

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

The Council met in the Council Chamber at Government House, on Thursday, the 14th September 1922, at 11 A.M.

PRESENT :

The Hon'ble Mr. J. C. Arbuthnott, C.I.E., *President*, the Hon'ble two Members of the Executive Council, the Hon'ble two Ministers and 36 nominated and elected Members.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

(UNSTARRED QUESTIONS.)

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY asked :—

1. (1) Has the attention of the Government been drawn to articles in the *Times of Assam* of date 24th June 1922 and 8th July 1922, alleging distress arising from recurring scarcity among the Hill people of the North Cachar Hills due to recurring failure of crops from various causes? Distress of Hill people of North Cachar Hills.

(2) Is it the case, as alleged, that a severe outbreak of dysentery at Hangrum and a neighbouring village was found on enquiry to have been due to and aggravated by the people eating wild roots for want of rice?

(3) Will the Government consider the advisability of appointing a local committee next cold weather to enquire as to the causes of the recurring failure of *jhum* crops in parts of the North Cachar Hills, and how the scarcity and distress arising therefrom may best be dealt with so as to prevent loss of life from starvation and diseases resulting therefrom?

(4) What amount was distributed in agricultural loans in the North Cachar Hills during the five years ending 1921-22 and of the sum how much has been remitted or written off as irrecoverable during that period?

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA replied :—

1. (1)—The answer is in the affirmative.

(2)—On receipt of a report last June of sickness in Hangrum the Assistant Surgeon visited the village and learned that there had been about fifty deaths in the preceding three months. The only persons then found sick were five who were suffering from fever and diarrhoea. In the neighbouring village of Ninglo the Assistant Surgeon treated six patients suffering from dysentery and twelve from colitis. He found that in six weeks there had been eight deaths from dysentery

and two from fever, but the epidemic was subsiding. The Assistant Surgeon thought that the eating of jungle roots during the dry season was one of the causes of the epidemic.

(3)—Government do not think that anything would be gained by the appointment of a local committee to enquire into the causes of the failure of *jhum* crops in the North Cachar Hills. Hangrum and Ninglo were visited by the Subdivisional Officer last cold weather, and there was then no talk of food shortage though damage had been done by the rats which came with the seeding of bamboos, while the people of Ninglo had been suffering from some form of influenza. There was no general failure of the last harvest in North Cachar, though in many villages the crops suffered from want of timely rain and in others damage was done by rats or elephants, while in a few villages there was much sickness.

(4).—The figures are as follows :—

	Rs.	a.	p.
Amount distributed in the five years ending 1921-22.		Nil	
Amount remitted or written off as irrecoverable during that period.	195	1	6

REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY asked :—

Cost of construction of new Legislative Council House.

2. Will the Government be pleased to state the cost incurred in the preparation of the site and construction of the Legislative Council House building up to the 31st March 1922 and the amount estimated to be expended on the work during the year 1923 ?

MR. A. W. BOTHAM replied :—

2.—The cost incurred in the preparation of the site and construction of the building referred to, to the 31st March 1922 is Rs. 95,735. The amount which it is estimated will be spent on the same work from the 1st April 1922 to the 31st March 1923 is Rs. 3,25,000. The final estimate of the total cost is Rs. 4,61,000.

MAULAVI ABDUL KHALIQUE CHAUDHURI asked :—

Forest Department.

1. Will the Government be pleased to state how many posts are there in the Assam Forest Department of Deputy Rangers, Foresters, Head Guards and Guards and how many of them are held by Muhammadans and how many they are entitled to ?

Assam Landlord and Tenants Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 1922.

2. Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table before the discussion of the Assam Landlord and Tenants Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 1922, the copies of memorials received from land-holders of Goalpara and Sylhet districts regarding refusal to pay rents by tenants from the year 1920 to the end of August 1922, so as to enable the House to read thoroughly the situation of the districts ?

3. Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table before the discussion of the Assam Landlord and Tenants Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 1922, the copies of memorials received from tenants of Goalpara and Sylhet districts regarding oppressions by land-holders from the year 1920 to the end of August 1922, so as to enable the House to read the situation of these districts thoroughly?

4. Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table before the discussion of the said Bill, a statement showing the action Government have undertaken regarding the memorials of the tenants, if any, to remove their grievances?

5. Is it a fact that the inhabitants of Athangiri, Guwahiri, etc., of pargana Dinarpur in the South Sylhet subdivision have submitted a petition to the Government complaining against the Forest authority? Complaint
against
Forest
authority.

If so, will the Government be pleased to make a proper enquiry and take steps in the matter?

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID replied :—

1.—Information regarding Deputy Rangers and Foresters is given below. Information regarding Head Guards and Guards has been called for and will be communicated to the Hon'ble Member when received.

Designation	Total number of posts.	Number of posts filled up.	Number of posts vacant.	Posts held by Muhammadans.	Percentage of appointments which Muhammadans might hope to hold if the sole consideration was their numerical strength in the province.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Deputy Raangrs.	60	49	11	2	13.27
Foresters ...	60	60	...	5	16.8

2, 3 and 4.—The Hon'ble Member is referred to the statement regarding the Bill which was made at the Council meeting of the 9th September. As the Bill has been withdrawn the question do not arise.

5.—On the 21st of January 1922 petition was received from certain inhabitants of Athangiri and other villages in the South Sylhet subdivision asking for further grazing facilities in the Dinarpur Hills. The Commissioner of the Division had found himself unable to accede to their request, and the Government saw no reason to interfere.

The Government do not propose to order a further enquiry.

MAULAVI ABDUL KHALIQUE CHAUDHURI asked :—

Clerks in
the Assam
Secretariat.

6. Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing the total number of clerks in the Assam Secretariat and in the offices of Heads of Departments, the number of Bengalee and Assamese, Hindoos, Ahoms, Khasis and Muhammadans and the number of posts to which each community is entitled according to representation of various communities in the Public Services ?

7. Are the Government aware that the number of Muhammadan clerks in almost all the headquarter offices at Shillong are far below their requisite numbers in proportion to their numerical strength in the province ?

If so, will the Government be pleased to take necessary steps so as to make up their deficiencies as early as practicable ?

8. Is it a fact that there has been a return showing the proper representation of Muhammadan community in the Public Services ?

If so, will the Government be pleased to state how many permanent and temporary vacancies occurred in the Assam Secretariat and in each of the offices of the Heads of Departments after the introduction of this return each year up to the year 1921 and how many posts were duly advertised for the same period ?

MR. A. W. BOTHAM replied :—

6, 7, and 8.—The information is being collected and will be supplied later to the Hon'ble Member.

MAULAVI ABDUL KHALIQUE CHAUDHURI asked :—

Punitive
tax.

9. Will the Government be pleased to state if there is any truth in the allegation as published in the Provincial Newspapers regarding the realisation of punitive tax from non-declared villages by Police Officers ?

If so, will the Government be pleased to hold an enquiry into the matter and compensate the persons aggrieved ?

10. (a) Is the Deputy Commissioner of every district the proper authority to determine punitive tax in his jurisdiction according to the circumstances of the villagers ?

(b) If so, will the Government be pleased to give the touring dates of each Deputy Commissioner engaged for the above purposes ?

(c) If not, who is the proper authority to fix punitive tax and under what provisions of law he is so empowered ?

The number of days spent on the spot in the supervision of investigations are given below :—

	1919.	1920.	1921.	1922 up to 31st August 1922.
1. Superintendent of Police ...	1	7	7	8
2. Deputy Superintendent of Police.	...	...	3	5
3. Inspector of Police ...	1	7	6	14

(d)—Yes. They advised the immediate opening of police stations at Gossaingaon and Kokrajhar, and these measures will be adopted as soon as funds can be made available.

2.—Circle Inspectors draw travelling allowance under the ordinary account rules and conveyance allowance has therefore not been sanctioned for them.

The duties of Court and Reserve Inspectors do not ordinarily involve touring but a Court Inspector may at any time have to take charge of a Circle or a Reserve Inspector to proceed to a disturbance. It is therefore necessary for them to maintain a suitable means of conveyance, and they draw horse allowance to enable them to do so. They do not in addition get ordinary travelling allowance like the Circle Inspectors.

