway station. However, they have not yet been pleased to go there—from Sorbhog Railway station and therefore the scheme of connecting the town of Barpeta with the railway has been kept in abeyance, and many things which touring would have brought to their notice they, at present, only know by second-hand information. If the Ministers are given facilities of touring and finding out things for themselves they will be able to do a lot of good to us. I for myself as Chairman of the Barpeta Local Board find that touring is difficult and so many things are brought to my notice in course of my travels through rural areas that I do not find sufficient time to deal with them properly. It is said that the amount of work that a Minister has to do, is light—but when they have to do a lot of touring I am sure that their work cannot but be heavy, and I am credibly informed that the death of the last two Ministers is due partly to overwork. So the cost of maintenance of the "Kestrel" used by the Members and Ministers in their touring will be more than counterbalanced by the amount of useful work that they are expected to do. So I oppose this motion on the ground of principle as well as on the ground of exigency.

SRIJUT DALIM CHANDRA BORAH :—Sir, this our favourite friend "Kestrel" appears to be something like our mythological hero Ravan who does not die although he is made to die. In the first year of our budget discussion a resolution was adopted doing away with the "Kestrel". Then we were given to understand that it would be necessary for the touring purposes of the officers of Government and that the "Kestrel" would be maintained at the expense of the officers using it. Then in the next year a certain provision for the upkeep of the "Kestrel" was made and allowed to pass. And again this year it is brought to the notice of hon. members and it is for them to discuss again and either to oppose or to support this resolution on its merits. It is of course the duty of the officers who use the "Kestrel" to maintain it at their own expense.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I should like the hon. member to state his authority for this proposition.

SRIJUT DALIM CHANDRA BORAH :—I have only my memory to rely on and it is not possible for me to quote the authority. Of course if I have made a mistake I am open to correction but my impression is that I was given to understand that it was decided to maintain her at the expense

of the officers who used her. One of the hon. members has been pleased to say that it is for the tours of Executive Members and Ministers during the rains that the "Kestrel" is maintained by the Government. I admit it, Sir, but is it not necessary for members of this Council to have some motors for their journey from Gauhati to Shillong? If it is the duty of the Ministers and Executive Councillors to go on tour on duty, is it not the duty of the members of this Council to come to Shillong on duty, and if it is necessary for them to have a steam launch is it not necessary that there should be some motors for the use of the latter? Of course the Members of Council get some allowance, travelling and halting allowance for their journey. But against this I argue that the Members of Government though not receiving any halting allowance are given travelling allowances. So on this ground I support the resolution.

RAI BAHADUR BEPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR:—Sir, we discussed this question in the Council once before on 23rd March when the budget for 1922-23 was under consideration. In 1922-23 a sum of Rs. 5,900 only was provided. The provision has now been increased to Rs. 16,000 for 1923-24. As water and land communications have much improved in Assam through the blessings of the British Government the necessity of maintaining a steam boat for the use of the Members and Ministers is practically non-existent. The Government can easily do without this vessel. It seems to me because we have got this steam boat we are simply finding means how to keep it engaged. As economy is the order of the day I think the "Kestrel" should be disposed of at once and the provision made for its maintenance eliminated. We may also expect to get a decent sum by selling this steam boat. I hope the hon. members will agree with me in proposing this retrenchment.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI:—Sir, I wish that the "Kestrel" were placed at my disposal for attending the meetings of this Council, but as the "Kestrel" was not available for me I could not take the opportunity of attending the last session of the Council.—(laughter.)

It does not mean by keeping the "Kestrel" that any efficiency in any Department will be enhanced. The necessity for maintaining the "Kestrel" has been shown to a certain extent to be a very ancient one. It can well be thought by us that without the "Kestrel" the duty of touring can be performed without much difficulty no doubt. Only in one case I find that in order to go to Barpeta it will be necessary. That is the only instance that has been quoted.

SRIJUT NILMANI PHUKAN:—North Lakhimpur also, Sir.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI:—Very well, it might be necessary from the point of view of Government but we have to keep our point of view, and what we think we ought to say, we ought to say 'yes' or 'no' with reference to the maintenance of this boat according to our convictions. It has been repeatedly said that it was knocked off and hence I do not like to say how it can survive. The question of necessity was first of all not raised by me and I thought of giving up that point but since it has been raised by the

Hon'ble the Finance Member and as well by other touting members of this Council I have to say a few words in order to nullify the arguments that they had advanced. I say that there is no necessity for maintaining the "Kestrel" solely for the purpose of travelling of the four officers under whose control this boat is. It will require Rs. 16,000 for the upkeep of the boat, and in my opinion this sum is superfluous. I do not think that there is any necessity as the "Kestrel" had disappeared. It has been urged that the "Kestrel" appeared last year also in the budget, but I do not see any such item as "Kestrel" in last year's budget.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I can assure the hon. member, Sir, that there is no deception, that under whatever head it is shown every rupee that the "Kestrel" costs is shown in the budget.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI :—If it did appear it appeared under some other head, under the jurisdiction of another Department and the amount that was laid down was Rs. 4,500. This amount has just gone up to Rs. 16,000. The "Kestrel" appeared probably under a different head. Under the Civil Works it belonged to the Public Works Department. Now the steamer again wants to come back to the Ministers and Councillors.

I do not like to make a long speech on the subject. The question is whether it is worth while to move a resolution if there is no such thing as giving effect to the resolutions. It is useless for us in future to propose any resolutions. The resolution will have no effect because another time another resolution will be adopted and ignored and the whole effect of the resolution will be lost. So apart from the consideration of necessity as a matter of principle, if the House have any regard for principle, it should be adopted that the "Kestrel" cannot appear under any head.

My friend Maulavi Munawwarali says, I do not understand how he says that the "Kestrel" appeared under the heading 'General Administration'. I think I am also right in saying that it did not appear under that heading. If it appeared it appeared under the heading of Civil Works, so my humble submission to the Council is that on principle at least they should vote that there is no necessity for it appearing under that heading even.

