

**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 11 A.M. on Saturday, the 3rd March 1945.

PRESENT :

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

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(To which oral answers were given).

Re Comrade Kali Prasanna Das of Rajnagar

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY asked :

*44. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) Why Comrade Kali Prasanna Das has at present been interned in his own village under the Police Station Rajnagar in the South Sylhet Subdivision ?
- (b) Whether Government are aware that he was the organiser of Lunding Co-operative Stores ?
- (c) Whether Government propose to remove the restrictions imposed on his movement ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

44. (a)—His conduct as a labour organizer was so indiscreet and illjudged that in present circumstances he could not be allowed freedom to operate.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—Not at present.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY : May I know why ?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : I have given the reasons in reply to Question No. 44(a).

Re Pay of Lower Primary School Teachers

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY asked :

*45. (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether they have taken any action to give effect to the Motion passed by this Assembly in its last November Session with regard to increasing the pay of the Lower Primary School teachers ?

(b) If so, what is that ?

(c) If not, why not ?

††The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

45. (a), (b) & (c)—The hon. Member is referred to the reply given to a similar Question (Unstarred No. 14) asked by Srijut Siddhi Nath Sarma during this Session of the Assembly.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Where is the reply, Sir ?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : It is laid on the table to-day.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Previously it was ruled that no reference to Unstarred Questions which have not been answered previously should be made.

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA : We thought that as the Unstarred Question referred to is No. 14, it would be replied earlier than this.

† Speech not corrected

†† The questions were answered by the Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadullah in the absence of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman.

However, fortunately the reply to that Question is on the table of my hon. Friend and he may kindly read the reply.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then, the hon. Member has got the answer laid on his table half an hour before the sitting commenced.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: I did not know that it would be referred to in replying to the Starred Question.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: But since the Hon'ble Premier has referred to the answer, the hon. Member may read it.

†Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Are Government aware that in a conference on 19th April, the primary school teachers resolved that they would take leave for one month if they were not given increased salary at the rate of Rs. 40 per mensem?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: This is entirely a new Question with regard to a decision of the House in the last November Session.

(Starred Question No. 46 was not put and answered as the Questioner, Srijut Beliram Das, was absent)

Srijut GAURIKANTA TALUKDAR: Will the Government be pleased to let us know the substance of the replies to the Questions of Srijut Beliram Das, as some of us had not the good fortune to hear them for remaining confined in prisons at that time. The Question is very important, Sir.

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am afraid, Sir, I cannot oblige my hon. Friend. We welcome the presence of the hon. Member—the Questioner—to-day in this House. My hon. Friend may however satisfy his curiosity to know the reply by a reference to the Library table where he will get the proceedings.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(To which answers were laid on the table)

Non-stoppage of Bengal and Assam Mail Train at Nalbari

Srijut SIDDHI NATH SARMAH asked:

13. (a) Are Government aware that the Bengal and Assam Railway mail train does not stop at Nalbari at present, causing great inconvenience to the public?

(b) If so, do Government propose to take necessary steps in the matters so that the said mail train stops at Nalbari?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied:

13. (a)—Yes.

(b)—The hon. Member is referred to the reply given to a similar Question [Question 41 (h)] asked by Srijut Rabi Chandra Kachari, M. L. A., at the November 1944 Session of the Assembly.

Re Salary of Primary School Teachers

Srijut SIDDHI NATH SARMAH asked:

14. Is it a fact that the Assam Legislative Assembly in its last November Session passed a Motion recommending the increment of salary of Primary School teachers to Rs. 40 and that the Hon'ble Minister for Education while declaring his inability to accept the Motion in full, promised to treat the matter sympathetically?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi SAYIDUR RAHMAN replied:

14.—Yes, the hon. Member is referred to this Government Resolution No. EPS.-43/44/10, dated the 3rd February 1945, published in the *Assam Gazette* dated the 7th February 1945. A copy of the Resolution is placed on the Library table.

Appointment of store-keepers for paddy godowns

Maulavi DEWAN ALI RAJA asked :

15. (a) Is it a fact that the Subdivisional Officer is authorised to appoint Store-keepers for the paddy godowns under the Government Paddy Procurement Policy ?
 (b) If so, how many Store-keepers have been appointed by the present Sub-divisional Officer of Habiganj ?
 (c) Were the posts duly advertised for public information ?
 (d) If so, in what way and when ?
 (e) If not, why not ?
 (f) What are the names of all the Store-keepers appointed through the said Officer ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied :

15. (a)—No.
 (b)—Does not arise.
 (c)—No.
 (d)—Does not arise.
 (e)—As the appointments had to be made immediately, there was no time to advertise the posts.
 (f)—Does not arise.

Mr. BAIDYNATH MOOKERJEE: May we know who made the appointments ?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The appointments were made by the Deputy Director of Procurement—Mr. Maqsd—in consultation with the Deputy Commissioner.

†Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: May we know, Sir, if any applications were received ?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: At the time when the appointments were made, no applications were received. On the vote of this House, as we had to take up procurement from the Syndicate and start buying through Government agency, we requested different departments of Government to release officers for the purpose. The Director of Public Instruction was prepared to release 25 officers from the Education Department, out of which 19 were selected for appointment and six more officers were selected from other departments. The Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet and the Deputy Director of Procurement sat together and made the selection.

†Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Was any outsider taken in ?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: So far as my knowledge goes, no outsider was appointed.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Were all these appointments made by the Deputy Director of Procurement ?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: As I have already said, the Deputy Director of Procurement in consultation with the Deputy Commissioner appointed all these people.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Are we to understand that the Sub-divisional Officer had no hand in the matter ?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No.

†Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Was any application received from outsiders for the appointments ?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: No, Sir. No application was received from outsiders.

†Babu KAMINI KNMAR SEN: How were the appointments made ?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: The Deputy

Commissioner consulted the Subdivisional Officer and on his recommendation six from other departments were appointed.

†Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN: Do we understand that all these people were in Government employment?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes, they had already been in Government employment.

Settlement of lands with immigrants

Srijut DHIRSING DEURI asked :

16. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) Whether all the blocks embodied in the Government Resolution on Development Scheme in the District of Nowgong, dated the 28th July 1941, have since been apportioned to the different communities in the district?

(b) The number of bighas of land that have since been settled in the said district with immigrants in those different areas opened for their settlement?

(c) Whether any other new block has subsequently been set apart for settlement with the immigrants?

(d) Whether any instructions were issued after the 28th July, 1941 to the local officers, particularly to the Colonisation Officer, Nowgong, in order to safeguard the interests of the backward and minority communities?

(e) If so, what are those instructions?

The Hon'ble Maulavi MUNAWWAR ALI replied :

16. (a)—No. The Development Scheme was abandoned a few months after the Resolution mentioned in the Question, and the Colonisation Scheme was reverted to for immigrants only leaving indigenous people to apply for land when and where they wanted it.

(b)—The information is not available.

(c)—Yes, under the Colonisation Scheme.

(d) & (e)—No special instruction was necessary as the general instruction contained in paragraph 6 of the Government Resolution No. RC.8/42/19, dated the 6th March 1942, to keep fresh settlements of the immigrants in as close proximity as possible to their older settlements and in particular to avoid making them in areas mainly populated by people of the Tribal classes, was sufficient.

Message from the Assam Legislative Council *re* the Shillong Civil Courts and Laws Bill, 1944

The SECRETARY to the Assembly: Sir, the following message has been sent by the Secretary, Assam Legislative Council:—

"In accordance with the provisions of rule 127 of the Assam Legislative Assembly Rules, I lay on the table "The Shillong Civil Courts and Laws Bill, 1944", which was passed by the Assam Legislative Council on the 7th December, 1944. The Bill was referred to a Select Committee of the originating Chamber.

The Bill has already been circulated to hon. Members.

Adjournment Motion *re* Failure of Government to supply mill cloth both to urban and rural population of the Sylhet district

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will now ask for leave to move the first two Adjournment Motions. In the first Motion, instead of "Sythet district" it should be "Assam".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: There is another Motion* on the same subject as it stands in relation to the whole Province of Assam. That Motion stands in the name of Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya. So I cannot allow the alteration in the terms of the Motion the hon. Member wants.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg leave of the House to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to discuss the following matter of public importance and of recent occurrence, namely, the failure of Government to supply mill cloth both to urban and rural population of the Sylhet district.

A serious cloth situation has arisen to such a height that a cloth famine is apprehended in the district of Sylhet. I wish to place some reasons before the House, citing certain instances. The Additional District Magistrate of Sylhet with his subordinates released certain bales of cloth to be sold in the black market. There are certain unlimited quotas fixed for the Government servants. And there are certain quotas reserved for fictitious people and those bales of cloth are made to be sold in the black market. Very recently, I know, one Sub-Inspector of Police seized 6 bales of cloth belonging to Sulaiman, a wholesaler who is also in association with the Additional District Magistrate. There are other instances also. As I know, some 200 bales were fixed for the district of Cachar, but only 32 bales have been given to the public for sale. If this state of affairs continues, then people of the poorer class as well as of the middle class will go without cloth. Not to speak of the bazars in the towns but also in the villages middle class people are not getting any cloth to be sold. In the past, from certain places of Bengal loom-made cloth used to come to our side for sale in the market. But since the Bengal Government has banned the entry into Assam any cloth the scarcity has become more and more acute, with the result that very soon people will have to go without cloth and which fact everyone knows.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my Friend is correct in saying that there is a scarcity of mill-made cloth in Sylhet. But I may say, this scarcity is not only there, but in the Province itself. We have got enormous quantity of standard cloth which is available to the entire public to buy without any reservation of being poor. But for the shortage of mill-made cloth, the Assam Government is not responsible. It is the Central Government who originally, through mistake, I should say more correctly, through a policy of appeasing the manufacturers of cloth, started a policy of giving quotas to different provinces and they decided that the quotas would be given to the actual dealers who had been in this trade from the year 1942 and earlier. In Assam we have no big dealers; no dealers from here have bought any cloth from the mills direct; in previous years our quota was merged with that of Bengal, as our traders bought from the merchants living in Bengal or Calcutta. But as the Bengal Government could not help our dealers in getting our quota from Bengal merchants, we had to correspond with the Government of India and, as a result, the Textile Commissioner with the Government of India, Mr. Vellodi came to Assam to discuss, and then we have been able to secure separate quota for Assam, namely, 4,600 bales per month and we have to buy this quota from Bombay and Ahmedabad mills, as the Government of India ordered us. We have sent our Deputy Director of Textile, Rao Saheb Sundram to Bombay and he has been, through agents, able to send to Assam about 10,000 bales in the last four months. Three agents are operating both at Bombay and at Ahmedamad to get our cloth. One thing stood in our way in the matter of railway booking, as no direct booking from Bombay to Assam is allowed due to orders and rules of the Railway Department. So, all our quotas now have been booked from Bombay to Calcutta, and we have to receive the Bengal Government's permission to export this from Bengal to Assam. We, therefore, asked Messrs. Shaw

*Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA to move.

"This Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance namely the cloth and yarn famine prevailing throughout the Province due to the failure of the Government machinery of supply."

Wallace & Co., to handle all these bales on behalf of Assam in which connection our Textile Commissioner, Mr. Hadi Hussain, went to Calcutta to settle terms with this Company for the disposal of this cloth from Bombay and Ahmedabad and to make arrangement for despatching the cloth to different centres in Assam. Now Assam's quota of cloth is coming. I have heard only three days ago from one hon. Member of this Assembly that some 250 bales have arrived at Sylhet. Moreover, it takes very nearly three months for a bale to reach Assam from Bombay. Hence, in the past, there was some scarcity of mill-made cloth in all areas of Assam. We have done our level best to secure cloth during the last four months and the result is in sight. Therefore, hearing these details, I hope my Friend will withdraw his Motion.

†Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: Sir, cannot the Government throw the responsibility of transport to the trade itself? We find, the difficulty arises in creating some new agents for the purpose of handling this business. I say this because in some cases where Government fails, the trade succeeds.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If we leave it to the trade, the complaint made by Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy, I am sorry to say, will be aggravated. Because the trade will sell the cloth in the black market. With that view the Government brings the cloth and issues it through co-operative organisations.

†Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR: Sir, in many places people weave their own cloth. But as they are not getting yarn, their looms are remaining idle. I will be glad to know if anything is going to be done to remove the scarcity of yarn.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, this is an adjournment Motion regarding the scarcity of cloth and the question of the supply of yarn does not come in.

†Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Sir, may I know from the Hon'ble Premier if any enquiry will be made against the allegation that has been just now made in the House?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If my Friend gives me any specific cases, I will enquire.

†Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: In view of that, Sir, I do not press my Motion for leave to move the Motion.

Then I may be permitted to move my next Motion.

Adjournment Motion re misuse of Defence of India Rules by the Deputy Commissioners of Sylhet and Cachar Districts

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Sir, I beg leave to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to discuss the following matter of public importance and of recent occurrence, namely, misuse of Defence of India Rules by the Deputy Commissioners of Sylhet and Cachar Districts by curtailing civil liberties of people in banning meetings, hoisting of Congress flag and in refusing permission for meetings and in putting restrictions on leaders belonging to popular organisations.

Now, in the Sylhet district, we cannot hold meetings and when permission is asked for, we receive permission after the date of the meeting. I shall cite certain instances. Recently there was a conference called Surma Valley Kisan Conference. I applied for permission for 4 days but permission was given only for 2 days and it was received very late. I had to send a reply-paid telegram and the reply came to me just the day before the conference. Permission was also called for a procession, but it was refused. I may also mention that, in this Assembly, last time we passed some Motions regarding the cultivators' paddy and rice. The cultivators did not know all these things. Meetings were required to be held to apprise the cultivators

of the details which have been passed in the Assembly. After many days, only on the 12th of January we got permission for the meeting and in that meeting Kisans knew what was passed in the Assembly. I sought for permission for holding many meetings in the whole Subdivision and some of the meetings were adjourned for want of permission.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: May I ask one thing? The hon. Member has raised four points. Will he tell me how many meetings have been banned between the last Session of the Assembly and this Session?

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: I have got a list. At least four.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Four meetings during these three months?

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Yes, Sir. There are other instances which have not yet come in to my hands.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member should have been in full possession of all facts he wants to discuss by the Motion. It is an Adjournment Motion and his informations should be clear and definite. How many are the cases in which restrictions, the Motion speaks of were imposed?

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Four. Sir, yesterday in answer to a Question of mine the Hon'ble Premier replied that he has been restricting the movement of Comrade Manik Choudhury in Sylhet town and Comrade Kali Prasanna Das has been detained and also Rajendra Kumar Nandi has been interned in Sunamganj town and I sent a reply-paid telegram to the Hon'ble Premier to allow Mr. Arun Kumar Chanda to attend the conference but I did not get the reply.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then, what does the hon. Member mean by mis-use of Defence of India Rules?

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Whenever the officers like to do anything they do that. They do not conform to any rules. There is no reason to detain those persons. They are not doing anything harmful. Moreover they are acting for the defence of India. They are making anti-fascist propoganda in the places where they remain.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member mean indiscriminate application of the Defence of India Rules without proper enquiry?

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Yes, there is indiscriminate application of the rules in many things.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: In all cases the objection to the holding of meetings was practically the same and was there any enquiry held before refusal of permission?

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: No.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Anything more?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: At the outset I may mention that this Motion is entirely out of order. In the first place, the occurrence was continuous one, the Defence of India Rules are there and they have been applied for the last two years. So the restrictions imposed are not new, but they were there since a long time. Sir, we are going to discuss a Motion* which will be moved by my Friend Mr. Mookerjee but this is an Adjournment Motion.

I have already pointed out that this has been the state of affairs for the last two years in the district of Sylhet. This is nothing new.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Does hon. Mr. Mookerjee intend to move his Motion when his turn would come on any of the Private Members' Business day?