3.—One promotion was made to the rank of Assistant Sub-Inspector and two to that of Head Constable from the rank of Constables during the three years 1919-21. Two were Hindus and one a Muhammadan and all were recruited from outside the province.

BABU KRISHNA SUNDAR DAM asked :—

Mobilisation
of Assam
Rifles.

1. Will the Government be pleased to state :—
 - (a) The reasons which led the Government lately to mobilise the Assam Rifles for demonstration marches in selected areas of the Province ?
 - (b) The costs incurred by the Government for the marches aforesaid, and under what particular head of expenditure the same will be shewn ?
 - (c) Whether instances of indisciplinary and violent conduct by men of the Assam Rifles so employed have been brought to the notice of the Government and with what result ?

MR. A. W. BOTHAM replied :—

1. (a)—Demonstration marches of the Assam Rifles were conducted in the districts of Sibsagar and Sylhet in order to maintain the authority of Government and to assure the public that Government were ready and determined to enforce law and order.

(b)—The cost was approximately Rs. 30,000. This was debited to the new head "26—Police—Special Measures in the plains" for which the Council have been asked to provide a grant.

(c) - The only cases of disorderly or violent conduct on the part of men of the Assam Rifles employed in the demonstration marches which were brought to the notice of Government were certain cases which occurred in Sylhet town. Suitable action was taken to guard against the repetition of such conduct. With this regrettable exception the conduct of the demonstration force was exemplary.

BABU KRISHNA SUNDAR DAM asked :—

2. Will the Government be pleased :—

- (a) to explain the circumstances under which, and the nature of the conduct of the inhabitants in view of which additional Police Forces were employed under section 15(1) of the Police Act V of 1861, at the expense of the inhabitants of the different thanas in the Province of Assam. Appoint-
ment of
Additional
Police
Force.
- (b) to state the nature and the source of information upon which the aforesaid action under the Police Act was taken.

3. Will the Government be pleased to inform the Council :—

- (a) The total number of Police Force of different cadres employed in this Province under Section 15(1) as additional Police at the expense of the inhabitants.
- (b) The total expenses involved in the employment of such Police Force.
- (c) The total amount recovered from the inhabitants under the said Act for expenses incurred for the entertainment of the said additional Force.
- (d) The total number of Police Force of different cadres, permanent and temporary, that was newly enrolled for the purpose of their entertainment as additional Police at the expense of the inhabitants and the total expenditure involved for this new enrolment.
- (e) The total number of forces out of the ordinary strength of the Police and the Assam Rifles of different cadres that were employed as additional Police at the expense of the inhabitants.
- (f) The total saving, if any, in the different heads of the ordinary expenditure of the Government on account of the employment of the Police Force at the expense of the inhabitants.

4. Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table a detailed Statement shewing :—

- (a) The names of each separate village or group of villages upon the inhabitants of which a separate Police Force were quartered or upon whom a separate amount was levied for entertainment of additional Police.

- (b) The names of thanas in which the said villages are situated.
- (c) The total Police force of different cadres entertained in each separate village or group of villages and the respective periods of their entertainment in such villages.
- (d) The date of the Government orders under the authority of which such Police Forces were entertained in the said villages and the respective dates of their actual entertainment in each separate village or group of villages.
- (e) The total amount levied upon the inhabitants of each separate village or group of villages.
- (f) The total number of persons in each separate village or group of villages upon whom such amounts have been levied.

5. Will the Government be pleased to state :—

- (a) On what basis the amount of separate contribution of each individual towards the expenses of the additional Police was fixed in the districts of Sylhet.
- (b) What officers made the actual assessment ?
- (c) If any objection was made to such assessment, and, if so, who decided those objections.
- (d) What enquiry, if any, was made by the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet before the costs were apportioned among the inhabitants, and if the Deputy Commissioner himself apportioned such costs among the inhabitants, as required by section 15, clause 4 of the Police Act.
- (e) If any inhabitant or any class or section of inhabitants of the villages at the expense of which additional Police Forces were entertained was exempted from liability to bear the costs of the additional Police, and, if so, by whose orders and on what reasons.

Confiscation of certain weapons and guns.

6. Is the Government aware that *daos* (দাঁও), *lathis* (লাঠি), *kuchas* (কুচা) and *khargas* (খড়া) have been seized or confiscated in Golapganj and Kanaighat Thanas in the district of Sylhet by the Police, and, if so, will the Government be pleased to state on what authority the Police have done so ?

7. Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing thana by thana :—

- (a) the number of guns possessed by villagers in the district of Sylhet on the 31st December 1921, and on the 1st August 1922, respectively.
- (b) the number of guns seized or confiscated, temporarily or permanently, in the district of Sylhet during the period intervening between the 31st December 1921 and 1st August 1922.

8. Will the Government be pleased to state the reasons for which such seizure or confiscation, if any, of guns have been made in Thanas to which section 15 of the Arms Act (XI of 1878) has not been extended ?

9. Will the Government be pleased to state the reasons for which section 15 of the Arms Act (XI of 1878) has been extended to Golapganj and Kanaighat thanas, and the period for which the said extension has been made operative ?

10. Has the attention of the Government been drawn to an article headed "Arms Act in Sylhet" published in the "Sylhet Chronicle" of the 24th July 1922, and, if so, has the Government made any enquiry as to whether any damage has been or is being done to the crops of the villagers of the aforesaid locality by the depredations of wild animals owing to the seizure of the weapons possessed by the villagers.

Arms Act
in Sylhet.

11. Will the Government be pleased to state the actual cost, if any, incurred by the Local Government in connection with the order of forfeiture of the security furnished by the Janasakti Press of Sylhet and the subsequent withdrawal of the same ?

Forfeiture
of security
of Jana-
sakti
Press.

THE HON'BLE MR. A. MAJID replied :—

2. (a)—In connection with a movement which was avowedly designed to paralyse the machinery of Government a campaign of opposition to Government and of racial hatred was being conducted. Government servants were abused, annoyed and threatened. Attempts were made to excite the labour force against their employees. Violence and intimidation were used to prevent people from buying and selling foreign cloth and to enforce the closure of hâts on which the tea-garden labour force depended for their supplies of food. People were instigated to refuse to pay Government revenue or chaukidari tax. Social pressure and intimidation were brought to bear on law-abiding citizens and in particular on the families of Government servants. In one area convicted prisoners were forcibly released from custody. In another the Commissioner of the Division was attacked when dispersing a prohibited meeting. In these circumstances Government decided that it was expedient to increase the force of police employed in certain areas.

(b)—Action was taken on information supplied by the officers responsible for the maintenance of law and order.

3. (a)—The approximate number of the police force recently employed as additional police under section 15, Act V, 1861, is as follows :—

Assistant Superintendents	...	...	7
			(partially).
Inspectors	...	...	12
Sub-Inspectors	...	...	39
Assistant Sub-Inspectors	...	...	41
Head Constables	...	...	123
Constables	...	...	1,014
Assam Rifles	...	...	9½
			(platoons).

(b)—Rupees 1,96,533 approximately.

(c)—Rupees 1,99,128 approximately.

Recoveries exceed the cost in certain areas, and in these cases refunds will be made.

(d) and (e)—As regards Civil Police detailed figures are not available. There were a number of vacancies in the Civil Police at the time chiefly owing to the increase of the Armed Police Reserves.

Men were recruited as Civil Police and deputed to Additional Police duties. When these duties terminated the best were retained for the permanent force. It is not possible to separate those specially employed, for additional police duties.

Of the Assam Rifles the 9½ platoons employed on additional police duties were all borne on the sanctioned strength.

(f)—It is impossible at this stage to give reliable figures of the savings which will be effected.

4. (a) and (b)—The names of the proclaimed villages and thanas in which additional police were quartered were notified in the *Assam Gazette* from time to time. A complete set of the relevant notifications* is laid on the table.

(c) and (d)—Approximate figures are given in the annexed statement.

3. (e) and (f) and 4 (a) to (d)—The information is not at present available in its entirety but will be collected and supplied later.

5. (e)—Exemptions were granted under the orders of Government in the case of those who dissociated themselves from the actions on account of which the additional police were employed or who were too poor to pay.

Statement showing the particulars of the Additional Police Force quartered in the disturbed areas in Assam.