With these few words I commend this motion to the careful consideration of the House.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—Sir, I have done my best for the hon. member. I found the page for him in the Civil Estimates where the subject of his motion is entered. I have tried to deal with the constitutional question and to show that there was nothing unconstitutional in this Council voting that the 'Kestrel' should not be kept as the Commissioner's launch, and on a specific motion subsequently deciding that the 'Kestrel' shall be kept for the use of Members of the Government. I am not sure that at the end of his remarks the hon. member did not suggest that any change in budget classification was unconstitutional. I really cannot accept this suggestion. I can say that complete figures of expenditure year by year are to be found in the Civil Estimates. We have from time to time, sometimes of our own motion but more frequently on the demand of the Accounts Department, to alter our classification and put expenditure which once appeared under one head under another head.

Srijut Dalim Chandra Borah said that the expenses of the 'Kestrel' ought to be borne by the officers who use her. I am not sure that he did not say that there had been an undertaking to this effect. That is why I asked for his authority. I have been entirely unable, Sir, to find that any such statement was made on behalf of the Government. I would remind the Council again of what I said a few minutes ago, that when Members of the Government tour they draw nothing by way of travelling allowance. It is therefore clearly impossible to cut the travelling allowance which they do not draw in order to meet the running costs of the 'Kestrel.'

Then, Sir, one hon. member suggested that we should get quite a decent sum by selling the 'Kestrel.' About that I am very doubtful. She is an old craft. We have had her now in the province for over twenty years. She carries on, but the engines are getting a little shaky and I do not think that if we found a purchaser at all we should get very much for her. She is, as I have said, most useful to Members of the Government by whom she is used at present.

There is one misapprehension on the part of one of my supporters which I should like to correct. The suggestion was that the reason why Barpeta has not got a railway connection is because no one tours there in the rains and sees the difficulties in the way of getting from the railway to the town. Well, Sir, that is not the case. The possibility of a railway connection has been examined on several occasions. A light railway can only be constructed if it is a commercial proposition, if there are likely to be profits which would justify promoters in taking it up. We have asked on several occasions whether any Company would take it up. We have entirely failed to find any offers. That is the reason why railway communication has not come into being.

One other point. It was suggested that there are no launches in Bengal. If hon. members will look at the Report of the Bengal Retrenchment Committee they will find that there are several launches. They will find recommendations as to how these should be used, that the launches should be assigned to particular areas and so on. I suggest, Sir, that these are very much the lines on which we are working.

To sum up, Sir, with the 'Kestrel' it is possible for us to tour in the rains, certainly to our advantage as far as acquiring local knowledge goes and I hope to the advantage of the districts and places which we visit. Without the 'Kestrel' it would not be impossible for us to tour, but the difficulties would be such that I personally should have to curtail my touring considerably.

The motion was put and the House divided with the following result :—

AYES—9.

NOES—22.

Maulavi Abdul Khalique Chaudhuri.
Maulavi Rashid Ali Laskar.
Munshi Safur Rahman.
Srijut Bepin Chandra Ghose.
Srijut Bishnu Charan Borah.
Rai Bahadur Bepin Chandra Deb
Laskar.
Srijut Dalim Chandra Borah.
Mr. R. N. Chaudhuri.
Mr. W. D. Smiles.

Hon'ble Mr. W. J. Reid.
Hon'ble Mr. A. Majid,
Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Promode
Chandra Dutta.
Mr. A. W. Botham,
Mr. A. J. Lainé.
Mr. J. N. Taylor.
Maulavi Abdul Rahim Chaudhuri.
Maulavi Munawwarali.
Khan Bahadur Muhammad Bakht
Mazumdar.
Maulavi Rukunuddin Ahmad.
Rai Sahib Har Kishore Chakrabatti.
Babu Hira Lal Bose.
Babu Krishna Sundar D.m.
Srijut Lohit Chandra Nayak.
Rai Bahadur Manomohan Lahiri.
Srijut Nilmoni Phukan.
Mr. A. J. G. Cresswell.
Mr. E. H. Featherstone.
Dr. H. G. Roberts.
Mr. E. S. Roffey.
Mr. D. M. Somerville.
Mr. D. S. Withers.

The motion was accordingly lost.

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :— Sir, I beg to withdraw the motion for reduction which stands in my name.

With the permission of the House the motion was withdrawn.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—Then, Sir, in compliance with the undertaking I gave the total will be reduced by Rs. 30,000. The demand is now for Rs. 18,28,000 instead of being for Rs. 18,58,000.

The original motion as amended was then put and adopted.

GRANT No. 17.

(45.—*Superannuation Allowances and Pensions.*)

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I beg, Sir, to move :

“ That a sum not exceeding Rs. 5,95,000 be granted to the Governor in Council to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1924 for the administration of the head ‘ 45.—Superannuation Allowances and Pensions.’ ”

The motion was adopted.

GRANT No. 11.

(26.—Police—Assam Rifles.)

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I beg, Sir, to move :

“ That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,72,000 be granted to the Governor in Council to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1924 for the administration of the ‘ Assam Rifles.’ ”

We have certain motions for reduction.

SRIJUT BISHNU CHARAN BORAH :—I beg, Sir, to move :

“ That the sum of Rs. 5,10,000 be reduced by Rs. 2,00,000.”

This will be found at page 95 of the Budget. In view of the expenditure which was incurred in supplying free rations to the Assam Rifles in the last year and in the year before the last I cannot make out why such a very big sum as Rs. 5,10,000 has been budgeted for the current year. I believe that the whole force of the Assam Rifles was provided with free rations during the last two years. The account for the year 1920-1921 shows an expenditure of Rs. 1,69,592 and the revised budget for the year 1922-23 shows Rs. 1,20,000. This year the expenditure has been practically increased fourfold. I desire to know from the Hon'ble the Finance Member what necessitates the Government to allot this unusually big amount as cost of free rations for the current year.

