

Proceedings of the Third Session of the Second Assam Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 2 P.M. on Friday, the 21st March, 1947.

PRESENT

The Hon'ble Mr. Debeswar Sarma, Speaker, in the Chair, eight Hon'ble Ministers and fifty-eight Members.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(To which answers were laid on the table.)

Number of Muslims deputed for training in Wardha and Delhi

Maulavi MAYEENUD-DIN AHMED CHOWDRY asked :

120. Will Government be pleased to state—

- (a) The number of Muslims deputed during 1946 for training in Wardha and Delhi ?
- (b) The principle under which the selections were made ?
- (c) The principle underlying selection of students for technical studies, viz., Medical, Engineering, Agriculture, etc., in India ?
- (d) Whether one Masaddar Ali of Hailakandi was a candidate for stipend for the Indian Dairy Diploma Course at Allahabad Agricultural Institute ?
- (e) If so, the date on which his application was received ?

The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI replied :

120. (a)—Jamia Millia, Delhi ... .. 11  
Wardha ... .. Nil.

(b)—Candidates, who gave the impression to the selectors for foregoing careers in favour of service to the villagers, were chosen.

(c)—On merit with consideration of communal ratio also.

(d) & (e)—One Masaddar Ali of Silchar was a candidate and his application was received on 6th May 1946.

Veterinary Field Assistants

Srijut HALADHAR BHUYAN asked :

121. (a) Do Government propose to provide free quarters or house allowances for the Veterinary Field Assistants like that of the Compounders of Civil Medical Department ?

(b) Are Government aware that these Field Assistants cannot generally arrange any accommodation with their present pay when they are transferred to some places from their home district for better administration and working ?

The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR replied :

121. (a)—No ; Veterinary Field Assistants are treated as on the same line with Agricultural Demonstrators who are not granted any house allowance.

(b)—Government realise their difficulties and will take the matter into their serious considerations.

**Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR** : Sir, as regards Question No 121, do Government feel the difficulty that the Field Assistants experience for having no allotted quarters ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR** : Reply is already there, Sir.

**Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR** : Do Government propose to obviate their difficulty by supplying them quarters in the near future ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR** : Sir, I have to repeat the same reply that the Government realise their difficulty and so Government have taken the matter into their serious consideration.

#### Establishment of Veterinary Hospital at Rampur

**Srijut HALADHAR BHUYAN** asked :

122. (a) Is it a fact that a Veterinary Hospital is going to be established at Rampur in Kamrup district instead of Nowgong ?

(b) If so, why ?

(c) Is it a fact that there is already one such Hospital at Gauhati while the district of Nowgong has none ?

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUL MATLIB MAZUMDAR** replied :

122. (a)—No.

(b)—Does not arise.

(c)—Yes.

#### Teachers serving in class III of the Assam School Service

**Maulavi ABUAL MAJID ZIAOSH SHAMS** asked :

123. (a) Is it a fact that the classical teachers as well as non-classical teachers serving in class III of the Assam School Service have got the same chances and opportunities for earning their increment while they are in class III ?

(b) Is it a fact that non-classical teachers in class III of the same service have got chances of promotion to class II and thence to class I ?

(c) Is it a fact that classical teachers have no chance of promotion from class III to class II ?

(d) Will Government be pleased to state the reason or facts which prevent the classical teachers from attaining the same status as non-classical teachers in the matter of promotion to classes II and I ?

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

123. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Yes.

(c)—There is no bar to promote classical (Sanskrit and Islamic) teachers to higher grades in the Assam School Service provided they possess the requisite qualification for such posts.

(d)—Because many of the classical teachers are not educationally qualified for promotion to higher grades of the Assam School Service.

#### Seats for Assam Students in the Engineering College of the Benares Hindu University

**Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR** asked :

124. Will Government be pleased to refer to the reply given by them to Starred Question No. 46 (g) asked by Srijut Lakshesvar Borooah, in the

Legislative Assembly in the last Session of the Assembly (page 1158 of the Assembly Debates) and state—

- (a) Whether Government have finished their promised consideration of the matter of reserving some seats in the Engineering College of the Benares Hindu University for students from Assam and providing some stipends for some deserving students of this Province studying in that College ?
- (b) If so, what is the final result of the Government consideration regarding these two matters ?
- (c) If the reply to question (a) above is in the negative, whether Government propose to come to an early decision and give some students of this Province the necessary facilities for prosecuting their studies in Engineering as stated in question (a) above ?

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

124. (a) & (b)—Three seats with scholarships have been reserved in the Engineering College of the Benares University for Assam students from the Session 1946-47.

(c)—Does not arise.

#### Deputation of armed guards to Muslim League meetings

**Maulavi ABDUL HAMID** asked :

125. (a) Are Government aware that the armed guards were sent to Muslim League meetings lately held in Mufassil in North Sylhet (Sadr Sub-division) ?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state on whose orders they were so deputed ?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state whether the Deputy Commissioner's permission was taken in these cases of despatch of armed police ?

(d) If not, why ?

(e) Is it a fact that notices were served in some places where such meetings were held on the adherents of the League by Thana officers warning the former that they would be held responsible for breach of peace ?

(f) Will Government be pleased to state why no such notices were served on the opposite side of the League ?

(g) Are Government aware that such action of the officers are subjecting Government to the charge of unjust interference with the League work ?

(h) Do Government propose to stop such interference ?

**The Hon'ble Mr. BASANTA KUMAR DAS** replied :

125. (a)—On the following two occasions Armed Police were sent out to maintain peace as there were reasonable apprehensions of serious breach of peace in the locality due to high communal tension, as a result of August disturbances in Sylhet town :—

(i)—On 1st September 1946 a half-section of Armed Branch Constables was deputed to Dayamir under Balaganj Police Station.

(ii)—On 13th October 1946 one section of Armed Branch Constables was deputed to Batulganj Bazar under Golapganj Police Station.

(b)—Under orders of the Superintendent of Police, Sylhet.

(c)—The deputation of police had the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet's concurrence.

(d)—Does not arise.

(e)—A certain Muslim student residing in the neighbourhood of Batulganj after his return from Calcutta in September, 1946, was spreading exciting and alarming news of the Calcutta disturbances along with some other Muslim youths in the locality. As a serious breach of the peace was apprehended the Additional District Officer, Sylhet, issued warning notices on these persons (numbering about 10) only, requiring them to desist from any act leading to breach of the peace, and public tranquility. No such notices were served on any person at Dayamir.

(f)—Notices were served on those persons irrespective of any party, who were found spreading exciting and alarming news affecting the public peace and tranquility.

(g)—Does not arise.

(h)—Does not arise.

### Settlement of Excise shops in Habiganj Subdivision

Maulavi Md. ABDULLAH asked :

126. (a) Will Government be pleased to state how many excise shops are there in the Habiganj Subdivision and how many Muslim Lessees were appointed within the last three years, with their names and addresses, year by year ?