Serial No.	No. and date of proclamation.	Name of thana and district.	Staff.	Cost.
1	2	3	4	5
1	No. 2395, dated the 23rd December 1921.	Boko (Kamrup)	One platoon, Assam Rifles.	Rs. a. p. 2,779 9 0
2	No. 678G.J., dated the 1st February 1922.	Dharampasa (Sylhet).	Sub-Inspector ... 1 Head Constables 2 Constables ... 25	5,843 15 0
3	No. 711G.J., dated the 6th February 1922.	Simologuri, Teok, Chowkat and Haligarh (Sibsagar).	Assam Rifles, 1 platoon	5,200 11 0

* Not published with the proceedings.

Serial No.	No. and date of proclamation.	Name of thana and district.	Staff.	Cost.
1	2	3	4	5
4	No. 883G.J., dated the 17th February 1922.	Barkhola and Silchar (Ca- char).	Inspector ... 1 Sub-Inspector ... 1 Head Constables... 2 Constables ... 25	Rs. a. p. 6,332 11 0
5	No. 951G.J., dated the 20th February 1922.	Kanai r g h a t (Sylhet).	Assistant Superin- tendent. 1 Inspectors ... 2 Sub-Inspectors .. 5 Assistant Sub-Ins- pectors. 8 Head Constables 2 Constables ... 118 Assam Rifles One platoon —	25,529 3 0
6	No. 954G.J., dated the 21st February 1922.	Lakhipur (Ca- char).	Sub-Inspector ... 1 Head Constable ... 1 Constables ... 15	2,254 15 0
7	No. 1026G.J., dated the 25th February 1922.	Kankalash (Syl- het).	Sub-Inspector ... 1 Assistant Sub-In- spectors. 1 Head Constable... 1 Constables ... 20	2,481 1 0
8	No. 1083G.J., dated the 23rd February 1922.	Raha and Jam- muna m u k h i (Nowgong).	Sub-Inspector ... 1 Head Constables 2 Constables ... 30 (for each thana) —	Raha— 2,542 1 0 Jam u n a- mukh— 2,529 8 0
9	No. 1089G.J., dated the 1st March 1922.	Mangaldai and Kala i g a o n (Darrang).	One platoon Assam Rifles.	4,981 9 0

Serial No.	No. and date of proclamation.	Name of thana and district.	Staff.	Cost.
1	2	3	4	5
				Rs. a. p.
10	No. 1166G.J., dated the 3rd March 1922.	Ghila dhari, Morongi and Dergaon Muzas in Sibsagar.	One platoon, Assam Rifles.	4,790 2 0
11	No. 1282G.J., dated the 10th March 1922.	Wards Nos. I and II of Karimganj Municipality.	Inspector ... 1 Sub-Inspectors ... 3 Assistant Sub-Inspectors. 4 Head Constables 2 Constables ... 68	9,982 0 0
12	(1) No. 1355G.J., dated the 20th March 1922. (2) No. 1883G.J., dated the 25th April 1922. (3) No. 2112G.J., dated the 8th May 1922.	Habiganj and Bahubal.	Assistant Superintendent. 1 Inspector ... 1 Sub-Inspectors ... 3 Assistant Sub-Inspectors. 4 Head Constables... 2 Constables ... 118 Assam Rifles 1/2 a platoon.	16,658 1 0
13	Ditto ...	Ratabari ...	Assistant Superintendent of Police. 1 Sub-Inspector ... 1 Assistant Sub-Inspectors. 2 Constables ... 20 Assam Rifles 1/2 a platoon.	6,448 14 0
14	Ditto ...	Golapganj, Karimganj and Jal-dhup.	Assistant Superintendent of Police. 1 Inspectors ... 2 Sub-Inspectors ... 4	22,210 11 0

Serial No.	No. and date of proclamation.	Name of thana and district.	Staff.	Cost.
1	2	3	4	5
	(3) No. 2112G.J., dated the 8th May 1922— <i>concl'd.</i>	Golapganj, Karimganj and Jaldhup.— <i>concl'd.</i>	Assistant Sub-Inspectors. 8 Constables ... 100 Assam Rifles 1 platoon	Rs. a. p.
15	(1) No. 1356G.J., dated the 20th March 1922. (2) No. 1883G.J., dated the 25th April 1922. (3) No. 2112G.J., dated the 8th May 1922.	Muchikandi and Nabiganj.	Assistant Superintendent of Police. 1 Inspector ... 1 Sub-Inspectors ... 3 Assistant Sub-Inspectors. 2 Constables ... 75 Assam Rifles $\frac{1}{2}$ a platoon.	12,412 11 0
16	Ditto ...	Kulaura and Jaldhup.	Inspector ... 1 Sub-Inspectors ... 2 Assistant Sub-Inspectors. 2 Head Constables.. 2 Constables ... 68	8,882 9 0
17	Ditto ...	Maulvi bazar, Kamalganj and Rajnagar.	Assistant Superintendent of Police. 1 Inspector ... 1 Sub-Inspectors ... 2 Assistant Sub-Inspectors. 4 Constables ... 100 Assam Rifles 1 platoon	17,951 12 0
18	Ditto ...	Sylhet (Sadr)...	Sub-Inspectors ... 2 Assistant Sub-Inspectors. 2 Constables ... 25	5,237 4 0

Serial No.	No. and date of proclamation.	Name of thana and district.	Staff.	Cost.
1	2	3	4	5
				Rs. a. p.
19	No. 1423G.J., dated the 24th March 1922.	North Salmara (Goalpara).	Sub-Inspector ... 1 Head Constable ... 1 Constables ... 10	1,221 6 0
20	No. 1587G.J., dated the 4th April 1922.	Sonai (Cachar)	Sub-Inspector ... 1 Head Constables... 2 Constables ... 20	4,913 0 0
21	(1) No. 1850G.J., dated the 24th April 1922. (2) No. 2143G.J., dated the 10th May 1922.	Hailakandi and Katlicherra (Cachar).	Jemadar ... 1 Havildars ... 2 23 Riflesmen up to 15th July 1922 and then 2 Head Constables and 22 Constables.	5,477 8 0
22	No. 1923G.J., dated the 27th April 1922.	Pathar k a n d i (Sylhet).	Assistant Superintendent of Police. 1 Inspector ... 1 Sub-Inspectors ... 2 Assistant Sub-Inspectors. 4 Constables ... 100 Assam Rifles $\frac{1}{2}$ platoon	18,626 0 0

6. 7. and 8.—The information has been called for and will be supplied later to the Hon'ble Member. ✓

9.—Section 15 of the Arms Act was extended to the Golapganj and Kanaighat thanas in consequence of the Kanaighat riot. In view of the possibility of further disturbance it was considered inadvisable to leave dangerous weapons in the hands of ignorant and excitable villagers. The order of extension will be withdrawn when conditions permit.

10.—Government have made enquiries and have ascertained that there has not so far been any special damage by wild animals owing to the withdrawal of arms, and that steps are being taken for the return of all fire-arms and other arms with only a few exceptions.

11.—The expenditure is rupee one and annas thirteen only, incurred in the preparation of a paper book in the High Court.

BABU KRISHNA SUNDAR DAM asked :—

12. Will the Government be pleased to state :—

What was the revenue of the North Cachar Hills from :—

- (i) Excise, and
(ii) All other sources,

Revenue of
North
Cachar
Hills.

during the year 1921-22, and what was the total expenditure in the different branches of the administration employed in that area during the same period.

13. Will the Government be pleased to—

- (a) state the amount in fines credited to the Political Funds of the North Cachar Hills during the six months ending June 1922, as compared with the corresponding period of 1921, and
(b) furnish a classified list of offences for which such fines were imposed and the total under each head for the said period separately for each year.

Political
fund.