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Yes, Sir, I was willing to move it but I think it is better for me to remind you as well as the hon Members including the Hon'ble Prime Minister who were present during the discussion which took place yesterday afternoon in your Chamber that I have decided to deal with this matter in my Budget speech, as that was the general desire, and the Hon'ble Prime Minister was also kind enough to assure that he would give a separate reply to the points that will be raised by me regarding the political prisoners.

*Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE to move:

“That the political situation of the Province be taken into consideration.”

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Then I am to take it that the hon. Member, Mr. Mookerjee is not going to move his Motion.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: According to yesterday's arrangements I do not like but if the Hon'ble Prime Minister so desires and if he be kind enough to make time for me then I may consider but as it stands I cannot.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The hon. Member should come to a decision. This is very important. If his Motion is to be discussed I may not allow this Adjournment Motion on the ground that it will anticipate discussion of a Motion that has already been set down for discussion and is likely to come up.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, our decision was due to a request made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition and I must stick to it. But the Hon'ble Prime Minister has forgotten the arrangement, it seems.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, the matter has been settled by arrangement in order to accommodate the learned Leader of the Opposition to have his Resolution about land settlement policy. This is the burning topic of the day. When we came to this arrangement, we went the length of—instead of taking private members' time—moving the Motion on the economic situation by Government instead of allowing my Friend Mr. Mookerjee to move his Motion. I was willing to allow Mr. Mookerjee to move his Motion on the political situation of the country but you, Sir, suggested that the same matter might be discussed in the general discussion of the Budget, and I might make a reply, and, therefore, the matter would be discussed on the floor of the House. I do not take shelter on that. But Sir, under our Rule 87 not more than one matter can be discussed on the same Motion and the Motion must be restricted to a specific matter of importance. As you yourself have pointed out—and I have also marked it—that this Motion has got four different sub-sections to it. The first point is about the curtailment of civil liberties by banning meetings. The second is the hoisting of Congress flag. The third is the refusing of permission for holding meetings. The fourth is the restriction on leaders belonging to popular organisations. But all these referred to cannot be one subject matter; my hon. Friend should have merely relied on "misuse of the Defence of India Rules".

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: He has explained how the misuse is being made. He wants to discuss the whole policy; this I can understand from his Motion.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: If you think so, I have nothing further to say.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member press his Motion for leave to move the Adjournment Motion?

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Yes, Sir.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Having heard the hon. Member who has given notice of the Motion and also the Hon'ble Prime Minister, I hold that the Motion is in order. The hon. Mover of this Motion wants to discuss the whole policy of the Government, underlying the imposition of restrictions in various ways on the civil liberties of the people and, having regard to the present political situation, it is a very urgent matter of great public importance. So I find the Motion to be in order and I give my consent to it.

Is there any objection to the Motion being moved?

(After a pause)

I see there is no objection. The Motion will be taken up at 3 p.m., to-day and the consideration of the other Adjournment Motions will stand over for Monday.

Motions under Assembly Rule 85(1)

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

Maulavi Amjad Ali is absent. Mr. Whittaker's Motion is to be taken up on the 12th. Then Maulavi Abdur Rahman can move his Motion.

Motion *Re*: introduction of free Compulsory Primary Education in the Province

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg 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

as may be deemed necessary." Sir, let me begin my speech with the saying that upon the education of the people of the country, the fate of the country depends and that in the youths of the nation we have our national assets. If we look to the other nations of the world—the nations who are now progressive in ideas and progressive in modern lines of education, we find that their people are much advanced in modern thoughts. The percentage of literacy in those countries is very much more than that of ours. It is said that the elementary education is the foundation of the welfare of our children, welfare of our women, welfare of our rural population and welfare of our citizens. If primary education of a better type is not introduced in the country and if the children of the soil are not forced to attend educational institutions under compulsion, the structure of national life is sure to be weak and feeble. We cannot shut our eyes against what is being done in progressive countries like Soviet Russia, modern Turkey, Denmark, Japan and so on.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : Excluding Great Britain ?

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN : They are our masters. If we compare the percentage of literacy in India with other countries of the world it will make our heads stoop down out of shame. Illiteracy is the root cause of poverty and ill-health and it makes a man immoral. The people of the United Kingdom and Germany are cent per cent. literate and the United States of America and Japan have got 95 per cent. of their population educated. In India the percentage of literacy is about 10 per cent. Then comes the question of our own poor Province of Assam. In the matter of literacy of its population the position of Assam stands fourth. The percentage of literate people in the Provinces of Bengal, Bombay and Madras are much higher than that of the people of the Province of Assam.

A little above 9 per cent. of the total population of Assam is at present literate. This indicates the urgency and extreme necessity for introducing free compulsory primary education in the Province at an early date. All civilised Government and nations are out to improve the position of their people. We should keep pace with them. Assam's total population, according to Census figures of 1941, is about one crore and five lakhs. Out of this only about 13 lakhs are children aged between 6 to 10 who are likely to attend schools. Then it comes to this that out of a total population of the Province, near about 12½ lakhs of children are here who can be made to attend the educational institutions. Now, Sir, if I can be allowed to refer to certain authoritative figures regarding the school-going children and if we can force them to attend school, it will be necessary to establish additional schools in addition to the existing ones which will necessitate increased expenditure over and above that borne by Government and the Local Bodies. On a calculation, Sir, it has been found out that if free compulsory primary education is to be introduced throughout the whole Province, the amount of expenditure that will be necessary will stand in the neighbourhood of one crore of rupees. The Government is maintaining certain primary schools from their own direct grant and the rest are being managed by the Local Bodies and other sources. Deducting the present expenditure which is now being borne by the Province towards imparting primary education to our children, the additional expenditure which will be necessary will be about 60 to 70 lakhs only. If we feel that it is necessary to keep pace with other nations of the world and also with other neighbouring provinces of India, we should make it a point, we should think it our determined duty, to introduce compulsory primary education in the Province and the question of finding out the additional expenditure of 60 to 70 lakhs may not be difficult. There are means, if wise handling is made, from which this additional sum may be found out. I will give my own suggestions in this respect later on. Since we entered into the present autonomous administration we made it a point to make a better nation of our people and so we should, first of all, take up the cause of imparting elementary education to our own children. There has been sufficient demonstration on the floor of this Hon'ble House since the advent of provincial autonomy which showed that none of the Members of this House is apathetic to this question. There has been the Primary Education Conference in

which all the members in a chorus recommended that the sooner the Government takes up the question of introduction of free compulsory primary education in this Province, the better it will be for its children. Even before the present new reforms, as early in the year 1926, while the present Leader of the House was in charge of Education, an Act was passed, called the Assam Primary Education Act of 1926. The views expressed by different Hon'ble Members then, tend to show that all right-thinking people of the Province are always out to see that they can give at least elementary education to their children and as a result of that, since after the enactment of the Act of 1926, what achievement the Province has made has to be considered. It has however been said that the Education Act which was passed in 1926, has remained a dead letter. Why this has been so? Why the Act has not been translated into action? What are the difficulties which stood in the way of introduction of the provisions of that Act? The difficulties, to me it appears, are the questions of finance—the question of dual system of meeting the expenditure, that is, it was provided that in an area where compulsory primary education was to be introduced, one-third of the cost thereof was to be borne by the Local Board concerned and two-thirds by the Government. Some of the areas were selected also for introduction of compulsory primary education and the Local Boards were approached whether they were ready to bear the necessary expenditure which the Act provided but the reluctance of the Local Bodies prevented such measures being taken up. Now it is high time that we should see that there should be some sort of compulsion towards the expenditure which will be necessary for the introduction of this very very important nation-building scheme in the Province. Sir, it was recommended, I remember, in a resolution that this scheme be introduced as early as possible. Now the present Government seems to be a bit alert about the country-wide agitation about this matter. They have appointed a Primary Education Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. S. C. Roy, retired D.P.I. of the Province. I do not know, Sir, what will be their recommendations. But I am sure this very vital question of the introduction of free primary education in the Province has not been lost sight of. We might send a recommendation to the Government to take up this scheme at a very early date.

Sir, as regards the public voice for introduction of primary education in the Province, I may cite several instances. Very recently, some months past, I have been trying to speak out my mind to the people at large, wherever I had an occasion. In several public meetings I pointedly raised this question—whether our people would be willing to pay any cess towards imparting education to their children if at all compulsory primary education was introduced. The voice of the people was unanimous everywhere. I have been very much impressed by the enthusiasm and willingness of the people displayed in favour of paying any cess in order to get their children educated. I do not know whether any resolution from any of the meetings has been sent to Government. But very recently at a meeting at Shaistaganj in my Subdivision, which was presided over by the Hon'ble Minister of Civil Defence, this question was very much agitated. Some of the speakers did not allow us any opportunity to speak as they kept on speaking for hours together till the subject was exhaustively discussed. They said that it was the only question which would give real benefit to the people of the Province if this primary education was introduced in a compulsory manner. There might be some opposition to this at the very beginning, as every good measure is confronted with opposition at first. Supposing, Sir, if a doctor wants to administer medicine to a person to cure his sore, the patient will naturally give some obstruction at the very beginning even though he knows full well that the medicine will do him good ultimately. This is also the condition with our people generally. Though they will grumble to pay any cess at the beginning, they will not hesitate to contribute towards it when they will find that their children and wards are deriving much benefit from introduction of primary education. And this cess will not be much higher than what they are paying now as Chowkidari cess. In this view of the matter I would urge upon the Government to take up this measure without any hesitation, and I will be extremely grateful if I get an unanimous support from the hon. Members of this august House for my Motion. This measure, if introduced, will enable the people to give at least the

elementary education to their children. Sometimes the guardians have a mind to educate their boys but because of the fact that they are afraid of their children's own wishes, they do not put pressure on them. But if there be compulsion there will be no option on the part of the guardians in sending the boys to schools.

Now, as to the necessity of this very important matter, I think, Sir, I need not dilate much, as I feel sure that no hon. Member of this House or anybody outside the House will stand against such a very popular measure. The only difficulty which may disturb the minds of some of the hon. Members of the House is the question of finance. I have already stated that the additional expenditure that will be necessary will not go much beyond about a crore. Government are now very much solvent, I should say. From the Supply Department, it is reported, they are earning a lot of money each year. I am told also that Government are increasing their income from Agricultural Income-tax and if a certain percentage of the income derived from the Agricultural Income-tax and income from other sources are earmarked for this scheme then it will surely minimise our task.

Then again, some amount of taxation may be levied on the Tea Industry, not on the growers but on the consumers of tea. I think my hon. Friends may take it seriously that if only one pie is levied on one pound of tea, the total amount will come to several lakhs.

Mr. A. WHITTAKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Member ask Government what they did with the suggestion that the Assam Government should take a share of the excise duty which is already bringing about 2 crores of rupees to the Central Government?

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Very well, Sir, I will ask that. We are now to see how this popular measure can be taken up by Government at once. I am just giving more light on the way in which they can find out additional expenditure. My idea was that as they might levy some additional cess on Tea Industry they might also find out some money from the Agricultural income. They might also spare some money from the earning of the Supply Department. I am told they are earning lakhs and lakhs from this Branch and that Branch. The Government is now out to open new avenues and they are making appointments right and left. This action of the Government is not at all welcomed. The additional income they are now deriving should be spent for this Scheme. It is no good spending the money to maintain the officers only.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Has the hon. Member finished his speech?

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Yes, Sir. With these words I commend my Motion to the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"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 as may be deemed necessary."

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I want to move a small amendment to the Motion that has just now been moved by my hon. Friend, Maulavi Abdur Rahman, *viz.*, that in the second line after the word "forthwith" the word "even" be added. The Motion, as amended, would read as follows:—

"That this Assembly do now take into consideration the question of introduction of free compulsory primary education in the Province forthwith even by levying such cess as may be deemed necessary".

I do think that my hon. Friend the Mover of the Motion will not have any objection to my amendment.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: But I think the vote of the House is to be taken for introducing even this small amendment.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: If the hon. Mover of the original Motion accepts the Amendment, there will be no difficulty.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Even if it is accepted by the hon. Mover, the vote of the House will be necessary.

*Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE : I think the hon. Member will have an opportunity of moving his Amendment.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : Very well.

Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY : Sir, my object is obvious. I want that the question of taxation should come into consideration as a last resort, when all other avenues have been explored, and exhausted. I hope, Sir, the hon. Members of the House will realise the position.

Sir, the movement for introduction of free compulsory primary education in this Province is as old as the Assembly itself. Year after year the hon. Members, irrespective of party alignment, have stressed the need of such compulsion. I do not hesitate to say that the movement received an additional impetus when the present Education Minister assumed charge of the portfolio. Since then he has been trying his utmost to advance the cause of primary education with the ultimate object of introducing free compulsory primary education.

In this connection, I would like to refer to the Primary Education Conference held in Shillong in 1943, where the Mover of the present Motion was also present. In this Conference, primary education in all its aspects was thoroughly examined and certain recommendations were made with the object of paving the way for an early introduction of free compulsory primary education. I regret to say that most of these recommendations yet remain unimplemented. In this Conference the question of levy of a fresh cess was also considered, but it was ultimately decided to find money from the provincial revenues.

Very recently, a Primary Education Committee was appointed by the Government with Mr. S. C. Roy, the *ex-Director* of Public Instruction, as its Chairman. This Committee, after very long deliberations submitted its report. Unfortunately, the report has not been made available to the hon. Members. I understand that in this report also the financial implications were thoroughly considered and the Committee made certain recommendations including fresh taxation.

When the Assam Primary Education Bill standing in my name was defeated at the last stage in the last Budget Session, the Hon'ble Minister in charge was kind enough to give an assurance that he would come forward with a comprehensive Bill for early introduction of free compulsory primary education in Assam. But the Government feared that levy of a fresh cess would be necessary for the introduction of free compulsory primary education and they did not agree to come forward with such Bill. They wanted beforehand to ascertain the verdict of the House and that too upon the initiative of a private Member. This is the origin of the present Motion. My hon. Friend Maulavi Abdur Rahman is a staunch exponent of the cause of primary education. I presume, Sir, he has tabled this Motion out of a sense of desperation, otherwise, he is no advocate of a taxation measure. (*A voice* :—No.)

We cannot but deplore the dilatory habits of the Government. Why could they not appoint a Special Officer with an adequate staff for a preliminary survey without appointing a Committee? We are yet to learn what useful work was done by this body. Then again, the Committee submitted its report in October 1944 and it is in the month of April 1945 that Government is going to appoint a Special Officer to examine the report.

I suggest that a Special Officer should be appointed without further delay and he should immediately undertake the necessary survey work which will surely prove to be a stupendous task. Such a survey will entail a census of school-going children, allocation of areas to be served by each single and plural teacher's schools in the light of local circumstances and it will also take into consideration the question of school buildings and equipments.

Side by side with the survey work, I think, arrangement should be made for starting more training schools for the purpose of training more teachers. Such

training of teachers should be considered as an essential requisite for the introduction of free compulsory primary education.

Upon a very modest estimate, the ultimate cost of Government for this introduction of free compulsory primary education throughout the Province will be in the neighbourhood of a crore of rupees. But the expenditure during the first few years is not expected to exceed 50 lakhs of rupees even including the capital expenditure and also a small rise in the pay of the lower primary school teachers.

Reading between the lines of the Sargent Report it is not difficult to presume that the Government of India will be ready to contribute at least 50 per cent. of the total expenditure if we launch upon the Scheme. Is it very difficult, Sir, to find out this money from the Provincial Budget? I want to say that if Government have the will, the way will not be difficult to find out. In this connection I would refer to the Agricultural Income-tax receipts. In the year 1941-42 the income under this head was Rs. 27,12,000. In 1942-43 it came to Rs. 38,83,000, in 1943-44 it further swelled to Rs. 58,11,000 and in the current year the Revised Estimates place the figures at Rs. 56,00,000. But I have definite information that the actuals will be much bigger (*Voices of No, No*). This is in any way a new source of income and if there is any difficulty in ear-marking it for primary education a proportionate amount can surely be spent for the purpose.

