



**Proceedings of the Seventh Session of the Second Assam Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935 as adapted.**

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 1-30 P.M., on Friday, the 16th September, 1949.

P R E S E N T

The Hon'ble Srijut Lakshesvar Borooah, Speaker, in the Chair, the eight Hon'ble Ministers and fifty-one Members.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**STARRED QUESTIONS**

(To which oral answers were given)

**Re-employment of retired Police Officers**

**Srijut DANDESWAR HAZARIKA** asked :

\*4. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The number of retired Officers in the Police Department who are now re-employed ?
- (b) Their names and ranks ?
- (c) The reasons for their re-employment ?
- (d) Whether Government are aware that there is much discontent amongst the junior officers in general in the Police Department for re-employing these retired persons as the junior officers have been debarred from promotion ?
- (e) Whether Government propose to take early steps to remove those retired persons from service for the smooth and efficient administration of the Police Department ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDLOI** replied :

4. (a)—Six.

(b)—The names and ranks are :—

1. Mr. H. F. G. Burbridge, Commandant, Assam Police Battalion.
2. Srijut Kamala Kanta Hazarika, Deputy Superintendent of Police.
3. Srijut Keshab Nath Bhuyan, Deputy Superintendent of Police.
4. Srijut Amrit Lal Das, Deputy Superintendent of Police.
5. Maulavi Daliluddin Ahmed, Deputy Superintendent of Police.
6. U Korjo Mohon Diengdoh, Inspector.

(c)—Dearth of trained and experienced personnel in the Department after the depletion of cadres by the departure of British Officers and Pakistan-opting personnel.

(d)—Promotions have been so rapid due to the above mentioned dearth that Government are reluctant to believe that the re-employment could have caused any discontent.

(e)—The re-employment will automatically cease when trained and experienced personnel for district duty becomes available.

†**Srijut DANDESWAR HAZARIKA**: May I know whether there is any chance of promotion of these retired officers ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI**: There cannot be any question of promotion of re-employed officers, Sir.

†**Srijut DANDESWAR HAZARIKA**: If there is no chance of being promoted of these retired personnel can we expect to get efficient service from them ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI**: The District Officers and those who are responsible for running the Department are of the opinion that the appointment of those officers has become absolutely necessary on account of their long experience on the line. In regard to the question of their efficiency I want to say, Sir, that it is a matter of opinion only. All the same, they have been found to discharge their duty more satisfactorily than some new recruits have been found to do.

#### Increase of dacoity cases in the Province

**Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN** asked :

\*5. (a) Are Government aware that of late the number of dacoities have increased to a great extent and particularly in the Upper Assam ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to enhance the quantity of petrol for police patrolling parties ?

(c) Are Government aware that the dacoits have adopted such methods as to avoid detection of their crimes by concealing their identity by wearing masks ?

(d) If so, do Government propose to move the Central Government to amend the law in such a way so that the person arrested in such offence cannot escape punishment ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI** replied :

5. (a)—Dacoities have generally increased this year particularly in the Sibsagar and Nowgong districts—but certain districts on the other hands, show a decrease.

(b)—This is a matter which is dependent on the financial position of the province.

(c)—Disguises have been worn by the dacoits in some cases. This, however is a common feature of such cases.

(d)—Government are not of opinion that alteration of the law is necessary.

## UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(To which answers were laid on the table)

## Beggars' nuisance

**Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR** asked :

19. (a) Are Government aware—
- (i) That beggars constitute a regular nuisance in Railway platform of the Assam Railways ?
- (ii) That they give considerable annoyance to passengers ?
- (b) If the answers to the above questions be in the affirmative, do Government propose to move the Railway Authorities to take necessary steps to prevent the beggars from giving troubles to passengers ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS** replied :

19. (a) (i) & (ii)—Government are prepared to accept the hon. Member's statement.
- (b)—This is being brought to the notice of the Railway Authorities.

## Assam Adhiars Protection and Regulation Act

**Dr. EMRAN HUSAIN CHAUDHURY** asked :

20. Will Government please state—
- (a) The names of places where the Assam Adhiars Protection and Regulation Act has been enforced ?
- (b) Why has it not been extended to the other districts of the province ?
- (c) Whether Government are aware of the public feeling that operation of the Act to a few limited places is a gross injustice to the raiyats and peasants of the other parts of Assam where the Act is unknown ?
- (d) Whether Government propose to extend its operation to the rest of the province in order to give relief to the cultivators and uphold the uniformity of the law ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI** replied :

20. (a)—The Act has been enforced to the areas mentioned below :—

District	Area
(1) Goalpara ...	Whole district.
(2) Kamrup ...	South Bank of the Brahmaputra River.
(3) Cachar ...	Whole district excluding North Cachar Hills Subdivision.
(4) Lakhimpur ...	Whole district.
(5) Sibsagar ...	South Bank of the Brahmaputra River in Jorhat Subdivision and Golaghat Subdivision excluding Mikir Hills.
(6) Nowgong ...	Whole district.
(7) Darrang ...	Bargaon and Naharbari Mouzas in Tezpur Subdivision.

(b) & (d)—The hon. Member may be referred to section 1(2) of the Act, which limits the application of the Act to certain districts only. The Act has already been applied to all those districts on the recommendation of the Local Officers concerned excepting a few areas in some of them. Government will consider if proposals are received in respect of these remaining areas also.

(c)—Government have no information.

### Supply of food and rations to Indian-owned Tea Estates

**Prof. P. M. SARWAN** asked :

21. (a) Are Government aware that in many Indian-owned Tea Estates food and other rations are not given to the labourers ?

(b) Are Government aware that this is causing a great deal of unrest among the tea labourers ?

(c) Do Government propose to issue instruction to the Labour Commissioner to take up this matter immediately ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS** replied :

21. (a)—Yes, foodstuffs at concessional rates are not supplied in some Indian-owned tea gardens.

(b)—This led to Industrial unrest in a few cases which were however satisfactorily settled by officers of the Labour Department.

(c)—Foodstuff concessions are based on the recommendations of Tripartite Conferences. Officers of the Labour Department are already doing their best to see that these are implemented by the gardens on a voluntary basis. If this fails the only other alternative will be legislation which is under contemplation of the Government of India.

**Prof. P. M. SARWAN**: With regard to Question 21(b), Sir, that before any unrest on the part of the labourers is noticed through strikes or threat of strikes and other disorders, would not the Department do something to allay their distress ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS**: It is usually done, Sir, through the help of the Labour Inspectors who always inspect the gardens.

**Prof. P. M. SARWAN**: With regard to Question No. 21(c), Sir, as this is a big problem and an urgent one probably, should not something be done immediately rather than to wait for a lengthy legislation ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS**: Foodstuff concessions are based on the recommendations of Tripartite Conferences and there is no legal sanction behind it. Such recommendations were made on mutual agreement. The Government of India, however, is contemplating to bring about legislation on the matter.

**Mr. HARENDRA NATH SARMA:** In reply to Question No.21(a), Sir, the Government have stated that in certain Indian-owned tea gardens foodstuffs at concessional rates are not supplied to the labourers. Have Government enquired into the reasons why these Indian-owned tea gardens could not supply foodstuffs at concessional rates?

**The Hon'ble Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS:** The question does not arise, Sir.

**Mr. HARENDRA NATH SARMA:** In reply to Question (b), Sir, it is stated that for the alleged non-supply of foodstuff in certain Indian-owned tea gardens unrest prevailed in the tea gardens. Can Government cite even one instance where there has been any labour unrest in the Indian-owned tea gardens?

**The Hon'ble Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS:** The reply relates to a few cases of industrial unrest due to non-supply of rice at concessional prices and not relate to Indian-owned gardens alone.