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID replied :—

12. —The figures as reported are given below :—

Revenue.	Amount.	Expenditure.	Amount.
1	2	3	4
	Rs.		Rs.
(i) Excise ...	77,757	5.—Land Revenue ...	1,442
		8.—Forest ...	3,885
(ii) All other sources	31,113	22.—General Administration.	17,652
		25.—Jails and Convict Settlement.	818
		26.—Police ...	5,589
		31.—Education ...	1,740
		32.—Medical ...	5,989
		41.—Civil Works ...	19,097
		47.—Miscellaneous ...	3,351
Total ...	1,08,870	Total ...	59,319

13.—Particulars of offences and fines realised in the North Cachar Hills are given below :—

Particulars.	Total for first six months 1921-22.	Total for first six months 1922-23.
1	2	3
	Rs.	Rs.
Penal House Tax	489	212
Cattle damage and annoyance ...	9	178
Cultivation without <i>patta</i> or permission and encroaching on hill villages.	...	440
Disobedience of <i>khuti</i> grazing regulations	118	461
<i>Jhuming</i> on to road-side and cutting of trees there.	153	58
Fines on Mauzadars and gaonburas for miscellaneous disobedience.	23	25
Fines on others on miscellaneous disobe- dience.	51	136
False statements by hill people and others.	10	24
Miscellaneous, petty	31	20
Advances returned	78	34
Fish traps fines	10	...
Total	972	1,588

RAI BAHADUR BEPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR asked :—

Punitive
Police Tax. 1. (a) Will the Government be pleased to state the principle of the
imposition of the punitive police tax ?

(b) Are the Government aware that the punitive police tax is often
imposed upon people who have not even houses of their own and who
are not in a better position than street beggars ?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state whether the punitive police tax was imposed upon one Ramesh Chandra Das and one Bharat Chandra Das of Panchgaon under Maulvi Bazar subdivision who are in a state of utter destitution ?

THE HON'BLE MR. A. MAJID replied :—

1. (a)—Under section 15 (4), Act V, 1861, the District Magistrate is required to apportion the cost of additional police among the inhabitants of the area concerned who shall not have been exempted by the Local Government. The apportionment is to be made according to the Magistrate's judgment of the means of such inhabitants within the area.

(b)—It follows from the reply given to question 1(a) that persons without any means should not be required to pay any portion of the cost. Government are not aware that any portion of the cost is in fact imposed on such persons.

(c)—Government have no information. If the fact is as stated, representation should be made in the first instance to the District Magistrate.

RAI BAHADUR BEPIN CHANDRA DEB LASKAR asked :—

2. (a) Is it a fact that the Veterinary Department was managed without any Deputy Superintendent since its creation in 1907 in Eastern Bengal and Assam up till only a year back ?

Superior posts in the Veterinary Department.

(b) Is the Deputy Superintendent lately appointed still on probation ?

(c) Is it a fact that about two years back when a Veterinary Inspector officiated as Superintendent for about eight months he managed the department without a Deputy Superintendent earning appreciation from Government for good service ?

(d) Is it a fact that the present officiating Superintendent, who is a probationer in Provincial Veterinary Service, has been managing the department smoothly without any Deputy Superintendent ?

(e) Will the Government be pleased to abolish the post of the Deputy Superintendent with immediate effect to secure the financial relief aimed in Mr. Lainé's Circular ?

(f) Is it a fact that Babu Guru Prasanna Sen, a graduate of the Bengal Veterinary College, with average career and then a Veterinary Inspector, officiated as Superintendent for eight months ?

(g) Is it a fact that he has now again been officiating as Veterinary Superintendent ?

(h) Will the Government be pleased to consider the desirability of abolishing the post of Veterinary Superintendent also and distributing his work between Circle Veterinary Inspectors under the direct control of the Director of Agriculture as the Head of the Department ?

(i) Will the Government be pleased to state why the permanent Veterinary Superintendent, a senior member of the Imperial Veterinary Service, requires a Deputy Superintendent while one of his subordinate officer can manage the same work alone?

(j) Will the Government be pleased to state the estimated expenditure for the maintenance of the Veterinary Superintendent and the Veterinary Deputy Superintendent including their office establishment and travelling allowance and the total estimated expenditure of the Government for the entire department for the current year?

(k) Is it a fact that there were only two Veterinary Inspectors in Assam when provinces were redistributed in 1912?

(l) If so, will the Government be pleased to consider the desirability of reducing the number of Veterinary Inspectors from three to the former strength of two putting one in charge of each Valley?

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA replied :—

2. (a)—Yes, the post of one Deputy Superintendent was allotted to the cadre of the Veterinary Department in Assam at the reconstitution of the province in 1912. It was not at once filled, partly because of the small number of Veterinary Assistants to be supervised, and partly because the Provincial Department did not possess an officer of sufficient experience for the work. By 1921 the number of Veterinary Assistants actually employed had risen from 24 to 48, and there was a sanctioned staff of 59. It was found that owing to this increase in the number of Veterinary Assistants and the consequent expansion of work it was necessary to relieve the Superintendent of routine duties so that he might devote more time to the supervision of professional work and the investigation of diseases, and the vacant post was accordingly filled.

(b)—Yes. He was appointed on probation for two years from the 4th May 1921.

(c) and (f)—Babu G. P. Sen acted satisfactorily as Superintendent, Civil Veterinary Department, for 7 months 11 days in 1919-20.

(d) and (g)—Mr. Harris, Superintendent, Civil Veterinary Department, has been deputed to undergo a course of post graduate training at Muktesar for three months from the beginning of July. Babu G. P. Sen is officiating for him and it has not been considered necessary to appoint a Deputy Superintendent for such a short period.

(e)—It is considered that the measure suggested, while effecting an economy, would seriously impair the efficiency of the Department. Government do not propose, therefore, to abolish the post of Deputy Superintendent.

(h)—No. The Veterinary Inspectors are neither by their general nor by their technical training fit to undertake research or investigation work. The Director of Agriculture has no veterinary knowledge and could not supervise or train Veterinary Assistants in their technical duties.

(i)—Government do not admit that a subordinate officer can manage the Department except for short periods during the absence of his superior officer.

(j)—The Hon'ble Member is referred to the budget estimates for the current year.

(k)—Yes.

(l)—The appointment of Veterinary Inspectors is based on the principle that one Veterinary Inspector can supervise the work of fifteen Assistants. There are now 48 Assistants. Government do not therefore propose to consider the reduction suggested.

SRIJUT NILMONI PHUKAN asked :—

1. (a) Will the Government be pleased to state what percentage of demands in money value for different kinds of agricultural seeds and silk cocoons the Departments concerned could supply during the last financial year?

Percentage of demands in money value for various kinds of Agricultural seeds.

(b) Was any larger provision made for the current year's supply?

(c) What price supplies of the last year fetched to the departments concerned?

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA replied :—

1. (a)—At the Gauhati Seed Depôt only 10 per cent. of the demand for sugarcane setts was met. The local supply of setts is small and it is reported that in most cases applications were not received in time to allow supplies to be procured from a distance. Eighty per cent. of other demands were met. At the Sylhet Depôt 70 per cent. of the demand for sugarcane mills, and 90 per cent. of that for paddy and potatoes, were met. Other demands were supplied in full. The unsatisfied demands in the case of sugarcane mills, paddy, and potatoes are reported to have been received too late.

The Department of Industries supplied 1,000 layings of *Eri* silk worm eggs and 325 layings of *Pat* eggs to the public free of charge. This met about 30 per cent. of the demand. No Mooga silk cocoons were supplied.

(b)—The allotment for the purchase of seeds, etc., for 1922-23 is Rs. 65,000 as compared with an expenditure of Rs. 64,028 last year.

For silk cocoons, etc., Rs. 300 were provided last year, and a similar sum is provided to the current year's budget.

(c)—The value of seeds, etc., supplied on payment in 1921-22 was Rs. 55,572.

The silk worm eggs were supplied free.

SRIJUT NILMONI PHUKAN asked :—

2. (a) Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table a statement of expenditure on all river protection schemes at Dibrugarh up to this time?

Expenditure on all River Protection Schemes.

SRIJUT NILMONI PHUKAN asked :—

3. (a) Will the Government be pleased to state whether the question of recruitment to the Assam Excise Service which was under consideration has been decided? Assam
Excise
Service.

(b) If so, how this recruitment will be made? In case of promotion from Subordinate Excise Service, will the merit or seniority of service be taken into consideration?

4. (a) Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table a copy of Circular, Notification, or any order in pursuance of which Excise Advisory Committee were formed? Excise
Advisory
Committee.

(b) What is their status and power in the general scheme of Excise administration?

(c) Will the Government be pleased also to lay on the table a copy of the return of the working of these Committees in Assam prepared for presentation to Parliament last year?

5. Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing the results of the last census of opium-eaters in the districts of Assam in all its bearing? Census of
opium-
eaters.