(b) Is it a fact that in 1945 one Midhan Miah of village Bahula, P. S. Habiganj was appointed a lessee for Ajmiriganj excise shop both by the Board and the Subdivisional Officer but subsequently that order was superseded by the higher authorities before he took up the charge of that shop ?

(c) If so, why ?

(d) Will Government be pleased to state whether the ratio of settling excise shops in the Habiganj Subdivision has been fulfilled in the case of Muslims ?

(e) If not, why not ?

The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS replied :

126. (a)—A statement is given below—

### Statement showing the particulars of Excise shops allowed to Muslims in Habiganj Subdivision for the years 1945-46 to 1947-48

No. of Excise shops in the subdivision		Year under settlement	Shops allowed to Muslims		Name and address of the Lessees
Combined C. S. & Ganja)	Single Ganja		No. of Shops		
			Combined C. S. & Ganja	Single Ganja	
11	-	1945-46	2	1	1. Md. Majafar Ali, Vill. Sarifabad. 2. Maulvi Abdul Gafur Chaudhury, Vill. Surma, P.S. Madhabpur. 3. Maulvi Nuruddin Ahmed Chaudhury, Vill. Baneswar, P. S. Madhabpur.

No. of Excise shops in the subdivision		Year under settlement	Shops allowed to Muslims		Name and address of the Lessees
Combined (C. S. & Ganja)	Single Ganja		No. of Shops		
			Combined C. S. & Ganja	Single Ganja	
11	7	1946-47	2	1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Md. Majafar Ali, Vill. Sarifabad.</li> <li>2. Maulvi Abdul Gafur Chowdhury, Vill. Surma, P.S. Madhabpur.</li> <li>3. Maulvi Nuruddin Ahmed Chowdhury, Vill. Baneswar, P. O. Madhabpur.</li> </ol>
11	7	1947-48	4	1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Md. Majafar Ali, Vill. Sarifabad.</li> <li>2. Maulvi Babar Ali, Vill. Baula, P. S, Habiganj.</li> <li>3. Maulvi Abdul Gafur Chowdhury, Vill. Surma, P. S. Madhabpur.</li> <li>4. Maulvi Surab Ali, Vill. Nurpur, P. S. Habiganj.</li> <li>5. Maulvi Nuruddin Ahmed Chaudhury, Vill. Baneswar, P. S. Madhabpur.</li> </ol>

(b)—Yes, but in 1946 and not in 1945.

(c)—On appeal.

(d)—No.

(e)—For want of suitable tenderers.

### Excise Officers serving in Surma Valley

**Babu BIDYAPATI SINGHA** asked :

127. (a) Is it a fact that among seven excise circles in the Surma Valley, six Muslim Excise Inspectors and only one Hindu Inspector are at present working as Circle Officers ?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to state whether there is any dearth of Hindu Excise Officers ?

**The Hon'ble Srijut RAM NATH DAS** replied :

127. (a)—Yes.

(b)—Circle postings are made on the basis of seniority and suitability and the Muslim Officers are accordingly holding six circles in the Surma Valley. Such of the Surma Valley Hindu Officers as are senior to them are either holding Circles or other important charges in the Assam Valley.

### Sub-Assistant Surgeons volunteered for War Service

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH asked :

128. Will Government be pleased to state—
- How many Sub-Assistant Surgeons from Assam volunteered for War Service ?
  - How many of these are Hindus and how many are Muslims ?
  - How many of these are from the Medical Department and how many from the Public Health Department ?
  - How many of the total number have up to date been released from military service and how many have been employed in Government service in the (i) Medical Department and (ii) Public Health Department ?
  - Whether Government propose to give them increased rates of pay in consideration of their war service ?
  - Whether any other facilities have been given to these war returned candidates ?
  - What arrangement Government have made for the training of these war returned Sub-Assistant Surgeons in the condensed M. B. Course ?
  - What are the future prospects of these war returned candidates ?

The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS replied :

128. (a)—70.  
 (b)—Hindus—46.  
 Muslims—16.  
 (c)—Medical Department—26.  
 Public Health Department—44.  
 (d)—Sixty-six have been released up-to-date, of whom 24 have resumed duties in the Medical Department and 41 in the Public Health Department.  
 (e)—The question is under the consideration of Government.  
 (f)—The Sub-Assistant Surgeons of the Public Health Department have been initially posted to the places of their choice as far as practicable. The question of giving any other facilities to the war returned Sub-Assistant Surgeons is under the consideration of Government.  
 (g)—Four war returned Sub-Assistant Surgeons have already been sent to the Patna Medical College for training in the condensed M. B. course. Government also made efforts to arrange seats in Medical Colleges of other provinces, but so far their efforts have been unsuccessful.  
 (h)—The hon. Member is referred to replies to questions (c) and (f) above.

### Sub-Assistant Surgeons in the Public Health Department

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH asked :

129. (a) Is it a fact that the Sub-Assistant Surgeons in the Public Health Department get a house rent allowance every month in lieu of free quarters ?  
 (b) Is it a fact that Health Officers of the Public Health Department do not get any house rent allowance ?  
 (c) If so, do Government propose to remove this anomaly and give a uniform rate of house allowance to these officers also ?

The Hon'ble Srijut RAM NATH DAS replied :

129. (a)—Yes.  
 (b)—Yes, Urban Health Officers do not get house rent allowance.  
 (c)—It is under the consideration of Government.

**Assam Provincial Conference of the All-India Medical Association**

Maulavi Dewan ABDUL BASITH asked :

130. (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the Resolution No. 12 of the 11th Session of the Assam Provincial Conference of the All-India Medical Licentiates' Association held at Silchar on the 15th, 16th and 17th February 1946 ?

(b) Do Government propose to take necessary steps to introduce the Government scale of pay, pension and other service conditions in the case of Local Board Medical Officers ?

(c) If not, why not ?

(d) Are Government aware that the Local Board Medical Officers are ill paid and with no future prospects and that they are equally qualified, and discharging exactly the same nature of duties and rendering the same service as the Government Sub-Assistant Surgeons are doing ?

(e) Do Government propose to give chance to efficient Local Board Medical Officers, in Government employment in their Post-War Scheme of re-organisation of Medical and Public Health Departments ?

(f) Are Government aware that the Local Board Medical Officers are required to do Public Health work, *i. e.*, *Kala-azar*, Leprosy and Cholera works without any extra remuneration, in addition to their other duties ?

(g) If so, do Government propose to grant them reasonable allowances for this extra Public Health work ?

131. Will Government be pleased to state the plan if there be any, of Government to relieve Medical Officers in charge of Dispensaries from Public Health duties ?

132. (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether they have any new schemes for Public Health Department in their Post-War Schemes ?

(b) Do Government propose to implement "Bhore Committee's" recommendation with its short and long-term planning ?

The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS replied :

130. (a)—No, the resolution referred to does not appear to have been received by the Government.

(b)—No.

(c)—It is a matter for the Local Boards.

(d)—It seems so.

(e)—Government will call for applications through the Public Service Commission.