Next I take up the provincial share of income-tax. In the year 1941-42 our share was a meagre sum of Rs. 14,78,000. It rose to Rs. 21,80,000 in the year 1942-43 and to Rs. 39,00,000 in 1943-44. In the current year it is expected to be in the neighbourhood of 60 lakhs. In the year 1945-46 it will be much more, if we get our due share from the new tax on betel-nut and tobacco. In the Budget that has been presented in the Central Assembly, an extra surcharge on income-tax has been proposed. This will effect a proportionate rise in our share. So, Government can easily spare a part of this amount for the spread of primary education.

I think, Sir, I need not mention about the extra profit that we are making from the Forest Department, Provincial Excise and from other taxes and duties. But I cannot but mention the *ad valorem* cess that is being realised by Government from most of its supply transactions. The collection under this will be, I understand, to the tune of 75 lakhs in the current year. In the circumstances, is it not possible for the Government of Assam to make a start towards the introduction of free compulsory primary education with their own resources? I submit, Sir, this will doubtless be the best investment in the way of post-war planning.

I want to make it clear that I am not fighting shy of new taxation. It should come as a last recourse when we cannot avoid it. In the present case I am not convinced that Government is unable to meet the expenditure to make a good start. Let the Government pull all its resources and if it is found to be deficient then only the question of taxation will come. As such, Sir, I can only accord my qualified support to the Motion moved by Maulavi Abdur Rahman.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Amendment moved:

"That in the second line of the Motion after the word "forthwith" the word "even" be added.

I think at this stage the Government point of view may be placed before the House.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, as the Hon'ble Minister in charge is engaged in the Upper House I may reply. Government stand-point in this matter has been sufficiently indicated in the speech of my hon. Friend the Mover of this Motion. But even at the cost of repetition, I have to place before the House seriatim the steps that have been taken. As has been pointed out, as early as 1926 Government had an Act, the Assam Primary Education Act, and a special officer, the late Mr. Sarat Chandra Goswami, was appointed to draw up rules and to see that that Act came into operation. This Act, was sponsored and piloted by me. It was an advance of the Compulsory Primary Education Acts that were prevalent at the time throughout India, and it

was with the greatest difficulty that I persuaded the then Finance Member of Assam Government, the late Sir William Reid, to agree to Government bearing 2/3rds of the expenditure, if 1/3rd would come from the Local Bodies, for carrying out the scheme of compulsion. Nowhere in India such pecuniary burden was then taken by Government for the introduction of compulsory primary education. The rules were completed by 1928 and we thought that certain areas would take advantage of the provision and start compulsion of school-going children of the age between 6 to 11. Some schemes did come, but before Government scrutinised them and took the preliminary steps, the world-wide depression, *i.e.*, the financial depression, came over the land and no Local Body was in a position to tax the people in order to produce 1/3rd of contribution that would be necessary. So, in spite of the willingness of Government to bear their share, it was our Local Self-Government institutions which were not in a position to take the advantage of the Act and so, things remained in the same way till 1937 when the new Constitution was ushered in. As has been mentioned by my Friend, the Mover, everyone was urging the Government to take up the spread of primary education and as the enormous strides that had already taken place did not satisfy the popular mind, they urged that compulsory education should be introduced throughout the Province. Government held conference after conference in order to find out ways and means. My Friend Mr. Abdul Bari Chaudhury has mentioned about the conference in 1943 and then laterly the Primary Education Committee presided over by Mr. S. C. Roy whose report we are at present considering. Mr. Abdul Bari is not quite correct in saying or rather presuming that Government had shelved the report and did not do anything to expedite taking up the preliminary steps. As a matter of fact, Government had given considerable thought to the matter and was about to appoint a special officer to have a preliminary survey when the cruel hands of Death snatched away the life of that officer designated. We are now thinking of appointing another officer of the Education Department, who has experience of both Bengal and Assam, to complete the survey. But no amount of survey will produce the wherewithal to start compulsory primary education in Assam. Primary education is free since 1912, an achievement attained by very few other provinces of India. In spite of the very poor financial resources of the Government of Assam, Assam stands fourth in the list of literacy throughout India. If we had better means, I think we would be able to raise our position very near the top.

Sir, we have calculated that if we are to introduce compulsory primary education in Assam on the basis of Sargent Report the recurring and non-recurring cost will be over 3 crores of rupees. Under the Sargent Report the teachers' salary on a scale of Rs. 30 to 50 and allowances will be 2,49,32,400 while other expenditure of non-recurring nature will be Rs. 1,62,15,670. The Assam Primary Education Committee thought that the average monthly salary of our Primary School teachers will be Rs. 25. It has been found that the expenditure necessary for any compulsory primary education will be Rs. 15,50,000 for the people of the plains only. Be it said to the credit of the hill districts that both in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills as well as Lushai Hills the percentage of literacy of school-going children is very high and a very little amount will be required if we start compulsory primary education. Almost 85 per cent. of the school-going children are already attending schools. But unfortunately we cannot draw the same picture for the plains and it is therefore that Government has calculated the expenditure of the plains only in coming to the figures that I have placed. I better read a few figures so that hon. Members will be able to come to their own conclusion. The total population of Assam is 105 lakhs according to 1941 census. Since then numbers have increased but we do not like to make any guess work. We have based our calculations on that figure. Of this number excluding the people living in the tea gardens and the population of the hills and the Native States the plains' population is 79,40,000. It is calculated again from the census figures. It is found that almost 11 per cent of the total population are of the age between 6 and 11. On this proportion, the number of students that shall have to attend school

under any scheme of compulsion will be 8,73,400 in the plains only. But if the total population of Assam, *i. e.*, hills, tea gardens as well as plains' population are taken into consideration the number of pupils that shall have to come to school will be a little over 11½ lakhs. The Assam Primary Education Committee calculated that the minimum expenditure per capita of these students will be Rs. 12 per annum and on this basis they said that the total expenditure would be Rs. 1,55,00,000 for the primary schools children of the plains. We have at present roughly 4,88,070 pupils in the primary classes in the Province, *i. e.*, including the Hills. So we will have to calculate on the basis of 7,43,193 children to be brought to school and the additional cost calculated at the rate of Rs. 12 will necessitate 94 lakhs in round figures for any scheme of compulsion. At the present moment, at least, in 1945-46, if hon. Members will look into provisions made in the Budget which has been laid before the House that at pages 88 and 89 they will find that under Grants to Government Primary Schools both excluded and non-excluded we proposed to spend Rs. 2,37,067. Then comes the Grants to Local Bodies for Primary Education. Here the Government grant comes to Rs. 16,72,475. Then there is direct grants to non-Government Primary Schools. It is Rs. 91,200 for non-excluded areas and for excluded areas it is Rs. 21,935. Thus the total expenditure on Primary Education at present is over Rs. 20 lakhs. We have therefore to find out additional ways and means for about a crore of rupees.

*Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAJ: On a point of information, Sir. Is the Hon'ble Prime Minister including girls in the number of students?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Yes. I would have very much liked the Mover of this Motion to give us some details of the proposed levy of education cess which he recommends in his Motion. Unfortunately for the House as well as for me, beyond giving his personal experience that people are eager to tax themselves for having the benefit of compulsory Primary Education he has given us no detail. The Assam Primary Education Committee also recommended that money should be found by levying two or three annas per capita of population. That would bring only a sum of about 10 lakhs of rupees.

*Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Rupee per head; otherwise if it be less than that there is no chance for free compulsory Primary Education.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: We therefore have been at pains to find out wherefrom the money would come, to translate into action this very much desired wish of the people to have the benefits of compulsory Primary Education. Sir, Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury is not so bold as the hon. Mover himself. He says that taxation should be a measure in the last resort. He thinks that the money could be found from various sources. I will take his suggestion in the reverse order. He said that there is extra income from Forests, extra income from Excise and there is some income to the Government from the cess which has been levied on our supply of foodstuffs and cloth operations. The expenditure on Primary Education will be recurring and therefore we must frame our scheme of finances in such a way that necessary expenditure for compulsory Primary Education throughout the Province is safeguarded for all times. The very word "extra" which he has used clearly shows that we cannot expect that additional income always from Forests, Excise or Supply Department for all times. Let us take the case of Forests. The surplus income under Forests, in normal times, has been between 3 and 5 lakhs. I say this is net income. If the figure on the income side of revenue is 35 lakhs in the normal year the figure on the expenditure side stands to about 30 or 31 lakhs in the same year. The net income is 3 to 5 lakhs. If we could devote the entire surplus from Forests it will meet only one-twentieth of our necessary resources for compulsion.

As regards Excise the less said the better. We have reduced our income from opium due to prohibition policy which has been in operation for the last twenty years, at first, gradual and progressive cuts in rations of opium and ultimately total

prohibition of opium inaugurated by my hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition when he held the reins of Government. The income from opium has vanished. Nobody is going to shed tears on account of that. The next income was from country liquor. Unfortunately, on account of the transport position our contractors cannot bring here the country liquor that is wanted. The contractor's distillery is in the Bihar Province and the Bihar Government have placed an embargo on any movement of spirit either rectified spirit or country liquor. Our income from country liquor has dwindled by a very considerable portion. But there are compensation elsewhere. The distillery in Assam has started making India-made foreign liquor which is largely being consumed by the Military personnel that is to be found in the Province. This new source of income has somehow or other kept the Excise revenue intact for the Province. But with the end of the war and the removal of the Military personnel the income from that source will again dwindle.

Lastly Sir, my hon. Friend refers to the cessⁿ on supply operation of the Government of Assam. As is well known, in order to meet losses due to pilferage in transit, due to shortage and shrinkage and owing to the depredation of rats in the godowns, Government or in other words, the general public tax-payers of Assam, would have suffered a huge loss. In order to safeguard that, Government takes a cess of 6 per cent. on all commodities which they import and sell to the consumers. As a result of last 2½ years' operation we have at the present moment about ½ crore of rupees in this fund. The Government of India has ruled that the proceeds of this cess fund should be kept separate from the general revenues of the Province and it can be only utilised in bringing down the prices of essential foodstuffs or in subsidising of growing those foodstuffs in the Province which are now imported from outside. At the present moment, there is a deep depletion in this fund on account of revaluating stock of rice and paddy which Government had purchased at higher rate last year. This caused quite a big drain on this fund. I do not know how the fund will stand at the end of the current year. Every year the price of outstanding stock is revaluated and valued at the present market price. The hon. Members know at one time the price of rice had gone up to Rs. 30 per maund at which the Government had to buy, but the price has come down to Rs. 13 per maund in the Assam Valley and Rs. 11 per maund in the Surma Valley and the outstanding stock in the hands of Government has to be revaluated and the difference of price is debited to this account. All these three incomes are transitory and are for the duration of the war only. Therefore, we cannot base any scheme of a permanent nature on such extraneous and extra income which is not normal to the Province.

My Friend had two more sources from which he thinks the total expenditure may come. The first he said is taking a part of the proceeds of the Agricultural Income-tax. He thought that the proceeds are going up by leaps and bounds, and his idea is that, in the near future, it will go higher up. But in this prognostication he is not correct. The tax is levied on the income which the Tea Industry makes. Although in 1940, 1941 and 1942 the Tea Industry made substantial profit which had been reflected in the increased income, the income from 1943 had gone down very much on account of the fact that the Industry bought rice and other foodstuffs at a very high price which they had to issue to their labour force at a very concessional rate thereby losing about Rs. 10 per maund in rice alone. (*Voices—More*). More! In any way, Sir, I am just giving an idea to my Friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury who does not know this probably. So on account of this, the net profit to the Tea Industry from 1943 onward instead of going up is going down. Then again, Sir, from past experience we know that the Tea Industry does not remain in a flourishing condition for all time. There was a time when the price of tea had gone down very low and I can mention that while the cost of production of tea per pound in the Indian gardens was about 10 annas whereas in the European managed gardens it was 13 annas a pound, the price of manufactured tea in the wholesale market was only 4 annas per pound. This state of affairs started from 1930-33 when in order to save this Industry

which is one of the capital assets of India, the Government of India passed the Indian Tea Control Act which has saved the Industry.....

*Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: On a point of information, Sir. Is there any source of income of Government which is not likely to fluctuate?

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: There are many sources of income which are not likely to fluctuate of this vehement nature.

So, Sir, we cannot get much out of the Agricultural Income-tax. Similarly there is not much hope of getting a slice out of the Provincial share of Income-tax which my Friend thinks will be in the neighbourhood of 60 lakhs. This is also a war time measure of the Central Government and we are getting a part of that but this is not the normal share. If I remember aright, our normal share is about 12 lakhs.

My Friend Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury had also stated that reading between the lines of Sargent Report he hoped of getting 50 per cent. of the cost of compulsory Primary Education from the Government of India. We are in correspondence with the Government of India. We have got no definite assurance from them as yet that we will get it.

The position of Government is this, Sir, that the expenditure on Primary Education during the last decade has been very nearly doubled. I remember, Sir, when I left the Education Department in 1929, the expenditure on Primary Education was in the neighbourhood of 12 lakhs. I have just now calculated that the expenditure which we have budgeted for the next year is over 20 lakhs and if we add the sum that we spend on adult education the expenditure will come to the neighbourhood of 21 lakhs. I have given the total of Rs. 20,22,000 for Primary Education and we propose to spend a sum of Rs. 91,000 for adult education annually. So if we add this 91,000 the total expenditure spread on education will be in the neighbourhood of 21 lakhs. So far as funds permit, we will be going on expanding this expenditure on Primary Education on the voluntary basis but if the House would point out some source of income as my Friend Mr. Abdur Rahman has been bold enough to suggest that let funds be found by levying a cess, we will carry out the wishes of the Legislature.

I would request all the Leaders of the different Parties in this House to give me their considered suggestions on this subject and if they extend the hand of co-operation and show the best way by which the sum necessary for introducing compulsion can be found, we will be only too glad to grasp that hand of co-operation and come before the House with a definite scheme.

While as Education Minister from 1924-29 I gave my careful attention to this subject and even now, as Head of the present Ministry, I have devoted a considerable thought to it. My own view is that we can introduce compulsion by spending a sum of about Rs. 75 lakhs and that also by redistributing the schools which we have already got. Almost every hon. Member, who has visited his own constituency, may have noticed that the schools are generally located together in the neighbourhood of villages of important and influential members of Local Boards who exercise their influence in getting schools near about their own places. In this way there has been maldistribution of the existing schools. At my instance Government proposes in the survey, which we are going to undertake, to go very deeply into the question of maldistribution of the existing schools. If we can redistribute the schools according to areas and population, I think, we can introduce compulsion by starting a lesser number of schools than otherwise it would be. Then again, if we revert to our original method of having education squatting on the ground on mats, that would obviate difficulty of providing benches, tables, etc. and it will minimise to a great extent the preliminary expenses. I know many will say that it will be a retrograde step, but if we can progress in the way of spread of Primary Education by such a retrograde step, it should be welcome to all well-wishers of the country.

Government is spending 20 lakhs at the present moment. If the present condition continues, I, as Head of the Provincial Government, can promise that we will add another 5 lakhs bringing the total to 25 lakhs. I would request the hon. Members of

the House either themselves or through their Leaders to express how the balance of 50 lakhs could be made forthcoming. I would spare no pains to move the Government of India to get our legitimate share of the Post-War Planning in Education. Even if we get something, I have not much hope of getting more than 25 lakhs a year for the first 5 years. So, probably we can get about half a crore of rupees and if we could provide for another half a crore,—if not half a crore, even a quarter of a crore—I believe, we will be able to launch this scheme of compulsory Primary Education.