6. (a) Are the Government aware that hundred of opium-eaters in the subdivision of Dibrugarh complain every day of short weight of opium? Short
weight of
opium in
Dibrugarh
Subdivi-
sion.

(b) Are the Government also aware of the fact that most of the mahaldars there engage salesmen under contract system which is ultimately responsible for this short weight?

(c) Will the Government be pleased to direct the Local Advisory Committee to hold conjointly with Excise Department an enquiry into this matter and suggest remedies, if any?

7. Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing the actual sale of opium, month by month, in every shop of Dibrugarh subdivision for the last financial year and for the months ending August of the current year? Sale of
opium in
Dibrugarh.

8. (a) Will the Government be pleased to enquire and state if there is a regular band of Chittagong smugglers of opium at Dibrugarh, generally appearing early in September or so, and disappearing during the rains? Opium
smugglers.

(b) If it is likely, will the Government be pleased to address the Government of Bengal on this subject and take special concerted measures against these bands?

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID replied :—

3.—The matter is still under consideration.

4. (a) and (b)—Copies of Notification* No. 4068F., dated the 12th July 1915, as subsequently amended, and of Rule 81A of the Excise Handbook are laid on the table.

(c)—Since the introduction of the Reforms these returns have not been prepared.

* Not published with the proceedings.

5.—The attention of the Hon'ble Member is invited to the reply given to the questions asked by the Rev. J. J. M. Nichols-Roy on the 29th of March 1922.

6. (a) to (c).—The Government have seen in the public press complaints of short weight, and enquiries are being made.

7.—A statement* is laid on the table.

8.—There has in the past been reason to believe that opium is smuggled from the Lakhimpur district to Chittagong, but the Government have no information of the operations of a regular gang of smugglers. Shop rationing in the district has been steadily restricted in order that opium for smuggling may not be available, and arrangements exist for a regular interchange of information between the Assam and Bengal Excise Staffs.

SRIJUT BEPIN CHANDRA GHOSE asked :—

Professional graziers under the Bijni Raj Court of Wards Estate.

1. Has the attention of Government been drawn to the fact that the professional graziers under the Bijni Raj Court of Wards Estate have to pay annual grazing tax at an unusually high rate of Rs. 6 per buffalo (Rs. 3 to Government and Rs. 3 to the Bijni Raj) because they have no other alternative but to graze their buffaloes for six months in *klash char* and for the remaining six months within the Bijni Raj *Elaka* ?

Will the Government be pleased to take early steps to make arrangements with the Bijni Raj Wards estate so that the graziers may not be required to pay more than Rs. 3 a year per buffalo as grazing dues ?

THE HON'BLE MR. W. J. REID replied :—

1.—No. On the information before them Government are not prepared to take any steps in the matter.

SRIJUT BEPIN CHANDRA GHOSE asked :—

2. Are the Government aware that undertrial prisoners in the Magisterial lock-up of Goalpara are made to undergo hard labour during the period of their stay in *hajat* and that they are often times taken out of the lock-up with ropes round their waists ?

3. Will the Government be pleased to issue circulars to all officers concerned that undertrial prisoners should not be made to work in any case and on any occasion ?

THE HON'BLE MR. A. MAJID replied :—

2. Undertrial prisoners in the Goalpara lock-up are not compelled to undergo hard labour. If no convicts are available volunteers are called for from undertrial prisoners for the performance of certain light daily tasks ; but Government are assured that no compulsion is used.

* Not published with the proceedings.

When a dangerous under-trial prisoner is taken outside the lock-up, it is customary to tie a rope round his waist to obviate the possibility of escape.

3.—Government do not consider that the issue of a circular is necessary.

MAULAVI SAIYID NURUR RAHMAN asked :—

1. Will the Government give reply to the questions put by me in the Council in March and April last, which were not answered owing to my absence from the Council ?

Reply to questions put in March and April Sessions of the Council.

THE HON'BLE MR. A. MAJID replied :—

1. (1)—All the questions put by the Hon'ble Member in the March Session of the Council were answered. He is referred to the Proceedings of the 21st March at page 351 of the Official Report, Volume II, No. 3, and the Proceedings of the 29th March at pages 546-548 of Volume II, No. 4.

(2)—There was no session of the Council in April last.

MAULAVI SAIYID NURUR RAHMAN asked :—

2. (1) Will the Government lay on the table a statement showing (a) the amount of money realized as punitive police tax from the inhabitants of the villages in South Habiganj, *i.e.*, thanas Muchikandi, Bahubal and Habiganj, (b) the Hindu and Muhammadan population of those villages, (c) the amount realized from Hindus and Muhammadans separately ?

Punitive police tax.

(2) Are the Government aware that the Hindus in Habiganj subdivision have been excluded from the payment of punitive police tax ? If so, why and at whose recommendation ?

(3) Are the Government aware that the Hindu inhabitants of villages Ubakata, Mirashi in Muchikandi thana have not been so taxed ? If so, why ?

(4) Are the Government aware that the seat of non-co-operation movement was at Baniachang ?

(5) Will the Government state why the inhabitants of Baniachang were excluded from payment of punitive police tax ?

(6) Are the Government aware that the inhabitants of many villages in South Habiganj who had no concern with non-co-operation or *khilafat* and Congress movement have been taxed ? If not, will the Government enquire of the fact ?

(7) Are the Government aware that the inhabitants of many villages which have not been declared as disturbed area in the *Assam Gazette* have been taxed and the police realized the taxes of these villages. Such as Ramsiri, Karimpur in Muchikandi Thana ?

If the reply be in the affirmative, will the Government state under what authority the police have realized such taxes? If the reply be in the negative, will the Government enquire of the fact?

(8) Will the Government state at whose instance or recommendations, the 65 villages in the Habiganj subdivision have been taxed and whether the Subdivisional Officer, Habiganj, was consulted before the list of those villages was sent to?

(9) Are the Government aware that many innocent persons have been taxed and oppressed at the time of realization of the tax? If not, will the Government appoint a committee consisting of two officials and three non-official members from the Members of the Legislative Council to enquire about the fact?

(10) Will the Government state whether offences have increased or decreased since the imposition of punitive police tax in the declared areas in the Habiganj subdivision?

(11) Will the Government lay on the table the copy of telegram of 24th June 1922 sent by me to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, the reply given and the result of the enquiry, if any, together with the copy of the report of the Subdivisional Officer, Habiganj?

THE HON'BLE MR. A. MAJID replied:—

2. (1) to (8) and (10)—The information is not available but is being collected.

(9)—Whatever care is exercised it is almost inevitable that in such cases some blameless persons suffer along with the guilty. Government have exempted a large number of persons from liability to bear a portion of the cost, but in dealing with wide areas and a large population it is not possible to be certain that all blameless persons have been exempted. Government do not propose to appoint a committee.

(11)—A copy of the correspondence is laid on the table.

Telegram, dated the 24th June 1922.

From—Maulavi Saiyid NURUR RAHMAN, M.L.C.,

To—Chief Secretary to Government of Assam.

Without notification in Gazette up to date declaring my village Ramsiri Circle 21 Muchikandi, thana Habiganj, as disturbed area police unexpectedly yesterday realised punitive police tax from my people and villagers who are as loyal and co-operators as myself. Subdivisional Officer, Habiganj, knows what I did to stop picketing in Habiganj. It is regrettable that my village is raided by police when I might stand surety of all breach of peace. I can boldly say there is not single non-co-operator volunteer congressman among tax-payers Ramsiri in separate village in revenue *thak*. Without Government declaration realisation of tax illegal; I solicit you will kindly order an immediate enquiry in the facts and order police officers to refund the taxes.

Telegram No. 2849G.J., dated the 28th June 1922.

From—Chief Secretary to Government of Assam,

To—Maulavi Saiyid NURUR RAHMAN.

Enquiry being made about your complaint. Result will be communicated.

No. C.P.-1033-3762G.J., dated the 24th August 1922.

From—The Under-Secretary to the Government of Assam,

To—Maulavi Saiyid NURUR RAHMAN, M.L.C.

In continuation of this Department telegram No. 2849G.J., dated the 28th June 1922, regarding the realisation of costs of additional police from the inhabitants of the Ramsiri village, I am directed to say that it has been found on enquiry that the inhabitants of the village were assessed through a mistake which is explained in the annexed extract from a report of the Subdivisional Officer, Habiganj. Orders have accordingly been issued for the refund of the money recovered from them.

