

**Proceedings of the Sixteenth Session of the First Assam Legislative Assembly,
assembled under the Provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.**

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 2 p. m. on Friday, the 2nd March, 1945.

PRESENT

The Hon'ble Mr. Basanta Kumar Das, Speaker, in the Chair, the ten Hon'ble Ministers and thirty-eight hon. Members.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(To which oral answers were given)

Allegations against Trade Adviser

†Maulavi MABARAK ALI asked :

*38. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether they have made enquiries as to the allegations made by the Excise Commissioner against the Trade Adviser of the Government of Assam in Calcutta ?

(b) If so, what is the result of that enquiry ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

38. (a)—No allegations were made by the Excise Commissioner against the Trade Adviser.

(b)—Does not arise.

Re Comrade Sashindra Dutta of Maulvibazar

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

*39. (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether comrade Sashindra Dutta, a Communist leader of Maulvibazar, has done anything in the course of the last four years for which he is still detained ?

(b) Do Government propose to release him after a thorough enquiry in the matter ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

39. (a)—The person named is not detained to the knowledge of Government.

(b)—The question does not arise.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY : May I know, Sir, what is the order against comrade Sashindra Dutta ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Sir, I can only answer to the Question as framed.

Re Comrade Manik Chaudhury of Sylhet

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

*40. (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether comrade Manik Chaudhury, a Communist worker of Sylhet, has still to give daily attendance to the Sylhet police station ?

†Questions were put by Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee on authorisation.

(b) Do Government propose to remove the restrictions imposed on him after a thorough impartial enquiry?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

40. (a)—Yes.
(b)—No.

Re Comrade Asu Sen of Sylhet

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked:

*41. (a) Will Government be pleased to state why comrade Asu Sen of Sylhet has still to appear before the local thana?

(b) Do Government propose to hold an impartial enquiry and thereby remove the restrictions on him?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

41. (a)—He is no longer bound by such an order.
(b)—Does not arise.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Sir, may I know whether there is any condition imposed upon him now?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: There is no condition, Sir.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Is it not a fact, Sir, that he cannot leave Sylhet town without previous permission of the Deputy Commissioner?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: That order has been withdrawn, Sir.

†Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, may we know since when?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: About a fortnight ago.

Re Dr. Benoy Bhusan Chakravarti, an externee from Dibrugarh town

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked:

*42. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether Dr. Benoy Bhusan Chakravarti, an externee from Dibrugarh now interned at Sylhet, has recently applied to Government for increasing his allowance and special allowance for purchase of winter clothes?

(b) If so, whether any orders have been passed on his application?

(c) If not, why not?

*43. (a) Is it a fact that Dr. Benoy Chakravarti, an externee from Dibrugarh, is now attached to the Communist party Hospital at Telirhaor, Sylhet?

(b) Do Government propose to increase his allowance?

(c) Do Government propose to release him after a thorough impartial enquiry?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

42. (a)—No application has reached Government.

(b) & (c)—The questions do not arise.

Srijut LAKSHESVAR BOROOAH: Will the Hon'ble Prime Minister be pleased to state for how long Dr. Benoy Chakravarti has been under externment?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The hon. Questioner has put a substantive Question on the subject and I will reply in detail soon.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

43. (a)—Government have no information.

(b)—If a request for an enhanced allowance is made Government will consider the matter.

(c)—The gentleman named is not detained, and Government are not aware on what point further enquiry is suggested.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Sir, is it a fact that he has been working in Malaria stricken areas in Sylhet and Patharkandi ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Government have no information, Sir.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(To which answers were laid on the table)

Students detained as Security Prisoners in different Jails of Assam

Srijut SIDDHI NATH SARMA asked :

12. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The number of students with their names and addresses, detained as security prisoners in different Jails in Assam ?

(b) The names of students who have applied till now for permission to appear at the University examinations ?

(c) The names of those students who have been allowed to so appear up till now ?

(d) Whether examination fees, books and writing materials were supplied to these examinees at the cost of Government ?

(e) Whether the students other than examinees as aforesaid were provided with books, writing materials and other facilities for study at the expense of Government ?

(f) If not, whether Government propose to provide them with facilities for study and pay examination fees at the cost of Government ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

12. (a)—Government are not willing as a matter of policy, to disclose the names of security prisoners but are prepared to give the numbers. From the language of the question, Government cannot come to a decision as to which prisoners should be described as "students".