I, therefore, Sir, place Government point of view before the House and we are at one with the hon. Members who support compulsory Primary Education. The only obstacles that are preventing us are two, firstly, funds and secondly, teachers. One hon. Member has said that we should have trained teachers. This is in our scheme also, but the number of teachers which will be needed is in the neighbourhood of 25,800 and it will not be an easy task to train such a large number in a very short time. Any way, Sir, if Government is assured, including the Government shares, of a steady fund annually of Rs. 75 lakhs we will at once start compulsory Primary Education.

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned for lunch till 5 minutes to 2 P. M.

(After lunch)

Mr. D. B. H. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to give qualified support to the original Motion moved by my hon. Friend Maulavi Abdur Rahman, but at the outset I must make it quite clear that I do so only in so far that we support the principle of free Primary Education for all.

I must also make it clear that we dislike the method of springing this wide and very important subject on the House by means of a Private Member's Motion, and before we place our fully considered views before the House we would prefer to await the publication of a new draft Education Bill, sponsored and framed by Government.

There are however certain clear-cut points which I desire to place before the House to-day.

In the first place, it is expansion of free Primary Education that we want to see, and not compulsion. Compulsory education may be excellent in theory, but its practical application throughout the Province is, in our considered view, quite impossible. How can attendance at Primary Schools of hundreds of thousands of children be made compulsory? The only answer surely is that at present, at least, it cannot.

Before any scheme for the extension of free Primary Education can be introduced, more and better teachers must be found on good salaries in line with their qualifications, and the training of new as well as existing teachers must be improved and carried out on far more practical lines than at present. In short, Assam needs teachers trained to use their hands more than pen and ink. Buildings must also be greatly improved.

The introduction of a scheme such as envisaged by the Mover will entail more taxation, and any such taxation must in principle touch everybody concerned. This principle conforms with the argument advanced by Sir William Beveridge, the principle of contributory benefit, namely, that in the main, benefits can only be paid for by those who enjoy those benefits. In this connection, I must stress that the benefits of this educational scheme must be made available to the very poorest classes, and further, that speed of action is of prime importance. It follows therefore that the tax contributions must be on the widest possible scale.

Thirdly, it is, in our view, outside the bounds of practical politics to expect Government to introduce this scheme at one fell swoop throughout the entire Province, with any hope of success. It can only be successfully introduced in selected areas, rural and urban. Urban areas would clearly be preferable in that it would mean considerable economy in both staff and building accommodation.

My last point is that the expansion of free Primary Education must be a state service, *i.e.*, a direct Government responsibility. The continuance of the present system of making Primary Education the responsibility of Local Bodies will, in our

view, not be sound. There would have to be a Provincial Board with fair representation of all communities and interests, and such representation should be related to the amounts of taxation paid.

With these qualifications, Sir, I support the Motion.

Mr. C. GOLDSMITH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I like to speak on the subject, because it is the most important scheme before the House. It is no doubt a very laudable project which no one would deny. It must come some time or other; but I entirely disagree with the hon. Mover when he said that it must be started immediately. My opinion is that apart from financial commitments and other reasons, free compulsory Primary Education should not be started at this time. Firstly, the atmosphere is not congenial. The mind of the mass people is not at rest at present and labour is not available. Then, there is the scarcity of food. People are now to spend much more than before to buy necessities of life. Then, there is the scarcity of paper. For the boys and girls attending the primary schools some paper will be required. For the there is the scarcity of kerosene. The school-going children will have to read at home at night, at least the teachers will need it.

I have taken the practical side of the matter. We can go by sentiment and say that the scheme is very good. But if we carefully look at it, we find it will take a long time to take effect.

It forms a part of the great nation-building projects that are going to be taken up and all nation-building programmes are in the making. There is a committee which is thinking of Post-War Planning in the Province, as in other provinces in India, and as soon as the time is opportune, the start will be given in this respect, though this will involve lot of consideration, money and co-operation from all sides. Primary Education forms a part of the Sargent Scheme and the primary stage is a part of the whole. The success of education will depend on the kind of education we should have in the preliminary stage. The Sargent Scheme has not been accepted by the country as a whole and what the future will bring to India, and what the Indian people will think themselves on the matter is in the air. Therefore, the compulsory Primary Education in India or in Assam should not be taken up at this hour. Any nation-building programme must have the co-operation and opinion of all the communities in the Province. Everyone knows that the whole Congress does not co-operate in any big scheme that a Ministry takes up. After launching a scheme if a great bulk of the people and a very prominent party does not take part in it it is pernicious and dangerous to have it and such a scheme would not be successful without having the voice of a bulk of people in the matter. For another important reason also I say the compulsory Primary Education should not be taken up now. My Friend is very emphatic in saying that literacy is the main thing for the advance and progress of the people. Literacy or education alone does not help men and the type of education that is in vogue in our country does not improve our people much. As all people know, little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Hon. Mover mentions about Germany, Denmark, Japan and such other progressive and independent countries where Primary Education is compulsory and free, the people are very literate, enlightened, advanced and civilised. Indeed education has enlightened them and they have advanced mostly in science; and what is the result? The result is disastrous world war. The question is not whether compulsory Primary Education is needed or not. The question is whether the time is opportune. Only material advancement will not give us true progress, and progress will not come by education alone. My point is that, without the moral and spiritual content in the education of the country, the country cannot advance on the right line. Therefore, the most important thing is not to find money for compulsory education but that the whole country should think and decide what kind of education should be imparted to our children. Then the next question comes, *i.e.*, to impart right type of education we require right type of teachers. Unless we get the right kind of or well-trained teachers we cannot expect to put our children on the right line and give them proper education. To do this carefully it requires time. According to our Hon'ble Premier 28,500 teachers will be required. They must be properly trained.

Now I come to the question of finance. The finance to my mind must come. Why I say 'must', because this is one of the fundamental or most important projects of nation-building, and all the nation-building programmes that will come this will have the preference. In to-day's discussion in the House many are of opinion that this scheme of compulsory Primary Education must be taken first. And if this is to be taken first, money should be found even by keeping other projects in abeyance. Yesterday I found in the Newspaper that the Central Government is running a deficit of something in the neighbourhood of 156 crores of rupees this year and yet the Finance Member of that Government showed no signs of worry and anxiety. If that can happen there, I do not think Assam Government should worry about a crore of rupees to start a project of such a great importance and the most important of all the nation-building programmes. For these reasons, Sir, I oppose this Motion.

Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, I beg to move an Amendment to this Motion.

The "fullstop" after the words "be deemed necessary" be deleted and the following words be added:—

"and that the House is of opinion that the Government do take immediate steps for the introduction of free compulsory Primary Education in the Province even by levying educational cess on such equitable basis as will ensure supply of sufficient finance in addition to whatever may be available from the existing sources of the revenues of the Province for the purpose".

Now, Sir, in moving this Amendment I would like to bring a few facts before the Hon. House. From the speech of the Hon'ble Premier which he delivered before the lunch hour we could gather that there is dearth of men in the Province for the purpose of formulating an acceptable sound scheme. Sir, a committee was formed and they had their sittings and they had submitted their report. Now, we hear that the report of that committee is under the consideration of the Government. Consideration may be on two grounds, Sir, but it has not been made sufficiently clear by the Hon'ble Prime Minister. One ground might be, whether their recommendation will be accepted as a sound and practical one, and the other, whether the recommendation made by them if given effect to will be of good use to the people of the Province. Now, Sir, before any survey, why this committee was formed for submitting their report on other grounds which should be considered afterwards, I cannot really follow. This was a case of just like putting the cart before the horse. At first we should know how many schools will be necessary. If we want to impart Primary Education to the children of the soil their number should be ascertained and then how many students should read in each school and how many teachers would be necessary to teach them. All these should be ascertained first and then the question of finance will come in. If that is not done, we cannot arrive at the right conclusion. Now, Sir, when the education will be given free, I think, in some cases specially in the subdivision of Sunamganj it might so happen that the Government will have to arrange for communication for the students in the low lying areas. So, Sir, as it was suggested by the Hon'ble Prime Minister the existing schools may be rearranged in such a way that after spending a few lakhs Government could teach more students does not hold good. Sir, here my point is this that instead of doing that the Government should first of all have the whole of the Province surveyed and they should take the matter in right earnest. They should employ the right type of men, not the men whose recommendations will be considered by the Government in detail with doubts and suspicion and thereby taking much more time than is necessary for the purpose. The experts should give the report and that should be accepted.

As regards finance, Sir, I have given hints to that already. It is up to the Government to find out the means and my only point is in this connection which I wish that the Government should remember that in case of levying new tax it must be equitable. It should not be a *zuloom* on any particular class or community; if anyone of my hon. Friends on the floor of this House just stands up and gives a definite suggestion that money should be raised by such and such way I cannot be one with him because it should take some time to find out the means. Nothing should be done hastily and

arbitrarily. Let Government think over the matter. They have got their financial experts. If the Government so desire let them form a committee of both officials and non-officials to go through the whole matter and then, I think, we shall be in a position to arrive at a decision as to how the money should be raised and how much money will be required, the number of schools that will be required, the number of teachers that will be required and how the teachers should be trained. If the suggestion of my hon. Friend Mr. Goldsmith is taken into consideration, Sir, then there is no way of advancement in this line in near future. In this way the improvement of all the departments may be kept in abeyance without any advancement. We must face the realities and I think nobody will challenge me if I say that Education should get the first preference and Communication and Public Health should closely follow this department. So there is no time to waste and I hope the Government will do full justice to my Amendment and they will take it in right earnest and immediately too, so that the Province may make a move in the right direction, namely, introduction of free compulsory Primary Education.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Amendment moved:

"That the 'full stop' after the words 'be deemed necessary' be deleted and the following words be added "and that the House is of opinion that the Government do take immediate steps for the introduction of free compulsory Primary Education in the Province even by levying educational cess on such equitable basis as will ensure supply of sufficient finance in addition to whatever may be available from the existing sources of the revenues of the Province for the purpose'."

Maulavi MUHAMMAD MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Amendment moved by Mr. Mookerjee. I was going to move a similar Amendment, but since he has already moved it, I do not want to move mine. We have heard the arguments put forward by the Hon'ble Prime Minister and Mr. Goldsmith who opposed the original Motion. Mr. Goldsmith said that the time was not opportune and the situation of the Province was not congenial for starting free compulsory Primary Education. To some extent, Mr. Goldsmith is right but when 92 per cent. of the population are illiterate in our Province, should we wait any further on the plea of the situation being uncongenial? We want education and want it at once. Communications and Public Health organisations may wait but Education cannot wait. I want that it should be started at once. The situation should be made congenial and the time should be made opportune by Government by starting free compulsory Primary Education. The Hon'ble Prime Minister pointed out some difficulties in the way of starting compulsory Primary Education. I may put forward a suggestion to him that Government may start in selected areas, if not, throughout a whole Province.

Now comes the question about funds. If Government convert the Chawkidari tax into an educational cess we may get at once at least 20 lakhs of rupees a year from this Province. We may levy a cess as education cess at 3 pies per rupee of land revenue, and, last of all, we may approach the Central Government for a subvention for this purpose. Dr. John Sargent also made a suggestion like this. Of course, I am reluctantly making mention of Dr. Sargent. When on a former occasion I mentioned that report, the Hon'ble Prime Minister said that it might be a gospel to me but not to Government. To-day I hear the Hon'ble Prime Minister mention about the Sargent Report and therefore, I feel embolden to make mention of Dr. Sargent in my speech. For selecting areas I may put forward some suggestions. Government may take up the progressive districts into their first consideration. I may make mention of some of the districts. They may take up first Kamrup, Sylhet and Goalpara. While selecting areas Government may select rural areas along with the urban areas so that the money that will be provided for the purpose may not be spent only in urban areas, depriving the rural population of the benefit. We heard from the Hon'ble Prime Minister that the question of funds was the main question in this matter. Sir, when Government want to introduce a new measure we do not find Government lacking in fund. As for Mass Literacy Campaign, when first it was introduced, there was some opposition in this Assembly, but Government introduced Mass Literacy and they are providing funds

regularly without any difficulty. This year, we find, for two colleges—namely, M. C. College at Barpeta and R. K. H. Girls' College at Gauhati, Government provided a good amount in this year's budget. If Government want to introduce compulsory Primary Education and they take this House into confidence and sit in a Committee to devise ways and means, I think there will not be any difficulty in the way of introduction of free compulsory Primary Education. I want that each and every boy and girl in the Province irrespective of caste and creed gets education at once. With these few words, Sir, I support the Amendment moved by Mr. Mookerjee.

Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan AHBAB CHAUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Motion moved by my Friend Maulavi Abdur Rahman. I am also very glad to learn that the Government is also at one with the House and the public outside to introduce the compulsory Primary Education in the Province. The question has been thoroughly discussed and I do not like to tax the patience of the Hon. House by delivering a long speech and therefore I shall be very brief. I shall try to place before the Government the Muslim point of view regarding the propagation of the Primary Education in the Province.

I must admit that, unfortunately, Muslims are backward in the modern education. I use the word "modern" intentionally. Sir William Hunter the famous author of the Indian Mussalman says that the case is otherwise. During the Muslim period and during Muslim reign, every Mosque was converted into a school and almost every Moslim was literate and educated. Dr. Hunter further says that according to the Muslim system of education, which produced great scholars, education was far superior to the present system of education. Further, Sir, it is not the proper time and place to read a thesis explaining the cause of the fall of Muslims in education.

My submission is this, Sir, that from our personal experience we have found that it is only in the name of religion that we can attract Muslim boys towards education. It is only for this that the system of Maktab Education was introduced by Government in all the Provinces. The principle of separate education for Muslims has already been accepted by Government and even during the Congress administration, Maktab for Muslims, existed in the Province. My request is this, Sir, that Primary Education for Muslim boys should be earmarked under the head Maktab, and, following the example of Bengal, Primary Education for Muslims should be quite separate. If the members of the other communities want to separate their education I shall support it. But the term "Maktab" in the present curriculum is a misnomer and is misleading. The present Maktab is a counter-part of the Lower Primary Schools. A new Maktab Committee should be appointed to frame rules and curriculum which would include in them the religious teaching of the Holy Quoran and similar education. With these few words, I support the Motion of Maulavi Abdur Rahman.

Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLAI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to make only a few observations on this Motion, a Motion which apparently has been considered as a very important one by all sections of the House. I take the occasion to make these observations to remove some misapprehension that might arise in the minds of some Friends in the House owing to complete absence of any speech from this side and also to show that we are not unsympathetic with the object of this Motion. I have been particularly encouraged to make this speech after reference to the attitude of the Congress in reference to such questions by my hon. Friend Mr. Goldsmith. He said that he did not know what attitude the Congress would be taking in reference to the future reconstruction work of the Province in matters of Education and many other things. I would like to tell him that if we have not been able to take any part in any of these schemes of reconstruction, the fault is not with us. So far as the section of the House which is composed of us, you know, Sir, that most of us were in jail till the other day and those few that have come out, have come out with health almost completely shattered. I must say that there are yet others—6 or 7 of the best of us still in jail. As regards those congressmen who are outside, almost

all the Congress Committees have been declared illegal, so that they cannot sit together and discuss the matters so vital to the Province or the country, as a whole. But inspite of these limitations, I would not like to completely dissociate with the Motion of the kind that is before the House. Sir, the two principles that underlie this Motion are compulsion and free education. I am always shy of compulsion and there I suppose I am almost at one with hon. Mr. Moore who made some observations on this point. I would never like to take to compulsion if I can do a thing without compulsion; and before we adopt any compulsion we should see whether the same object cannot be achieved by means other than compulsion. The second point that has been urged in the Motion is that it should be free; in so far as this is concerned, I give my full and unqualified support. But where I find the Motion most lacking in detail and suffering from vagueness is the idea of Primary Education that is wanted and which has not been explained. As a matter of fact, I must say, Sir, that although I happened to have heard much discussion in the House I found very little definition of the important subject of what Primary Education is, and should be. From that I have assumed that the mentality of the House is restricted to the existing order of Primary Education, which aims at teaching only the 3 R's—a sort of literacy, the value of which I do not know. I also do not know how far it has been useful to the society as a whole. I do not know whether many of us took pains to study the effect of the Mass Literacy Campaign; but I was one of those, Sir, who tried to gather what experience I could from this drive in course of my tours and inspections. I found that large number of illiterates, made literates, were only old literates of Lower Primary Schools who had lapsed into illiteracy in the meanwhile. This only shows that the education of 3 R's is a matter which can be gained for the time being and can be lost in no time (*hear, hear*), and that in itself, it has not come to much use as is evident from the fact that those persons who had learnt these 3 R's. have not been found to be better cultivators, I mean to say better than other cultivators, or better artisans. Therefore, the inevitable conclusion is that there has been serious wastage in this system of education. It has not been giving the benefits we expect from such huge expenditure of public money. Therefore, when we think of compulsion, when we think of imposition of cess and things of that sort, we must be clear in our minds that a subject, over which we are going to spend so much of our money and so much of our energy, should be such as would give us good result.