MR. A. W. BOTHAM :—This item, Sir, requires some explanation. If the hon. member had accepted the Hon'ble Finance Member's invitation to come round to the Finance Office and ask for an explanation on the point we should have been very happy to give it to him.

The system under which we give ration compensation has been explained before in the Council. The men in the Assam Rifles pay a fixed charge per month for their rations and Government pay the difference between that fixed charge and the actual expenditure. In the case of the Lushai Hills battalion the entire cost of the rations is paid by Government and the men's share is recovered from the men and credited to Government under the Revenue head 19C.—Police. In the case of the other four battalions up to this year Government paid only the difference between the men's contribution and the total cost and consequently there was no recovery from the men. The net result in both cases was of course the same. Government paid the difference. Now, Sir, as I have said, in the case of the Lushai Hills battalion we paid the whole cost of the rations and this was classified in the accounts as “cost of free rations.” In the case of the other battalions we paid the difference, and that was classified under a different detailed head, namely—“Compensation for dearness of provisions” in one year or ‘Ration compensation allowance’ in another year. This year as I say we have unified the systems and the entire provision is shown under the head, ‘Cost of free rations.’ In order to get the net result hon. members have got to compare and to compile the figures which they find under the heads ‘Compensation for dearness of provisions’ on page 93, under the head ‘Ration compensation allowance’ on page 94, under the head ‘Cost of free rations’ on page 95 and under the Revenue head ‘Recoveries on account of rations’ on page 16. The result is as follows :—
Actuals of 1921-22 Rs. 5,14,000 ; 1922-23—budget provision Rs. 4,24,000 ;
1922-23—Revised Rs. 4,09,000 ; 1923-24—Rs. 4,00,000, *i.e.*, the difference between Rs. 5,10,000 which appears on page 95 and the Revenue head figure Rs. 1,10,000 which appears on page 16.

SRIJUT BISHNU CHARAN BORAH :—From the Budget of course I could not understand how the amount came to be so big. Now I am satisfied and withdraw the motion.

With the permission of the Council the motion was withdrawn.

SRIJUT BISHNU CHARAN BORAH :—I beg, Sir, to move :

“ That the sum of Rs. 10,000 provided for service postage and telegram charges under sub-head Special Police be reduced by Rs. 5,000.”

This item will be found on page 95. The expenditure under this head in the year 1921-22 was Rs. 328 only. The budget estimate for the year 1922-23 was Rs. 1,000. The revised figure for the last year was Rs. 3,800, but this year by a big jump it has come up to Rs. 10,000. Now, Sir, I cannot understand what is there which has necessitated the Government to increase the expenditure under this item three times the revised figure of last year? I think we are not going to wage any war against the Hill Tribes to justify this department to correspond more than is usual, more than they did in the last year. I consider that Rs. 5,000 is a modest sum and anything more than that is unnecessary. I therefore propose a reduction of Rs. 5,000 under this head.

MR. A. W. BOTHAM :—This again, Sir, is a case of change in classification. If the hon. member will look at the detailed head ‘ Other contract contingencies ’ in the accounts for 1921-22, he will find a lump sum of Rs. 39,717, and again in the Budget estimate for 1922-23 a provision of Rs. 27,180. There is no similar provision either in the Revised for 1922-23 or in the Budget for 1923-24, the explanation being that these charges have been shown under the more detailed heads including that of ‘ Service Postage and Telegram charges.’ In the Revised for 1922-23 this charge is shown partly under ‘ Service Postage and Telegram charges ’ and partly under ‘ Office expenses and miscellaneous.’ I admit it is rather confusing but the Finance Department are not responsible for these cases for the classification. If the hon. member will look at the total figures he will find that we are providing Rs. 31,729 under ‘ Contingencies ’ as against Rs. 36,030 in last year’s budget. There is one other point, Sir. These Service postage and telegram charges are one item of what are known as Contract Contingencies. We give to the Head of the Department a lump sum which is calculated on a three years basis and which is intended to cover a considerable number of items, which will be found scattered over pages 94 and 95. The Head of the Department undertakes to spend that sum only on these particular items and he is required to keep within the contract allotment. He can however vary the allotment as between the various items. If he spends less on one item he can spend more on another; if he spends more on one item he has got less to spend on the others. Therefore to take any one item and propose a reduction in that is hardly fair on the officer concerned. When the contract grant is revised (as it is every three years) it ought to be revised as a whole.

SRIJUT BISHNU CHARAN BORAH :—If the Council is satisfied with the explanation given by the hon. the Chief Secretary I have no objection in withdrawing the motion.

With the permission of the Council the motion was withdrawn.

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—Sir, I think I will speak a few words and move this motion. The motion is :

“ That the demand for grant No. 11 under 26.—Police (Assam Rifles) of Rs. 2,72,000 be reduced by 5 per cent.—i.e., by Rs. 13,600.”

We have had quite a discussion on the question of the Assam Rifles and I think the reduction of five per cent. will have some weight on the resolution that we have already carried in the House, to show that on account of the financial distress this amount should be reduced, and this also should be brought to the notice of the Central Government. Moreover I still hold the principle that it is possible for the budget to be reduced by five per cent. and that that will deliver the country from bankruptcy. I feel, Sir, that it is my duty to protest against the budget being carried with such a large deficit and against any legislation brought forward for the sake of getting money from the poor cultivators and the poor people of the province. I feel that I am under compunction of conscience, Sir, to see that the budget will be carried with such a large debt at the end of the year and that legislation will be brought forward to tax the poor cultivators and others who are hardly able to pay for their food and clothes much less any taxation. For these reasons I say that there must be some curtailment in the budget and I press this motion before the House and ask them to consider whether it is not reasonable to have some reduction under this head.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I think, Sir, it is hardly necessary for me to acknowledge the obvious sincerity of the motives by which the hon. mover of this resolution is actuated. We know that he does not move his reductions to embarrass us or in any light-hearted manner, and we sympathise with his desire to reduce expenditure. But as regards the method that he has adopted of trying to bring about a reduction in our expenditure I must protest as strongly as I did when replying to his first resolution.