(b) and (c)—Five applications have so far been received, and all who apply for permission to attend examinations and are authorized by the University will be allowed.

(d), (e) and (f)—Facilities for study, including an adequate allotment of stationery at Government cost, and the admission within the Jail of books provided from the prisoner's own funds or of his family's subject to censorship, have been allowed. Government do not propose to accept liability for the provision of books or for examination fees.

The Assam Local Board Elections (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 1945.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was discussing the points that were raised by my Friend Srijut Surendra-nath Buragohain on behalf of the Ahom community. His principal complaint was that the Ahom community had not got the proper representation and he deduced this on a comparison of figures of Caste Hindus and the seats given to them and the seats allotted to the Ahom community on their population basis. But my Friend has missed a very relevant point. The Ahom community whose strength is a little over 3 lakhs in the whole Province is not congregated at one compact district or in one compact block. They are scattered over 4 different districts in some of which they can very well be said to represent a microscopical minority, for example, they have got no population whatsoever in Goalpara district; their population in the Kamrup district is in a microscopical minority. Their population in the Nowgong and Darrang districts can be said to be infinitesimal. It is only in the subdivisions of Sibsagar district and a part of Dibrugarh where they prevail. Their population in other districts are so small that they cannot expect any representation in those districts. Therefore, it will not be correct to compare the dispersal of the Ahom community's population strength along with the Hindu community in all districts. Taking into consideration the preponderance of Ahoms in different areas we have allotted seats accordingly. In Jorhat the number of Ahom population is 37,591, and one seat has been reserved for them. In Sibsagar subdivision their population is 120,841, and four seats have been reserved. Next comes Golaghat, their population is 20 thousand, and they have been given one seat in Golaghat. In the Dibrugarh subdivision their population is 74,003 and they have been allotted two seats and in the North Lakhimpur subdivision their number is 25,567, and they have been given one seat.

I started by saying, Sir, that we propose to give representation to different communities taking into consideration the fact that certain communities have been given separate representation in the Legislature. Unfortunately, the Ahom community have not got that privilege, for the leaders of that community during the time of Simon Commission thought it fit to cast their lot with the majority community, *i. e.*, the Caste Hindu community and therefore they were not separately enfranchised and they were not given separate seats in the Legislature. If I had followed the principle that we adopted, the Ahom community could not get any separate seats at all, but we wanted to be realistic and not go by theory and we have allotted separate seats for the Ahom community who were the last Ruling Race in Assam and who are a distinct and separate community. I have, therefore, to request my Friends of the Ahom community not to look very minutely into the teeth of a gift horse, for this is not done.

I am glad, Sir, that my hon. Friend the Leader of the European Group is just now at his seat, for, I was wondering whether I should speak anything in his absence on the points which he raised before the House yesterday. I must congratulate Mr. Whittaker for the very frank manner in which he has placed before the House their weakest and their strongest case. He had started with a very large assumption that the European management of tea gardens is representative of large labour elements in the tea plantation. I have no quarrel with him on that point, but that assumption would not have been accepted in his own country, I mean, Great Britain. I speak from my personal experience, for, during the Diarchical system of Government which prevailed between 1921 and 1937, according to the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, the then Government of Assam nominated the late Mr. Withers to represent the interests of labour, for he was a very benevolent employer and it was known throughout Assam Valley that in his hands the interests of the labour force were perfectly safe. During the Simon Commission, the Home Government, His Majesty's Government wanted the opinion