**"Deputy Commissioners' and Subdivisional Officers"**

**Raja AJIT NARAYAN DEV of Sidli** asked:

22. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) If the Deputy Commissioners and Subdivisional Officers are officially known as 'জিলাধিপতি' and 'মহকুমাধিপতি' respectively?
- (b) If the Assamese word 'অধিপতি' is equivalent to the English words 'Proprietor' or 'Master' or 'Lord'?
- (c) If replies to questions (a) and (b) above are in the affirmative whether Government propose to change such official designations in view of the fact that Deputy Commissioners and Subdivisional Officers are neither Proprietors nor Masters nor Lords of Districts and Subdivisions?

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI** replied:

22. (a)—No.

(b) & (c)—Do not arise.

**Srijut SARAT CHANDRA SINHA:** Sir, with regard to question 22(a), is there any form of address in Assamese officially recognised to designate a Deputy Commissioner or Subdivisional Officer?

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI:** I do not know, Sir, of any occasion when in Government papers the Deputy Commissioners and Subdivisional Officers were designated as *Jiladhipati* and *Mahkumadhipati*. They may be commonly called like that, but not officially.

**Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN:** Can we address a Deputy Commissioner as *Jilladar*?

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI:** When any proposal comes to Government for such designations, Government will consider whether they should have such designations or not.

**Restrictive measures in consumption of liquor**

**Raja AJIT NARAYAN DEV of Sidli** asked :

23. (a) Are Government aware that the Government of West Bengal have prohibited sale of liquor one day in a week as a step towards total prohibition ?
- (b) Do Government propose to prohibit in this province the sale of liquor in liquor shops, bars and clubs at least one day in a week ?
- (c) If so, do Government propose to enforce Prohibition on every Saturday which is the heaviest drinking day in this province ?

**The Hon'ble Maulana MAHOMED TAYYEBULLA** replied :

23. (a)—This Government have no information.

(b) & (c)—The matter is already receiving consideration of Government in connection with certain restrictive measures in regard to consumption of liquor now in contemplation of Government.

**Srijut SARAT CHANDRA SINHA** : With regard to replies to questions (b) and (c), are the measures with regard to total prohibition ?

**The Hon'ble Maulana MAHOMED TAYYEBULLA** : The answer itself is clear. Measures relate to restrictive measures and not to total prohibition.

**Jagannath Barooah College, Jorhat**

**Prof. P. M. SARWAN** asked :

24. (a) Are Government aware of the great progress made by the Jagannath Barooah College, Jorhat ?

(b) Are Government aware that besides degree-course in Arts and Commerce, and besides providing special sections for girl students, the above College has branched out into science and that students for I.Sc. Course have been enrolled ?

- (c) Do Government propose to give special grants to the above College—
- (i) for the Science Department ;
  - (ii) for the Girls Section, and
  - (iii) for the improvement of College buildings and equipments ?

**Srijut MOHENDRA MOHAN CHOUDHURY (Parliamentary Secretary)** replied :

24. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Yes.

(c) (i)—Grants have already been provided.

(ii)—The matter is under consideration.

(iii)—A non-recurring grant of Rs.3,000 was sanctioned last year (1948-49) out of the storm-damage fund.

**Prof. P. M. SARWAN** : In reply to question (c) (ii) it is stated that the matter is under consideration. Will Government keep in mind the fact that the longer the present question remains unsolved the more it remains a painful sacrifice for the teaching staff ?

**Srijut MAHENDRA MOHAN CHOUDHURY (Parliamentary Secretary):** It is a matter of opinion, Sir.

**Srijut DANDESWAR HAZARIKA:** The answer to question (c) (i) is—'Grants have already been provided'. May I know the amount of grant sanctioned?

**Srijut MAHENDRA MOHAN CHOUDHURY (Parliamentary Secretary):** Rupees 5,000 non-recurring and Rs.1,000 per annum recurring.

**Srijut DANDESWAR HAZARIKA:** The answer to question (c) (iii) is—'A non-recurring grant of Rs 3,000 was sanctioned last year (1948-49 out of the storm-damage fund.' May I know from Government how a grant was made to this College from the storm-damage fund? Was it due to storm-damage?

**Srijut MAHENDRA MOHAN CHOUDHURY (Parliamentary Secretary):** Yes, must be.

**Srijut DANDESWAR HAZARIKA:** Then may I know from Government whether they have recently received any representation from the College authority to increase their non-recurring grant?

**Srijut MAHENDRA MOHAN CHOUDHURY (Parliamentary Secretary):** Yes, Sir, as from other Government Aided Colleges.

#### Muslims migrated from East-Pakistan to Assam

**Babu BIDYAPATI SINGHA** asked:

25. (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether they have ascertained the number of Muslims who have migrated from the East-Pakistan to Assam after the 15th August, 1947?

(b) If so, what is that number?

(c) If not, do Government propose to take necessary steps for the correct enumeration of those Muslim Immigrants?

(d) Do Government propose to introduce the Foreigners Permit System for those Muslims from the East-Pakistan?

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI** replied:

25. (a) & (b)—Presumably the hon. Member refers to those who have migrated to Assam for the purpose of settling permanently. If so, it is difficult to ascertain their number until they do settle down permanently. Many persons come for temporary work; there are others who come with a view to settle down but finding no land return to their homes in East-Pakistan.

(c)—No. Government do not think that anything is likely to be gained by having a special census when the general decennial census will be done in the very near future.

(d)—Permit System of the kind would relate to a Federal subject and the Provincial Government are not competent to introduce it.



**Investigation into the assets of Government servants**

**Dr. EMRAN HUSAIN CHAUDHURY** asked :

25. Do Government propose to take necessary steps to conduct an immediate investigation into the assets or otherwise of all classes of people drawing Government salaries including those of the present and past Members of Legislatures ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI** replied :

26.—No.

**Dr. EMRAN HUSAIN CHAUDHURY** : To my anxious question seeking to know the assets or otherwise of, among others, the Members of Legislatures past and present one word was enough so far as the reply was concerned. But I must persist and ask would Government be pleased to let me know the reason for this negative reply ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNU RAM MEDHI** : I would request the hon. Member to recollect the replies I gave to his Unstarred Question No.54 during the March Session of the Assembly, 1948. If he wants I can read them.

**“Dr. EMRAN HUSAIN CHAUDHURY** : Is it a fact that all Government servants have been asked to make a declaration of their property ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNU RAM MEDHI** : For the present a declaration of assets is asked for from Gazetted and Non-Gazetted Officers other than ministerial and menial employees.

**Dr. EMRAN HUSAIN CHAUDHURY** : Are we to understand that certain classes of Government servants are excluded from making a declaration of their property ?

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**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI** : The ministerial and menial employees have a little opportunities for taking bribes. Moreover, that will be a huge task. We shall first see what results we get after examining the bigger fries ; after that we shall decide whether the enquiry should be extended to the ministerial and other employees.”

**Dr. EMRAN HUSAIN CHAUDHURY** : Will it be extended to the Members of the Legislative Assembly ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI** : We do not consider them as Government servants.

**Dr. EMRAN HUSAIN CHAUDHURY** : The reply given by the Hon'ble Minister is that the Members of the Legislature are not Government servants and hence they could not be included among persons from whom a declaration is sought. But I would like to venture and ask Government why no enquiry may be made into the assets or otherwise of the Members of the Legislatures past and present ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI** : The hon. Members of the Legislature are elected by the electors and we will have to leave this matter to

the discretion of the electors; as the hon. Members belong to different parties and Government consider it desirable that the matter should be left to the discretion of the Parties concerned to take disciplinary action on any Member of the respective Parties in case only there is any allegation against any Member of the Assembly.

### Appointment of a third Judge to Assam High Court

**Maulavi ABDUL HAI** asked :

27. (a) Are Government aware of the need of a third Judge to Assam High Court without further delay ?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state when the third Judge for Assam High Court is going to be appointed and what step is Government taking in that direction ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA** replied :

27. (a)—The fact is that there has not been enough work for the High Court.

(b)—As soon as there is enough work for a third Judge.

**Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN** : May I know, what is the position when the two Judges differ ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA** : Uptil now there is no such difference but when necessity will arise it will be considered.

**Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN** : Does not the minimum cadre of a High Court consist of three Judges ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA** : As soon as necessity arises, we shall see that it is done. As a matter of fact, appointment of High Court Judges are done by the Home Department of the Government of India.

**Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN** : Are Government going with the impression that the two Judges will not differ ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI** : It is known only to the Judges of the High Court.

**Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR** : Is there no provision which enables the authorities to appoint a third Judge for the time being for the decision of cases when the two Judges differ ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA** : Action will be taken for appointing a third Judge when there will be such differences.

**Babu KAMINI KUMAR SEN** : May I know what will happen when in a particular case if there is difference of opinion between the two Judges ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA** : There has been no disagreement uptil now.

### Creation of a separate Civil Judiciary in Assam

**Maulavi ABDUL HALIM** asked :

28. (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether they have received proposals for creation of a separate Civil Judiciary in Assam as in Bengal and some other Provinces for the convenience of all and particularly for Civil Administration ?

(b) If so, do Government propose to take up the matter as soon as possible ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA** replied :

28. (a)—Yes. Government have received a proposal for the creation of separate Civil Judiciary from the Hon'ble High Court.

(b)—This is under consideration of Government.

### Buildings of the Offices of District and Sessions Judge, Upper Assam Districts at Jorhat

**Maulavi ABDUL HALIM** asked :

29. (a) Are Government aware of the difficulties and inconvenience felt at Jorhat for want of separate buildings to accommodate the offices of the District and Sessions Judge and the Special Subordinate and Assistant Sessions Judge of the Upper Assam Districts ?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether they have received proposals of the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar or the District and Sessions Judge, Upper Assam Districts asking for sufficient and separate accommodation ?

(c) Do Government propose to take up the work of construction of those buildings at an early date ?

(d) Do Government propose to appoint an Additional District and Sessions Judge at Silchar so that the District and Sessions Judge would be able to dispose of appeals and original Sessions cases in Jorhat and Sibsagar and clear up accumulation in the interest of the litigant public ?

(e) Do Government propose to appoint an Additional Subordinate and Assistant Sessions Judge for Lakhimpur and Sibsagar Districts with headquarters at Dibrugarh so that Civil appeals and suits pending since 3 or 4 years back are disposed of early and thereby save litigants of their loss and handicaps for inordinate delay in their disposal ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut RUPNATH BRAHMA** replied :

29. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—This will be taken up as soon as funds are provided in next year's Budget.

(d) & (e)—Government have already decided to appoint an Additional District and Sessions Judge at Silchar and an Additional Subordinate Judge at Dibrugarh.

### The Assam Cattle Preservation Bill, 1949

**Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN:** Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce the Assam Cattle Preservation Bill, 1949.

Sir, a conference was held four or five months ago, with you as Chairman, at Gauhati and it was decided that steps would be taken to preserve the cattle wealth of the Province. You know, Sir, that since after the war there has been a great scarcity of milk throughout the Province and it is high time that we should consider about taking proper steps so that we can protect the cattle wealth of the Province. And with that end in view I seek to introduce this Bill for the consideration of the House.

**The Hon'ble Srijut OMEO KUMAR DAS:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have full sympathy with the object of the mover of the Bill, *i. e.* preservation of all useful animals. But I am sorry to state that the landable object with which he moves his Bill would be frustrated by clause 3 of the Bill. Of course, I do not intend to raise the economic and religious issues involved in this Bill at present. But in this connection I want to enlighten the House that the Government of India have recently instructed the Provincial Governments to implement the recommendations made by the Cattle Preservation and Development Committee set up by that Government. A draft model Bill has also been sent for our consideration. We are now considering the question of introducing that Bill very soon. But the point is that some financial implication is involved in this Bill and this is under examination. With this I have to request my hon. Friend to withdraw his motion for introduction of the Bill.

**Mr. KEDARMAL BRAHMIN:** In view of the fact stated by the Hon'ble Minister, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

The motion was, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

### Further discussion on Motion regarding Food Policy of the Government of Assam

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Next is the Motion moved by Maulavi Md. Abul Kashem yesterday on the food policy of the Government of Assam which remains unfinished. Has the hon. Mover anything more to say?

**Maulavi MUHAMMAD ABUL KASHEM:** I have finished, Sir. Now the turn falls on the hon. Parliamentary Secretary.

**Srijut BIMALA PROSAD CHALIHA (Parliamentary Secretary):** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Mover for bringing in this very important discussion. To be frank the food situation in the country is far from satisfactory. There has been considerable rise in the prices of foodstuffs; particularly of rice and paddy, and I should admit that it has not been possible for the Government, for various reasons, to enforce the price control all over the Province quite effectively. So far as the price of rice and paddy is concerned, the first thing necessary for the Government to enforce rigid price control, is a successful procurement. Our procurement, Sir, has not been up to our expectation. The reasons for that are various. Our agriculturists are not in the habit of parting with their agricultural produce. As a matter of fact it is still in the minds of the people that greater is the quantity of paddy there they are stronger in their resources and they hardly care for converting their paddy into hard cash. Then, Sir, we have not yet in this Province thought fit to take to compulsory procurement. The reason for it is that at first we have to impress upon the agriculturists

about their responsibility in feeding the people of the country. That is a matter which needs adequate propaganda and through that we have to educate them. Therefore our procurement in this Province has been more or less is of a voluntary nature, *i.e.*, whatever the agriculturists want to part with or want to sell, we take it. Besides that our internal commitment is increasing every year. For example the commitment in the year 1944-45 was 1,06,050 tons of rice. In order that I may not be misunderstood, I would like to make it clear that the figure I am quoting represents only the requirements of the industrial concerns, the rationed areas and the deficit areas for which the Government have taken the responsibility. It does not include the rest of the Province. In the year 1945-46 our internal commitment went to 1,12,000 tons. It had gone up by about 6 thousand tons. In 1946-47 it was almost the same. In 1947-48 as the hon. Members are aware that due to circumstances beyond the control of the Government they had to decontrol rice and paddy in that year and in that period the internal commitment was 1,75,305 tons. For the current year our commitment is estimated to be 1,90,000 tons. Sir, it appears from our experiences that in order to effect effective price control over the prices of rice and paddy the Government should have enough rice and paddy in their stock so that whenever there is rise of price in rice and paddy the Government can send some stock from their reserve to stabilise the market. Even now some supplies in this direction have been made, but it is not quite sufficient. For example upto now we have issued 3,000 maunds of paddy for the deficit areas of Goalpara, 500 maunds of paddy to North Lakhimpur to cope with the emergency that arose as a result of flood and to Majuli we gave 550 maunds of rice and in Kamrup we gave 200 maunds of rice on account of floods and to Nowgong district for the deficit places we have issued 4,000 maunds of paddy and 200 maunds of rice and to the Garo Hills 3,030 maunds of paddy. Hitherto the practice has been that whenever the Deputy Commissioner or the Subdivisional Officer thinks that there has been a scarcity of rice and paddy and it is not possible for them to manage by adjustment of stocks, they approach the Government in this respect so that they may get some supply and the Government then direct the Procurement Department to make the supply. The supply about which I have stated just now has gone according to the procedure I have mentioned. Sir, I admit that as a result of floods the particular area about which the hon. Member Maulavi Abul Kashem acquainted the House yesterday there has been difficulty to the people residing in those areas. On our part, Sir, within our limitation we have been trying our best to do what is possible. For the current year we have no commitment to export any rice or paddy outside the Province, but for the information of the House I should say that the Government of India has directed us to export next year 75,000 tons of rice to help them in making the Food Sufficiency Scheme, that has undertaken by them recently, a success.