Extract from a report, dated the 4th August 1922, of the Sub-divisional Officer, Habiganj, to the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet.

2. * * * *

In preparing the assessment lists, "Ramsiri" was shown as part and parcel of "Jikwa" which was proclaimed as disturbed. In the thana map of the Muchikandi police station, there is no mention of any village bearing the name of "Ramsiri". There is however one bearing the name of "Pranballavpur". Now, upon enquiry I find that "Pranballavpur" is same as "Ramsiri". There is a sheet of *thak* map No. 715, bearing the name of "Pranballavpur known commonly as Ramsiri". It is different from *thak* map of village Jikwa (*thak* No. 718).

The 4th August 1922.

M. C. DE.

THE HON'BLE THE PRESIDENT:—There is no notice of any other business on the agenda.

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA:—I am sincerely grateful to you, Sir, for allowing me this opportunity even by altering the time for to-day's sitting as announced yesterday, to make a statement before the Council. I now ask for permission to make that statement.

THE HON'BLE THE PRESIDENT:—After the Council was adjourned yesterday and after the printed agenda had been circulated the Hon'ble Minister announced that he wished to make a statement. It would have been more in order if the Hon'ble Minister had given previous notice, unless of course the statement is a matter of urgent importance. However, I would ask the Hon'ble Minister to proceed.

THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR GHANASYAM BARUA:—I thank you, Sir. With your permission I now wish to make a statement to the Council regarding the Department of Industries and the subject of industrial development in this province. With regard to this department as to some others doubts and misgivings have not infrequently been expressed, criticisms sometimes sound, sometimes unsound have, from time to time, been made and many misconceptions and uncharitable ideas still prevail. My hope is to do something to remove these.

First, let me say that our Department of Industries is a very young one and still in the process of organisation. It was created only in the year 1918, and the post of the Director was combined with that of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, both posts being held by an officer of the Provincial Executive Service. That officer has recently been promoted to the imperial cadre, but almost simultaneously with that promotion, the office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, Life Insurance Companies and Provident Insurance Societies and Custodian of enemy properties has also been made over to him. His energies are therefore more divided now than before and more of his time has to be spent in headquarters. Since 1913 there has been a very remarkable expansion of the activities of the Co-operative Department, the number of Societies, the number of members and the working capital having doubled during the last three years. As a matter of fact his duties as Registrar of Co-operative Societies alone are now perhaps sufficiently heavy and onerous to keep him fully occupied during the year. In most of the other provinces the post of the Director of Industries is held by an Indian Civil Service Officer and he is not only a whole-time Director but has one or more expert deputies to assist him.

In the next place the bigger provinces like Bengal, Madras and Bombay which are both geographically and economically better placed than our small out-of-the-way province had a long start in this matter and had numerous important industries established from a long time. Even in the United Provinces industries have engaged the attention of that Government for the past 15 years or so. This province on the contrary had very little or nothing in that line when the department was created. The only heritage that the Department got at its start were the Fuller Industrial schools at Shillong and Kohima and a few stipends from the Williamson Fund for training artisans.

Thus compared with other provinces our disadvantages at the start were many. To make up for past deficiencies we would all like to move fast; but the finances of the province which is the smallest of all Governors' provinces has a great bearing on the question, as without suitable funds the desired expedition and development is necessarily retarded. But though we may not be able to speed as fast as we would we should make a steady move onwards which though slow should as far as possible be sure.

We all know that the most important of our industries is tea. This industry is highly organised and is not in need of any assistance from the Government Department of Industries apart from the fairly generous grant which we make towards its research laboratory at Jorhat; if there were such a need perhaps we could not afford it. Our industries in coal, mineral oil and saw-milling are equally well organised and do not stand in need of such assistance. Our Department of Industries is therefore mainly concerned with the cottage and other minor industries of the province which do not require elaborate organisation and may be taken up by small capitalists but are not on that account negligible or unimportant to the life of the people. We must therefore first give the Department the minimum of organisation which will carry us through the first stage in the development of such industries.

Since the creation of the Department our achievements have been the Weaving schools at Gauhati and Shillong, the Industrial school at Tura, the Emporium at Gauhati and the Sericultural station at Titabar. We hope to give a start to the school of handicrafts at Sylhet from the beginning of the next financial year and the proposed Technical school at Jorhat will be taken in hand as soon as funds permit. The department also undertook the supply of carp fry to encourage fish rearing in tanks but the results were not encouraging as the fry have to travel a long distance.

There are now only two experts in the Department—the Textile Expert, who supervises the working of the Gauhati Weaving Institute and the work of the two Peripatetic Weaving Parties and generally assists in the development of handloom weaving, and a Sericultural Expert who is in charge of the Titabar Sericultural station where experiments in Mooga, Eri and Pat rearing have been undertaken and where the diseases of Mooga are being specially investigated. The activities of the Department are therefore mainly devoted to the development of these two important cottage industries of Assam. But even in these two we are as yet far from being thoroughly well-grounded.

Sericulture.—In Sericulture our outstanding needs are a supply of disease-free seeds and the investigation of diseases of the different silk-worms and their food plants. As matters now stand we are in a position to detect the disease germs of Eri and Pat (Mulberry silk), as past investigations in India and elsewhere have furnished data for such detection. But the diseases of the Mooga worm have still to be investigated, and to do it successfully the staff and equipment have to be strengthened, *i.e.*, an expert capable of original research and a suitable laboratory are required. The food plants of this worm also present a vast field for investigation and experiment. To arrive at final definite results patient work extending over years will be necessary.

As regards the supply of good seeds the demand for them is overwhelming, and it will not be possible to meet it unless we have facilities for growing our own seed, as outside supplies can never be had in sufficient quantities to meet the demand. For this purpose Dr. Jameson, the Imperial Protozoologist, who visited Assam at our request twice to examine the position of our silk industry and the work being done at Titabar, strongly recommended a silk nursery station at Shillong. The objects of the station are, first to grow Mooga food plants with a view to raise in the cold climate a hardier race of worms and thereby improve the present degenerate stock in the plains which has become a prey to diseases, and secondly, to similarly improve the existing races of Eri and Pat silk worms for seed purposes. Seeds issued from the hill stations will be first tested at the Titabar station where the work of disease investigation will be continued. The estimated recurring and non-recurring expenditure for the station amount to Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 3,000 respectively.

Technical and Industrial Education.—In the field of Technical Education the Weaving School at Gauhati is at present held in a rented house and accommodation there is so limited that not more than 30 students can be admitted annually, though the school has become so popular that more than 200 applications for admission are received every year. A scheme for permanent Government buildings for this school has been sanctioned and a site for their location has also been secured, but the project is held up for want of funds. The estimated cost of the scheme is about Rs. 60,000. The two Peripatetic Weaving Parties that we have sent out this year have been greatly appreciated and from experience gained till now such a party will take about five years to complete its work in a single district. The multiplication of such parties is therefore very desirable. I would like to add at least two more parties as early as possible and the estimated recurring expenditure for them will be Rs. 14,000 annually.

The other technical and industrial schools that we have at present are the three industrial schools at Tura, Kohima and Shillong, and the Weaving School at Gauhati. Of these the first three are far from being up to the mark. To bring them to the proper standard and well above the bazar level expenditure both recurring and non-recurring will be necessary. The staff, tools, implements and working materials all require improvement and increase. The improvement of these should engage early attention.

The new schemes in hand are the Sylhet School of Handicrafts and His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales Technical School in the Assam Valley. For the former we have buildings ready and we hope to give it a start from next year. The recurring expenditure for this will be Rs. 10,000. For the latter, as I had occasion to tell the Council the other day, we have some buildings ready at Jorhat. A munificent endowment of one lakh of rupees in 3½ per cent. G. P. Notes has been made in its behalf by the Assamese merchant prince Mr. B. Borooah. The School is proposed to be run in conjunction with the Jorhat Provincial Railway Workshop and will train up foremen mechanics. The course will be for five years and both practical and theoretical instruction will be given at the workshop and the school respectively. Only matriculates of the University will be admitted to this school. The project is estimated to cost Rs. 66,000 in non-recurring expenditure and Rs. 21,218 recurring expenditure, and has been held up for dearth of funds.