of the Assam Government as regards representation of labour. The Assam Government pointed out that, as there were no Trade Unions representing labour and as there were not sufficiently qualified men amongst the labour force to take intelligent interest in the debates of Legislature, they did not think that any labour representation was necessary for Assam. We pointed out that during the previous 15 years labour interests were looked after by one of the employers himself. All these statements of facts were brushed aside by the then Prime Minister of Great Britain, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald at a very late stage, if I remember aright, when the Bill was actually debated in the House of Lords. Four seats to represent labour were added and to create a balance, three more seats were added to the European Planting Group. If the assumption made by Mr. Whittaker had been correct, then this state of affairs would not have come from the Mother of Parliament—the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Sir, the position of the tea planters in the Assam Valley is of very great consequence to them. For, in the earlier times their only means of communication was by means of Local Board roads, which was essentially necessary, especially for the purpose of securing communication between tea gardens and district headquarters and at that time there was sufficient representation of tea industry in the Local Bodies. Times have since changed; almost all the big tea areas are now connected by all-weather motorable roads maintained by the Public Works Department as satisfactorily as is possible within our limited means. Even then, acting on the principle that we should not reduce any representation which any particular community or interest is enjoying, we have kept *in toto* the representation planters enjoy now in the Local Bodies. If I am to confuse the issue I could place figures before the House to show that, if we take only the management of tea industry, *i. e.*, the European personnel of tea estates, surely it would be found that they enjoy not merely 400 per cent. increase in their representation criticised by Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury but an increase in the neighbourhood of 1,000 per cent. But as I have already stated, Sir, they have a very good and great stake in the country and it was necessary for them to get adequate representation. I need not dilate on the point, for Mr. Whittaker has already admitted that, if only one factor mentioned in the proviso to Section 4 of the Assam Local Self-Government Act is taken into consideration, they will be entitled to a higher figure and if another factor is taken into consideration then their representation will be much less than what has been proposed by the Government in the new distribution. I am glad, Sir, that he has made no complaint as regards representation that has been allotted to them.

I wish, Sir, the spokesman of the great Hindu community had spoken in the same strain and as frankly as Mr. Whittaker. I wonder that my hon. Friend—Srijut Kameswar Das—from Barpeta, after using any number of adjectives on our distribution and allocation of seats used the term that it was “unfair”. If there is any Goddess of Fairness, she must vanish from this world when such accusations and remarks come from one who for the last 20 years has been monopolising seats in that Local Board to the great detriment of the Muslim community. He is not satisfied that the Muslims, who ought to have got at least half of the seats, are given only twelve seats and now he is complaining because the Muslims who form 49 per cent. of the population of that subdivision are given seats not what they should get according to their population basis but a little less, and although the Muslims were 49 per cent. of the total population in 1941 we gave them only twelve seats as against thirteen seats given to others, *viz.*, one to the Scheduled castes, ten to the Caste Hindus and two to the Plains Tribals. The Muslim figure in 1941 has quintupled itself than those of 1921 census. If our allocation of seats for Barpeta was not fair, I do not know what will be fair according to my hon. Friend Srijut Kameswar Das, M.Sc., B.L. ! (*Laughter.*) There is no question of laughter. I specially emphasised the word “M.Sc.”, because one with knowledge of mathematics ought to have had a sense of proportion

better than anybody else. Speaking in round figures, Muslim strength in Barpeta in 1921, according to census was forty thousand, against two lac twenty thousand in 1941.

Srijut KAMESWAR DAS : May I know from the Hon'ble Premier what number of seats were given to the Barpeta Local Board ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : 25 elected.

Srijut KAMESWAR DAS : Not 27 ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : 27 is the total.

I am sorry to find that my hon Friend, the learned Leader of the Opposition, is not in his seat, and that I am to make my submission in his absence on the points that he raised. Therefore, I will be as charitable as is possible for me under the circumstances. He started by saying that he was disappointed, for Government had not considered the Press statement which he was pleased to issue. If he really wanted that his constructive suggestions should have been taken into consideration by Government, the best policy for him would have been to send his suggestions directly to me. For it has been our painful experience that Press reports are often as diametrically opposed to truth as the North and the South Poles are. I myself had been reported to be in various places at times when I never had moved from Shillong. Well, one cannot vouch for the truth of what appears in the Press. Therefore, it was not proper on the part of the learned Leader of the Opposition to assert that we have miserably failed in embracing the situation and not taking into consideration the views which he expressed in the Press. He advises, Sir, that instead of deferring the election, which is 4 years overdue, we should have brought in a comprehensive Bill to amend the present Act and then start election under the amended Act. Nobody quarrels with him on the statement that Amendment of this Act is over-due, and that this Act came into existence in 1915—full 30 years ago—and, in the meantime, there have been gigantic strides in democratic institutions throughout the country and various provisions of the old Act have been anachronism in the present state of affairs. But it amuses me to hear him saying that Government could have introduced an amending Bill in this Session and carried it through at once. Such a statement from a man of the position of the learned Leader of the Opposition is really surprising.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Not so, Sir ; he is your student. (*Laughter.*)

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Well, Mr. Mookerjee may get his turn. I will reserve him for the last.