The other point which my hon. Friend Maulavi Abul Kashem raised yesterday about the removal of restriction in the internal movement of rice and paddy, this subject was actually brought up before the House by him in the March Session of the Assembly also and I have examined the question and I am sorry, Sir, to inform the House that we have not found it possible to relax the conditions for the best interests of the Province.

But so far as his allegation about the Rice Control Staff is concerned the matter will be enquired into and necessary steps will be taken.

With regard to the rationed areas which my hon. Friend Maulavi Abul Kashem told yesterday that we should abolish the rationing in town areas and instead of that we should take up the same in the rural areas—particularly—in the deficit areas. Sir, I think, regarding the question of abolishing the rationing in town areas, unless they are provided with rice and paddy they would have to starve and in the same way I admit that unless supplies are made the people

living in deficit areas will also suffer. Sir, I think we should consider whether we can extend this rationing system at least to deficit border areas, if not for the whole Province. We will have to consider this matter while planning our programmes for the procurement and distribution of rice and paddy for the following year.

Sir, as regards 'china' we have done well by including it within the foodstuff. I understand the market for 'china' is in the East Bengal and if we had not imposed this restriction on 'china' that was available in the Province, the whole of it would have passed into East Bengal. Sir, I understand that the particular area about which my hon. Friend Maulavi Abul Kashem stated the people use 'china' and we have instructed the Procurement Department to issue licenses for the movement of the 'china' from the Barpeta Subdivision freely.

With regard to the other suggestions of my hon. Friend, Maulavi Abul Kashem, that we should relax control over the movement of rice and paddy but simply guard the border so that no rice and paddy can go outside the Province, I think, it will not be possible for us to do so. I do not think the Government of India will allow us to do so and how far it will be desirable is also a matter to be seriously considered. It may bring quite the contrary result also that what he expects. Now I would like to speak a few words about this procurement of paddy with the help of Corrugated Iron Sheets. We got a special quota of about 2,000 tons of Corrugated Iron Sheets from the Government of India for the purpose of procurement. And this comes to about 20,000 bundles. This quota we thought we had better utilised by giving this to the agriculturists who have got big stocks. This is actually not meant for distribution to those who do not have paddy. Those who do not have paddy will get Corrugated Iron Sheets as usual from the general quota. There is a separate quota for agriculturists. Those who cannot avail the benefit of Corrugated Iron Sheets under the present scheme for inadequate stock of paddy will be indirectly benefitted through the scheme. Because those who will get Corrugated Iron Sheets from the present quota will not get from general quota and to that extent the demand on the general or agriculturists quota will be less. I want, Sir, that those hon. Members of the House would discuss this very complicated at the same time very important problem of food and give their views and suggestions on the various matters as to how things can be improved. During the question hour hon. Srijut Talukdar raised certain points about the controlled commodities. If you would permit me, Sir, I can speak about that also now.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** It will be more appropriate if you speak later.

**Maulavi MUHAMMAD ABUL KASHEM:** Regarding the relaxation of section 17, of the Assam Foodgrains Control Order, 1947 that is, movement of paddy from the field by agriculturists to their homes, may I know something?

**Srijut BIMALA PROSAD CHALIHA (Parliamentary Secretary):** This question was examined but so far we have not found it possible to relax it.

**Maulavi MUHAMMAD ABUL KASHEM:** At least for the harvesting season may we have it? There is no chance of smuggling then. Under section 17 agriculturists were allowed to take to their homes to the extent of 30 miles. This is nullified now. As a result people are not getting any benefit.

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI:** Is there any difficulty in getting permits by the agriculturists?

**Maulavi MUHAMMAD ABUL KASHEM:** Actually there are difficulties, because according to the present system the Deputy Commissioner or the Assistant Director of Procurement can only issue permits. They remain in towns. Small cultivators at the time of harvesting season cannot go to town to receive their permits. The result is that they are faced with difficulty. Government without detriment to the public interest can do away with this difficulty.

**\*Srijut BIMALA PROSAD CHALIHA (Parliamentary Secretary):**  
I will consider it.

**\*Srijut SARAT CHANDRA SINHA:** May I know from the Parliamentary Secretary whether control over the prices of paddy is affected? That is to say whether there is any difference between the market price and the controlled price.

**\*Srijut BIMALA PROSAD CHALIHA (Parliamentary Secretary):**  
I cannot say it is quite ineffective. There is temporary rise on account of flood, etc., and we have not been able to effectively control the price.

**Dr. EMRAN HUSAIN CHAUDHURY:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Parliamentary Secretary prefaced his speech by saying that the rice situation in Assam is far from satisfactory. But as he proceeded with his speech and as he came to the end of it, the impression gathered by the House is this that Government appear to be complacent about the food situation of the Province. To the supplementary question put by Mr. Sinha the reply was that the price control has not been quite effective. Mr. Chaliha has just now said that on account of flood and other causes there has been some rise in the price of paddy. May I know from the hon. Parliamentary Secretary why there has been this steep rise in the price of paddy recently? There is no flood now. As regards control, it should not be removed. I am glad that control is there, and I think it will have to continue in the country for at least another decade. From the effects of the abolition of control on cloth in 1947 we have seen that a profit of a sum of Rs.100 crores was made by mill owners. Similarly was the case with sugar mill owners recently. Following the abolition of control on rice and paddy in July, 1948 there was a sharp rise in prices. The index number has risen terribly and there is so much talk of inflation to combat which the Government have undertaken a number of measures one of which is the dropping of some of the post-war plans. I do not know what happened to the Government of Assam to deem it wise despite the inflation to decontrol rice and paddy last year. The Parliamentary Secretary says that the reasons were beyond the control of Government. At the time when decontrol was imposed no rice and paddy could be obtained at reasonable prices. I do not know why they took that momentous decision which adversely affected the poor people of the Province. In spite of the fact that Assam is proverbially known as a rice surplus Province we are short of foodstuff at present. I do not see why there should not be any control over prices in view of the shortage of commodities. The Government may be supposing that the Procurement Department is running all right. But I should like to ask whether they know that rice sells in the market at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  seers and at places 1 seer to the rupee. Mr. Kashem said that 'China' is being eaten by the unhappy people of Dhubri area. One measure that has been adopted by the Government of Assam regarding the procurement of rice is that C. I. Sheets are given in lieu of paddy.

\*Speech not corrected.

So far as the people who have enough land and on which they can produce enough are concerned, the position is all right. But what about those people who have no land, people who are called 'landless', who actually take on rent land belonging to zemindars or landed people? I doubt whether what they get from their labours is even enough to make both ends meet and whether they can carry on decently without having to borrow from the Mahajans. I do not know what happens to these people if they happen to want Corrugated Iron sheets. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary said that a part of the general quota has been set aside for the cultivators in the villages. But what about people of the urban areas? Many of them might not have land or paddy or rice. Will they have to go without Corrugated Iron sheets? The reply that I have got from my hon. Friend, Mr. Hardman, is 'Yes'. I would like to know whether Government agree with him that people living in the towns cannot get Corrugated Iron sheets (Maulavi Mahammad Abul Kashem:—Bricks are available). I am very glad to know that bricks are available and they are to be placed at the disposal of the people of the towns without the necessity of sending bills for their supply. The hon. gentleman, Maulavi Mahammad Kashem, who belongs to my party, ought to know that sometimes bricks are not available even at high prices. On account of its shortage, the price per 1,000 has gone up to Rs.80 or Rs.90 or even more. The people of the towns have not got enough money even to construct graves not to speak of building houses because all the people living in towns are not rich like Mr. Kashem.

Then, Sir, as regards procurement, I do not know what supplies the Department has been able to obtain at controlled rates from agriculturists, peasants and the people in the rural areas. But what about those who unfortunately have to purchase rice and paddy at uncontrolled prices in the market under the very nose of the Government? In the course of his speech the Parliamentary Secretary gave us no indication as to the measures he might be contemplating to give effect to the control orders that he has promulgated.