(f)—Normally it is within the legitimate duties of the Local Board doctors to treat all cases within a radius of 5 miles.

(g)—Does not arise.

131.—Government have no plan to relieve them from their legitimate duties.

132. (a)—There are 8 schemes under the Public Health Department and these are:—

	Rs.
1. Anti-Malaria Schemes for	12,50,000
2. Provincialisation of Anti-Small-pox vaccinators	13,34,000
3. Creation of a Provincial Anti-T. B. Organisation for	1,47,500
4. Nutrition Scheme for	34,500
5. Provincial Organisation for collection of vital statistics for	7,95,000
6. Maternity and child welfare	3,54,000
7. Public Health Engineer for	79,100
8. Anti-Leprosy Scheme for	6,64,000

(b)—Yes, the Government, is in general agreement with the recommendations of the Bhore Committee and many of the new schemes are in conformity with its proposals.

**Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA:** As regards Question No 132(a), Sir, may I know from the Government whether any detailed schemes have been prepared under these 8 schemes under the Public Health Department, such as Anti-Malaria Schemes, Provincialisation of Anti-Small-pox vaccinators, etc.?

**The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS:** For some items of these schemes detailed schemes have been prepared and for some, officers to take charge of them have not yet been appointed but advertised for their appointment.

**Srijut RAJENDRA NATH BARUA:** May I know, Sir if any detailed survey is going to be made or has been made District by District for the Anti-Malaria Schemes for which an amount of Rs.12,50,000 is going to be spent?

**The Hon'ble Srijut RAMNATH DAS:** Yes, Sir, such survey is being made.

#### **Profit or loss incurred by Government in connection with Paddy Procurement Scheme**

**Srijut MAHENDRAMOHAN CHOUDHURY** asked :

133. Will Government be pleased to state—

(a) The amount of profit or loss incurred by Government on the course of their Paddy Procurement Scheme through Agency of Messrs. Steel Brothers during the year 1945-46?

(b) Whether there has been any loss?

(c) If so, will Government be pleased to state the cause for such loss?

**The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE** replied :

133. (a)—A profit of Rs.11,20,931 taking rice and paddy together.

(b) & (c)—Do not arise.



**Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA:** May I know, Sir, whether the amount of profit was calculated by actual stock taking or by book value of the stock, as there must have been some stock at the end of the year?

**The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE:** There might have been some stock at that time, but the accounts were adjusted afterwards. When the stock was cleared and there was nothing in the stock, at that time this amount was arrived at.

**Babu RABINDRA NATH ADITYA:** May I know, Sir, whether any balance-sheet is prepared?

**The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE:** Yes, but, Sir, there is no question of any balance-sheet here.

**Srijut MAHENDRAMOHAN CHOUDHURY:** Sir, in reply to my question it is stated that there was a profit of Rs.11,20,931 taking rice and paddy together. But I find that there was a loss in the year 1944-45 suffered by Government on this account. I am reading out the relevant portion from page 15 of the Audit Report of 1946: "Sums amounting to Rs.2,75,00,000 were advanced to Messrs. Steel Brothers and Company and a further sum of Rs.6,52,67,689 was received by them in cash being the sale proceeds of rice and paddy supplied to Indian Tea Association, War and Railway Departments and others. They purchased rice and paddy worth Rs.6,53,02,886 and charged commission at annas 3 per maund for the first 95,000 maunds and at 1½ annas per maund for the quantity purchased in excess thereof during one calendar month. The total amount of commission charged by them was Rs.6,77,392."

It was decided that the firm should make purchases within the ceiling rates fixed by Government from time to time. As the ceiling rates were reduced periodically the value of stock purchased at higher rates had to be written down. In consequence, in the year under report Government had to suffer a loss of Rs.6,11,607."

**The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE:** This is the information which I have received from the Department. The account was not kept separately for paddy procurement; it was kept both for Rice and Paddy Procurement Schemes. The gain under that account, as revealed in the Trading Accounts, was Rs.11,20,931.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** The Hon'ble Minister has probably taken note of the passage read by the hon. Questioner and will, I think, go through the matter.

**The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE:** Yes, Sir, I shall go through the entire report and I hope I shall be able to prove that I am right.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** If there be any doubt we shall take up this matter tomorrow, as this is the last Question for to-day.

#### Statement *re* Business of the House.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Before I take up the next item I seek the sense of the House with regard to a certain matter. Typed copies of my Statement have already been supplied to the Hon'ble Ministers concerned and the Leader of the Parties.

I want to be enlightened by the House as to how its time that might be available after the disposal of the Demands for Grants allotted for each day during the next week should be utilised. If the House agree, the following business may, in my opinion, be taken up on the date or dates noted against each :—

*On Monday, 24th March.*—1. The Assam Committee of Enquiry (Evidence) Bill, 1946—

(a) Presentation of the Select Committee's report

(b) Consideration of the Bill as reported by the Select Committee (clause by clause to be taken up later).

The House will remember that the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge refrained from taking this Bill up on the 18th March in response to a request made by the Leader of the European Group. The House will also remember that I announced on 18th March that the Assam Electricity Control (Emergency Powers) Bill, 1947 would also be taken into consideration, clause by clause, and passed on this date.

*On Tuesday, 25th March.*—1. Consideration of Amendments to the Assam Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940, item by item

2. Motion for adoption (in case there is notice of further Amendments).

Notices of further Amendments, if any, should reach the Assembly Department before 3 p.m., on 22nd March 1947. The Amendments were placed on the table on 10th March 1947 and hon. Members have had more than sufficient time to send in further Amendments, if any.

3. Debate on the Statement made by the Hon'ble Minister, Planning and Development, regarding Post-War Reconstruction Programme of Government to be resumed.

4. Motion regarding food and supply position of the Province. This is provisional because I am afraid there will be no time left for this item.

*On Thursday, 27th March.*—The debates on (i) the Statement regarding Post-war Reconstruction Programme and (ii) the Motion regarding food and supply position of the Province to continue.

*On Friday, 28th March.*—Consideration of the Assam Primary Education (Amendment) Bill, 1946, clause by clause and Motion for passing.

Notices of Amendments, if any, to this Bill should reach the Assembly Department at or before 3 p.m., on Monday, the 24th March.

*On Saturday, 29th March.*—Consideration of the Assam Committee of Enquiry (Evidence) Bill, 1946, clause by clause and motion for passing.

Notices of Amendments, if any, to this Bill should reach the Assembly Department at or before 3 p.m., on Tuesday, the 25th March.

I am not in a position to say now as to on which date it would be possible to take up the consideration of (i) the Assam Sales Tax Bill, 1947 and (ii) the Assam Opium Prohibition Bill, 1947, as reported by the respective Select Committees. As the hon. Members know, the Motion for consideration cannot ordinarily be made unless copies of the Bills as reported by the Select Committees are made available to the Members seven days before. The date or dates for this purpose will be fixed when printed copies are received from the Press and circulated to the hon. Members.