Well, Sir, from the hon. member's point of view he could hardly have chosen a worse head of the budget than this one under which to move a mechanical five per cent. reduction. If hon. members will look at the figures they will find that expenditure on Assam Rifles came down from Rs. 7,38,426 to Rs. 6,54,000 and again to Rs. 5,71,000 and that in the current year we budget for only Rs. 4,62,000. I said the other day in the course of the general budget debate that we were of opinion that the strength of the Assam Rifles had been reduced to the absolute limit of safety. How can we have again a five per cent. reduction? The reduction already effected is very much more than five per cent. Without going into details, without considering the requirements of the situation, the disposition of the force, I ask whether the grant should be reduced arbitrarily by another five per cent.? Does this course commend itself to members of this Council as business men?

The hon. mover suggested that to accept his resolution would help the request which under the decision of the Council will be made to the Government of India—that the Central Government should pay the entire cost of the force of Assam Rifles. As I understand his argument it was that if we now reduce the budget figure by five per cent., this will show the Government of India how very hard up we are, how essential it is that we should get some assistance. I do not attach any weight to the argument,

Sir, but might it not be that the Government of India, looking at the figures of a year or two ago would say—' Why should we assist this province? We see that their expenditure under this head is coming down every year. We already give them fourteen lakhs a year and in a year or two that will more than cover all their expenditure? '

MR. W. D. SMILES :—Sir, I beg to oppose this resolution. The other day the question of the Assam Rifles was raised in this House and I voted with the enlightened member that the Imperial Government should bear the entire cost. But that is no reason now for cutting down the grant by five per cent. If it were not for the Assam Rifles neither the poor villagers nor ourselves would know when we went to bed at night if we would wake up in the morning with our heads on our shoulders or not. And we have got a force, Sir, which we should be proud of. We should be proud of the Assam Rifles. It has got a reputation far beyond this province for jungle fighting, and it is efficiently and economically run. I think it will be a great mistake to try to reduce this grant which has been already materially cut down.

The motion was put and negatived.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—Sir, the demand may now be put.

The original motion was then put and adopted.

GRANT NO. 8.

(24.—Administration of Justice.)

THE HON'BLE MR. A. MAJID :—I beg, Sir, to move :

" That a sum not exceeding Rs. 7,04,000 be granted to the Governor in Council to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1924, for the administration of the head ' 24.—Administration of Justice.' "

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—Sir, I beg to withdraw the motion for reduction standing against my name.

With the permission of the House the motion was withdrawn.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI :—Sir, the motion that stands against my name runs thus :

" That the amount of Rs. 95,000 budgeted as share cost of maintenance of the Calcutta High Court said to be payable by this Province be omitted."

Sir, I am not sure of the fate of my motion seeing the way in which the House is dealing with me (*laughter*). But I have got to say something. We must have known for a long time that the Calcutta High Court is the High Court of this province. Is it not a fact? That fact nobody will challenge. The second fact is whether during the period of the existence of the High Court of Calcutta any amount was contributed from this province as share cost of the maintenance of that High Court. We are told that the High Court of Calcutta would do justice to the people of this province solely because the High Court has a jurisdiction over this province. Several attempts were made to establish a High Court in this province. It was said over and over again that when justice is done freely what is the necessity for having a High Court in the province. The arguments for the establishment of a High Court in the province were that the province ought to be self-contained, that the distance from here to Calcutta was great involving a large amount of expense for travelling, that the High Court should be established for the prestige of this province, that the High Court at Calcutta had jurisdiction over the Punjab, the United Provinces and Behar and Orissa in earlier days, that gradually the High Court was shorn off those jurisdictions as soon as those provinces had their High Courts which the people demanded, as I understand. Lately the province of Behar and Orissa being separated from the province of Bengal, a separate High Court was established according to the demand of the people there. Well, it does not matter much whether the High Court is in Calcutta or elsewhere so far as the justice is concerned. I am getting it in Calcutta. I am a resident there. I have got nothing to say against it. The only question that is raised is that once we had not to pay anything, why all on a sudden we have got to pay something? Is it a case of getting free justice? Where then the doctrine of getting free justice goes? Now, when we pay a certain share of the cost of maintenance we must claim for certain advantages over the persons who are getting the advantage from us. I do not know how much we will be entitled to get in exchange of Rs. 95,000. I have been told just now something between four and five thousand would be payable—I am not sure, I am open to correction for what I do not know. Then in this connection reference was made to rule 14 of the Devolution Rules. A peculiar construction was laid on that provision :—

The following sources of revenue shall, in the case of Governors' provinces and in the province of Burma, be allocated to the local Government as sources of provincial revenue, namely,—

And one of the items is :—

“payments made to the local Government by the Governor General in Council or by other local Governments, either for services rendered or otherwise.”

The meaning of this item is very clear. What will be the source of revenue, that is the only question which is to be decided by this rule. But the construction that has been put is something different. It has been said so far as I can understand that when any Government has made a claim over a sister province for anything under this rule payment can be made or a claim can be admitted under this provision. Of course what we would pay to the Government of Bengal, that will be considered as revenue earned by the Government of Bengal. Probably there are other sections of which I am not aware. So far as I can consider the thing it is so and nothing else

but so. Well, it does not strike to me to be a very hard thing to pay Rs. 95,000 to the Government of Bengal for a share of cost of maintenance of the Calcutta High Court ; my contention is to know why this sum has so suddenly been admitted. Having regard to the fact that on all previous occasions we had made no provision for it and that the Bengal Government had made no claim for it whatever why all on a sudden a claim has been made that is not intelligible to many of us. Of course as long as the High Court of Calcutta remains the High Court of this province perhaps that Court has some claims, but what I find difficult to understand is why on a sudden this claim is admitted when no claim had been made formerly and why the High Court of Calcutta suddenly made a claim. That is a difficulty which I cannot reconcile.