One thing that recently appeared in the papers is about the advertisements. Very short notice was given to the tenderers regarding procurement of rice and paddy for Shillong. The commission that was granted by Government was 6 annas per maund, but for some reasons or other that was raised to 9 annas. Well, that statement is not based on rumour because it appeared in the papers. I would like to know from the Government whether there was a rise in the rate of commission from 6 annas to 9 annas. Sir, in spite of the fact that Assam is a surplus Province, Government ought to know that there is a deficit in rice production throughout the world. There may be many causes. It may be due to the wars now going on in China since 1932, in Greece or the hitch in Palestine and warfare in some other parts of the world. Besides, there are hoarders and speculators and such-like people and Government also, on account of shortage at times, have taken measures to stock rice and paddy. It is known that we are short of food-stuffs in this country to the extent of 10 per cent. for which we had to purchase from abroad 2·8 million tons of food grains in 1948 at a cost of Rs. 129·5 crores of rupees.

This year the amount to be purchased might be 4 million tons, according to Dr. Keskar in Switzerland, although according to Mr. Daulatram (I am referring to the proceedings of the last Budget Session of the Central Assembly) it may even come to 5 million tons, in spite of the measures we have taken regarding the reclamation of waste lands which cost some 2 crores of rupees in 1948, and the Grow-More-Food campaign which cost us 5 crores of rupees. In spite of all this there is scarcity. I am very much pained



to see the distress of the fixed-salaried people, who have to purchase rice at a cost which is not commensurate with the remuneration which they get for their loyal services to the Government of Assam.

**Mr. LARSINGH KHYRIEM:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, after hearing the speech of the Hon'ble Parliamentary Secretary I wish to bring to his notice the difficulties of the rural people on the border areas, I mean those people on the Dawki side extending upto Narpuh. These people grow only oranges, betel-nuts and betel leaves. At the time of undivided India they used to get their rice from Sylhet side, but since partition they get no rice from that side, and as a result rice has to be supplied to them from Shillong. They have been allotted a certain quota, but I understand that for a month or two last they have not got their full quota; they have been given only half of their quota. So, they are in difficulties now. I would request Government to see that these people, who have not got any other alternative source of supply, may get their full quota.

Then, Sir, I must refer to their difficulties in coming to and going back from, Shillong. They have to come to Shillong twice, thrice or even 4 times a week for their ration. I would request Government that they should be given weekly ration and also that it should be regular, otherwise these people, as I have said just now, who have no other alternative but to depend on the Government will suffer.

With these words, Sir, I request the hon. Parliamentary Secretary who is in-charge of this supply to see that the people are getting their full quota and also that they should get it regularly.

**Maulavi MD. NAZMAL HAQUE:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am very glad to hear from hon. Parliamentary Secretary that he has admitted what is a true fact. He has admitted that price control over rice could not be effective and also that the procurement of rice and paddy has not been satisfactory. Sir, it is true that Government have completely failed to improve control over the price of rice and paddy. From Dibrugarh down to Dhubri we find that rice is being sold at Rs.15 to Rs.22 per maund. Now, what is the reason for this increase in price? Firstly if we admit that our Province is a deficit one and that we cannot keep any control over price. But if our Province is not deficit, there must be some hoarding of rice and paddy. If there is hoarding, the Government should take steps to bring out this hoarded rice and paddy. Sir, the reasons given by the hon. Parliamentary Secretary as to the failure of the Procurement Department is, I think, different from the real reason. There must be some other reasons which prevented us from getting as much paddy as we want.

Then, Sir, as regards distribution of paddy to deficit areas, I am not satisfied with the reply given by the hon. Parliamentary Secretary. In the District of Goalpara, the Lakhipur Police Station and the South bank of Dhubri Subdivision are the deficit areas. Since last year we have been requesting the Government to keep some reserve stock there for emergency cases, but nothing has yet been done and now the quantity that has been sent to our District is also quite insufficient to feed the people. Now, Sir, I want to bring to the notice of the Government that about 20 or 25 villages under Lakhipur Police Station have been eroded, and the people have no land for cultivation. As a result the people are starving and moving hither and thither having no house to live in. It is the duty of Government to see that these people may not die. But till now no arrangement has been made to redress their grievances. My hon Friend, Dr. Emran Husain, said that on the very face of the Government Officers rice was being sold at high prices. It must be so because

we cannot check it. If we want to control rice, it will not be available to the people and the people will die. In my constituency when there was an extreme scarcity of paddy, the merchants demanded Rs.13 per maund although all Congressmen in the area wanted to give rice at controlled rate and insisted on rice being sold at the controlled rate. The merchants refused to do so and the result was that the people had to go on without food for some time. I had to request the Subdivisional Officer, Goalpara to visit the places and to allow the people to sell rice at even more than the controlled rate because if we insist on the controlled rate the people will not get rice and thereby they will suffer. Such are the conditions brought about by this control. If we cannot procure rice and distribute it even for our internal commitment, what is the use of these restrictions? Let there be no restriction of movement within the Province. When there is any shortage in any area the people of the said area will automatically go to places where rice is available. The Government cannot bring rice because they will insist on the controlled rate, but the people who feel that they must get their food somehow or other will find out where the paddy is. This restriction is preventing the people from finding out paddy for them.

I am not objecting to the rationing system. Sir, as regards the policy of exchanging C. I. sheets for paddy, I want to say that as long as Government cannot control the price of paddy, this scheme will be a failure because if the people can sell their rice at higher rate, why should they give 25 maunds of paddy for a bundle of G. I. sheet which they may not need also.

Then, Sir, I want to know from the hon. Parliamentary Secretary what our Grow-More-Food Campaign has done. We have been spending so much money from our revenues towards this scheme, but we are not getting more food. I cannot find anything plausible as to what has been done in this direction to give us more food and to save the people from starving. I shall be very glad if the hon. Parliamentary Secretary will enlighten the House as to what has been done by this Grow-More-Food Campaign of Government.

For our deficit areas I suggested to the Subdivisional Officer for supplying *paranga ashu* seed (it is also called *Kati Asu*) which is grown on the muddy places; as soon as water dries up this '*ashu*' is grown. The Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara District has referred this matter to the Agriculture Department of the Government to provide seeds of this crop, but the reply from the Agriculture Department was that they could not supply the seed. We cannot understand this, Sir. The Agriculture Department is to help the people with seeds when they need, but if they fail in this, we cannot understand what benefit we shall derive from this Department. We expect that they will give us seeds at the time when we need them. But it generally happens that when seed is required it is not available and by the time it is available, it is not used as seed but as food.

With these words, Sir, I endorse what has been said by the hon. Mover of this motion except the statement that the Shillong people are all potato eaters (*laughter*). With these words, Sir, I resume my seat.

**Mr. J. S. HARDMAN:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, as a representative of a Group which represents Industrial and Commercial interests which have been compelled to buy 1 lakh 60 thousand maunds of rice through Government for feeding our labour, I can assure you that questions of food policy have received very close attention from this side. We are, Sir, indebted to Mr. Abul Kashem for bringing forward this Motion, though we confess that we are a little out of sympathy with the views which he has

expressed. At one moment he is complaining that decontrol has broken down and rice is being purchased at present at Rs.35 per maund, and at the same time he is advocating abandonment of control and removal of all brakes to check the rise in rice prices. We have heard from the hon. Mr. Chaliha an able defence of Government policy and eloquent and poignant pleas from the representatives of consuming areas throughout the Province. The question of our food policy is not, I submit, a matter which can be considered to-day by Members of this Legislature, since the Government of India has laid down clearly and unequivocally the objective which the country must attain. It is therefore merely for Government to decide how that policy can be fitted in to the mosaic of the all-India pattern. The hon. Mr. Chaliha gave certain statistics of the rising demands placed on the Government and it is a little unfortunate that he did not allude to the amount of rice, which was exported in the earlier years, when demand on Government was considerably less. If my recollection is correct, substantial exports were made in those years. But I agree entirely that comparisons are odious and I wish to avoid them. The hon. Mr. Chaliha is entirely correct in his view that with the increasing purchasing power in the rural areas procurement faces far greater difficulties to-day than it did some years ago.