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI:** I would like to make one request, Sir, and that is in reference to a small Motion which I shall have to bring

forward before the House in relation to the expenditure on the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Society. That is a very small matter. Certain saving has been effected on account of a certain item of expenditure not being incurred, and the proposal has been to divert that expenditure towards the creation of a fund. That is a formal Motion and some date may be fixed; it will not take more than ten minutes of the House.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** We shall try to fit that in.  
Any other suggestion from any hon. Member regarding my Statement please?

**Mr. W. R. FAULL:** This is quite suitable to us.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** (*After a pause*): Then I take it that the House agree to the scheme of business I have laid down.

**Srijut GAURI KANTA TALUKDAR:** Will you kindly supply us with a copy of the revised programme?

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Yes, that will be done.

We pass on to the next item on the Agenda, *viz.*, Demands for Grants.

### Demands for Grants

#### GRANT No. 1

(TAXES ON INCOME OTHER THAN CORPORATION TAX)

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 60,600 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head "4.—Taxes on Income other than Corporation Tax".

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 60,600 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '4.—Taxes on Income other than Corporation Tax'."

There are no Cut Motions under this Demand. If no hon. Member is taking part in the debate I will put the question.

(*After a pause*)

The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 60,600 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '4.—Taxes on Income other than Corporation Tax'."

The question was adopted.

#### GRANT No. 26

(50.—CIVIL WORKS—TOOLS AND PLANT AND ESTABLISHMENT CHARGES)

**The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that

a sum not exceeding Rs. 17,44,400 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head 'Tools and Plant and Establishment Charges.'

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER** : Motion moved.

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 17,44,400 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head 'Tools and Plant and Establishment Charges.'"

*After a pause*

There is no Cut Motion under this Demand, therefore I am putting it as a question.

The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 17,44,400 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head 'Tools and Plant and Establishment Charges.'"

The question was adopted.

Grant No. 7

(12.—CHARGES ON ACCOUNT OF MOTOR VEHICLES TAXATION ACTS)

**The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE** : Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,81,300 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '12. Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Acts.'

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER** : Motion moved.

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,81,300 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '12. Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Acts.'"

There are two Cut Motions. I call upon Mr. E. W. B. Kenny to move his Motion.

**Mr. E. W. B. KENNY** : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is probably common knowledge that a large number of vehicles particularly trucks are being newly registered.....

\***The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE** : Let the hon. Member move his Cut Motion, Sir.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER** : Yes.

\*Speech not corrected.

**Mr. E. W. B. KENNY:** I beg to move, Sir, that the provision of Rs. 7,208 under Grant No. 7, Major head—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, Minor head—B—Inspection of Motor Vehicles (total), at page 47 of the Budget, be reduced by Re. 1, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 4,81,300 do stand reduced by Re.1.

The object of moving my Cut Motion is to discuss the failure of Government to provide petrol for all vehicles newly registered in the Province.

**\*The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE:** Sir, I rise on a point of order. I do not understand how this Cut Motion can be moved under this head. The Inspector of Motor Vehicles or the Inspection Branch of the Motor Vehicles Department has got nothing to do with petrol.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** I cannot quite follow. The Hon'ble Minister will please elaborate.

**\*The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE:** Sir, the cut is against the Inspection of Motor Vehicles at page 47 of the Budget and it is to be reduced by Re.1. My point is this that the total grant of Rs.7,208 under this head—this Inspection Branch of the Motor Vehicles Department, has got nothing to do with petrol. The petrol is entirely at the control of the Central Government and the Inspection Branch has got nothing to do with it. The cost, whatever it is, incurred for the petrol rationing is borne by the Central Government. So no hon. Member has any right to move any Cut Motion regarding petrol rationing. Not a single pice is spent from the Provincial Exchequer in the matter of petrol rationing.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Are the officers functioning under the orders of the Government of India?

**\*The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE:** Yes, Sir; the place selected for the Cut Motion, specially here, is a wrong place.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** That is a different matter.

**Mr. W. R. FAULL:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think, we may claim that at least there is an indirect connection in this cut because, if you will listen to hon. Mr. Kenny, you will find that he touches on the fact that Government are allowing new registrations after passing by the Inspector when there is no provision for the extra petrol necessary to run these vehicles.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** I quite follow, but how does he propose to meet the Hon'ble Minister's point that the officers rationing petrol are being paid by the Central Government and they act under the orders of the Central Government?

**Mr. R. A. PALMER:** Sir, this Government is paying their salary and we are asked to vote money for their salary.

\*Speech not corrected.

\*The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: So far as petrol rationing is concerned, nothing is paid by this Government.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Supposing there is "N" a Petrol Rationing Officer at Jorhat, who pays his salary?

\*The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: The Central Government.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Are the services of these officers lent to the Central Government?

\*The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: They get something from the Central Government for the extra work.

\*Srijut PURNA CHANDRA SARMA: Do they get anything extra from the Central Government, Sir?

\*The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Yes, Sir.

\*Srijut PURNA CHANDRA SARMA: Are not the salaries of the Superintendents of Police paid out of the Provincial Exchequer?

\*The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Yes, Sir.

\*Mr. C. W. MORLEY: When a new vehicle arrives, before it can be registered, it has to be shown to the Inspector. Therefore, it is under this head the Cut Motion is brought.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: Is it the complaint that petrol is not being available for new vehicles registered?

\*Mr. C. W. MORLEY: New registration. Sir, old vehicles may be newly registered.

The Hon'ble the SPEAKER: What is the grievance? Is it that the vehicles are being registered and there is no provision of petrol?

\*Mr. C. W. MORLEY: Vehicles are being registered newly when there is no provision of petrol.

The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI: The fact is, Sir, that the Inspector cannot refuse a vehicle to be registered unless it is found defective. It is the duty of the owner to ascertain from the Rationing Officer whether petrol will be available or not, or he may move the Central Government.

\*The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE: Sir, even without the Cut Motion I can make the position clear. But I have taken my stand on the

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\*Speech not corrected.

fact that this is not the proper place. But whatever that may be I can explain the position.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** But first of all I have to dispose of the point of order raised.

**\*The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE :** Sir, the intention of this Cut Motion is to discuss the failure of Government to provide petrol for all vehicles newly registered in the Province. This is not a fact. We are not refusing petrol to all vehicles. I refute that charge.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** Has the hon. the Leader of the European Group got to say anything more ?

**Mr. W. R. FAULL :** We have not said that he has not provided petrol for some vehicles newly registered ; we have said that he has not provided petrol for all vehicles newly registered.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** On hearing the arguments advanced for and against the point of order raised by the Hon'ble Minister I am of the opinion that this Cut Motion is not admissible in view of the fact that the Provincial Government is not controlling the rationing of petrol.

There is however plenty of time and the Hon'ble Minister may explain the position.