It seems to me, Sir, that the whole Primary Education system requires reconstruction.

Other questions that must naturally arise are for what length of time this Primary Education should continue—whether it should be as now for three or four years, or it should be a 5 years' or even a 7 years' course. These are questions to which we must address ourselves before we resort to taxation and compulsion. Sir, to my mind, the Primary Education should be such as to give the villagers, I mean to say the village students, full capacity to understand the surroundings in which they live, to be able to interpret the surroundings for their own good, progress and development, to teach them to live as clean and honest villagers. If the Primary Education were not devised with that end in view we may not even go for it; at any rate, we should not go to tax people for the kind of education that we are having just now. Various schemes are now before the country as the hon. Members know. Those Friends who are keeping in touch with recent movements with regard to education, know very well, that there are various avenues through which the matter is being studied. There is the Sargent Scheme, a part of which visualises basic education also.

You have heard also of experiments in different Provinces in basic education. But just at present I do not want to say anything on any particular definite scheme. I can say definitely that Primary Education must aim at increasing usefulness of village life, and at making good, self-reliant and honest villagers. Thus what I feel necessary at present and what I find lacking in the Motion is the definition of the outlook

of this Education and all I can say at present is that if the move turns out to be a progressive move, a move in the right line, it may not be difficult to find money for it even by taxation on those who can bear the burden. But I cannot commit myself to any and every scheme of education and taxation of the people at the same time.

With these observations, Sir, I resume my seat.

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAIN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to speak a few words in this debate.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Yes, we have got only 15 minutes more. Will the hon. Member be very brief?

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAIN: I will be very brief, Sir, and will not take more than five minutes.

Sir, the question of introducing compulsory Primary Education is very important from another point of view which has not been touched upon by any hon. Member of this House. In practice, Sir, it has been found out that among the children who attend the existing schools, only one out of every four stays long enough in school to come to the stage at which literacy can be said to have been attained. This means that the money that has been spent on the rest is wasted, and as a means to prevent this wastage the only way out is to make education for this stage compulsory. Sir, this fact has been taken note of in the Sargent Report and they have recommended that in Post-War Schemes of things education at this stage must be made compulsory.

Sir, the second suggestion that I have to make is this. The Hon'ble Prime Minister has said that in the two Valleys in the plains there is a total of 8 lakhs of children of school-going age under the age group 6 to 11. Of these we can certainly take that about 4 lakhs will be girls and 4 lakhs boys. Now, if we make allowance out of a total of 4 lakhs school-going children for roughly one lakh girls and Hill children we shall be left with in the existing schools about 3 lakhs school-going boys in the 2 Valleys, and if we consider this fact then the question comes to educating only one lakh more boys in the two Valleys. (Sic)

*Maulavi ABDUL BARI CHAUDHURY: It will be the reverse.

Srijut SURENDRANATH BURAGOHAIN: Thus if we introduce compulsory Primary Education among the boys only in the first instance, then it need not worry us to find the money, for, we have already spent 20 lakhs of rupees on this head and if we add a few more lakhs we can certainly educate one lakh more boys. So the question of finance will not present any very great difficulty if the Government make up their mind to introduce compulsory Primary Education only to the boys in the first instance in both the Valleys.

Sir, with regard to introduction of compulsory Education among the girls, the Hon'ble Prime Minister has pointed out the difficulty of getting suitable teachers for any scheme of compulsion. In the case of girls the question of finding trained teachers will be much more difficult for obvious reasons. So, Sir, may I suggest to the Government that they should in the first instance introduce the measure to make Primary Education compulsory among the boys only of the two Valleys and in that case it will not be necessary for us to take to the extreme measure of taxing the people.

With these words, Sir, I support the Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Does the hon. Mover exercise the right to reply?

*Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: I will only speak on one or two points, Sir, if time permits.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: We shall have to close the debate just at 3 P. M.

Maulavi Syed ABDUR ROUF: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I must, at the very outset, thank my Friend Mr. Abdur Rahman for bringing a Motion on so vital a question for National Life. I must then thank the Hon'ble Premier and through him his Government for the very kind assurance given to us. The Government is prepared to introduce

compulsory free Primary Education, provided we can pay the money required for the purpose. Primary Education may be a good thing, the adjective 'free' makes it better, and the qualifying word 'compulsory' probably makes it the best thing, the nation at its present stage can aspire after. Every right thinking man—as my Friend the Mover says—should support his move. Perhaps they would. But I am afraid, I cannot give him my unqualified support. I have perhaps not been able to understand all the implications of a compulsory form of education and hence I have got some doubts as to the efficacy of the system. Before I can support the move whole-heartedly the Government should clear my doubts and dispel my fears.

Sir, you know that in Assam Valley we the immigrants, are about 13 lakhs in number and we are one of the most backward of classes in point of education. The reason and perhaps the only reason for this state of affairs is that we have been kept deprived of our birth right of getting education through the medium of our mother tongue. A foreign tongue has been forced upon the tongue of our children and hence they cannot make any progress. We find it very difficult to send our children to the schools where they cannot understand the language in which they are taught. Little children therefore find the school atmosphere most unpleasant for them and it becomes really very difficult to keep them confined in the school room without caning and whipping them most mercilessly. The result one can easily imagine. Most of our children cannot be persuaded to finish even the primary course and others whose guardians are unduly harsh and strict cannot finish the course in less than 6 years. In comparison to them the Assamese boys finish the same course in 4 years. The effect is this that the Immigrant boys in secondary stage cannot compete with their Assamese friends.

If by compulsory education you want to make it compulsory for us to get our Primary Education through the medium of a foreign tongue, not only that I won't support the move but I will resist it to the last. I will be the last person to barter away my birth right for a mess of pottage. If, however, I am assured that I will be given the Primary Education through my own mother tongue which is as dear to me as is theirs to them, I am prepared to give you concrete and practical suggestions as to how we should find out the entire amount necessary for the purpose.

I quite realise that in translating such a big theory into action the main consideration is the financial consideration. I further realise that after the war the income accruing to the Provincial Exchequer will be much less than what it is now. But for that have we not sufficient brain to tap the other independent sources of permanent income? Can we not add another fifty lakhs of rupees annually to our Exchequer? The answer is definitely in the affirmative.

In the Assam Valley alone there are at least 40 lakhs of acres of khas land which, if settled with the cultivators, will bring us net 50 lakhs of rupees annually. Millions of agriculturists are sitting idle with their ploughs. Huge labour is being wasted, just give them the chance and they will provide you with half the money you require. Then come to the huge area of grazing reserves. If you have simply the foresight and boldness to do justice, throw the excess area for settlement and that will bring you another 10 lakhs. Allow the immigrants to cultivate jute on a portion of the newly opened area and ask them to produce some 7 lakhs more bales of jute and you will get another 12 lakhs as jute duty. I leave your buffaloes which in fairness should pay at Rs.20 per head.

Well, then don't make the Education free in the Municipal areas where the people are rich and educated. They have got the zeal for Education and they will educate their children whether you make it free or not. So, in the cases of rich men of mofussil realise a fee of Rs.6 per year for each child. This will decrease the total expenditure. Then, accept donations from the rich men on condition that you will name the school after their choice. I am sure you shall not have to spend a single pie for construction of buildings. In this way, the Government can easily get the required money. But the question is whether they have got the amount of courage required to govern a country advanced in education? Let you all guess.

The Government should appoint a Committee at once to find out the funds and I am sure the result will be simply heartening. Believe me, Sir, if I venture to suggest that immigrants alone are prepared to meet the whole cost you require for the noble purpose.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order.

Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy will now move his Adjournment Motion.

Adjournment Motion regarding mis-use of Defence of India Rules by the Deputy Commissioners of Sylhet and Cachar

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg, to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to discuss the following matter of public importance and of recent occurrence, namely, mis-use of Defence of India Rules by the Deputy Commissioners of Sylhet and Cachar districts by curtailing civil liberties of people in banning meetings, hoisting of Congress flag and in refusing permission for meetings and in putting restrictions on leaders belonging to popular organisations.

I move this Adjournment Motion on grounds of some very serious inroads of the present Ministry on the elementary civic rights and liberties of our people in course of these few months after the last November Session of the Assam Assembly.

To cite only some of the hundreds of cases where permission for holding meetings, etc. was disallowed, I may mention, Sir, that permission was withdrawn for holding a public meeting in Habiganj town on 26th January last. Only the other day I myself sought permission for holding the ninth session of the Surma Valley Provincial Kisan Conference at Baraigram and also for carrying on group propaganda forming squads and holding processions, etc., in connection with the session. You will be surprised to hear, Sir, that I was permitted to hold such an important conference of about 500 peasant delegates from all over Sylhet and Cachar districts only in two days—though I sought permission for a four day session. To top all, the District Magistrate of Sylhet did not allow me to run squad propaganda nor hold processions. These are only the recent two performances of the Sylhet district authority they have many more to their credit, and I do not like to state them all here and now. As regards restriction to individual persons I must cite the instance of Comrades Lalmohan Roy and Barin Chaudhury. Comrade Lalmohan Roy who was responsible last year for extinguishing fire from village huts near Dulabchera station which was also under fire was served with a notice of externment from Dulabchera the very next day after the occurrence.

Comrade Barin Chaudhury, the Secretary, Fenchuganj Engineering Workers Union was assaulted on the public road by Mr. Kennedy, the Manager of the Fenchuganj Workshop in June last. Mr. Kennedy had to apologise in open court for assaulting Comrade Chaudhury. In the counter charge of assault brought by Mr. Kennedy against Comrade Chaudhury he has been acquitted by Mr. Balachandran, Magistrate, Sylhet. But unfortunately innocent Barin Chaudhury has been externed from Fenchuganj.

Sir, if I be permitted to mention one pathetic instance from Dibrugarh, I may say that a condolence meeting on the death of Mrs. Hemaprova Das, wife of the retired Civil Surgeon—Dr. Harekrishna Das, was disallowed at Dibrugarh.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion relates to the Sylhet and Cachar districts only.

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: Very well, Sir. I cite the cases where individual public workers were refused permission to attend meetings of *bonafide* organisations, etc. I may mention the case of Comrade Rajendra Nandy of Sunamganj. He sought permission to attend the ninth session of the aforesaid Surma Valley Provincial Kisan Conference and was flatly refused. I also want to cite the case of Mr. Arun Kumar Chanda. I wired to the Hon'ble Premier to allow Mr. Chanda to attend the Kisan Conference but no reply has yet been received though money was paid for the reply.

Sir, these are only few instances. They cover only two aspects of the broad issue of civil liberty. Every one knows how the present Ministry has been continuing its utter callousness towards popular rights and liberties. These acts are only in continuation of its past policy and Practice. Is it not here in this Province, Sir, that a Ministry run in the name of the Muslim League banned the President of the Assam Provincial Muslim League—Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan, to hold meetings in the Surma Valley very

recently? Is it not the only Ministry in the whole of India which banned public display of Congress Flag and still continues to do so in many districts?

We know, Sir, the Treasury Benches will come out with their pet arguments that they have instructed District Magistrates to exercise their discretion in issuing permissions. But every body knows what such discretions of those bureaucrats mean. A petition for permission sent to the District Magistrate will rot in the newly created War Office for days and when it at last reaches the District Magistrate, the District Magistrate will invariably send it to the Superintendent of Police with words "Superintendent will be brought back to the District Magistrate for orders, the date of the meeting may have passed away. Such instances are not few, Sir, where permission for holding a meeting or attending a meeting or a conference reaches the applicant days after the date prayed for.

In conclusion, Sir, I would only draw the attention of this House to the simple fact that this gagging of public opinion systematically pursued by the Ministry is deeply interlinked with the present food and such other vital policies of the Cabinet. When sufficient public opinion should be mobilised against hoarding and profiteering to secure food for all—when ample public exposure of corrupt officials should be carried on to keep the public servants away from corruption, the Ministry and its bureaucratic allies gag public opinion systematically and with impunity.

I conclude with the high hope, Sir, that the House will rally as one man to support my Adjournment Motion and thus put an end to this undemocratic and suicidal policy of the Ministry.

This refusal of permission to hold meetings and curtailment of civil liberty touches almost all the organisations, the Members of which are present in the House. I appeal to all of them to vote for the Motion. Unless and until the delegation of powers under the Defence of India Rules are not taken away from the District Magistrates, such oppressive measures will continue to be applied to all the civil population. Such procedure must cease to exist. With these words, Sir, I commend my Motion for the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The Motion moved:

"This Assembly do now adjourn to discuss the following matter of public importance and of recent occurrence, namely, mis-use of Defence of India Rules by the Deputy Commissioners of Sylhet and Cachar districts by curtailing civil liberties of people in banning meetings, hoisting of Congress flag and in refusing permission for meetings and in putting restrictions on leaders belonging to popular organisations."