We must recognise the importance of a sound food policy and it is necessary that it should have the full support of all sections of this House. The hon. Dr. Emran Husain Chaudhury referred to the very serious drain on national resources by having to import prodigious quantities of food-grains. High prices of food-grains are having a very adverse effect on the progress of industrialisation and expert opinion recognises that the slow progress that has been achieved in the past years is one in no small measure to the economic effects of high food-grains. Purchasing power has been transferred to the rural areas from the traditional investing classes, which exist in the town areas mostly and who have been placed to-day in financial difficulties and have in consequence been unable to support enterprises which the industrialists are ready to prepare. Even the Government of India and, to a greater degree the Provincial Governments, are experiencing difficulties in raising funds. Loans at the present time cannot be raised on a substantial scale either by the Centre or by the Provinces. High prices of food-grains are also having a very important effect on national life itself and it is widely recognised that the middle classes who may be described as the bulwark of any country are suffering to-day as never before. It is therefore only by progressive reduction of food-grain prices that the economy of the country can be placed on a sound basis. This policy was rightly accepted by the Government during the current year and in pursuance of it two reductions in prices were made. It was a little unfortunate that this policy was implemented somewhat late in the year. We can, I think, congratulate the Government on the acceptance of the principle. If they will carry on with this policy and if Government can announce to-day that prices on the 1st of January 1950 will be at a lower control rate there will be less inducement to hoard. During the disastrous days of the Bengal famine when prices were rising steeply, one heard occasionally the view expressed by Government that the higher the price the easier it would be for Government with its vast resources to purchase its requirements, but it was found that with every rise in price less was purchasable. It is for that reason that we recommend to Government very insistently the continuance of the policy of price reduction, which has had only a limited success during the current year.

Last year, it will be remembered, Government's procurement policy collapsed completely and enforced decontrol brought distress to large sections of the population. The Assam Government rightly determined in the current year to overhaul their procurement organisation and we can with sincerity congratulate Government on the improvement which has resulted. But for the unfortunate effects of wide flood with its interruption on communications—and it also constitutes an encouragement to those who are anxious to withhold paddy—we are satisfied that Government would have surmounted this crisis successfully. We must, however, impress upon the Government that the situation at the present moment is very serious. The interests which I represent require 1 lakh and 60 thousand maunds per month. In the past 4 months we have never received anything near our full requirement and stocks to-day have reached a very serious low level. On many tea gardens stocks do not amount to more than one or two weeks requirements and it must be remembered that many weeks must elapse before rice released from Government godowns can be supplied to the labourers on tea gardens for consumption. It is therefore important that at this moment Government should act with resolution. The situation can be saved and price control can be maintained. I am quite confident that if proper action is taken the situation can well be brought to normal within a fortnight or three weeks. Fortunately, Government had considerable fore-thought and approached the Central Government for a stimulant for their procurement policy. I refer to the scheme for distribution of corrugated iron sheets. Government took steps to expedite the transit into the Province of these supplies, but after that point, Sir, I confess that I cannot continue to congratulate Government as there appears to have been a certain amount of indecision over the method by which these corrugated iron sheets should be converted into paddy. We are told that corrugated iron sheets arrived a month ago in many places, possibly not the full quantity but sufficient to justify a vigorous onslaught with the scheme. Reports which I have received are that practically no corrugated iron sheets have been disposed of and no substantial quantities of paddy received in exchange. I should be very glad to hear from the Government benches that I am incorrect in my information. But I would stress that it is of vital importance; that Government's reputation is at stake when they have the means to save price control and revive paddy procurement. It is not a question at this moment of deciding whether the *bona fides* of sellers of paddy require verification. If my information is correct, the Trading Co-operatives, who have been appointed by Government to scrutinise applications, have been refusing to accept applications and in some instances have been using their influence to dissuade cultivators from selling paddy. Cultivators are clamouring to get corrugated iron sheets, and are prepared to give the paddy in exchange. Government should be bold enough to say that we do not care who supplies paddy, but whoever supplies paddy whether he is a deserving character or not, will be entitled to get in exchange corrugated iron sheets. If Government do this, I am convinced, within a period of a fortnight Government will be the proud possessor of more than 6 lakhs of maunds. To-day 3 lakhs maunds of paddy will completely transform the situation. Therefore, it is necessary for Government to adopt vigorous measures. It is not the time for determining niceties of distribution whether man who has no paddy should be deprived of corrugated iron sheets, whether those who live in towns should be deprived of the supply. Government require paddy from those who are able to supply it and require to offer in barter what is attractive. We feel, Sir, we are offering to Government a practical and concrete suggestion for meeting a very urgent situation and if Government utilise this opportunity, we are convinced that they can

achieve success, and this success, we consider they will be justified in claiming in view of the soundness of the main features of their procurement programme. Thank you, Sir.

**Maulavi MUHAMMAD ABUL KASHEM:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I really thank the hon. Parliamentary Secretary for frankly admitting the fact. As pointed out by Mr. Nazmal Haque he wants to adopt in the future effective measures of control over procurement and distribution.

I am glad to get his assurance that in spite of rationing he will consider the question of supply to the deficit areas, specially border areas. There will be no difficulty to do the distribution in the border areas as there are a number of Co-operative Trading Societies who can help easy distribution to the rural areas. If it is done, the difficulty will be mitigated. I think, Sir, this will also help to stop smuggling as this procedure will not allow giving permits or license to different people who might smuggle. At the time of harvesting season it will be required to get declarations from the house-holders as to the quantity of rice or paddy in their possession and whether that quantity will be sufficient for them. It is no denying the fact that large quantities of paddy and rice are smuggled by merchants. Either the smugglers pass it at the connivance of officers or negligence of our people. But this smuggling is not done in March or April as the prices then in Pakistan is lesser than it is in the border areas of Assam.

As for removal of paddy from agriculturists, I am glad to get the assurance from the Parliamentary Secretary that he would consider it. I should say that he should consider it sympathetically as there is no smuggling in harvesting season when price is lower in Pakistan border than in this area ; so there cannot be any chance of smuggling. Further, if he is afraid that there is chance of smuggling, I can assure him that he should not be afraid of that, as the transport cost will be high to carry it to Pakistan.

At least provision should be made for taking in bundles or sheaves as I have already explained to the Hon'ble the Finance Minister. The people have come to the town for obtaining permits and they have to face a lot of difficulties. So, I would suggest that the Director should delegate powers even to the Sub-Inspector in those areas to permit the agriculturists to bring their paddy.

Sir, yesterday, in my speech I stated only that there should be no internal control on the movement of rice and paddy and it would be very difficult to check export of rice and paddy outside the Province, and I do not like to raise any more question in this respect.

With these few words, Sir, I beg to resume my seat. I wish in future we will not have to come to Government regarding supply of foodstuffs to the people specially in the months of June, July, August and September.

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have considered it necessary to join in this debate to give the closing reply in the hope that certain matters of policy adopted by the Government of Assam in this Province may be better understood in its relationship with the food policy of the Government of India, just as the Textile policy of the Government of Assam was shown to be in reference to the over-all policy of the Government of India. I

would like to speak a few words in this behalf. The facts are almost known to the Hon'ble Members of this House and I hope I will not be considered as taxing the patience of the House when referring to them.

I have already stated, Sir, that the food policy of this Government cannot be isolated from the food policy of the Government of India. It is well known to every one of us that India is deficit today in the matter of food to at least 7 to 10 per cent. of her requirements and that we are importing foodgrains from outside India and are paying annually more than Rs.100 crores just to meet this deficit. The most unfortunate part of this is that the money has got to be paid to Dollar Areas from which India is getting her machineries, etc., for her development. Therefore, the necessity of growing more food has become the supreme need of the hour. The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India only the other day broadcast to us the full import of this deficit in food and the methods and manner which we should adopt in order to make up the deficit. A time target has been fixed within which we must be self-supporting. Our 'Grow-More-Food Campaign' has got to be linked in such a way by which all that is possible could be done in the matter of Grow-More-Food and the provincial contribution that has been fixed on us should be faithfully fulfilled.