**The Hon'ble Mr. BAIDYANATH MOOKERJEE :** Sir, we have already taken up this matter. The real difficulty is with the vehicles that are coming on the road from military dumps. The fact is this, Sir, that so far as the new cars are concerned, we are giving basic rations and also for other cars used by the private owners we are giving basic rations. But so far as other vehicles which are coming from military dumps by hundreds, in every district per month it has become practically impossible to give them petrol and no basic ration has been fixed for these vehicles. But it is also a fact that we are giving a minimum of 10 gallons of petrol for the maintenance of these vehicles also. I shall be glad to know even one case where the car had been registered and it is in a fit condition and no petrol has been given. If I am enlightened on this point I shall certainly take steps, but in some cases when it is found that even private owners using these vehicles as taxis for hire in those cases the Area Rationing Authorities have stopped issue of basic rationed petrol, rather they have reduced the quantity of petrol. It is not a fact that nothing is being given to vehicles which are in running order ; for the maintenance of the machinery we are giving something.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** The other †Cut Motion also relates to the same thing, I suppose and I put the Demand as a question.

\*Speech not corrected.

†2. Mr. R. A. PALMER to move :

That the provision of Rs. 7,208 under Grant No. 7, Major head—12.—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, Minor head—B.—Inspection of Motor Vehicles (total), at page 47 of the Budget, be reduced by Re. 1, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 4,81,300 do stand reduced by Re. 1.

(To discuss the failure of Government to provide petrol for all vehicles newly registered in the Province.)

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** The question is

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,81,300 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '12—Charges on account of Motor Vehicles Taxation Acts'."

The question was adopted.

GRANT No. 8

(13.—OTHER TAXES AND DUTIES)

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 8,700 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '13—Other Taxes and Duties'."

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Motion moved.

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 8,700 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '13—Other Taxes and Duties'."

There is no Cut Motion under this Demand; therefore I am putting the Demand as a question. The question is

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 8,700 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '13—Other Taxes and Duties'."

The question was adopted.

GRANT No. 14

(30.—PORTS AND PILOTAGE)

**The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS ROY:** On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,100 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '30—Ports and Pilotage'."

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Motion moved.

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,100 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '30—Ports and Pilotage'."

There is no Cut Motion under this Demand; I am now putting the question.

The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,100 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '30.—Ports and Pilotage'."

The question was adopted.

GRANT No. 16

[37.—EDUCATION (EUROPEAN)]

**The Hon'ble Srijut GOPINATH BARDOLOI:** On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not



exceeding Rs. 1,04,400 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head "37.—Education (European)".

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,04,400 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '37.—Education (European)'."

There is no Cut Motion under this Demand; I am now putting it as a question.

The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,04,400 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '37.—Education (European)'."

The question was adopted.

#### GRANT No. 28

(55.—SUPERANNUATION ALLOWANCES AND PENSIONS)

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI:** On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 22,66,400 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head "55.—Superannuation Allowances and Pensions."

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 22,66,400 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '55.—Superannuation Allowances and Pensions'."

There is no Cut Motion under this Demand; I am now putting it as a question.

The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 22,66,400 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '55.—Superannuation Allowances and Pensions'."

The question was adopted.

#### GRANT No. 6

(11.—REGISTRATION)

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUR RASHEED:** On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,30,500 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head "11.—Registration."

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,30,500 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '11.—Registration'."

There is one \* Cut Motion in the name of Babu Akshay Kumar Das.

**The Hon'ble Maulavi ABDUR RASHEED :** He is not present, Sir.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** Then I am putting the Demand as a question. The question is :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,30,500 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '11. Registration'."

The question was adopted.

#### GRANT No 27

(54-A.—FAMINE RELIEF)

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI :** On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,00,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head "54-A.—Famine Relief."

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** Motion moved :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,00,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '54-A.—Famine Relief.'"

There is one † Cut Motion. I suppose it falls through due to the absence of the hon. Member. I am therefore putting the Demand as a question.

The question is :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,00,000 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948 for the administration of the head '54-A.—Famine Relief.'"

The question was adopted.

#### GRANT No. 15

(36.—SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENTS)

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI :** On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum not exceeding Rs. 15,900 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948, for the administration of head "36.—Scientific Departments."

\* 1. Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS to move :

That the provision of Rs. 71,776 under Grant No. 6, Major head—11.—Registration, Minor head—A.—District Charges, Sub-head—1.—Pay of Officers (total), at page 44 of the Budget, be reduced by Re. 1, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs 2,30,500 do stand reduced by Re.1,

(To raise a discussion about the Katigora Sub-Registry Office).

† 1. Babu AKSHAY KUMAR DAS to move :

That the provision of Rs. 1,00,000 under Grant No. 27, Major head—54-A.—Famine Relief, Minor head—A.—Famine Relief, Sub-head—(b)—Gratuitous Relief (total), at page 175 of the Budget, be reduced by Re. 1, i.e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 1,00,000 do stand reduced by Re. 1.

(To raise a discussion about gratuitous relief in the affected areas in the Sunamganj Subdivision).

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** Motion moved :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 15,900 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948, for the administration of the head '36.—Scientific Departments'."

"There is no Cut Motion under this Demand, I am putting it as a question."

The question is :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 15,900 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948, for the administration of the head '36.—Scientific Departments'."

The question was adopted.

GRANT No. 5  
(10.—FORESTS)

**\*The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :** On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Assam, I beg, Sir, to move that a sum of Rs. 22,79,700 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948, for the administration of the head "10.—Forests".

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** Motion moved :

"That a sum of Rs. 22,79,700 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948, for the administration of the head '10.—Forests'."

There are two Cut Motions. I call upon hon. Mr. Telfer to move his Cut Motion No. 1.

**Mr. J. S. R. TELFER :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the provision of Rs. 77,840 under Grant No. 5, Major head—10.—Forests, Minor head—A.—Conservancy and Works, Sub-head—II.—Timber and other produce removed from the Forests by consumers and purchasers, at page 42 of the Budget, be reduced by Re. 1, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 22,79,700 do stand reduced by Re. 1.

My object is to discuss the need for prevention of land erosions.

Sir, some few years ago I went on a fishing trip up the Barak river to Taepaimukh, about 85 miles above Silchar. As we navigated each bend I became more and more appalled at the bareness of the hill sides, sometimes rising to 3,000 feet along the valley of this—Cachar's biggest and main river. Practically every slope was completely denuded of virgin jungle. Many places were quite bare. Our boatmen pointed out as a landmark the "Lal Pahar"—a steep slope wasted down to the very sub-soil and showing up like a great red gaping wound. When we finally pitched our permanent camp, after some four days journey on a *chur* we were warned by our *shikari* that should there be rain we must be prepared to move quickly to higher ground. He said that because there was little jungle on the surrounding *tellahs* the river rose very quickly.