Well, to reply to the interjection, Sir, if a student is not up to the mark, it is not the fault of the teacher. The teacher has striven his best to make the student as creditable as one can find in the Province. Much depends on the person in question, the environment and the association he keeps. (*Loud laughter.*)

Well, it has very often been our painful experience that Bills have not been seen in the same light in both the Houses. I may refer only to the Assam Revenue Tribunal Bill—a Bill which was passed by this House and the principles of which were accepted also by the country at large. But it was amended by the other House with the result that it had to be re-introduced in this House.

The fact that a simple Bill of the nature of the Assam Revenue Tribunal Bill evoked such an amount of criticism in the Upper House, cannot lead one to expect that a full comprehensive Bill, which will be the basis of all self-governing institutions in the Province, would have an easy passage in either House. There was absolutely no time to have such a Bill introduced in the House during this Session, even if we would take it for granted that it would be possible to get it passed in this House. But I have not an iota of doubt that the Upper House would make some Amendments and the Bill with the changes made in the Upper House would have to come again to this Assembly, and in this way, I am afraid, not one year but a couple of years would be necessary to have an amending Bill on Local Self-Government. As I mentioned yesterday, Sir, much good news we are all expecting and we are all hoping that the Province itself, nay India as a whole, will have a new constitution which will have a new bearing on our primary local self-government institutions—Local Boards and the Municipalities—and we must have to recast even the amending Local Self-Government

Act on the lines of conditions then prevailing. So, why throw this labour, time and money to waste and not take the time by the forelock and have our election on the basis of the present Act and then wait for the future to have an entirely new and recasted Local Self-Government Bill passed in the House? Srijut Lakshesvar Borooah complained, and very vigorously complained, that Government's desire to bring in a comprehensive Bill has not been implemented. I plead guilty to the charge, but I have laid the bare reasons which have prevented an amending Bill at this late stage. But, Sir, does he really want that the present Act should be amended? I think not, for, bringing of an amending Bill to the Legislative anvil will mean the postponement of the election under new allotment of seats that has already been made, and I am afraid, Sir, I am uncharitable enough to suspect that it is the real motive.

I now come to Karimganj. Various champions of Karimganj, notably my Friends Mr. Aditya and Mr. Sen have placed their cases very fully and with great force. I find, Sir, that the Muslim representatives from that subdivision, barring one exception, are scarce up till now in the present Session. I wish that that notable exception, my quondam Friend, Khan Bahadur Mahmud Ali, would have taken the cudgel on behalf of his constituency—for he is not merely the representative of that subdivision, but also in his capacity as an *ex*-Chairman of the Local Board of that subdivision, on a very good and strong ground—to urge in favour of the Muslims. Therefore, it has been my sad lot to place before the House as dispassionately as possible, under the circumstances, those reasons that had led Government to the conclusion for the allotment that has been made. My Friend Mr. Sen laid great stress on a certain rule about nomination to the Local Board. Rules are only explanatory to the main provision of the law; section 4, sub-section 2 was quoted by me yesterday before the House; I hope it is fresh in their memory and I need not recapitulate that. The difference of allocating between elected and appointed seats is laid with the Government and it is within the power of the Local Government to make any provision if they want to make in the appointed seats as well. My Friend, the Minister-in-charge, is prompting me to place before the House one provision, under the Government of India Act, 1935. In the Schedule VII, Item No. 13 of the Provincial Legislative List of the Government of India Act reads thus—"Local government, that is to say, the constitution and powers of municipal corporations, improvement trusts, district boards, mining settlement authorities and other local authorities for the purpose of local-self-government or village administration."

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: What purpose serves the Hon'ble Premier by quoting this list of the Schedule, Sir?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I can only bring a horse to a tank and it is its business to drink the water. So, it is for my Friend, a lawyer of repute, to draw his own conclusion.