Scholarships.—Again, there are many industries in which Assam offers little or no facilities for the training of our youths in local workshops or technical schools. For training in jewellery work, leather tanning, dyeing and printing some young men have been sent out of the province during the last three years by means of stipends. Such scholarships are needed to supplement our efforts in giving Industrial education for which we are not able to provide institutions in the province. The Director proposes to increase the number of such stipends and to make them tenable in other provinces like Bombay, Madras and Mysore, where good facilities exist. Funds are required for these also.

In addition to experts about whom I have already mentioned there is need of more for other things. Minor technical institution organized by private persons or local bodies are gradually springing up. There are a number of oil and rice mills in the province owned by Marwaris and others. That they are profitable concerns is evidenced by the fact that the number of such mills is increasing. They are, however, not reported to be efficiently run, and it appears that they are in need of technical advice and expert guidance which an expert Mechanical Engineer in the Department might easily give. We have no such Engineer and one is badly wanted. Apart from these, there are other possible small industries which can be undertaken with a moderate capital, but regarding which investigation and study have to be undertaken by experts. In 1920 for instance the Director submitted proposals for the development of the *lac* industry in Assam. As a beginning he suggested the deputation of a local forest officer with botanical and entomological qualifications to study the methods of cultivation and manufacture in the Central Provinces and Behar which constitute the main *lac* areas in India, with a view to suggesting after enquiries what practical action can be taken here. The proposal did not mature at the time. Stick *lac* is however an important raw produce of the province and if progress is to be made the services of an expert to make the necessary enquiries and recommendations will be necessary.

There are numerous other industries for which the province affords ample materials. We have, for instance, lime-stone clay and coal within our borders and if experiments prove successful the manufacture of cement should be possible in Assam. Our principal oil-seeds are rape, sesamum, castor, cotton, ground-nut, linseed and tea. With the exception of a small quantity of rape seeds pressed locally in *ghanis* the bulk of the raw produce is sent out of the province. There is no doubt that some of these seeds will yield oil very suitable for soap-making but no expert investigation in this line has yet been undertaken. We have also raw materials out of which essential oils like Agur and medicinal and other useful oils like Chaulmogra, eucalyptus and turpentine can be obtained. Modern distilling methods have not yet been attempted in Assam to recover such oils from lemon grass, Agar, pine or orange rinds which are locally available in abundance. Similarly the up-to-date solvent process of extracting oil from other seeds such as rape and mustard has not yet been tried, though petrol and benzine are produced locally and seeds worth half a crore of rupees are exported annually. We export annually large quantities of raw skins and hides and very suitable tan-stuffs are believed to be available in our forests. Leather-tanning may therefore be a suitable new industry in Assam. Similarly manufacture of

caffeine from tea waste may be possible as we know the waste is now collected and shipped to America for manufacture of the drug there. Assam is an important producer of silk cocoons like Bengal, Mysore and Kashmir, but she now exports cocoons and waste and import both reeled and spun silk yarns. The possibilities of establishing a modern steam filature or a silk-spinning mill have not been investigated by experts. Soda, lime and sand available in Assam point to the possibility of glass manufacture. Assam grown indigo for manufacture of natural indigo and of the Assam Savannah grasses for manufacture of paper pulp having been tested and demonstrated these industries have already been taken up. It is only natural to expect that other new industries would similarly be taken up if the preliminary researches are undertaken and satisfactory results are obtained.

I have said enough to show that our natural resources—vegetable, animal and mineral—are abundant and that there are immense possibilities for many industries, both big and small. They are waiting for men and money to be developed and experts are needed to investigate into them. At the third Conference of the Departments of Industries in Simla, Sir Thomas Holland remarked that Assam alone required the services of 20 different chemists to investigate properly into the possibilities of her immense natural resources. I know it is impossible for the province to undertake such a huge programme of research, and her people are not yet ready to take advantage of such investigations in order to fully develop the resources, but there seems to be no reason why researches likely to prove the possibilities of comparatively smaller but promising industrial undertakings in new lines should not be undertaken as funds permit.

Last but not least, is, I think, an Advisory Board of Industries to advise Government on lines to be pursued in aiding and developing our industries. The Board if appointed will include successful business men and industrialists who are cognizant of the local conditions as well as the needs and possibilities of the province, as also some Members of this Council as a connecting link between the Department and the Council.

More than a year ago the Director, at my desire, submitted some comprehensive proposals for the organisation of the Department with a view to enlarging its sphere of action in the direction of investigation and research into the industrial possibilities of some of our raw materials, the expert supervision of technical and industrial education, collection and distribution of industrial intelligence and organisation of markets and technical advice and assistance to small industrialists. As the consideration of the proposals advanced, the unexpected financial difficulties which the province was suddenly brought to face made me give up all hopes of further advancing in it. The idea of my making a statement at the last autumn session was thus reluctantly abandoned. I have waited for a year but things have not fared better. I have, however, been encouraged by His Excellency the Governor not to be despondent, for, though we cannot afford to make the progress that we desired, there is no reason why some advance should not be made gradually and cautiously in some of the directions proposed. I am therefore availing of this opportunity to inform the Council how matters stand.

Without venturing to lay down an ambitious scheme or a far-reaching programme which those after me will have time enough to consider, I submit for the consideration of the Council a small programme which I personally

consider is the minimum of our immediate requirements to give the Department the lowest organised basis and enable it to discharge our present commitments with fair efficiency and that is this :—

1.—*Development of Cottage Industries.*

- (a) *Handloom Weaving.*—We want a residential weaving institute at Gauhati and two additional peripatetic weaving parties.
- (b) *Sericulture*—A nursery station at Shillong.
- (c) Expansion of the Emporium and Central Stores at Gauhati by the opening of new branches.

2.—*Technical and Industrial Education.*

- (a) The starting of the school of Handicrafts at Sylhet ;
- (b) Establishment of the Prince of Wales Technical School in the Assam Valley, and
- (c) Industrial Scholarships of about Rs. 5,000 annually.

3. *Small Organised industries, such as oil mills and rice mills.*—For expert assistance in technical matters one Mechanical Engineer as Industrial Engineer and Deputy Director is essentially necessary. He will supervise also the technical and industrial schools where training is given in metal work, wood work and fitting and running of oil or steam engines. There is a proposal to appoint a Factories' Inspector for the province. Possibly the two posts might be combined, but I cannot definitely say whether it will be possible until the point is further examined.

4. *Expert Investigations.*—For this I propose the appointment of one Industrial Chemist on a temporary basis to be selected from time to time for different chemical investigations. I would also like to devote some money for *lac* investigations and experiments.

5. *Organisation of markets and collection of Commercial and Industrial Intelligence.*—One Commercial and Industrial Intelligence Officer who will collect industrial and commercial intelligence both in the province and outside.

6. *An Advisory Board of moderate size.*—I put forward this list not of course as a definite demand for money nor even as the outline of an agreed on policy of Government which of course will have other claims of various Departments to consider. Nor do I forget that I have other Departments in my charge which have also calls equally imperative and so have those in charge of my other colleagues. But I mention these items, without prejudice, which I personally as Minister in charge of Industries think necessary as comprising the first stage of a sound foundation.

I only repeat a truism when I say that the economic salvation of India lies in the development of her industries. That development alone will enable her to take her stand with the other civilized countries of the world. To that end all the other Provinces of India are now trying to work and do their best, and it does not behove us to make our Province lag behind.

I fully realize our financial situation, and before asking the Council for grants I shall not be wanting in my endeavours to assure myself that money spent will be usefully spent. In order to develop industries and to train up an industrial population we shall have to spend money, large sums of money. But we must face the expenditure, trying at the same time to be as sure as human beings can be, that the Province will profit by it. It is no doubt time for us to observe strict economy and we must observe it. But Hon'ble Members will, I hope, agree with me that many of our concerns fail by false economy. This principle applies equally to Government as to private undertakings. While therefore we should be careful in spending money, we should not fall into the error of false economy. Without money—and large sums of money—an efficient and progressive department of industries is impossible, and without proper experts and efficient supervision the department cannot be expected to be either progressive or efficient. These are almost truisms and my excuse for repeating them is that none the less they do not seem now and then to be realized in some quarters.