It is not only in the hills that the Barak rises and falls with little warning. Due to continued differences of opinion and difficulties with the upcountry-gentlemen who farm most if not all of the ferries in the Surma Valley, we decided

\*The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. Nichols-Roy moved the Motion in the absence of the Hon'ble Srijut Bhimbor Deuri.

last year to operate the Masimpur Ferry ourselves and the actual supervision devolved on me. It did not take long to find out without inspection that after only moderate rain it would be necessary to send men to prepare a new landing stage higher up the approach or, conversely, after a few fine days labour would be required to clear away silt. I think, I am not far wrong in saying that on the occasion the pontoon bridge at Silchar, for Kumbhirgram Aerodrome, was washed away. The Barak rose 23 feet in one night.

When, Sir, these tremendous rises subside huge deposits of fine silt are found to have been formed at various places. At Masimpur we had to cut, on the left bank, completely new approaches on two occasions this year and I would estimate that on each occasion the cubic capacity of deposit was not less than 3 times the size of this venerable House. This silt, Sir, did not resemble the clay of the Plains but the fine top soil of the hills—washed down as the rain raged over the bare slopes to the valleys below without check by nature's own protection—jungle. In this connection, Sir, I understand that experts estimate that soil covered by trees retains 46 times more moisture than that of soil which is wide open to the weather.

When, Sir, I was on my way to attend the July Session of this hon. House, I was fortunate, after much difficulty, to catch the last train out of Cachar before the flood waters banked up over the railway line. It was not, therefore, only as a Kiwani, or a troubled traveller but as a probable victim that I noted with further apprehension, last December, that the superb and beneficial bamboo jungle opposite Hatangajao on the Hill Section, up the Valley of Jetinga, was being recklessly and ruthlessly cut down to afford but a few maunds of rice and in course, add to the chaos in Cachar below.

It is well known to Government that successive Conservators of Forests have given continual warnings against the effects of uncontrolled *jhuming* and stressed the danger of greater and more frequent floods in the plains from this cause. In the Naga Hills the people must of necessity undertake terrace cultivation but in the Lushai Hills, from where the water pours into the Barak, this necessity has not yet occurred as the area is so vast. The time, however, is not far distant when these Hills, too, will be *jhumed* clean with dreadful results to the whole economic set-up of the Surma Valley.

I, therefore, suggest, Sir, that Government immediately inaugurate a re-forestation scheme along the valleys of these major rivers and employ the people already resident there so that their purchasing power may be increased and the necessity to *jhum* reduced.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Cut Motion moved:

"That the provision of Rs. 77,840 under Grant No. 5, Major Head—10.—Forests, Minor head—A.—Conservancy and Works, Sub-head—11.—Timber and other produce removed from the Forests by consumers and purchasers, at page 42 of the Budget, be reduced by Re. 1, i. e., the amount of the whole grant of Rs. 22,79,700 do stand reduced by Re. 1."

**The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have heard with great interest the description of the fishing trip of Mr. Telfer and of his beautiful observations of the denuded hills, by which, probably he means the North Cachar Hills and the Lushai Hills. It is a known fact that these Hills are in the Excluded Areas and this Ministry has no power whatsoever over these areas. These hills are altogether in the hand of His Excellency the Governor. But, Sir, the question of preventing *jhuming*, where the tribal people are living and where they have not been used to terrace cultivation, is a great problem and that problem need not be discussed here for the present. I want to point out only one fact that if we

have to prevent the people from *jhuming* in order to grow their crops and in order to enable them to live from hand to mouth, the Government of Assam will have to feed this people and they will have to do terracing for them for terrace cultivation. This is a great economic question and it will have to be solved before the *jhuming* system of the hill tribes be forbidden. But as this question also affects some parts other than the Excluded Areas, the Government is thinking seriously as to what should be done in this matter. It is only a question of finance to feed these people so that they may be able to live like good citizens and they may be protected from any oppression which might result from any new system which the Government may introduce in order to prevent land erosions. This is all I have to say. It is a question of finance which will have to be considered very seriously.

**Mr. J. S. R. TELFER:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, my Cut Motion was not directed against *jhuming* but it was a request for re-afforestation along the valleys of the major rivers running into Cachar.

I, however, Sir, beg to withdraw my Cut Motion.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Has the hon. Member leave of the House to withdraw his Cut Motion?

(After a pause)

The Cut Motion was, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

**Srijut BELIRAM DAS:** May I, with your permission, Sir, speak something on the main Motion?

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** If the hon. Member wants to speak there is no bar in the Rules, but should we not follow a healthy convention that after the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge has replied there should not be any more speech from the hon. Members?

**Srijut BELIRAM DAS:** I want to speak something in order to bring some facts to the notice of Government. I am not going to criticise Government.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** I quite appreciate that there is no bar in the Rules which can prevent the hon. Member from making a speech now and if it be the sense of the House I have no objection in allowing the hon. Member to make a speech now.

**Mr. W. R. FAULL:** It might create a dangerous precedent, Sir.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Anyway, under the Rules he is perfectly entitled to make a speech now but can't we create a healthy convention? Should we go into the debate now?

**Mr. W. R. FAULL:** I think, Sir, it would be better not to continue the debate after the Hon'ble Minister has replied.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** I also think so. What the hon. the Leader of the European Group has said, I take it, is the sense of the House also. We should try to create this convention.

Now I put the question.

The question is:

“That a sum of Rs. 22,79,700 be granted to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on the 31st March 1948, for the administration of the head ‘10—Forests’.”

The question was adopted.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Now we pass on to the Supplementary List of Business.

**Motion re Formation of the Assam Embankment and Drainage Works Advisory Committee**

**The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY:** I beg, Sir, to move that this Assembly recommends that a Committee be formed for the life-time of this Assembly to be called the “Assam Embankment and Drainage Works Advisory Committee” with the following as members:—

1. Hon'ble Minister, Public Works Department—President.
2. Superintending Engineer, Embankment and Drainage Circle—Secretary.
3. Chief Engineer, Assam—Member.
4. Chief Engineer, Post-War Reconstruction—Member.
5. Hon'ble Minister, Local Self-Government and Agriculture—Member.
6. Secretary, Planning and Development—Member.
7. Secretary, Finance—Member.
- 8-17. Ten Members of Legislative Assembly to be elected by the Assembly—  
one from each district—Member.
- 18-19. Two Members of Legislative Council—Member.
- 20-21. Two members nominated by Government—Member.

The Committee is to advise Government on all important schemes and also to fix priority of Embankment and Drainage Schemes which Government propose to undertake from time to time and that this Assembly do elect in accordance with the instructions contained in the voting paper 10 Members of the Assembly to the said Advisory Committee.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** Motion moved:

“That this Assembly recommends that a Committee be formed for the life-time of this Assembly to be called the ‘Assam Embankment and Drainage Works Advisory Committee’ with the following as members:—

1. Hon'ble Minister, Public Works Department—President.
2. Superintending Engineer, Embankment and Drainage Circle—Secretary.
3. Chief Engineer, Assam—Member.
4. Chief Engineer, Post-War Reconstruction—Member.
5. Hon'ble Minister, Local Self-Government and Agriculture—Member.
6. Secretary, Planning and Development—Member.
7. Secretary, Finance—Member.
- 8-17. Ten Members of Legislative Assembly to be elected by the Assembly—  
one from each district—Member.
- 18-19. Two Members of Legislative Council—Member.
- 20-21. Two members nominated by Government—Member.