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I said this morning, the Defence of India Rule 56 has been in vogue not from the recent time but for the last three years. I find by going through my record that I had minimised the time during which this order has been in operation. In the Cachar District, order prohibiting meetings and processions were imposed on 27th July 1940, for Silchar, and in the Hailakandi Subdivision on 16th August 1940. The order was extended to the whole of the Cachar District on 28th of May 1940. The order was imposed on 28th of May 1940. These orders were for a course of 6 months at first and after the end of 6 months the atmosphere in those Districts was taken into consideration and where there was need, the orders were extended by another 6 months. The last extension in the District of Sylhet was on 14th November 1944 while in the Cachar District it was on the 16th February 1945. These orders were for the purposes of security, peace and law and order. We have been living in abnormal times and at times the war was very near to the District of Cachar. It is well known that the Japanese infiltration had come within 35 miles of the District headquarters of Cachar. At this time it was unfortunate that some people, under the guise of anti-Fascist organisations, were spreading discontent in the minds of the simple labourers working either in the railways or in tea gardens. My Friend, in order to support his case, mentioned about two cases which, according to him, show the callousness of the Ministry in curtailing the civil liberties of the people. He mentioned the case of one

comrade who was, according to him, doing very good work for the masses at Durlavchera. I can assure my Friend that I have no personal knowledge of this gentleman. I have never met him in my life and therefore I cannot be characterised to have any partiality or ill-feeling against him. I have to work on the report of the local officers and every local officer reported that in the guise of impressing the people about the Grow-More-Food Campaign, this gentleman was spreading false rumour about the war and said that labour *raj* or *Kishan raj* was coming in course of a few months. This gentleman was creating discontentment and cases of breach of discipline occurred in many tea estates. Government therefore had reluctantly to ask him to leave that particular area of the District but did not extern him out of the Province, rather allowed him to live in his native village. My Friend also mentioned the case of Mr. Barin Chaudhuri who had an unfortunate fracas with Mr. Kennedy of the Steamer Company at Fenchuganj. This gentleman, on the plea that he was organising, as the Secretary of the Labour Union, the labour force that was working in the workshop at Fenchuganj, created such a bad situation that the labourers went on a strike and would not do any work holding up all the navigable traffic. Steamers and launches that needed repair could not be repaired in time and for this the civil comforts were denied to the people, for these steamers were carrying the much needed foodstuff from outside. It took the Deputy Commissioner and the Labour Commissioner of the Province 6 months to settle the dispute not amongst the authorities and the labour force on the other side but amongst the rival sections of the labour organisations whereas formerly the labour force at Fenchuganj were working harmoniously. Mr. Barin Chaudhuri started one organisation, became its Secretary which was resented by another organisation. If on account of such happenings the local officers thought it fit to remove the new comer from such nefarious activities, I think the authorities had done a public good and if the civil liberty of one particular person had to be curtailed under those circumstances we should not grudge such curtailment. My Friend has stated that certain big meetings which he had organised could not be held as Government or rather Deputy Commissioners refused permission. Yet he has been good enough to admit that he was allowed to hold many meetings but permission was given for two days only whereas he applied for four days. That clearly shows that when a responsible person like my Friend comrade Karuna Sindhu Roy gave his word, he was allowed to hold meetings.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Instead of 'comrade' he should be addressed as 'honourable'.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Very well, Sir. But I get letters from him as comrade Karuna Sindhu Roy. My hon. Friend Mr. Karuna Sindhu Roy, or rather to give his proper title Srijukta Karuna Sindhu Roy, is in the habit of corresponding with me and in all matters he has got a most patient and sympathetic hearing from me. I pause, to hear a contradiction from him.

*Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Nobody will contradict it, Sir.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: It is curious that when he wired to me asking me to allow Mr. Arun Kumar Chanda to preside over certain meeting of his that I had kept his reply-paid telegram form to use and I had not sent him a reply. May I know from him in which month he wired to me?

*Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: On 24th February.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I have not received it as yet, Sir. However, Sir, I can assure my Friend that if it were possible to allow Mr. Arun Kumar Chanda to be brought to preside over the meeting I will have no difficulty in granting his request but, I am afraid, I am not in a position to remove all the restrictions on Mr. Chanda as I did in the case of my hon. Friend Mr. Bardoloi. I had taken the risk personally of allowing him to attend the Assembly Session but the Military quarters vehemently oppose and assert that

Mr. Chanda is too famous a person to be allowed to remain without any restriction either in Silchar or in Sylhet. His activities are well known.

Then, Sir, my Friend has said that it is in the district of Sylhet, rather in Assam, that the Congress flag has not been allowed to be hoisted. I am not so omniscient as my Friend Srijukta Karuna Sindhu Roy. Whether the Congress flag has been allowed in any other Province to be hoisted, as far as this Government is concerned, we have taken legal opinion and the legal opinion is that so long as the flag remains the symbol of an organisation which has been declared by the Central Government to be unlawful, the Provincial Government have got no power to allow its public hoisting. Sir, we must face the situation. We had series of troubles ever since the war started. When the Japanese conquered Burma, the position of Assam became very dangerous. There can be no contention of the fact that given suitable opportunity and convenience the enemy would invade India through Assam and they showed their intention by their invasion of Manipur and the Naga Hills. At that time, we had come across some difficulties from some other quarters. I do not know who they are but cases of sabotage, arson and even at times assault were taking place. Various innocent lives were lost in the sabotage of the mail train in the Habiganj subdivision. Tension between the two communities—the Muslims and the Hindus—at one time in the Habiganj subdivision was very acute. Tension among the Hindu communities in Sylhet is still very ugly. Only three days ago I got a telephonic message from the Director of Public Instruction that the conflict between the Hindu and Muslim students of the Murarichand College in the district of Sylhet, which at one time turned very serious and which I publicly commend here, has been settled through the joint effort of my hon. Friend Mr. Mookerjee and the Director of Public Instruction. Mr. Mookerjee was good enough to render all possible help and support in the matter. The party which compromised only about ten days ago is reported to have stabbed a Muslim student. Three Hindu students of the College are alleged to be concerned when such unfortunate tension prevails between the two communities. One cannot blame the district officers if they use their own discretion in matters of keeping the public peace and security of the country. They have got powers delegated to them in many matters not by the Provincial Government but by the Central Government. In one or two instances, I need not mention the districts when I had tried to interfere, it was politely pointed out to me, not by the Secretariat, but by the district officers, that they derived this power from the Central Government and that Local Government had no right to interfere. Sir, I contended also this morning that the Motion was out of order and I did not challenge your ruling on the subject that it was in order. I have pointed out that these restrictions have been imposed, not recently, but since 1940. The only charge that has been urged before the House by my Friend Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy is that meetings organised by the communist party were not allowed to be held and that this curtailment of liberties of civil people has gone a little too far. Things are looking up, the enemy has been pushed back from Assam and it appears that they will be pushed back from the regions of Burma which is contiguous to Assam. If I find that the atmosphere is such as we can withdraw the ban, I will be the first person to do so. At the present moment two Indian Deputy Commissioners, I mean of Sylhet and Cachar are against withdrawal. I do not want to override the local officers and order the withdrawal of the bans that have been imposed under the Defence of India Rules.

Maulavi SYED ABDUR ROUF: I think the hoisting of Congress flag has been banned in the district of Sylhet but why not in other parts of the Province? The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Sir, this is not question time. I refuse to answer this question. We are now discussing the Adjournment Motion.

Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: In supporting the Motion of Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy, I will only cite one instance. The other day, I think, it will be in the last part of December or in the first part of January, there was a General Meeting of the Muslim League in Karimganj. In this meeting, it is very surprising,

Sir, that a Provincial Leader, the President of the Muslim League of Assam Province, one of our Members, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan was not allowed to preside over that meeting. Sir, due to his absence a quarrel took place and it was a very serious one; Sir, this is one of the cases of curtailment of personal liberty. Again, Sir, I personally cannot understand the policy of the Government in banning public meetings in Assam, because I find that the opinion of the citizens of Assam is that Japan should not come and take Assam; the opinion of the Assam people is that Germany should not come to invade Assam. As for me, even if Turkey comes, I as a Muslim even will not want to make room for them. We will be the last persons to allow them to do so. (*Hear, hear.*) Really we find that His Majesty's Government are allowing the Congress people and the Muslim League people to work as contractors for Military works. So Military works are going on with their help. I cannot understand, if His Majesty's Government can rely on these people, why the Assam Government cannot have reliance on them. Sir, it will be more surprising that the other day when Mr. Sultan was the Subdivisional Officer at Karimganj there was a meeting at Patharkandi. He was presiding there. One of the gentlemen who was afterwards sentenced to rigorous imprisonment was requested by him to take up the Secretaryship of the "Grow More Food Campaign". It is surprising, Sir, that we had to take his help, but afterwards for the work of Secretaryship or for making propaganda for "Grow More Food Campaign" he was punished by the Court of Karimganj. I was a witness there. Mr. Sultan was also there as witness, though somehow or other he did not give evidence. I was the unfortunate man to be there and was astonished to find what kind of justice was going on. In spite of our evidence the Magistrate sentenced him to 6 months' rigorous imprisonment, but, Sir, the Judge of Sylhet acquitted him after three months' "enjoyment" of jail life. (*Loud laughter.*)

Sir, the public in this way got alarmed at the course this Government had taken in appointing these men. I find to my utter surprise that in procurement of foodgrains and supply works these authorities are afraid of their action being criticised and therefore they ban these meetings purposely otherwise I do not find any reason to ban this kind of meeting. With these words, I support the Adjournment Motion of Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA: When the Hon'ble Premier was arguing his case for the continuation of the ban on meetings and curtailment of civil rights, I thought as if he was quoting Mr. Amery. He argues, Sir, in justification of the restrictive orders that there were communal troubles; this is why he cannot withdraw them. Similarly Mr. Amery also argues that there was disunity between Indians and Indians, Hindus and Muslims and that is the bar to India's independence. He pleaded helplessness in the matter, because the District Magistrates got their powers direct from the Central Government and that he was bound to be guided by the reports of the District Magistrates. Sir, the orders that have been passed with regard to the districts of Sylhet and Cachar, were issued in the name of the Governor.

Here the Governor means Governor on the advice of the Ministers, and, as such, I do not know how can the Hon'ble Premier plead helplessness in the matter or evade his own responsibility in issuing all these restrictive orders and Ordinances. If he is simply to rely on the reports of the District Magistrates and if he has no personal discretion in the matter, I think, there is no hope of ever these orders being withdrawn, because it is certainly to the interests of the district officers to get away from the public opinion, public agitation, on questions which relate to their administration. It is certainly to their interest to suffocate or muffle all public expression. But certainly it is up to the popular Government to read the barometer of public opinion so that they may guide their policies in the light of that reading. Sir, the Hon'ble Premier has also raised the question of Japanese invasion and sabotage and all these things, I must congratulate him as being one of the first astrologer of India because in May in the year of Grace, 1940, nobody could have anticipated a Japanese invasion in India; nobody nor even Mr. Churchill or the Commander-in-Chief could ever foresee that there could possibly be an invasion in the eastern part of India. So I do not know what was the basis or justification for promulgating the restrictive orders in May 1940. There was then no sabotage, no political agitation in the country. What was his

justification to shut out public opinion throughout the entire district of Sylhet? Although this particular Motion refers only to Sylhet and Cachar, the policy underlying is applicable throughout the whole of Assam with the exception of one or two districts. Sylhet was the first victim as early as May 1940. Then came the turn of Cachar and subsequently the infection of restriction pervaded throughout the Province. Sir, certainly it is a very cheap and facile weapon with the bureaucracy to rule the country but certainly it is not so with a popular Government. The danger of Japanese aggression was certainly no less in Bengal. Bengal was equally exposed to the danger of enemy invasion as Assam. But no such wholesale restrictive orders were ever passed in the Province of Bengal, not even in the metropolis of Calcutta. Calcutta held its meetings freely. Only until very recently in the city of Calcutta, town of Dacca and perhaps in the district of Midnapore Defence of India Rule 56 has come to play. But even in other parts of Dacca where communal feeling runs so high there is no such restrictive orders. Moreover, Sir, in Bengal there is an organised and strong public opinion; there is an well-organised press; their grievances find prominent place in the daily newspapers. Unfortunately for Assam we have got no daily newspapers. Our grievances are only published by the courtesy of Calcutta papers in some corners of their columns. That is all. Our metropolis is situated at a place where it is impossible for any public opinion to grow. Shillong is more or less a place of residence of ministerial staff of the Secretariat and Comptroller's office. There is no public under British administration. So in such a metropolis whatever else may flourish, not except some officers of Government and most of the areas in the town are not also public opinion. If the Ministry feel that it is necessary for them to contact public opinion, should they muffle it by banning meetings, processions and assemblies, etc. Is there any other source of contacting public opinion in this Province? So if the right of the public to hold meetings and processions, etc., is most needed anywhere, it is certainly in Assam. Here, Sir, the price level of articles has gone fantastically high, even the price of vegetables is twice the price prevailing in the metropolis of Bengal. Here in the rural areas people buy salt at Rs. 2 per seer; here all rotten pulses and cereals are forced upon the people; here all traders and licence-holders are forced to buy National Savings Certificates which reacts on the consumers ultimately and in these ways the people are made to suffer. Corruption is going on rampant from high to low. It is now the common talk in everybody's mouth that there is corruption everywhere in the administration but certainly it is not to the interest of our Deputy Commissioners or other top dogs of Government to allow people to agitate over their conduct in these matters. So in a place where there is no scope of ventilation of public grievances, it is certainly the look out of the popular Government that these fundamental rights of the people are restored, as early as possible. Sir, the Japanese have receded far away and we hope that there is not even the ghost of a chance of their hitting back Assam. In that case, Sir, what was the justification for Government to re-issue that ban on meetings and assemblies as late as 14th November 1944 and that in Cachar it has been renewed even on 15th February last. The political atmosphere is certainly easier. The sabotage activities and all those questions which the Hon'ble Premier raised as a plea are now things of the past. In this calmer atmosphere of politics and also with the receding of enemies to a far distant place in Burma I do not think there is any further justification for curtailing the fundamental rights of the people. Sir, the other day Mrs. Vijoy Lakshmi Pandit told an American Press that India is a big concentration camp. That remark of Mrs. Pandit unnerved the Torry Press in England and our Secretary of State, Mr. Amery, who thought that all their expenditure for propaganda in America was going in vain. But if public opinion is thus being stiled, holding of meetings and processions are being banned, people are being detained in Jails without trial for years together and movements of people restricted,—a large number of them are either externed or interned—then is not Assam the fittest place where the remarks of Mrs. Vijoy Lakshmi Pandit will be applicable? Sir, many of our fellow workers and colleagues of this hon. House are still rotting in Jail. Some have come out shattered in health, while others are still languishing inside the Jails. Sir, the Leader of the

Congress—Mahatma Gandhi—has been released but the British Empire has not been any the less safer by his release. Mahatma Gandhi has definitely said that his authority to launch Civil Disobedience Movement has lapsed with his arrest and that 1944 is not 1942, and certainly far less 1945. But, in spite of that statement from him, Government have not thought fit to release our leaders. In Assam, Sir, some of our hon. Members have been released and may I ask the Hon'ble Premier whether he has got anything to repent for that action? When so many of the Assam Congress leaders have been released from Jails, I do not think he has anything to rue for it. Certainly, Assam's security has not in any way been jeopardised with the release of these leaders. Therefore, what was the harm in releasing others who are rotting in Jails for years together? How long will they be detained in this way, Sir, we do not know.

Then again, some among those who have been released have been placed under restrictive orders. Now-a-days every body knows how costly the living has grown. Many of them have got families to maintain and how is it possible for them to earn their bread under such restrictive orders? Sir, detention and restriction of people without trial and without giving them adequate allowance is a travesty of law and justice. The allowances that have been granted range from Rs. 5 to Rs. 50 or Rs. 60. Now-a-days when one's activities have been curtailed and he is not allowed to earn his livelihood elsewhere, it is simply a mockery to grant him such a poor pittance.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER : The hon. Member has reached his time.

Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA : Yes, Sir, I am closing.

My hon. Friend, Maulavi Abdur Rouf, has raised a very pertinent question that the same flag is regarded as illegal in one part and legal in another part of the same Province. How this has been made possible we do not know. On the 26th of January, *i. e.*, on the Independence Day, the Congress National Flag was hoisted all over India. In Calcutta, the National Flag was hoisted in almost every housetop—but I do not know why the hoisting of the flag was banned in some parts of this Province.

With these words, Sir, I support the Motion of my hon. Friend, Comrade Karuna Sindhu Roy.

Babu SHIBENDRA CHANDRA BISWAS : Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I take this opportunity to voice my feeling before the House in a very few words?

Sir, the indiscriminate application of the Defence of India Rules by the Deputy Commissioners of Sylhet and Cachar leads me to think in the fag-end of my life whether we are living under a popular Government and marching towards the path of democracy day by day. Though the flag hoisting has not been considered illegal by some of the courts, yet our Executive Officers are preventing its hoisting. This seems to be a mockery and it leads me to think if these Executive Officers are under the control of any popular Government or not!

With these few words, Sir, I whole-heartedly support the Adjournment Motion of my hon. Friend, Comrade Karuna Sindhu Roy.