Now, Sir, the Government of India has requested the Government of Assam to supply from the next year's production 75,000 tons of rice from this Province. But there should be no apprehension that this would mean reduction of food to some people in our Province. In certain areas—particularly in the deficit areas—the people are feeling the pinch of the deficit and therefore there may be some apprehension in the country that the Government in spite of the difficulty in the Province in the matter of food are going to export 75,000 tons of rice. The fact however, is that the new production for covering this 75,000 tons of rice to be exported, have nothing to do with the existing production of this Province. This 75,000 tons of rice is expected to be produced from what we call 'Grow-More-Food scheme'. And how that is proposed to be done is the main point. Sir, the programme for production of this 75,000 tons of rice is under two different types of schemes which do not involve—opening out of new land or provision for supply of machineries, for bullocks, etc., according to the opinion of Agriculture Department of the Government of Assam or the estimate of the Grow-More-Food Officer of the Government of India. The first scheme, which is also prevailing for a long time in our Province, is the extension of Small Irrigation Scheme throughout the country. It has been found from actual experience that increase in the percentage of food from the scheme has often time been ranging from 35 per cent. to 60 per cent. On the basis of that calculation, it has been worked out that this Small Irrigation Scheme will yield at least as much as 45,000 tons of rice out of this 75,000. The other 30,000 tons of rice will also be made possible under what will be called major irrigation scheme now in the hands of Embankment and Drainage Department of the Government of Assam. The scheme has already been prepared and sanction from the Government of India has already been asked for. It is expected that by the end of this month works under this scheme also will be taken in hand. The importance of these schemes lies in the fact that agriculturists have not to purchase any machinery or even more plough bullocks. It only means that so much percentage of produce is made possible by the merest fact of distribution of water. But besides above, the Provincial Government have some other schemes in hand. Two other schemes are just now under consideration. We are proposing to open some land in two places—one near Kaki in Nowgong and another in the North of Rangiya near about Tambulpur, by offering settlement to landless people. If people take settlement for cultivation, there is likelihood of production of another 25,000 tons of rice. Therefore what I desire to point out to you is that if we give this 75,000 tons of rice, it will not interfere

with our existing food situation. The second point that I wanted to point out is the necessity of doing all that we can in the matter of this drive. I am very glad to tell you that even this morning we had a very pleasant function on the 32nd mile of Jowai Road. The Military Sub-Area here are organising there a grow-more-food centre. They have got tractors from the Government of Assam, we have already seen them at work although it is only a fortnight ago that they devised the scheme. The programme of the year is that they are cultivating over one thousand acres, I hope it will lead to considerable easing of the situation in Shillong in reference to our food requirements. What I was trying to impress on the House is the necessity of following a lead of this kind and support production of more food. You may also know that the Government of India organised what may be called a subsidiary food department. That agency is functioning more or less in an honorary capacity today, but they have been given powers to incur expenditure for growing subsidiary food in India. Three subsidiary foods have been selected. They are banana, sweet potato and Tapioca. So far as this Province is concerned, we have informed the Government of India that it will not be possible to produce them in abundance inspite of all possibilities unless clear arrangement is made for marketing them. If people after having spent labour and money cannot have substantial gain is bound to feel disheartened. Sir, we all feel today the necessity of growing some food. It is a world problem. And it is the most important problem for India. Assam cannot be isolated from the rest of India, and follow a selfish policy. I want to point out that the policy adopted by this Government has been in consonance with that of the Government of India.

But in order that there may be maximum efforts for not only producing, but also for procuring the food existing, difficulties in our operation had to be taken notice of by us. We have tried to impress on our Departments certain facts. One of them is to have good communication from the area from where surplus food is produced. There are many surplus pockets in this Province which generally lie in areas to which we have not good communication. If we study the situation as to how last year we were compelled to adopt the policy of decontrol temporarily, one factor was that we had not had good roads for going to the areas where food was produced in rains. We have therefore made it a part of the policy of this Government that those areas should be linked with major arteries of communication as effectively as it can be done by Government. Taking these and other factors into consideration I find, Sir, that there is a lot to be done in the matter of improvement of procurement. The Parliamentary Secretary has been pleased to say that the desirable efficiency in the matter of procurement has not been possible. I perfectly agree with him. You will see that actually there is no scarcity in Assam. I speak with complete authority that even last year when the situation was tense on account of the unavailability of rice and paddy for immediate distribution, there was hardly any ground for any talk of any serious shortage or difficulty in the matter of food. The food is there today and their controlled price is prevailing in the controlled areas. Yet the price has gone up. What does it actually prove? It is that there are some surplus food available for people. It leads also to the conclusion that if we could effectively procure all these surplus food, our distribution policy would have been more successful. The fact outstanding is that we have not been able to procure maximum quantity that is procurable in the country. That fact seems quite clear to me and that has been also the feeling of the Government. There are two ways of effecting satisfactory procurement. One may be the method of force—compulsory levy, that is by means of police force, if the situation required for the purpose of getting the surplus rice and paddy that might be in the hands of hoarders. The other way was by method of persuasion and by offering things like C. I. sheets which is one of the most

important necessities of the richer cultivators as an inducement for parting with their rice and paddy. Government gave full consideration to the alternatives to be adopted. I know that in other provinces like the United Provinces they have adopted compulsory procurement, Madras and Pakistan have introduced compulsory levy on the basis of which they are making their procurement. But we thought that before adopting this measure of force we should give the richer section of the cultivators a chance to part with their paddy in lieu of their other requirements, *e. g.*, C. I. Sheets. We persuaded the Government of India to give us 2,000 tons of C. I. Sheets for this transaction besides a quota of 400 tons for ordinary cultivators who might get them without consideration as to whether they can part with their paddy or not. Now, Sir, some objection is being raised regarding distribution of the former quota of 2,000 tons. There are people who are arguing that this will not lead to actual procurement because of the amount of paddy (I suppose 25 maunds) which the Government have assessed in lieu of a bundle of C. I. Sheets. Well, Sir, if it was thought that an ordinary cultivator had much paddy with him today which he could part with, Government would not have put that assessment. But the information Government have is that, it is the richer cultivators who are hoarding their stocks. Therefore, Government do not propose to relax that condition. Then, Sir, there was the idea of having this distributed through the Trading Co-operatives, who are now apparently governed by—I am prepared to take it—poorer classes of cultivators. They also are not willing possibly to distribute in this manner. We want to make it clear to the House as well as to the cultivators that if procurement under the circumstances of to-day has got to be made in course of the next two or three months till the paddy is out, there is no other alternative than to accept the basis which Government have adopted, *viz.*, that only when 25 maunds of paddy will be given they can have one bundle of C. I. Sheets. I submit, Sir, that even if the Trading Co-operatives do not co-operate in the matter of disposal of C. I. Sheets for procurement of paddy, we shall have to do it directly. In the meanwhile I can give it for the information of the House that we have already received an offer of 60,000 maunds of paddy on the arrangement which Government have proposed.