The Committee is to advise Government on all important schemes and also to fix priority of Embankment and Drainage Schemes which Government propose to undertake from time to time and that this Assembly do elect in accordance with the instructions contained in the voting paper 10 Members of the Assembly to the said Advisory Committee."

**Shri SATINDRA MOHANDEV :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, in this connection I want to impress upon the Hon'ble Minister for Public Works Department to consider the cases of Sylhet and Cachar Districts. If members are selected on the district basis, I think, Sylhet and Cachar Districts will not be properly represented. I request the Hon'ble Minister to devise any other means so that Sylhet and Cachar may be well represented, on their population basis.

**The Hon'ble Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, Cachar is a District by itself and Sylhet District is one District. There will be one member for the Sylhet District. So I propose to nominate one member for the Sylhet District. Then from the Upper House there will be one Member from the Sylhet District. So in all there will be three. We shall put a Motion in the Upper House that one Member will be from the Sylhet District. But there is another point, *i.e.*, regarding the Planting Group. We have promised that one Member, the Leader of the European Group, will be taken as the nominated Member, *i.e.*, Mr. Faull.

**Mr. W. R. FAULL :** Not in my capacity, Sir, as Leader of this Group, but because of my position in relation to and my knowledge of water-ways in Assam.

**The Hon ble the SPEAKER :** The question is :

"That this Assembly recommends that a Committee be formed for the life time of this Assembly to be called the 'Assam Embankment and Drainage Works Advisory Committee' with the following as members :—

1. Hon'ble Minister, Public Works Department—President.
2. Superintending Engineer, Embankment and Drainage Circle—Secretary.
3. Chief Engineer, Assam—Member.
4. Chief Engineer, Post-War Reconstruction—Member.
5. Hon'ble Minister, Local Self-Government and Agriculture—Member.
6. Secretary, Planning and Development—Member.
7. Secretary, Finance—Member.
- 8-17. Ten Members of Legislative Assembly to be elected by the Assembly—  
one from each district—Member.
- 18-19. Two Members of Legislative Council—Member.
- 20-21. Two Members nominated by Government—Member.

The Committee is to advise Government on all important schemes and also to fix priority of Embankment and Drainage Schemes which Government propose to undertake from time to time and that this Assembly do elect in accordance with the instructions contained in the voting paper 10 Members of the Assembly to the said Advisory Committee."

The question was adopted.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** Under the rules I hereby fix Saturday, the 27th March, 1947 as the date for holding the election to the Assam Embankment and Drainage Works Advisory Committee. Voting will be held between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m., in the Committee Room No. 1 as soon as the business of the sitting is finished.

Consideration of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Appropriation Accounts for 1944-45 and approval of the expenditure as recommended by the Public Accounts Committee on the Accounts for 1944-45

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Assembly do proceed to consider the Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Appropriation Accounts for 1944-45 and that the Assembly do approve the expenditure of Rs. 90,22,255 as recommended by the Public Accounts Committee on the accounts for 1944-45.

Now, in moving this Motion I draw the attention of the hon. Members to the Audit Report at page 2, paragraph 2 that thirty-five demands for grants amounting to Rs. 4,27,80,800 were moved in the Assembly and voted by it without any reduction. This amount and another sum of Rs. 90,35,220 required to meet expenditure charged on the revenues of the Province were included in the Schedule of authorised expenditure, which was authenticated by His Excellency the Governor of Assam in March 1944 under section 89 of the Government of India Act, 1935. In connection with that I also draw the attention of the hon. Members to page 5. There was a gross excess of Rs. 90,22,255 requiring regularisation by the Legislature as set forth in paragraph 8 below. As against this there were savings under other grants amounting to Rs. 30,11,545 resulting in a net excess of Rs. 60,03,710. The excess over voted grants are shown in Item No. 8 at page 5. This Audit Report was placed before the Public Accounts Committee and the Public Accounts Committee, after examining the different objections and after hearing the explanations, made recommendations that the excesses referred to in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Audit Report should be regularised and in accordance with that advice in placing the Report of the Public Accounts Committee I move that this amount of Rs. 90,22,255 may be regularised by this Assembly.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER :** Motion moved :

"That the Assembly do proceed to consider the Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Appropriation Accounts for 1944-45 and that the Assembly do approve the expenditure of Rs. 90,22,255 as recommended by the Public Accounts Committee on the Accounts for 1944-45."

**Mr. W. R. FAULL :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have examined the printed Report of the Public Accounts Committee and the Appropriation Accounts of the Government of Assam for the year 1944-45 with very great interest, and I hope this valuable Report will be studied not only by all Members of the Legislature but also by Heads of Departments and other Government officials.

It is most encouraging to me to find that the Members appointed by this House to this Committee have taken such a very keen interest in examining the financial and accounting arrangements of the administration. They have very rightly pressed a number of points for action to be taken and have also very rightly observed that the excuses offered by the Departments were not acceptable to them.

I will turn first of all to the proceedings of the Accounts Committee. The Committee started by considering last year's recommendations. It was there observed that the Committee, in the previous year, had commented on the defective accounts of three emergent Departments—Supply, Assam Transport and Civil Defence. I will not refer to the question of Civil Defence as these accounts are practically finished, but I do not consider that the explanations



offered on behalf of the Government Departments regarding Supply and Assam Transport can be regarded as adequate, and I am gratified to see that the Members of the Public Accounts Committee also shared this view. Where I am inclined to differ from them is in their recommendation that reorganization of account maintenance should be deferred until the report of an Enquiry Committee on Assam Transport is published. In our view the importance of maintaining adequate commercial accounts is so pressing that this matter should not be delayed whilst difficult enquiries, which I understand are now proceeding, are complete. We are also not clear whether there is any profit and loss statement being prepared for Supply accounts or Assam Transport. If there is, might we request the Hon'ble Finance Minister to arrange for these to be printed and placed before this House so that we can examine the financial position of these enterprises?

I do not wish to reopen ancient history but it is very disquieting to learn that in the A.R.P. organization in almost all offices, no regular accounts of stores locally purchased from time to time or received from the Central Government were maintained.

In connection with the large excess in voted expenditure under 5—Forests—there is a serious reflection on the efficiency of the Forest Department. It appears that the Comptroller had been pressing the Forest Department to present its demand for timber supplied to the Government of India and the Department was required to submit proper vouchers for the claim. After a great deal of delay it was reported that the vouchers were missing and it appears that a report was being submitted to the Chief Secretary on this matter. After an interval of over three years the balance had been reduced to some 13 lakhs but even this is a very large amount and should obviously have been cleared up with much greater expedition.

We agree that there has been pressure of work but Government are not the only organization that had to work at heavy pressure in war time, and other Departments are required to keep their accounts in proper order and up-to-date. A commercial firm would get no sympathy from the Income-tax Department if it told them that it could not settle its accounts yet for the year 1943, and would inevitably be summarily assessed to income-tax.