Sir, I would again read the figures for that subdivision. The total population of that subdivision is 5,68,223 of which the Muslim population comes to 3,11,881, or 55 per cent. The Scheduled caste population is 88,213, and population of Hindus comes to 1,56,704 or 27 per cent. Fifty-five per cent is an absolute majority. But yet in the proposed Local Board of 30 seats, 27 elected and 3 appointed, we have allocated only 14 seats to them, *i. e.*, to Muslims, in order to give only 50 per cent. representation in place of 55 per cent. and Government thought fit in fairness and justice to the Muslim community that at least one of the nominees should go to this community.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: May I know, Sir, what is the percentage of seats that has been allotted to the non-Mahommedans?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: "Non-Mahommedan" is a wide term. This time we have allotted different seats to every different community. We have given 2 seats to the Scheduled castes and 6 seats to the Caste Hindus. The non-Mahommedans include the population of the tea gardens the number of which I placed before the House yesterday.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: On a point of information, Sir. Is the tea garden labour entitled to vote in the Local Board election and do they get any seat in the Local Board constituency?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The tea garden people have got representation through the Planting community, and they have got 6 seats. By using the term non-Muhammadan my Friend Mr. Sen wants to eat the cake as well as to have it. He wants that the strength of these 53 thousand people, who have already got representation in the local bodies through the Planting constituency, should be added to the Hindu community. Therefore I rightly describe the attitude of the Hindus claiming to represent all non-Muhammadans as that of a residuary legatee.

*Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI: On a point of explanation and information, Sir. May I point out to the Hon'ble Premier that he himself in a statement in the Assembly said that the Tribal population was 28 lakhs for the reason that the Labour population was included along with it. If that is so, how can he now say that the same Tribal population is included in the Hindu population? Will he after making the calculation of the entire population of the Province give us an idea or picture of how the population stands of the different communities?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am glad to learn that the Leader of the Opposition has now arrived in the House and he signalled his presence by interruption which has absolutely nothing to do with what we have been talking. It is apparent to any one who has gone through the census figures and the notes given therein by Mr. Marar that he had combined both the tea population and the Tribals as under one head and given the population as 28 lakhs in the Province. He said after all tea garden labour force are recruited from tribes that inhabit Central India, Madras, Bombay and the Central Provinces. The question that these people are counted among the Tribal people has got absolutely nothing to do with the claims of the caste Hindus. These tribes, the labour force, I say and Mr. Whittaker also says, are represented in the local bodies by the European personnel of the tea gardens. Sir, in a Board of 30 seats in Karimganj subdivision if the Muslims get 15, they get less than what they are entitled to on the population basis. Three factors I will be told ought to justify the seats. First, population that we have got through the census figures, next is the holding of land. Nobody could say that the Muslims (3 lakhs) live in the air or even in a vacuum. They hold some land. Therefore they must hold a considerable portion of the area. They hold some land. prepondering advantage over the three communities. These two give them tax and unfortunately for the Muslims, that subdivision being in the permanently settled district of Sylhet, we have not got separate figures of local rates paid. Two hon. Members hailing from that district and who ought to know conditions prevailing there, assert that ultimately local rate is paid by the tenants. It is realised as local rate (স্থানীয় কর) in the receipts which the zemindars issue.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: I don't think that will be less than what our Hindu friends pay.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Thank you, Sir, or taxes paid by the Hindus are in no way less than what the Muslims pay, then the Muslim community ought to curse the Minister for reducing their seats from 55 per cent. to 50 per cent. and that too by one seat being reserved for Muslims in nomination.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: May I interrupt, Sir, just to add a few words. As regards local rates paid by the tenants to the zemindars, in reply to certain Question put by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan yesterday (Un-starred Question No.1), it has been stated that in 1350 B. S. the amounts of local rates collected from Bijni Raj and

Mechpara Estates were Rs. 32,992 and Rs. 14,865. It seems that even in the district of Goalpara these two big zemindaries are realising high local rates from the tenants and this is the case in Sylhet district also.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, those figures were known to me. They refer to the permanently settled district of Goalpara. I did not mention them for if somebody challenges my statement, I have no Government records to put before the House. As I have already stated on very many occasions on the floor of this House that the question of preparing record-of-rights has been engaging the attention of Government for the Sylhet district alone from 1924 when for the first time I was included in the Ministry of Assam province. Government says that the record-of-rights will benefit the zemindars. Therefore the cost of preparation ought to come from them. I remember, Sir, at one time Government were prepared to contribute a little if the balance was paid by the zemindars; but there was no gesture from the zemindars and therefore the state of chaos as regards land records in Sylhet district continues up till now. I doubt that the tax-payers of the rest of the Province will be in a mood to pay the entire cost of preparing a document which will be of vital necessity and importance to the zemindars without their contributing a single pice. Sir, I now.....