Babu NIRENDRA NATH DEV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are grateful to the Hon'ble Premier for giving us two very valuable informations this afternoon. One is that Mr. Chanda could not be allowed to move freely in the Surma Valley because of the vigorous protests from the Military Authorities. Sir, we would be glad to know from the Hon'ble Premier in what other spheres the Military are pressing their opinions on the popular Government. Mr. Chanda is now in Calcutta banned to come to the Surma Valley. He has been in the public life of this Province for more than a decade now, and his activities are not unknown to the Hon'ble Premier and other Members of his Cabinet, and to think that they agreed to disallow Mr. Chanda to come to the Surma Valley to live a normal life only because the Military Authorities objected to that is very painful indeed. Let us be plainly told that it is not the Ministry that is governing the country but it is the Military whose influence are really mattering in these matters—let us be plainly told that we are living under martial rule and that what Mrs. Vijoy Lakshmi Pandit said in America is perfectly true that the whole of India is a vast concentration camp. We are glad that the Hon'ble Premier has given us thi

valuable information, for we can now try to gauge the situation in country in the light of that information. We apprehend that if they can interfere in this matter, they may also interfere in other spheres.

The other valuable information supplied by the Hon'ble Premier is that the Deputy Commissioners had authority delegated in certain matters direct from the Central Government. If it is a fact that the Provincial Government have no voice in these matters, I do not see how the Hon'ble Premier can say at the end of his speech that he will try to remove this ban if the Deputy Commissioners agree. I don't understand how he could give an assurance without consulting the Central Government. If things like these are being done under the orders of the Central Government, what is the use of Provincial Autonomy? Could we know that this is the position, we could approach the Central Government through the Members in the Central Assembly or through any other persons for redress of our grievances. I don't see any use of putting all these arguments before the Hon'ble Premier who appears to be helpless in this matter and we need not bother ourselves here. The argument of tension between communities, to my mind, is altogether baseless. Was there no tension between communities before the days of 1940? Indeed, there were communal differences in the country even at that time, but the Government did not think it necessary to promulgate any such wholesale gagging order previously. There are a thousand and one grievances which the people would like to ventilate, but the net result of this wholesale gagging order has been that the people simply don't like to go to the authority knowing how difficult it is to get permission for holding meetings. And the effect of all this has been that the grievances are getting accumulated in the minds of the people. Whether the Central Government or the Provincial Government, if they had any statesmanship in them, they should have thought twice before promulgating any such Ordinance. To-day or tomorrow, in some form or other, such discontent must burst out. It is not possible to suppress the public discontent for any length of time. So, Sir, while supporting the Adjournment Motion pressed by my hon. Friend, Comrade Roy, I would appeal again to the Hon'ble Premier to see that these orders are withdrawn without any reference whatsoever to the Deputy Commissioner, if he has any authority.

Mr. JOBANG D. MARAK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have heard the debate in this House to-day. The Hon'ble Premier has replied explaining the case. The Provincial Government should not be blamed at all for the action taken by the Deputy Commissioners because they have orders and instructions regarding ban and restrictions from the Central Government direct. We are not discussing here the manner in which the Province is being administered whether by the Military or the Provincial Government. The Provincial Government has nothing to do for the action taken by the Military. So, the Government cannot be censured by the Adjournment Motion of this nature. For these reasons, I am very sorry, I cannot support the Motion, although I feel so much for the sufferings experienced by some people by the ban and the restrictive orders. There are and may be occasions where there should be restriction and where there should be no restriction according to the environment, tension or pulse of the people of the particular area of the country for which the authorities concerned are to take action. For these reasons I cannot support the Motion.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Does the hon. Mover want to exercise his right of reply?

Babu KARUNA SINDHU ROY: The Hon'ble Premier said that there were some persons in the district of Cachar who were going to form the Kisan Raj when the Japanese were near by. I want the name of those persons from the Hon'ble Premier. I have received contrary informations. Comrade Yarabat Singh was in Cachar when the Japanese were near the district and he was distributing leaflets among the Manipuri people not to give the Japanese even a cup of water. This news was broadcast by the All-India Radio at Imphal. At the same time Comrade Yarabat Singh was arrested and detained in the Silchar Jail. He was released after one month and after release he was served with a notice that in leaving the district he should inform the Deputy

Commissioner. Again after 15 days he was served with another notice not to leave the Province without taking permission of the Government.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the debate, which should have been confined to happenings in Sylhet and Cachar, has been given a very wider aspect by certain hon. Members who compared the tiny tot of Assam with Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, and travelled to America and Ahmedabad for bolstering up their arguments. I could not follow their example, but I will confine myself to the relevant points that have emerged from the discussion.

The first person whom I congratulated in this House was Mr. Nirendra Nath Dev for his utterances and every time I complimented him for the constructive suggestions which he offered me and the House. But I am sorry, I cannot congratulate him to-day. On the other hand, I am constrained to say that he has become twister of words in his speech to-day. As I mentioned, so far as security is concerned, we had to respect the military opinion, for Assam has been declared to be an operational area. But my hon. Friend has said that the Province is being ruled by the military. If he could have taken a realistic view, he would have realised where we and the Legislature would have been if the military had not come and defended Assam and India from the aggression of the eastern enemy. He cannot ask the Military to fight the enemy and at the same time allow people opportunities to undermine the morale of the people who are behind them. This will be a dangerous policy. Therefore, Sir, I am perfectly content and unblushing in my conduct. During the course of the session, in reply to numerous questions, I will lay figures before the House to show that during last year I have released as many as 120 political and security prisoners. The Military could make no objection although they were consulted in many occasions. But if the name and fame of any particular popular leader is such that the Military thinks that his residence in a particular area where there is likelihood of recrudescence of some trouble, it is better for the Province to avoid that kind of trouble by allowing complete liberty to him. If in these cases, after consulting our Indian Deputy Commissioners, I come to the conclusion that, for a particular reason, it is better not to allow freedom to a particular individual, it will be the height of injustice to me and travesty of all truth and facts to say that I am being ruled and dictated by the Military personnel. My Friend also suggested that the Local Government have nothing to do in the issue of these orders, under the Defence of India Rule 56. I never conveyed that view to the House. I simply stated that in certain matters, not in this particular one, Deputy Commissioners had got powers delegated direct from the Central Government. In those matters when Local Government wanted to interfere with some Deputy Commissioners as their power is derived direct from the Centre, it was not in some cases possible for them to follow the advice of the Local Government. From that statement of the actual position, to come to the conclusion that the Ministry has got no basis for existence when everything is dictated from the Centre, is to take a very high jump in the realm of imagination. Another question is whether the districts concerned are in such a state that all restrictions on public organisations and public meetings could be withdrawn. Two Indian Deputy Commissioners, one a Brahmin and the other a Muslim, are equally of opinion that it is not yet time to withdraw all the restrictions. One kind gentleman, I would not use the word "hon. Friend", states that the Deputy Commissioners are so mishandling the food situation that they are afraid of hearing public criticisms and that is why they have taken this step to gag the ventilation of public grievances.....

†Khan Bahadur Maulavi MAHMUD ALI: On a point of explanation, Sir, as far as I can remember, what I said was that I could not know why these things were going on. But people said that perhaps the Deputy Commissioners were afraid of public criticisms of this kind.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I did not refer to my hon. Friend, but it appears that the cap fits him. He says that he is not taking

the responsibility of holding that opinion, but he has got the temerity to express it on behalf of the electorate from whole votes he has come. I think that comes to the same thing because he has come with the suffrage of his electorate, and if that is the opinion of his electorate he must say that, otherwise he will not carry their confidence for the next election. I strongly resent and repudiate that assertion. We have started Food Committees in every subdivision in which hon. Members of this House have been included, and all the public grievances of that nature could be expressed before the Subdivisional Officers and Deputy Commissioners, and if they are afraid to approach those Officers, there is my humble self to write to. Many hon. Friends including Srijut Karuna Sindhu Roy, have taken the advantage of writing to me and getting replies. (Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy: No replies to all.) Of course he is not getting full satisfaction, but he must admit that out of 16 annas he is getting at least 4 annas worth of redress. As I said, Sir, whatever be the Government, whether the Government of Saadulla or the Government of Bardoloi, they cannot ignore the report of the local officers. Sitting at the height of Shillong, no Minister can be present at the same time throughout the Province to learn what difficulties the local people or the administration are having in these abnormal times. They have got to place some little bit of trust on the local officers when they happen to be our own kith and kin, when they are Indians, who, in their heart of hearts, have love for the Indian cause. If they see that the atmosphere is such and is charged with love for electricity that no spark should be allowed to burst into a big conflagration, we have to take their advice in this matter. Unfortunately I cannot give out all those things which are marked secret and confidential. My hon. Friend, Mr. Karuna Sindhu Roy spoke of Srijut Irabat Singh, a gentleman so well known to many and he is personally known to me, a gentleman for whose political activities the Manipur Hindu State had externed him from the State boundaries. My Friend may recommend him, but had it not been confidential, I would have placed certain matters about him which would have surprised most of the hon. Members.

In a Question today, my Friend Srijut Karuna Sindhu Roy asked about the activities of a certain worker of his group. He was a very good worker and I can give that certificate. He organised co-operative stores in a particular district. He was a leader of a very popular movement there, but, at the same time, he used to deal in politics and he agitated among the railway employees and labour force there in such a way that the police of that locality, the Indian Superintendent of Police, had to approach a European Deputy Commissioner stating that this gentleman, in spite of doing considerable benefit to the people of that locality, has started creating trouble and the labour force of that particular station has become so restive that sooner or later the entire line of communication which was the very heart of all war efforts and movement of all war materials will be totally disorganised, unless that gentleman is removed from that particular locality. I got reports from other sources as well. So I was in this difficulty—where public opinion *plus* official opinion are against this gentleman, though according to my hon. Friend Mr. Karuna Sindhu Roy he is a very good man in a particular line, I cannot entirely rely upon his statement. As the head of the Ministry and being in charge of Law and Order, I give more stress to the reports of local officers than my hon. Friend does. However, if I find that there is a way out of helping my Friends in removing all these restrictions I will do my utmost.

One hon. Member spoke about our Friends from the Congress who are still behind the jail bars. He spoke about it in order to accuse me of heartlessness, or, although it is unspoken, they think that it is my motive to keep them behind the prison so that I can rule unmolested. My friends will give me the credit that with the utmost reluctance I have kept, on reports from district officers both executive and police, five gentlemen who all belong to the Opposition Group still in jail. At one time as many as 16 were in jail. During the course of last year for one reason or other I have released 11. One of those disobeyed orders and expressed his willingness to go back to jail rather than to remain in his sister's house. I am not responsible for that. Every one knows that another hon. Member of the Opposition has been absconding since 1942. I am not responsible for his absence from the House. My hon. Friends instead of complain-

ing that I have kept five of our colleagues behind the prison bar should have complimented me that in spite of tremendous opposition from various quarters, I have released as many as eleven. Therefore I will ask my Friend, and I use the final word "Comrade", that although he is working for the betterment and uplift of our *kisan bhais* all his followers are not actuated by this same high motive.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: I am putting the question.

The question is:

"That the Assembly do now adjourn."

The Assembly divided.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: My orders exempting Srijut Shibendra Chandra Biswas from giving his vote in the lobby stands. He will therefore vote on the floor of this House.

AYES—17

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| 1. Babu Akshay Kumar Das. | 10. Srijut Lakshesvar Borooah. |
| 2. Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee. | 11. Babu Lalit Mohan Kar. |
| 3. Srijut Bepin Chandra Medhi. | 12. Babu Nirendra Nath Dev. |
| 4. Srijut Gaurikanta Talukdar. | 13. Babu Rabindra Nath Aditya. |
| 5. Srijut Gopinath Bardoloi. | 14. Srijut Sarveswar Barua. |
| 6. Srijut Haladhar Bhuyan. | 15. Babu Shibendra Chandra Biswas. |
| 7. Srijut Kameswar Das. | 16. Srijut Siddhi Nath Sarma. |
| 8. Babu Kamini Kumar Sen. | 17. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mahmud Ali. |
| 9. Babu Karuna Sindhu Roy. | |

NOES—31.

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| 1. The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla. | 14. Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahab Chaudhury. |
| 2. The Hon'ble Mr. Naba Kumar Dutta. | 15. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Keramat Ali. |
| 3. The Hon'ble Maulavi Munawwar Ali | 16. Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury. |
| 4. The Hon'ble Srijut Hirendra Chandra Chakravarty. | 17. Maulavi Matior Rahman Mia. |
| 5. The Hon'ble Khan Sahib Maulavi Mudabbir Hussain Chaudhuri. | 18. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Mufizur Rahman. |
| 6. The Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Nath Saikia. | 19. Maulavi Naziruddin Ahmed. |
| 7. The Hon'ble Maulavi Abdul Matin Chaudhuri. | 20. Mr. F. W. Blennerhassett. |
| 8. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulavi Sayidur Rahman. | 21. Mr. D. B. H. Moore. |
| 9. The Hon'ble Miss Mavis Dunn. | 22. Mr. C. W. Morley. |
| 10. The Hon'ble Srijut Rupnath Brahma. | 23. Mr R. A. Palmer. |
| 11. Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury. | 24. Mr. W. D. Rutherford. |
| 12. Maulavi Abdur Rahman. | 25. Mr. A. Whittaker. |
| 13. Maulavi Syed Abdur Rouf. | 26. Srijut Bhairab Chandra Das. |
| | 27. Srijut Bideshi Pan Tanti. |
| | 28. Mr. Binode Kumar J. Sarwan. |
| | 29. Rev. L. Gatphoh. |
| | 30. Mr. C. Goldsmith. |
| | 31. Mr. Jobang D. Marak. |

The question was negatived.

Motion re introduction of free compulsory Primary Education in the Province

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: As the Assembly is not being adjourned, the House may resume the discussion of the Motion† of Maulavi Abdur Rahman for disposal. We can finish the discussion of the Motion today.

†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."

Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: Sir, I have listened to the speeches made by hon. Friends Mr. Mookerjee, Mr. Bardoloi and Mr. Goldsmith and also the speech delivered by my Friend, Maulavi Syed Abdur Rouf. All of them have sympathised with the object of the Motion, but they say that it is not free from complications and therefore a committee of some people having brains should be appointed to find out ways and means as to how free compulsory primary education may be introduced in the Province. I think time is necessary to come to some decision which would satisfy the people of the Province, for the conditions that have been laid down in the speeches, especially in that of Mr. Bardoloi. May I therefore suggest that the Motion may be taken as a Post-War Reconstruction measure? Here in Assam perhaps nothing practical has yet been done as far as Post-War Reconstruction measures are concerned. If my information is correct, in all other Provinces in India, the best brains from among the officials have been placed in charge of this work. We expect to have some part of the money that the Government of India is going to distribute among the different Provinces.

I, therefore, request the Hon'ble Premier and the other members of his Cabinet to find out some men from among the officials in whose hands this work may safely be placed. It has been pointed out by Mr. Bardoloi and Mr. Goldsmith that compulsory primary education is a very important subject and the education that is being given now is not satisfactory. Therefore some men who have ideas, who have initiative and who know what primary education is and what it should be, may be put in to devise ways and means as to how this Motion can be given effect to. It has been said, Sir, that lakhs, if not crores, will be necessary to introduce compulsory primary education in the Province. It will not be wise to take any step hastily without giving any thought over the matter as has been suggested by Mr. Bardoloi. In conclusion I would request the hon. Members to wait and think over the matter and then approach the Government for a proper and practicable scheme with regard to compulsory primary education.