As I have found the tendency of this House I wish I could have opposed this resolution but that cannot be done. (*Laughter.*) Well, Sir, I should like to have the Hon'ble the Judicial Member's explanation as to the claim and as to the payment.

THE HON'BLE MR. A. MAJID :—Sir, in the course of the general discussion of the budget I in my reply explained on Saturday last why we were bound to make the payment, and I am anxious not to be guilty of inflicting another speech on the House repeating the same facts and reasons. I shall content myself with saying that we had no option but to make the payment. The Bengal Government who pays the Judges of the Calcutta High Court who try our cases and also pays the legal advisers of that Government who give us advice, has demanded the payment of our share of cost, and I do not think the House will consider that the provision was not justifiable.

✓ SRIJUT NILMANI PHUKAN :—Sir, I beg to say a few words on the subject. As regards High Court justice, I think we were fortunate enough to get it by sufferance so long. But fortune never smiles always, and misfortunes also never come singly. If we were asked to pay for High Court justice by the Bengal Government or the Government of India we were either to say that we did not want High Court justice or that we wanted it but were unable to pay for it. This is a fact that we shall have now to pay for the justice which we are receiving at the hands of the Calcutta High Court. Then also there is reason to be glad that we shall also be able to make a definite claim upon it for certain things. So long by sufferance we had an access to the Calcutta High Court but now we shall be a partner, though a humble partner it may be, and we must have a place there. Then I think this will now give us an opportunity to claim one or two seats in the High Court of Calcutta. Perhaps we shall now make a claim upon other offices so far as is consistent with the demand of this province. So, rather this will give us an opportunity to establish this claim once for all. Before we have a High Court of our own we should not grudge this amount. Now that we shall have to pay it, there is no way out of it. I shall welcome the day when we shall have an independent High Court of our own like the Calcutta High Court in our province. But is it possible at this moment to have, or even to dream of, a High Court here? For that reason I think it is not proper on our part to refuse to give this money.

With these remarks I am sorry I have to oppose this motion.

BABU KRISHNA SUNDAR DAM :—Sir, I am sorry that Mr. Chaudhuri did not anticipate the liabilities which would come upon the province with the grant of provincial autonomy, and I thank Srijut Nilmani Phukan that he has partially realised the sort of liabilities which have come upon us already and many others which are to come in quick succession. At present I am concerned only with the present item which affects all of us of the Surma Valley. We are vitally interested in the administration of justice by the High Court. Mr. Chaudhuri has asked why we did not pay anything so long and why we should be asked to pay now. It is because we had no autonomy before and we had not to pay and because we have autonomy now, we have to pay, and as my friend Srijut Nilmani Phukan has indicated, further claims from Bengal on account of the University and other institutions may soon be coming upon the province on account of the dependence of this province on the province of Bengal. I am in full sympathy with the views expressed by my friend about our having an independent High Court of our own, but we the people of Sylhet are not at all concerned with it because whether an independent High Court is established here or not, or whether that is ever an accomplished fact or not, it is a question of giving up vested rights with the people of Sylhet, and whether they will be ready to accept a substitute for the Calcutta High Court here in future.

With these few words I beg to oppose this motion, and I believe other hon. members of the Surma Valley will be sure to oppose the motion for like reasons.

SRIJUT LOHIT CHANDRA NAYAK :—Sir, it struck me, as it has struck my hon. friend Mr. Chaudhuri, why the Calcutta High Court which was dispensing till now justice to Assam freely had made a sudden change in its attitude and had demanded a contribution for its maintenance. I thought over it a little while and it dawned upon me that it was provincial fiscal autonomy that has been at the root of this demand. Yes, when the provinces of India have been granted fiscal autonomy to some extent it is quite proper that each province should adjust its accounts with one another and since the Calcutta High Court is dispensing justice to us it is quite fair that it must be paid for the services they are rendering us. There is no reason why this amount should not be paid to the Calcutta High Court as a share towards its maintenance. Now, what my hon. colleague Mr. Phukan said is quite true, that when we are paying for the maintenance of the High Court we can claim some seats in the Calcutta High Court as well. So I do not see any way out of this contribution made to the Calcutta High Court till we have an independent High Court of our own established within the four corners of this province.

MAULAVI MUNAWWARALI :—Sir, as the motion which has been introduced has a very important side issue without a direct reference to the motion I want to speak a few words as the subject has been allowed to be generally discussed. As to the main question of contribution there can be no two opinions that it must be contributed. Provincial readjustments have taken place and if the Calcutta High Court has demanded our share of cost we also have demanded a share for the maintenance of the Pasteur Institute

from the Governments of Bengal and Behar and Orissa. Well, Sir, if my recollection does not fail me I remember to have read in my college days in the *Assam Gazette* that the same hon. gentleman had moved a resolution for the establishment of a High Court in Assam and I need not tell you of the fate of that resolution. He wanted a High Court even in pre-Reform days, and it is no wonder that he should be talking on the same subject in these days of Reforms when so much more powers have been granted to us and we are drifting towards full provincial autonomy. As to the desirability of a separate High Court it is a remote question whether we should have an independent High Court. I think it is better to get the benefit of the most enlightened High Court in the continent of India, namely the Calcutta High Court, than to have a second or third rate high court in our province. The question which is to be more deeply thought out is the question probably of a University. If the question of a University is started it may be well said that the times are not opportune but when the question of a High Court is brought forward I think the reply ought to be that not only are the times not opportune for it but that it is altogether undesirable as there is the great High Court of Calcutta to administer High Court justice to us.

MAULAVI RUKUNUDDIN AHMAD :—Sir, I have already mentioned in my budget speech during the general discussion of the budget that this demand of the High Court was unfortunate for us but at the same time the payment was equally unavoidable. When we are receiving justice at the hands of the High Court in my opinion they have a right to demand payment. But we should not forget that by this contribution we are simply asserting our right to have a seat in the High Court.