In regard to the same Department, I would draw the attention of this House to a very serious matter. I do not know the officers concerned in this but I feel that the handling of this matter was most unsatisfactory. It is stated that an officer had recorded incorrect measurements and made payments without adequate check. No proceedings were drawn up against the officer on the ground that if he had been suspended he would not have been available for duty for four or five months. It appears subsequently that he was reduced in his grade.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Magistrates in this Province are regularly sending persons to jails for cheating. If any person makes an incorrect statement in a return which has to be submitted to Government, for example for income-tax purposes, they are liable to imprisonment. This appears to have been a clear case of fraud in which Government, but for this detection, would have suffered a loss. We can see no justification for retaining in service officers of this type and we cannot regard Government as having any serious intention of tackling the question of corruption until more exemplary action is taken against officers who are clearly proved to be dishonest.

I would also invite the attention of this House to losses incurred by the Agricultural Department. The Comptroller had stated that he was not prepared to accept the excuses advanced by Government and urged that a very heavy loss had occurred in wastage of potatoes, and pressed that responsibility must rest

with some officer. We are glad to note that the Committee was also not satisfied and have pressed for steps to be taken to allocate responsibility and of stricter supervision arrangements. In this connection I would emphasize that there is an urgent need for special precautions in the Agricultural Department when supplies are purchased and sold again, to see firstly that undue loss is not sustained and, when supplied—as is frequently the case—are sold at concession rates and that the transactions are not fictitious.

As I have already mentioned I do not propose to go in any detail into the Assam Transport's affairs but we feel that Finance Department cannot so easily avoid its responsibility as has been suggested in the evidence recorded before the Committee. Even if the concern was being started on commercial lines it was necessary to have a proper system of accounts. In point of fact, we would urge that the commercial system of accounts, if properly followed, should have given far more accurate control than the normal Government system of accounts, but it was clearly the responsibility of Finance Department, who are charged with the application of the principles of sound finance, to have paid close attention to this matter.

In conclusion, I shall have occasion to refer on a later date to a further point which is dealt with by the Public Accounts Committee, but I would give a very special welcome to the statement which has been approved by the Public Accounts Committee presided over by the Hon'ble Finance Minister, to the effect that *no expenditure involving a change in policy should be incurred without giving the Legislature a chance to discuss the merits or otherwise of the new policy*.

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI:** Sir, these accounts were maintained during the war time practically when almost all of us were entrapped in jail, and we were not in any way responsible for the manner in which those accounts were maintained. However, Sir, since the taking charge of Office I have been trying to regularise the accounts and to see that all Departments keep their accounts properly of the money belonging to the public and for which the Government is a trustee. I am also endeavouring to see that the Finance Department tries to set things right in respect of those irregularities.

I may inform the hon. Members that the Assam Transport and the Supply Departments are now preparing their balance-sheets from time to time. As regards publishing the balance sheets from time to time, the matter will be considered by the Government. As regards the Supply Department's accounts, I may inform the hon. Members of this House that since the appointment of a Financial Adviser, whose services have been lent by the Central Government, the accounts are well looked into. From the time of his taking over charge the amount of percentage of shrinkage, loss in transit, depreciations, etc., and other aspect of all trading branches are taken into consideration in finally submitting a proposal.

With regard to the items of loss in the Agricultural Department, I may read out from the Report of the Public Accounts Committee: "With reference to the loss of Rs.61,448-1-9 brought to light on page 102 of the Audit Report, the Committee recommends that Government should direct the Director of Agriculture to take prompt steps to allocate responsibility for the loss and to impress on him the desirability of enforcing stricter control and supervision to avoid such losses in future." Sir, this is the unanimous opinion of the Committee. As soon as these are accepted by this House we propose to go into the matter and see on whom the responsibility for the loss can be fixed.

I think, Sir, the reports that are published by the Assam Transport Organization must have been made after regularising their accounts. These reports will be placed before the next Public Accounts Committee.

I may again read out from the Report: "The Committee was not satisfied with the explanation given for the loss of Rs.33,23,866 in respect of rice and

paddy on account of shrinkage and other causes and a loss of Rs.24,19,232 on account of standard cloth, noticed in the Profit and Loss Accounts." I was myself surprised to find such a huge loss. As soon as the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee are accepted by the House we will try to find out and fix responsibility, if possible, on the officers who were responsible for this state of affairs.

Then, Sir, a payment of Rs.7,00,000 was made to the Eastern Bengal and Assam Commercial Syndicate towards their dues of Rs.7,83,460 while Government stock of rice and paddy worth Rs.60,00,000 still remained with them when the contract terminated. I was myself surprised and horrified at the state of affairs.

**Srijut BELIRAM DAS:** "On a point of information, Sir. May I know whether Government have taken any steps against the officers responsible for these losses?"

**The Hon'ble Srijut BISHNURAM MEDHI:** Sir, the procedure is this: that once a matter is placed before the Public Accounts Committee, which is composed of the elected representatives of this House, the recommendations of the Committee must be accepted by the House before any action can be taken. As soon as the Report has been accepted by the House we will try to fix responsibility.

The Committee goes on "It is the considered view of the Committee that this payment should not have been made before the accounts in respect of the stock had been adjusted. The Committee recommends that investigation should be made on what grounds or reasons this payment could be justified and further recommends that no further payment should be made until the stock had been completely taken over by Government".

Another surprising item was "the original rate of commission paid to this Syndicate was two annas per maund. This was raised to three annas per maund. The Committee was not satisfied with the manner in which this rate was raised and would recommend that a proper investigation should be made to find out whether there was a proper sanction behind this enhancement of the rate of commission."

In connection with another Syndicate, Sir, the rate of commission was raised, but I have not sanctioned the increase as yet. The officer responsible has been suspended and the case is being examined. Had we been in Office, Sir, at that time we would certainly have taken action. But now the position is: once these matters are placed before the Public Accounts Committee it is not desirable to take any action unless the recommendations of the Committee are accepted by the House. The Report of the Committee relates to the year ending on the 31st March, 1945 when almost all of us were in jail. We assumed Office only a year ago and are not in any way responsible for this deplorable state of affairs.

**Mr. W. R. FAULL:** It was not my intention to accuse the Hon'ble Finance Minister. I merely wished to draw his attention to particular items so that he might be forewarned for the future.

**The Hon'ble the SPEAKER:** The question is: "That the Assémbly do proceed to consider the Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Appropriation Accounts for 1944-45 and that the Assémbly do approve the expenditure of Rs.90,22,255 as recommended by the Public Accounts Committee on the accounts for 1944-45."

The question was adopted.

#### Adjournment

The Assémbly was then adjourned till 11 a.m., on Saturday, the 22nd March, 1947.

-SHILLONG:

The 21st May, 1947.

A. K. BARUA,  
Secretary, Legislative Assémbly, Assam.