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS: I think in the subdivision of Karimganj the number of Scheduled Caste people is much more than any other subdivision of the Surma Valley and I am amazed that only two seats were allotted to them.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: My Friend has scored by a neck, to use a racing term, for the number of Scheduled Caste people in Habiganj is 27,595 whereas the number of such people in Karimganj is 38,213, the difference is about 700 only.

Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS: What is the number of Caste Hindus at Karimganj?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have already told it three times. It is 1,56,704.

Sir, on account of these interruptions I have forgotten the thread of my argument. I think I finished with Karimganj.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURI: Please start with Mr. Mookerjee.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Sir Saiyid MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Very well I will start with Mr. Mookerjee.

Sir, Mr. Mookerjee started by congratulating the Government for making the House to pray for a certain thing that they condemned last year. He, as a good general, master of strategy, always thinks in terms of manoeuvres and position. We are simple folks, we are only led by the House; and we follow their dictates. The House wanted that there should be no more time given to Government and to have Local Board election within 1945. We failed, and according to him, miserably failed therein. We have come here with a begging bowl for an extension of 10 weeks. Where do strategy and manoeuvres come in—we fail to see. But masters of strategy always find that there is some reason behind any particular move. After congratulating the move, he blew hot and cold in the same breath, and started by saying that Government have no policy; their policy is one of convenience.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I said 'basis.'

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am glad my hon. Friend has put in the right word. He said that our actions are based on convenience. He said that this Ministry is out to destroy the Hindus *in toto*.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I never said that, Sir. I challenge the statement. The proceedings are with the stenographers.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member may repeat what he said.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: If I get a chance, I can repeat it again.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir it is very unfortunate that you had to vacate the Chair at that time, otherwise you would have heard what Mr. Mookerjee had said.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Sir, this is again wrong ; you were all along here while I was speaking

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Mr. Mookerjee, although he did not use the term, said that the present Muslim League Ministry had pampered unjustifiably, according to him, to the Muslim demands. He occasion and not to be guided by the nefarious intentions of a Muslim League he did not use these words I have uttered, there was the innuendo. He said *toto* on a population basis and to justify their action...

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Still I hold that position of course.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : He is a strategist and no wonder that Mr. Mookerjee still holds that opinion. It is for the House to see how far he is justified in holding that opinion. It is Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : The House knows it.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : I say, Sir, the word "Convenience" with a capital 'C' is writ large in the social and political life of Mr. Mookerjee. He is the *de facto* leader of the Independent Group but it is not convenient for him to claim *de jure* status. In his criticisms of Government and the persistent voting in the wrong lobby, he has out-congressed the Congress leaders and yet it is convenient for him not to adopt the Congress label. I could multiply various phases of the activities of my hon. Friend. As a matter of fact, I was thinking last night whether I should not confer upon him the title of "M. C.", but I thought it would be entrenching upon my European friends who joined the War because M. C. means "Military Cross" and my M. C. would mean "Master of Convenience" and not Hindu Minister for Local Self-Government Department. Short of using all coercion and compulsion upon him there was sufficient jesture and posture, hints and innuendoes and ultimately coaxing and cajoling, he was told not to support the nefarious plot of the Muslims to convert at least the district of Sylhet into a Pakistan.

Sir, I shall not take much time of the House. I think, I have placed sufficiently all the relevant facts which have compelled Government to come to this allocation. My Friend, Mr. Buragohain complained that it appeared that Government was ashamed to publish these facts. That there is a hush-hush policy and the public has not yet known what has been the decision of the Government. If the public wanted a communique on the subject we are ready to publish one. There is no hush-hush policy. Each District Collector, I mean the Deputy Commissioner, has got Government orders who in his turn has issued the Government orders to all Local Boards.

Mr. Sen made mention that we had used the terms 'Caste Hindus' in our order. He is not correct in that, for in paragraph 2 of the Government orders communicated to the Deputy Commissioners we have used the words—seats are allotted to each of the Hindu and Muslim communities concerned and you are requested to take prompt steps to revise them.

Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN : What would be the name of the constituency ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Si. MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : The Hindu constituency.

Now, two suggestions have been made from various parts of the House. One is that the seats, if possible, should be redistributed, Thanawise, that is, the constituencies should be single-member constituencies. If we are to take that course, probably it will take a year's time before we can come to a satisfactory solution. As the

House and the public wanted Local Board elections as early as possible, we have for the time being to take recourse to the plural to member constituencies, that is to put in more members in the same constituencies. This probably will confuse our unitary voters, but if the candidates will send their agents to the polling booth, they will be able to tell their supporters where, how and for whom to vote.

Then, Sir, the difficulty about monsoonic weather has been mentioned. We also recognise this, Sir, but as I mentioned yesterday only three courses are open to the House—either to reject this Bill, which will mean that the lives of the Local Boards will come to an end by the 31st of March and there is no other provision to extend their lives and no provision to hold the election within the short period, or to give your blessings to this Bill, strengthen the hands of Government to expedite all possible preliminaries and have the election in spite of the weather before June. If the House agrees to vote for this extension, we will try our best to see that the elections are held about the middle of May or towards the end of May or early part of June...

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: On a point of information, Sir, whether once in 1929 the Council election was not held in May? So what is the harm if it is held in early part of May?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If this is not acceptable to the House and they want that Government should get more time to prepare single-member constituencies to split over the whole subdivision and in the case of Nowgong over the whole district then, as I mentioned yesterday, it may be, there will be no election on this extended distribution of seats during the period before the war, for, we all expect a new Constitution for the Legislatures and, therefore, a new constitution for the local bodies in the near future and it will not be worth while to have an election under the old basis, say, in 1946. I have placed these three different courses which are open to the House and we will be guided by the vote of the House. But Government is of the opinion that an early election is the best course to adopt.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURI: What about finance, Sir, *i.e.*, election expenditure? We wanted that the total expenditure should be borne by Government.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: That shall have to be discussed in the whole Government and I cannot commit anything here because the Finance Department will have a great say in the matter.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order, the question is: "That the Assam Local Board Elections (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 1945 be taken into consideration."

The question was adopted.

Motions under Rule 85 (1) of the Assembly Rules

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Now we shall take up Motions under rule 85(1) of the Assembly Rules.

The first Motion* stands in the name of Maulavi Muhammad Anjad Ali. As he is absent Mr. Whittaker may move his Motion† now.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, arising out of your own observations yesterday, I assumed that time for Motions was to be allotted after our discussion this evening. As regards my own particular Motion, if it could be discussed on a private Members' day, in that case we shall only lightly touch on it in the general discussion of the Budget. If it is not going to be discussed as a private Members' business, it will form a very prominent part in the Budget speeches. In the meantime, nobody can usefully discuss the reconstruction programme of the Government of Assam without

* Maulavi MUHAMMAD AMJAD ALI to move:—

"This Assembly is of opinion that the Food Procurement Policy of the Government of Assam be taken into consideration."

† Mr. A. WHITTAKER to move:—

"This Assembly is of opinion that the Post-War Reconstruction programme of the Government of Assam be taken into consideration."