With these few words, Sir, I beg to oppose the motion.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I had not intended to speak, Sir, but should like to say two words. First as has been recognised by several speakers so long as the Calcutta High Court works for us as it does this demand is inevitable. There is no way of getting out of it, and it is not very dignified to pass a resolution to which effect cannot possibly be given. Secondly the question whether Assam should or should not have its own High Court is hardly one the discussion of which comes within the range of practical politics at the present moment. Hon. members know what the financial position is. They can form for themselves some idea of what a High Court of our own would cost. I ask them whether we need take up time just now by discussing so very remote a contingency.

MR. R. N. CHAUDHURI :—Sir, several speakers have expressed their intention of pressing the matter forward, and I am asking myself whether I should or should not do the same. The only point that strikes me is as to how the High Court of Bengal came to put its claim over this province and how this province admitted such a claim. The reason as I have just heard was on account of adjusting finances. The amount probably has been paid for the upkeep of the High Court in so far as Assam is concerned. However, the purpose has been served and I rather think now that I should not press the motion but withdraw it.

With the permission of the House the motion was withdrawn.

The original motion was then put and adopted.

GRANT No. 9.

(25.—*Jails and Convict Settlements.*)

THE HON'BLE MR. A. MAJID :—I beg, Sir, to move :

“ That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,55,000 be granted to the Governor in Council to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1924, for the administration of the head ‘ Jail Department. ’ ”

There is one motion.

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—In order to save the time of the Council, Sir, I beg to withdraw this amendment.

With the permission of the House the amendment was withdrawn.

The original motion was then put and adopted.

GRANT No. 10.

(26.—*Police.*)

THE HON'BLE MR. A. MAJID :—I beg, Sir, to move :

“ That a sum not exceeding Rs. 18,99,000 be granted to the Governor in Council to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1924, for the administration of the ‘ Police Department ’ (other than Assam Rifles). ”

There are several amendments.

SRIJUT BISHNU CHARAN BORAH :—I beg, Sir, to move :

“ That the lump provision of Rs. 13,616 for the construction of residence for the Principal of the Police Training School be omitted.

MR. A. W. BOTHAM :—Sir, it might save time if I explain that this particular item has already been cancelled by a deduct entry. There is a lump reduction under the Assam Police Training School of Rs. 39,878, the intention being that the Police Training School should be closed altogether for the time being and no expenditure incurred on it.

SRIJUT BISHNU CHARAN BORAH :—In view of the explanation offered I beg to withdraw my amendment.

With the permission of the House the motion was withdrawn.

RAI BAHADUR BIPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR :—Sir, I beg to move :

“ That the provision made in the budget for 4 Inspectors, 7 Sub-Inspectors, 149 Assistant Sub-Inspectors and 456 Armed Constables in excess of the last year's budget be omitted. ”

Sir, this is not the year to create new posts. We are all troubling our heads to reduce expenditure. Our hospitals are not getting good supply of medicine. Our schools are not getting new provision for teachers. Schools

are being closed for want of funds. Teachers and clerks are being thrown into helplessness by abolition of posts. This is not the time to increase the police force. There is no use of saving money by curtailing necessary expenditure if the savings be utilised to swell the number of police officers. I cannot understand why so many police officers numbering 4 Inspectors, 7 Sub-Inspectors and 149 Assistant Sub-Inspectors and 456 armed constables will be required in the year to come. It is funny to notice while other departments are suffering from retrenchment the numbers of the police force are increasing. I am finding no necessity whatsoever for this increase and I hope the hon. gentlemen present in Council will agree with me.

MR. A. W. BOTHAM :—Sir, the hon. member is under a misunderstanding here. It is not intended to increase the Police force during the present year at all. The increase which is shown in the column headed "Numbers" is the increase which was sanctioned by the Council last year. If the Council will turn to the foot of the establishment head they will find a deduct entry of probable savings amounting to Rs. 1,30,000, which means that far from proposing any further increase in the Police force, we are proposing to make a considerable temporary reduction in that force. The expression 'Assistant Sub-Inspectors' as the Hon'ble Judicial Member explained the other day is simply a change of designation. Officers who were formerly called head constables are now called Assistant Sub-Inspectors, and the increase which is shown in Assistant Sub-Inspectors is balanced by a decrease in head constables.

RAI BAHADUR BIPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR :—In view of the explanation just offered by the hon. member for Government I beg to withdraw my amendment.

With the permission of the House the motion was withdrawn.

RAI BAHADUR BIPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR :—Sir, I beg to move :

"That the provision of Rs. 1,07,794 made for Railway Police be omitted."

Under the fitness of things the expenses for the Railway Police should be borne by the Railway Company. Why should the Government bear the expenses of the Police who work for the Railway?

The total provision made in the budget for the Railway Police is Rs. 1,29,700. Out of this Rs. 21,906 is a non-voted sum and Rs. 1,07,794 is a voted sum. Therefore I only move for the omission of this Rs. 1,07,794 for which the Council has the right to vote and leave the rest Rs. 21,906 to the judgment of the Government with a request and prayer that the amount be realised from the Railways and I place the sum of Rs. 1,07,794 in the hands of the House who will vote for its omission.

I have also noticed the receipt side of the budget to my astonishment. I have found nothing under the head of Railway Police. Therefore I hope that the hon. members of this House will consider the matter and vote for the motion.

MR. A. W. BOTHAM :—I understand, Sir, that the hon. member's argument is that as the Railway Police are maintained for the benefit of the Railway the Railway Companies ought to pay the cost. Well, Sir, assuming that we admit that, what would the hon. member propose to do as regards the police who are employed on the Jorhat State Railway? However that is a small point. It has of course always been recognised, Sir, that a proportion of the cost of policing the railways should be borne by the Railway Companies and if hon. members will turn to page 23 of the Budget they will find a Revenue entry of Rs. 53,000 which represents the contribution which we get on account of the Assam-Bengal Railway. Government however cannot escape liability for some portion of the cost of Railway Police. Government are responsible for the prevention and investigation of cognisable crime on the railways just as they are elsewhere and it is in respect of those duties that we undertake a certain portion of the cost. Then again, Sir, apart from the question of principle, the contract which exists with the Assam-Bengal Railway and the other railways provides that Government shall maintain the police force and shall recover from the Companies only a certain proportion of the cost. We have therefore, Sir, no option but to continue to pay for the police force.