Now, Sir, I would like to speak a few words about the internal food situation of the Province. In that connection I would like to give some figures. It is perfectly clear that the internal commitment of the Government of Assam has increased by at least 30 per cent. from the figure which we had in 1947-48. For example, the internal commitment for 1947-48 was 1,25,305 tons; in 1948-49 it has gone up to 1,90,000 tons. This represents an increase by about 35 per cent. This must be due to various causes. I know it for a fact that so far as the Khasi and Jaintia Hills are concerned, the increase in the maundage of supply has been as much as 80 per cent. to 90 per cent. over the figure which we had only two years ago (*i.e.*, even after Partition). Today we are supplying 70 to 75 thousands maunds of rice to Shillong and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills in place of about 30,000 maunds some time before and 50,000 maunds in the previous years. (Maulavi Md. Abul Kashem:—What is the reason for this increase? The reasons are many. There has been some increase in the population and the economy of border areas has been disrupted. These areas used to get their supply of rice from Pakistan which has now entirely stopped. Then, Sir, the Baghmara area of the Garo Hills has now got to be fed from other areas, though the consumption there is not heavy. Then there has been increase in demand everywhere. The influx of population may be one of the reasons. Of course, the figure does not take into account the general consumption. This figure represents only our commitment in regard to tea industry—other industries, Railway and the rationed areas. These are the general accounts on the basis of which internal commitment is shown.



Now, then, it will be seen that we had peak procurement in the year 1945-46. In that year we collected as much as 90 thousand tons. And in 1946-47 we exported 39 thousand tons, but last year we were more or less in deficit. In the circumstances, it seems to me that production has not deteriorated very much in view of the fact that although our internal commitment has increased we have been able to maintain the existing supply in spite of it.

As regards other things that we have done in reference to supply to the deficit areas, this has been explained by the hon. Parliamentary Secretary. In this matter two hon. Members raised this question—I refer to Maulavi Abul Kashem and my hon. Friend, Mr. Lar Singh Khyriem. I have already told them that Government had and still have in certain areas stocks out of which supply is rushed to those areas where there is deficit. But on account of floods and other difficulties in transport and other such difficulties supplies could not be rushed to those deficit areas as immediately as might have been desired. But I can assure the hon. Members that it will be the object of this Government to do as effectively as possible to bring relief to those deficit areas.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** The time is up. How long will the Hon'ble Leader of the House take ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI :** I will finish in 5 minutes' time, Sir. I want to finish by pointing out that the apparent difficulty is not and cannot actually be real. Just now we are in possession of a stock which will be a guarantee against any kind of difficulties of the nature we experienced last year. I believe that in about a month's time the situation will ease. I can tell for the information of the House that we are now in possession of such stock that we cannot only tide over our present difficulties but to keep ready for some time more. It is necessary for me also to point out in this connection that the Industry are not now feeling any difficulty. They may not feel quite at ease, but they are surely not in any apprehension of any grave crisis. Sir, we are now in a position to know what evils are creating the present difficulty in procurement, and to tackle them in a manner which will prevent the crisis of last year. If our present method of persuasion fails, I hope we shall have the support of the House in our taking more drastic measures.

Then, Sir, one little thing which I have to explain to you in connection with our policy. It is one in connection also with the policy of the Government of India to check inflation. This problem must be tackled in the right spirit and urgently too. The Government of India, as I have said, are trying to bring down the price of cloth, but they wanted the Provinces to bring down the price of foodstuffs also. If this is not brought down then the labourers will demand their higher wages and so on and we shall be caught, as now, in a vicious circle. Therefore, Sir, the whole economic set-up has got to be linked up in such a way that the gradual fall in prices all round can be achieved. We have decided that the price from the next procurement will be reduced—though we have not yet decided upon the amount. But I can safely say for the information of the House that our policy shall be to reduce the price of paddy and rice to the level where the cultivators will not find it difficult to adjust themselves but also will enable those who are suffering at this time—I mean the lower middle class—to get their rice in an appropriate level of price.

Now, Sir, I think I have fully explained the policy of the Government and have also told the House of the steps this Government are taking for the purpose of easing the situation.

**\*Maulavi MD. ABUL KASHEM:** Sir, we have heard the Hon'ble Premier saying that they have got sufficient stock at present. May I request him to divert some of this paddy and rice to Dhubri side so that the emergency there may be met ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI:** Sir, I think the hon. Parliamentary Secretary has said that there is a stock of paddy at Dhubri which could be sent to the deficit areas. The arrangement, as I have stated just now, made by Government is to have stocks built up in different places from which the deficit areas will be served as early as possible. I think the hon. Parliamentary Secretary will see that some paddy is sent to the areas mentioned by my hon. Friend, Mr. Kashem, from the stock at Dhubri.

**\*Dr. EMRAN HUSAIN CHOUDHURY:** May we know, Sir, when do Government propose to enforce their policy for further reduction in the price of rice and paddy ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI:** There are two methods by which this can be done, Sir. If you can take out all the surplus paddy from the hands of the hoarders, then only you can have effective control over prices. I mentioned that there are two methods to meet the situation. One is the method of persuasion which we are pursuing so long. If that fails, then Government will have to take other measures such as was done in some of the Provinces in India. The fact is that if we can get sufficient quantity of paddy out of the hands of the hoarders then the present situation would have eased and prices could be effectively brought down. But the position as obtaining now is not quite clear. If all the paddy that was surplus in the country would have been brought out by Government, Government would have been in a position to control the price completely. But so long as there will be paddy in the hands of persons as to leave room for private trade, we will be put to handicaps in regard to enforcement of Control Order and cannot evidently obtain the benefit that we seek for. We are at present going to take such action in regard to procurement which will at least bring out the surplus quantity of stock from the people concerned paying not more than the reasonable price in order to achieve the desired result of bringing down the price level. At present this will be by the method of persuasion.

**\*Srijut GAURIKANTA TALUKDAR:** Sir, may I ask hon. Maulavi Abul Kashem whether the scarcity in his district is due to smuggling into Pakistan ?

**\*Maulavi MD. ABUL KASHEM:** In reply to this question, Sir, I may only say that there is hardly any smuggling into Pakistan now-a-days.

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI:** In reply to Srijut Gaurikanta Talukdar's question I may inform the House that there was some smuggling in the Cachar District. So far as Goalpara District is concerned, my present information is that there has been no leakage or smuggling. There was leakage in the Cachar District ; but soon after the harvest of last crop, the procurement in that District has been more than satisfactory and as far as I know no leakage has taken place in that District now.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** The debate on this Motion is closed.

\*Speech not corrected.

**Srijut PURNA CHANDRA SARMA:** Sir, the Session has been cut short to 22nd instant. Since we have already finished the Private Members' business excepting the Resolutions which can be disposed of tomorrow, we can I think further shorten the Session.

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI:** Three days were allotted for Private Members' business. Now two days have already gone and the 3rd day may be fixed for the 20th.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Order, order. It has been suggested that the Session may be further shortened by two more days and we may close it on the 20th. As usual, I request the Leaders of different parties to meet me in my room either to-day or to-morrow morning at 9-30 a.m. to examine whether that may be possible so that I may announce the result to-morrow after the Question Hour.

**Maulavi Saiyid MD. SAADULLA:** I prefer to meet you to-morrow at 9-30 a.m.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Yes, to-morrow you may please meet me at 9-30 a.m.

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI:** Government business is starting from to-morrow, the 17th and continues to 19th and whatever little business is left out could be finished on the 20th when Private Members' business could also be taken up.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** It has then been agreed to meet to-morrow at 9-30 a.m.

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI:** Sir, unless official business is finished other business cannot be taken up. There are certain Bills which might take longer time to dispose of than is expected. To-morrow the position could be known how far the official business could be disposed of and then we might perhaps judge to what extent the Session could be shortened.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** If the official business is taken up to-morrow, I think during the whole day it could be finished. The Hon'ble Finance Minister's suggestion is that unless the official business is finished the position cannot be properly known.

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI:** Yes, Sir, that is my point.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** All right then, after finishing to-morrow's business we will decide on the matter. (*Voices:* We shall be able to finish the official business to-morrow). Very well, we will consider the matter to-morrow after the day's work is finished, if there is no objection.

**Maulavi Saiyid MD. SAADULLA:** I have no objection.

#### Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 10 A.M., on Saturday the 17th September, 1949.

SHILLONG :  
The 27th October, 1949.

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