Maulavi ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will begin with the suggestions of hon. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Keramat Ali. He has advised us that we should wait. But is it not a fact that we have been waiting and waiting for a very long time over such an important question, about which all sections of the House have emphatically said that it is a vital concern for the welfare of the nation? Have we not been waiting for the last 7 or 8 years? Have not the people of the Province been waiting since the inauguration of the Provincial Autonomy? Have we not been waiting any further justification to wait? I think, not. In view of this, Sir, is there ed me to take up this measure is that I understand that Government have taken up the question and appointed a special committee for the purpose of scrutinising the question of primary education. That committee is deliberating over the subject and therefore they are coming up with a report. So is it not high time that the point which is upper-most in our mind, viz., introduction of compulsory primary education in the Province should be taken up at this time as a whole without taking it in piecemeal? Sir, some of the hon. Members, such as Mr. Moore has suggested that instead of making primary education compulsory there should be free primary education in some selected areas. Sir, according to the expert report we find that at present the school-going children in the Province are in the neighbourhood of 8 lakhs, and from the quinquennial report of the Province we find that the total number of those children now attending schools is near about 4 lakhs only, that is to say, in Plains Districts only about 50 per cent. of the school-going children are now attending schools. Sir, I do not know if any such compulsory measure is not adopted, how unwilling boys can be made to attend schools even if we start free primary education. Some of the hon. Members including Mr. Goldsmith have raised the point that the time is not opportune for taking up such an important measure. The reasons advanced by them in this connection are all questions of minor details which are to be examined if and when Government take up the scheme. What we are here about is that we are to bring home to Government that this is the desire of the people of the country at large; that this is the demand of our people that they want Government to take this question up at once and not to give the details. It is not our duty, Sir, that we

should give the details of the measure as to how this is to be executed, or how this is to be implemented. If my Motion is accepted, it will be the duty of Government to see that this is implemented. They are to execute it according to the wishes of the House, although we will be prepared to lend our ungrudging co-operation in the matter.

From the lengthy speech of the Hon'ble Prime Minister what we find, Sir? His foremost point is the question of finance. He says that the only impediment that stands in the way of implementing this scheme is the question of finance. Sir, according to the present Act, the Act of 1926, Government readily took up the responsibility of meeting the two thirds of the expenditure if the local bodies undertook to pay the one-third. Now with regard to the two-thirds of the expenditure the Government is already committed. Now the question remains with regard to the one-third of the expenditure which should be met from other sources and what should that other sources be I will give some indication. To gain that end, Sir, there should be some education cess which will be a very negligible one and may not be opposed by the people. Then I can suggest, Sir, the Government of India must be approached to set apart a big amount, say, Rs. 30 lakhs from the excise duty. It was suggested that the total additional expenditure which will be necessary is about 70 lakhs of rupees. We may approach the Central Government at least to pay 30 lakhs of rupees from the income they are deriving from the excise duty on petrol and tea. I think, Sir, it will not be an unjust demand and if we can make a very good demand, they won't refuse us.

If Government can bear two-thirds out of Rs. 72 lakhs, the remaining one third which is about Rs. 24 lakhs can be found out. Government with both officials and non-officials can sit together to discuss ways and means to raise that amount.

Sir, as for the amendment which my hon. Friend, Mr. Mookerjee, has moved and also the slight changes which my hon. Friend, Maulavi Abdul Bari Chaudhury, was trying to make, I have nothing to oppose these two measures. I think Mr. Mookerjee's amendment is very comprehensive and it can be accepted.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: Mr Speaker, Sir, both today on the floor of the House as well as in the conference of Party Leaders held yesterday afternoon in your chamber I requested the Members to show me the way by which to find out the money for implementing this demand. My hon. Friend, the Mover, was very loud in suggesting that we should go up to the Government of India to get a share of the excise duty on petrol and kerosene. These two excise duties produce very nearly 4 crores of rupees and although I tried my level best from the year 1930 up to 1934 when I was the Finance Member to get a share of the excise duty on petrol, I knocked my head against a stone wall. The Government of India would not in any way concede that Assam was entitled to a share of it, although I gave them a very complete and, I think according to me and many others, a conclusive proof that we ought to get a share. Petrol is manufactured out of the natural wealth of a Province, I mean, crude oil, that is found in the sub-soil of Assam. Crude oil is not a manufactured article, but it is a natural deposit in the depth of Assam. It is being pumped out, in other words, our natural resources are being depleted and therefore Assam has a legitimate claim upon the tax obtained by reduction of her own natural deposit. In this connection, I also pointed out the case of Australia where the Federal Government grants a portion of such income to the component States. But the Government of India in their opposition went to the length of seeing that the Parliament which framed the present Constitution debarred all Provinces from such income. Therefore, I see no hope of getting any share of this—the petrol excise duty.

My hon. Friend has suggested that we may claim a share of the excise duty on tea produced in Assam. Mr. Whittaker has pointed out that the Government of India is taking two crores of rupees by means of excise duty. Here also I see absolutely no hope of getting anything out of the Central Government. I say this from my bitter experience.

Every one knows that the Government of India had started a Fund called the Road Fund from the extra excise duty on petrol at 2 annas per gallon. Proceeds of

this Fund were given to the Provinces according to the quantity of petrol consumed in the Provinces. Our share from this Fund in normal years was nearly 5 lakhs of rupees annually. With that we started various road development. This time, while I was in Delhi in the Conference of the Transport Advisory Board, we were suddenly told that the Government of India was stopping all contributions from that Fund to the Provinces and instead they were going to start a fund with 500 crores of rupees for Post-War Development of Roads. One-third of this Fund would go to the Native States and the balance of 350 crores would be divided among the Provinces. We have been asked to submit our plans and estimates up to a limit of 11 crores. But our requirements, being a Front Line Province and an undeveloped Province, are very high. We have innumerable bridges to construct over our High Ways; we have got to raise our roads over the water level in the Surma Valley. So our schemes came to a total of about 54 crores of rupees. But in view of the direction from the Government of India, I had to ask the Public Works Department to recast the estimates and to see if we cannot bring our schemes up to a level of Rs. 11 crores. This being the attitude of the Government of India, I doubt whether they will easily part with any of the sums that they realise from Assam's tea.

Sir, I am very pessimistic over the out-come of this Motion. I requested the Leaders of different Groups to give the Government clear cut instructions whether they should bring in a Bill for taxing the people by way of an additional cess. But excepting two vague generalities, one from the mover of this Motion and the other from Mr. Mookerjee, I did not hear any word of that nature from any of the speakers. On the other hand, I have summarised the speeches of the various hon. Members and find that although most of them do realise the importance of the Motion, they could not give either full support or even half-hearted support to it.

Mr. Moore of the European Group has definitely stated that they are against the principle of compulsion. Therefore, my hon. Friend cannot get any support from the European Group.

Mr. Goldsmith is also opposed to the Motion, though not on the ground of policy, but on the ground of expediency. He thinks that compulsion is out of question at the present juncture when the atmosphere in the country is not proper.

From Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee's Amendment I deduce that he is in support of the Motion, but he also says that the scheme or rather the Motion is just putting the cart before the horse. He stated that we must have a clear cut idea of what the curriculum will be, what the nature of education to be given and what the number of students to be dealt with will be. Then, he said what kind of spade work will be necessary should have been placed before the House before they are asked to tax themselves. Moreover, he was afraid that by this general Motion, some particular interests or communities were going to be mulcted by heavy taxation. He wants that Government should see that no *zoolom* is committed upon any community. He suggests that in order to arrive at an idea of these measures there should be a committee of officials and non-officials. If we start with a committee again going over this matter, there will be hardly any time to put it into real activity before we take up the Post-War Reconstruction Scheme.

Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury supported Mr. Mookerjee's Amendment and, therefore, he is in favour of the Motion. But he suggests that instead of introducing compulsion throughout the Province, it should be introduced in selected areas of some progressive districts, and according to him the progressive districts are Kamrup, Sylhet and Goalpara. He thinks that other districts will demur to come to the list. Therefore, he whittles down the scope of the Motion, as the Motion wants that free compulsory primary education should be started throughout the Province without losing any time. Well, Sir, we need not have this Motion for the purpose mentioned by Maulavi Md. Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury, for the unacted compulsory Primary Education Act of 1926 still holds the field, and I shall really be glad to see if anybody would put a life into it. I would like if Maulavi Muhammad Maqbul Hussain Chaudhury could persuade his Local Board to provide one-third and

Government will provide two-thirds. He also supports the plea of Mr. Mookerjee of having a committee of officials and non-officials.

Khan Sahib Maulavi Dewan Muhammad Ahbab Chaudhury has supported the Motion with some reservation. He wants Muktab education should be taken out of the so-called primary education.

I find that the learned Leader of the Opposition—Mr. Bardoloi—has spoken against compulsion. But I do not exactly remember whether he gave his personal opinion or spoke on behalf of the party which he has the honour to lead.

*Srijut GOPINATH BARDLOI: I spoke on behalf of the party.

*Khan Bahadur Maulavi KERAMAT ALI: I remember he spoke on behalf of the party.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: As my hon. Friend, the Khan Bahadur, corroborates, I accept the statement. I am sorry, I misunderstood him. However, it is well known that the Congress Party will not agree to any scheme of primary education which is not in the line with the basic education scheme which they have adopted.

Mr. Buragohain holds that it would be a tremendous wastage of time and money to introduce compulsion from Class I to the final Class of the primary school and does not agree to the introduction of compulsion on the girl students. He wants the experiment to be started on the boys only. But I can adduce very cogent reasons in saying that economically speaking compulsion among the boys will be far worse than compulsion among the girls. I am sorry (looking at the time), I am exceeding 5 P.M. but in such an important matter I must explain every point. Every one who is conversant with the life in the village knows that a small child plays a very important part in the economic life of the villager. It is found that most of the little boys from the age of 5 or 6 years up to 12 or 13 years look after the cattle. If the cultivators do not get the service of the young boys, they will break each others heads; because their cattle will go astray and graze on the crop of the other or they will have to keep a Chaukidar for the cattle which they cannot afford to pay. Therefore, in the rules framed under the Primary Education Act, 1926 I left it open to the villagers themselves to choose the time for holding the school. In certain places and weather afternoon is more convenient and in others, the morning class is more convenient for the boys of the villagers. So, if you want to introduce compulsion among the village boys, you will throw many out of the gear from the economic life of the villagers. So, in my opinion it is far better to make the female section of the peasantry literate. If the mother is literate, she will see that her children become literate (*hear, hear*).

Maulavi Syed Abdur Rouf did not support the Motion of my hon. Friend wholeheartedly. He said unless the question of medium of instruction is settled beforehand, he cannot give his support to the Motion. Then, he further tried to find out ways and means for the introduction of compulsory primary education and suggested that all the available waste land should be settled with the immigrants. Fortunately for us, he did not want the entire land but only the available land, and that from the land revenue that we will get, we will be able to finance compulsory primary education. He wanted more land to be given to the immigrants for cultivation of jute, and that will bring us another 12 lakhs of rupees as our share from the central excise duty on jute. Lastly, Sir, Khan Bahadur Keramat Ali suggested a *via media* that this should be made a Post-War Reconstruction Scheme. This is a Post-War Reconstruction Scheme without the Khan Bahadur's advocacy, for the Sargent's report itself makes it a Post-War Reconstruction plan. I therefore, Sir, started by saying that the Government have been left where they were without getting any clear-cut ideas from the House whether, if we bring in a taxation Bill, we will get the support of the entire House. As I mentioned early, our Assam Primary Education Committee had recommended that if a *per capita* tax of two to three annas is levied as an education cess, we may be in a position to start the scheme. But after calculating, we find that that will bring about ten lacs of rupees or one-tenth of what is required. Mr. Mookerjee, during the discussion,

interjected that if the taxation is to be real in order to provide sufficient fund, it should be one rupee per head. Whether this is possible has got to be seen. Our people have got already too many taxations directly or indirectly to pay, but if the whole House is of opinion that we should bring an Education Cess Bill and have it through, we can start free compulsory primary education throughout the Province before the war ends.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Order, order. The question is: "That after the word "forthwith" in the second line of the Motion the word "even" be added."

The question was adopted.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the 'fullstop' after the words 'be deemed necessary' be deleted and the following words be added:—

'and that the House is of opinion that the Government do take immediate steps for the introduction of free compulsory Primary Education in the Province even by levying educational cess on such equitable basis as will ensure supply of sufficient finance in addition to whatever may be available from the existing sources of the revenues of the Province for the purpose.'

The question was adopted.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA replied:

47. (a)—No. A permit was granted to an Association of traders on the basis of business done in the preceding five years. As two of these traders were not alive their quotas were allotted by the Secretary of the Association to their representatives in interest.

(b)—The first part does not arise. The permit was issued by the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet.

(c)—Permits were issued to one Association each at Dwarabazar and Sunamganj. For export from Chhatak one permit each was issued to two Associations of traders and four Associations of Khasi growers. All the members of the Sunamganj Dwarabazar and the four Khasi growers' Associations were natives of this Province. As to the two traders' Associations at Chhatak some members of each Association were natives of the Province and others were traders of Bengal temporarily resident in Assam.

(d)—No separate permits were issued to any *dalals*. In one case four *dalals* were given a small quota in one Association on the basis of export financed by them in the preceding five years and in order to enable, by not disturbing the usual channel of business, persons normally dependant on them to continue in business.

Maulavi Muhammad MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Is it a fact that permit for export to Bengal was issued to an individual who was not a member of any Association?

†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: May I know the place?

Maulavi Muhammad MAQBUL HUSSAIN CHAUDHURY: Sunamganj.
†The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir MUHAMMAD SAADULLA: I am not aware of that, Sir. I want notice of that Question.

†Speech not corrected.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: The question is:
 "That this Assembly do now take into consideration the question of introduction of free compulsory Primary Education in the Province forthwith even by levying such cess as may be deemed necessary and that the House is of opinion that the Government do take immediate steps for the introduction of free compulsory Primary Education in the Province even by levying educational cess on such equitable basis as will ensure supply of sufficient finance in addition to whatever may be available from the existing sources of the revenues of the Province for the purpose."

The question was adopted.

Adjournment.

The Assembly was then adjourned till. 11 A.M. on Monday, the 5th March 1945.

Shillong:
 The 12th April, 1945.

A. K. BARUA,

Secretary
Legislative Assembly, Assam.

A. G. P. (L.C.) No. 123--125 + 2--17-4-1945.

their cattle will go astray and graze on the crop of the other or they will have to keep a Chaukidar for the cattle which they cannot afford to pay. Therefore, in the rules framed under the Primary Education Act, 1926 I left it open to the villagers themselves to choose the time for holding the school. In certain places and weather afternoon is more convenient and in others, the morning class is more convenient for the boys of the villagers. So, if you want to introduce compulsion among the village boys, you will throw many out of the gear from the economic life of the villagers. So, in my opinion it is far better to make the female section of the peasantry literate. If the mother is literate, she will see that her children become literate (*hear, hear*).

Maulavi Syed Abdur Rouf did not support the Motion of my hon. Friend wholeheartedly. He said unless the question of medium of instruction is settled beforehand, he cannot give his support to the Motion. Then, he further tried to find out ways and means for the introduction of compulsory primary education and suggested that all the available waste land should be settled with the immigrants. Fortunately for us, he did not want the entire land but only the available land, and that from the land revenue that we will get, we will be able to finance compulsory primary education. He wanted more land to be given to the immigrants for cultivation of jute, and that will bring us another 12 lakhs of rupees as our share from the central excise duty on jute. Lastly, Sir, Khan Bahadur Keramat Ali suggested a *via media* that this should be made a Post-War Reconstruction Scheme. This is a Post-War Reconstruction Scheme without the Khan Bahadur's advocacy, for the Sargent's report itself makes it a Post-War Reconstruction plan. I therefore, Sir, started by saying that the Government have been left where they were without getting any clear-cut ideas from the House whether, if we bring in a taxation Bill, we will get the support of the entire House. As I mentioned early, our Assam Primary Education Committee had recommended that if a *per capita* tax of two to three annas is levied as an education cess, we may be in a position to start the scheme. But after calculating, we find that that will bring about ten lacs of rupees or one-tenth of what is required. Mr. Mookerjee, during the discussion,

*Speech not corrected.