RAI BAHADUR BIPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR :—Sir, if it is only for the State Railways.....

MR. A. W. BOTHAM :—No Sir, not for the State Railways alone. The Jorhat State Railway Police forms a very small item. I merely wished to point out that on the hon. member's argument there would be no police on the Jorhat State Railway at all.

RAI BAHADUR BIPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR :—Sir, I wish to withdraw the amendment.

With the permission of the Council the motion was withdrawn.

RAI BAHADUR BIPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR :—Sir, the next motion that stands in my name runs thus :

“ That this Council recommends to the Government of Assam that the lump provision of Rs. 1,300 for the travelling allowance of River Police be reduced to Rs. 89.”

Sir, it is not clearly stated in the budget for whose travelling allowance this sum of Rs. 1,300 will be required. If the provision is for the travelling allowance of the Superintendent then I should draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Superintendent is getting Rs. 1,200 in addition to his pay and allowances as Superintendent of Police. So he cannot reasonably claim another separate allowance. If this provision is for the Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors then I should say that their services are on the river and therefore they must be on the river to deserve their pay. A special allowance as travelling allowance is not at all required. Moreover I beg to draw the attention of the House to the fact that this sum of Rs. 1,300 is not at all required for the purpose. In the year 1921-22 only Rs. 89 was spent under this head.

In 1922-23 the budget estimate provides Rs. 1,300 for the purpose but in the revised estimate of that year only Rs. 200 was found necessary and I fancy that in the actual account only Rs. 89 will be shown to have been spent under this head. When things are so, when not more than Rs. 89 is necessary for the purpose why should there be a provision of Rs. 1,300?

This provision supplies a key to the framing of the budget. I think this lump provision was made only to keep some money in the department unnecessarily. Under the circumstances I think the House will agree with me in reducing the lump provision of Rs. 1,300 to Rs. 89, the amount that was actually spent in the year 1921-22.

MR. A. W. BOTHAM :—This provision, Sir, covers certain sanctioned allowances which are made to members of the River Police Force in lieu of ordinary travelling allowances. The allowances are Rs. 30 to an Inspector, Rs. 15 to a Sub-Inspector, Rs. 7 to a Head Constable and Rs. 3 to a Constable. The Superintendent is not concerned at all. It is true that the budget shows only Rs. 89 in 1921-22 and only Rs. 200 in the Revised for 1922-23. That is owing to a mistake in classification. The amounts have been undoubtedly spent. They are sanctioned allowances and there is not the slightest doubt that the sanctioned allowances have been drawn. By some mistake they have been classified under some other detailed head.

The motion was put and negatived.

RAI BAHADUR BIPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR :—Sir, the next motion standing in my name runs thus :

“ That this Council recommends to the Government of Assam that the lump provision Rs. 13,616 for the construction of the residence of the Principal of the Police Training School be omitted.”

MR. A. W. BOTHAM :—Sir, Government are prepared to accept this motion.

THE HON'BLE THE PRESIDENT :—The motion is that the lump provision of Rs. 13,616 for the construction of the residence of the Principal of the Police Training School be omitted.

MR. A. W. BOTHAM :—I am afraid I made a mistake, Sir. I thought the hon. member was dealing with his next motion. The one that he just moved, *i.e.*, No. 4 on the paper has been automatically withdrawn.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I think the position, Sir, is that Government have already given effect to this motion. It is therefore unnecessary for the Rai Bahadur to move it. I think it was on this understanding that the hon. member who had an identical motion in his name withdrew his. At all events the position is that Government have already done what the hon. member wants us to do.

The motion was accordingly deemed to have been automatically withdrawn.

RAI BAHADUR BIPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR :—Sir, the last motion that stands in my name runs thus :

“ That this Council recommends to the Government of Assam that the lump provision of Rs. 1,200 made under the head of Village Police as miscellaneous expenses should be omitted.”

Sir, the total provision for the main subject of Village Police is only Rs. 1,700. I do not very well understand for what purpose this Rs. 1,700 will be spent. Our village chaukidars are paid from the fund raised locally as chaukidari tax. What else will the Government do for them so as to spend this Rs. 1,700? However as I do not understand I allow the Government to take this Rs. 1,700. But over and above this why should the Government give another Rs. 1,200 as miscellaneous expenses. I see no earthly reason for this save and except that the Government want some money to remain in the Police Department. Moreover it stands peculiar that the main item of expenditure requires only Rs. 1,700 whereas ‘miscellaneous’ under it requires Rs. 1,200. This is quite unreasonable, and this will be clear to the hon. gentlemen of the House when they will notice that there was no such provision in the last year or the years previous. Therefore I beg to request the House to vote for the omission of this Rs. 1,200.

MR. A. W. BOTHAM :—This motion, Sir, Government are prepared to accept. The provision refers to the cost of gold rings which are given as rewards to Chaukidari Panchayats. If the Council consider that an economy should be effected Government are prepared to accept this.

The motion was adopted.

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—Sir, I think the hon. members of the House are too tired to discuss figures now and I therefore withdraw this motion standing in my name :

“ That the demand for grant No. 10 under Police (excluding Assam Rifles) of Rs. 18,99,000 be reduced by five per cent. i.e., by Rs. 94,950.”

With the permission of the Council the motion was withdrawn.