hearing a statement from the Government. As every Member of this House is in the dark, we can only make wild suggestions in the absence of a Government statement. I should therefore like, Sir, to hear now the views of the Hon'ble Prime Minister or failing that I would prefer to wait the results of the discussion arranged for this evening.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. Member will notice that having regard to the number of Motions tabled and having regard to the number of Private Members' Business days allotted in the programme it will not be possible for some of the Motions to be moved at all. Although the object of the conference of leaders I am going to hold today is to determine the order in which the Motions are to be moved, we may take up at least one of the Motions today. If the hon. Member before moving his Motion wants to get some idea as to the Government scheme on the subject to which his Motion relates, he may give up the priority of his Motion and wait till the Budget discussions are over. In the course of the Budget discussion he may know the position of Government on the subject and then decide if it will still be necessary for him to move his Motion. The subject of Post-War Reconstruction is likely to come under discussion during the general discussion of the Budget and matters that may come to light in the course of the Budget discussion may lead the hon. Member to decide the course he would like to follow in regard to his Motion.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER : May we hear the Hon'ble the Prime Minister, Sir ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are all grateful to Mr. Whittaker for giving notice of this Motion. While I was at Delhi in January last, I found that our Reconstruction Plans had lagged very much behind and that the Government of India wanted all the Provincial Schemes at an early date. I had to request the Member-in-charge of the Government of India to wait for a few days for Assam's Memorandum on the subject and I wired from Delhi to the Chief Secretary that this was the state of affairs and if Sir Keith Cantlie, who was in charge of drawing up our Post-War Reconstruction Schemes, was not in a position to complete, he should be helped and I suggested that Mr. S. C. Roy, the retired Director of Public Instruction, who was available in Shillong, should be put in to help Sir Keith. On return, I found that Mr. Roy, as I suggested, had been put in and Mr. Roy has been given direction by me how to write out the proper plans. As there is not much time to lose, I have asked him to give a very short and tentative plan on Orissa model. I got a copy of Orissa plan which was handed to me by an Adviser of that Government. Mr. Roy is busy preparing our report. He has sent our short plan to the Press and a part of it only has been printed by the Press up till now. On account of extreme pressure of work in printing papers of both the Houses of the Legislature they have not been able to give their undivided attention to the Post-War Schemes. Sir, I hope to call a Conference in which certain hon. Members of this House are represented to sit together and discuss our provisional plans.

But I was told this morning that the Press would not be able to complete the printing by the 7th. The next available date of recess is the 14th, which is a Wednesday ; unfortunately this date has been set apart for the sitting of the Economic Advisory Board. Therefore, I had reluctantly asked the Chief Secretary of the Economic Advisory of the Post-War Planning Committee on the 21st of this month. In the meantime, I have asked for sufficient copies to be printed so that every hon. Member will get a copy. We may take up this Motion sometime before the 21st and if there be no date available for this I am prepared to allot time for its discussion from Government days and we can discuss it, so that Government and those hon. Members of the House, who are members of the Post-War Planning Committee, will have the views of the House. So, Sir, if you fix some time after the 7th of this month, by which time our schemes will be printed and placed before the House, I think, we all will be obliged and I also think that course will be convenient to us all.

Mr. A WHITTAKER : Sir, could the Hon'ble Prime Minister indicate a safe date by which it is certain the printed memorandum now being prepared by Mr. Roy will be in the hand of each hon. Member of this Assembly ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I will do my best to place them on the 10th.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: On the 12th we have got Private Members' business.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: I would like to suggest 12th, Sir, because if the memorandum is placed in our hands on the 10th, 11th being a Sunday, we shall be able to study the memorandum on Sunday and be ready to debate it on the 12th.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Very well, it may be taken up on the 12th. This afternoon, when we will be meeting in my Chamber we will decide about it.

But I think one Motion* may be taken up now—the Motion of Maulavi Abdur Rahman. Does he want to move it?

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Yes, Sir, I will move it.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The next Motion† stands in the name of Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhuri by which he wants that the Government policy regarding supply and distribution of foodstuffs, coal, fuel, kerosene oil and cloth be taken into consideration.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Motion that stands in my name is a very comprehensive one and I would be glad if I am not asked to move it now.

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAJIN: Sir, in view of the Conference that you are going to hold today, is it not possible that this item on the agenda may stand over till tomorrow so that we may pass on to the next item?

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Yes, it can be done. But I think it will be better if I adjourn the House today. (*Cries of "Yes" "Yes"*).

Statement *Re* allotment of time for Demands for Grants

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Before we disperse I want to draw the attention of the hon. Members to one other matter. I have prepared a time table allotting time that should be devoted to the discussion of each of the Demands during this Session. Copies of the time table have already been circulated to the leaders of the parties and I would request them to examine it and give me their opinions by 2 P. M. tomorrow.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 11 A.M. on Saturday, the 3rd March, 1945.

Shillong,

The 7th April, 1945:

A. K. BARUA,

Secretary, Legislative Assembly, Assam.

* Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN to move:—

“That this Assembly do now take into consideration the question of introduction of free compulsory Primary Education in the Province forthwith by levying such cess which may be deemed necessary.”

† Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY to move:—

“That the Government policy regarding supply and distribution of foodstuffs, coal, fuel, kerosene oil and cloth be taken into consideration.”