Sir, I must thank you and the Hon'ble Members for the indulgent and patient hearing you have given me. I hope that even kinder indulgence will be given to the financial aspect of the above programme. How much of it will be accepted by the Council and what relative precedence given by it to different items of our numerous demands in different departments are for the Council to consider and decide. What is the measure of advance that our crippled finances will allow is also for the Council and my Hon'ble Colleague the Finance Member to consider and decide. By making this statement to the Council to-day I am only endeavouring to show what is the minimum of our requirements in the Department of Industries if we wish to see progress made. It is for the Council to find ways and means. I am glad that the Council fully realizes that one of its primary duties is to develop the nation-building departments as far as it can. I therefore look to it for all the help and guidance that our struggling Department of Industries deserves at its hands.

One other point which it was my intention to mention, Sir, but which I have left out is that we have arranged a show in Shillong of some of the industrial products of the Province under the name of "Assam Home Industries Show". It has often been remarked that ocular demonstration is more effective than verbal pleading. Therefore I hope that as many Members of the Council as find it possible to do so will take an opportunity of visiting the collection of industrial exhibits at the show which will be opened at the Recreation Club on the 18th instant. I hope that it will convince them that we have already in the technical skill of our people a very sound basis for the development of the cottage industries of Assam.

Unfortunately the opening date has fallen somewhat behind the date of the closure of the Council. The date was originally fixed in anticipation of the Council extending its session up to that date, but when all the arrangements were made it was decided that the Council shall close earlier. I very much regret this, but none the less I would request that those of the Hon'ble Members who could make it possible to stay, will be pleased to do so and do us the favour of attending the Show.

THE HON'BLE THE PRESIDENT :—As already announced His Excellency the Governor will prorogue the Council at 12 o'clock. It is now a few minutes to 12.

At 12 noon His Excellency the Governor attended by his personal staff arrived at Council Chamber.

His Excellency then addressed the Council as follows :—

Mr. President and Hon'ble Members of the Legislative Council of Assam,

The session which has just concluded has been a shorter one than usual, and with the one exception to which I shall presently refer, has been marked by no special features requiring comment from me. But there are two reasons which make it appropriate that I should say a few words to you personally in declaring your labours for the present at an end. It is in all probability the last time that you will assemble under the roof of Government House ; and also, I regret to say, the last time that I shall address you from this chair. The former circumstance I cannot pretend to deplore. When you next meet it will be under a roof of your own, in more comfortable and appropriate surroundings, in a building of which I hope you will be proud, and which will do much to make the province proud of also. As I have said already, when I laid the foundation stone of the Council building, material surroundings have a way of subtly influencing the minds of men ; and I cannot help feeling that the political growth of the province, and the progress of this Council towards full parliamentary status will be accelerated by the feeling that it is at home of its own right in its own house, and not a guest in the residence of the executive head of the province.

But I do sincerely regret to think that this will be the last time that I shall address you. The relations of my Government with the legislature, and my personal relations with its members, will both be a pleasant memory to me when I have left Assam. I was, I have to admit it, one of those who thought three years ago that the severance of a head of the province from the legislature was a mistake. I feared that it would put him too much out of touch with the Council, and that he might be embarrassed by feeling that he had to depend on other spokesmen than himself for the exposition of his Government's opinions. But I do not think so now. I think that the political instinct shown by the Joint Parliamentary Committee in segregating the Governor from the Council was sound ; and that it would probably have been an embarrassment both to you and to myself if I had had to combine the positions of executive head of the province and speaker of its legislative body.

As one of those who took some part in discussing the evolution of the new constitution, I realised vividly the possibility of difficulty in working the somewhat intricate arrangements provided in part VI of the Government of India Act without friction or loss of working efficiency. That difficulty, I hope we may claim, has been successfully surmounted here. You will, I trust, all agree with me that a good start has been made. Neither the legislature nor the Government has always had its way. Sometimes we have argued and you have not been persuaded. Sometimes you have been convinced when we have put our whole case before you, and have accepted proposal that we well knew could not be entirely agreeable to you. You feel I hope that the Government have not been perversely obstinate in insisting on their views ; we, on our part, gladly acknowledge that the legislature, with whatever force and earnestness it has thought right to press its views, has never been obdurate or unreasonable ; and in particular I desire heartily to acknowledge

the assistance which it has repeatedly given us in coping with a most difficult financial situation. In a word, I think it may be claimed that the first two years of the reformed constitution have been passed in Assam not merely without friction or hostility, but also with positive gain; in that each party has realised more of the other's position, and with that understanding has, I hope, acquired greater respect and sympathy for the other's views. Such was the hypothesis on which the superstructure of reforms was based, and I am happy to think that in Assam it has been found strong enough to support the weight imposed upon it.

I do not feel that this is the occasion to enter upon a review of my too brief period of office. Every man coming new to a province requires time to acquaint himself with its conditions and problems; and unfortunately, both for you and me, we have inherited a period of financial embarrassment which not only put a speedy end to hopes of rapid development, but also imposed on us the disagreeable task of restricting expenditure. And here in passing let me just add this. I trust that there is no Hon'ble Member present who thinks we are not whole-hearted in our pursuit of economy. We are anxiously exploring the various suggestions made to us. We have acted already on some of them. We have found out others for ourselves, and on others we are still deliberating. But retrenchment, just like expansion, is sometimes a protracted business. You cannot always pull up the machine with a great jolt without damaging its gear, and before deciding what staffs can be dispensed with or what activities discarded, we are bound to consider closely the effect upon the welfare of the people. But if a formal assurance is needed, I give it without hesitation, in the names of all the members of my Government, that we are keenly alive to the necessity of spending every rupee wisely, and what is more, I am sure that all our disbursing officers throughout the province realise the same obligation and are animated by the same purpose.

We have had during the last cold weather a period of great political excitement, not indeed peculiar to Assam, and in fact for the most part an importation from abroad. My Government have been blamed for not taking earlier and more effective steps to suppress it in its earlier stages. They have been blamed equally for suppressing it with too heavy a hand later on. Between these two suggestions, it seems possible that we were not really far from pursuing the happy mean. So long as agitation is merely in the air and does not manifest itself in overt acts, it is extremely difficult to deal with it, without alienating sympathy, and thereby exaggerating the mischief. If we had acted much sooner than we did I question whether we should have had responsible Indian opinion with us. The fact that we eventually had no option but to take action is recognised by this Council's vote of yesterday, when you, Gentlemen, gave us the money for which we asked for the exceptional expenditure incurred in the movements of the Military Police, which were required to reassure law-abiding people and to restore respect for authority in the perturbed areas. I am much obliged to this Council for the way in which it realised that my Government had acted with a due sense of responsibility, and also for its acceptance of the necessity for an increase in the strength of the armed police reserve.

There is another outstanding matter to which I will briefly refer. As you know, my Government appointed in the cold weather a committee of inquiry to deal with a matter of great moment to this province, namely the

conditions of labour upon the tea gardens in Assam. I cannot attempt to forecast the report of the committee, or the finding of the Government on it; but I want to say that it was a strong and independent committee under the wise guidance of the Hon'ble Mr. Arbuthnott, to whom my Government are greatly indebted for his having consented at no small inconvenience to himself to serve as Chairman. I greatly hope before vacating office to deal with the report. I am sure that the Council will receive it with interest and sympathy; and I earnestly hope that the result may be to settle for a long period of time the main outstanding questions regarding the condition of tea garden coolies.

It now remains, Gentlemen, only for me to take my leave of you. I do so with sincere regret. You have given me a very friendly reception in this province, and I like to think that, had I been remaining, such good relations would have been maintained. I am grateful to you all for your courtesy and forbearance, and also for the good wishes which I have received from many of you in undertaking a new and probably a more difficult enterprise. You will, I know, extend the same consideration to my successor, whoever he may be; and I am sure that he will make it his aim, as I have done, to work amicably with the legislature, to respect its dignity, and to encourage its development. I now wish you all, Mr. President and Hon'ble Members, at least my formal, if not my personal, good-bye. I need not say perhaps that I shall always watch the fortunes of Assam and of its government and legislature with the warmest interest. I wish them both all happiness and success.

I now declare the present session terminated, and the Legislative Council of Assam prorogued until such date as will in due course be notified.

SHILLONG,

The 16th September 1922. }

S. E. STINTON,

Offg. Secretary to the Legislative
Council, Assam.

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