BABU KRISHNA SUNDAR DAM :—Sir, I regret very much that at this fag-end of the day it should have fallen to me, the other motions having been withdrawn, to move this motion which stands in my name. It runs as follows :

*“ To reduce 26.—Police—Criminal Investigation Department—
Rs. 1,04,100 by Re. 1.”*

The motion may seem somewhat singular in its form just as the value of the reduction is also singular. But in this I have followed in the foot-steps of my hon. friend Rai Bahadur Amarnath Ray whom I remember thankfully just as he remembered me during the discussion of the Municipal Bill in a manner which was not perfectly consistent with regard for truth, honesty, good manners and courtesy. However I give him the credit for showing the way of moving amendments in important matters and again I believe he will be pleased to tell the Hon'ble Finance Member that there is nothing to choose between myself and himself (*laughter*).

Now, Sir, as to the procedure which I have adopted in moving this amendment, I think I should explain it to the Council. I was told by certain hon. members of the Imperial Legislative Assembly that this is also what is adopted in other Councils whenever any proposal has to be made for economy about a particular item, a non-voted item, for which this Council has no right to vote. I intend to submit a proposal for economy in the Criminal Investigation Department. At page 78 of the Budget the hon. members will find that the total amount budgeted is Rs. 1,04,100 of which the voted amount is Rs. 81,016, and the non-voted amount is Rs. 23,084. I have no economy to suggest here so far as the voted amount is concerned, but I have a suggestion to place before the Council regarding the non-voted item and if I asked for a reduction in the non-voted item, it would have been at once rejected and so I have taken the entire amount together and propose a reduction of Re. 1 and I shall, if possible, ask the House to give their opinions on the matter, so that the Government may be impressed with the views of the Council in a better way instead of having to obtain it from the divergent and voluminous budget speeches. The economy which I have to suggest and the proposal for economy which I have to place before the Council is this that the post of the Superintendent in charge of the Criminal Investigation Department may be omitted and the entire Department may be placed under the supervision of the Inspector General of Police... ..

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—On a point of order, Sir. I venture to suggest that the hon. mover is not in order in the course which he is taking. A motion for the reduction of a grant by Re. 1 is usually taken as a vote of censure, but here there seems to be no question of censure. Apparently the hon. mover wishes to suggest that a particular post should be abolished. The pay of that post is a non-voted item and he cannot attack it as he could a voted item. So he is trying to effect his object in this fashion. I suggest, Sir, that his proper course would be to move a specific resolution at some other time for the abolition of the post, and that no straining of our procedure can justify what he is doing. The motion before us is for a reduction of the grant by one rupee, and in view of what I have said the probabilities are that my Hon'ble Colleague will cheerfully accept the motion.

BABU KRISHNA SUNDAR DAM :—Sir, I am not anxious for the acceptance of the motion for reduction by Re. 1 by the Government and I have explained the object of my motion and it is not so much for favouring me by agreeing to my amendment, but whether the Government will agree to accept the proposal of economy as suggested. If this is disallowed on a question of procedure, of course I shall certainly not pursue it. So I leave the decision to the Hon'ble President in this matter.

THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT :—Under the rules I must disallow you.

BABU KRISHNA SUNDAR DAM :—Then, Sir, I abandon this motion.

The motion was withdrawn.

THE HON'BLE MR. A. MAJID :—Sir, the demand may now be put. It has been reduced by Rs. 1,200.

The original motion as amended was put and adopted.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I think, Sir, I may now move certain motions.

GRANT No. 4.

(8.—Forest.)

I beg to move, Sir :

“ That a sum not exceeding Rs. 8,80,000 be granted to the Governor in Council to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1924, for the administration of the ‘ Forest Department ’.”

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—I beg, Sir, to withdraw the motion for reduction.

With the permission of the House the motion was withdrawn.

The original motion was then put and adopted.

GRANT No. 21.

(Goalpara Forest Tramway Scheme.)

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I beg, Sir, to move :

“ That a sum not exceeding Rs. 50,000 be granted to the Governor in Council to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1924, in connection with the ‘ Goalpara Forest Tramway Scheme ’.”

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—Sir, I beg to withdraw the motion for reduction.

With the permission of the House the motion for reduction was withdrawn.

The original motion was then put and adopted.

GRANT No. 3.

(7.—Stamps.)

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I beg, Sir, to move :

“ That a sum not exceeding Rs. 35,000 be granted to the Governor in Council to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on 31st March 1924, for the administration of the head ‘ 7.—Stamps ’.”

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—I beg, Sir, to withdraw the motion for reduction.

With the permission of the House the motion was withdrawn.

The original motion was then put and adopted.

GRANT No. 2.

(6.—*Excise.*)

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I beg, Sir, to move :

“ That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,00,000 be granted to the Governor in Council to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on 31st March 1924, for the administration of the ‘ Excise Department. ’ ”

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—I beg, Sir, to withdraw the motion for reduction.

With the permission of the House the motion was withdrawn.

The original motion was then put and adopted.

GRANT No. 15.

(37.—*Miscellaneous Departments.*)

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I beg, Sir, to move :

“ That a sum not exceeding Rs. 18,000 be granted to the Governor in Council to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on 31st March 1924, for the administration of the head ‘ 37.—Miscellaneous Department. ’ ”

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—I beg, Sir, to withdraw the motion for reduction.

With the permission of the House the motion was withdrawn:

The original motion was then put and adopted.

GRANT No. 19.

(47.—*Miscellaneous.*)

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I beg, Sir, to move :

“ That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,87,000 be granted to the Governor in Council to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1924, for the administration of the head ‘ 47.—Miscellaneous. ’ ”

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—I beg, Sir, to withdraw the motion for reduction.

With the permission of the House the motion was withdrawn.

The original motion was then put and adopted.

GRANT No. 18.

(46.—*Stationery and Printing.*)

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID :—I beg, Sir, to move :

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,85,000 be granted to the Governor in Council to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1924, for the administration of the head ‘86.—Stationery and Printing.”

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :—Sir, I beg to withdraw the amendment.

With the permission of the House the motion was withdrawn.

The original motion was then put and adopted.

The Council then adjourned till 11 A.M. on Wednesday, the 11th April 1923.

SHILLONG :
The 10th April 1923. }

A. MELLOR,

Secretary to the Legislative Council, Assam.

