

**Assam
Legislative Assembly
Debates**

OFFICIAL REPORT

**SEVENTH SESSION OF THE ASSAM LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY ASSEMBLED AFTER THE
FOURTH GENERAL ELECTIONS UNDER
THE SOVEREIGN DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLICAN CONSTITUTION
OF INDIA**

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Proceedings of the Fifth Session of the Assam Legislative Assembly assembled
after the Fourth General Elections under the Sovereign Democratic
Republican Constitution of India

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 10 A. M. on
Tuesday, the 27th August, 1968.

PRESENT :

Shri MOHI KANTA DAS, M.A., B.L., Deputy Speaker, in the Chair, 11
(eleven) Ministers, 6 (six) Ministers of State, 3 (three) Deputy Ministers and
93 (ninety-three) Members.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(To which oral answers were given)

Re: Food Shortage

M. SHAMSUL HUDA asked:

- *1. Will the Minister-in-charge of Supply be pleased to state—
- What was the percentage of food shortage in the State during the first 6 months of 1968?
 - Whether Government is aware of this percentage of food shortage of the period concerned at the beginning of the year?
 - If so, whether precaution was taken?
 - If precaution taken, why food crisis leading to starvation death in the State could not be prevented?

Shri RAMESH CHANDRA BAROOAH (Minister, Supply) replied:

- Estimate of first six months shortage is not available. Shortage of estimated cereals during the crop year 1967-68 was 2.62 lakh tonnes.
 - Yes, to the above estimated amount of shortage.
 - Action was taken to obtain rice and wheat from Government of India and maize, maize products, atta and suji from other States.
 - There was no starvation death though scarcity condition developed in certain parts of the State, but the situation was promptly brought under control.

M. Shamsul Huda: The Minister-in-charge Supply was pleased to reply that the shortage of foodstuff during the six months was not available. Is it a fact that the Government had no idea about the foodstuff during this period?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I have not stated that. I have stated that the total shortage was 2.62 lakhs tonnes. Only the shortage during the first six months was not separately available.

M. Shamsul Huda: What are the factors responsible for this shortage?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: This shortfall was due to the shortage of production.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: The Minister has stated in reply to (1) (c) that they have taken steps to obtain rice and other essential commodities from the Government of India as well as from other States. Whether these were received by the Government of Assam? If so, what is the quantity?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: Wheat, Maize etc. we have received in plenty. So far rice is concerned, we have received only 4000 tonnes.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: Whether Government of Assam has made any assessment as to the requirement of the State per month? If so, what is the quantity?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I have already stated about the total requirement of our State.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: What is that?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: The total requirement of the State is 21 lakhs 93 thousands tonnes.

Shri Sadhan Ranjan Sarkar: What is the total quantity held by the Government during that period?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I have already said that the shortage is by about 2.62 lakhs tonnes. Our estimated requirement is 21 lakhs 93 thousand tonnes and our shortfall is 2.62 lakhs tonnes.

Shri ATUL CHANDRA GOSWAMI:—চৰকাৰে অখাঢ় খাই, মানুহ মৰিছে বুলি কৈছে। খাবলৈ নোহোৱাৰ কাৰণে যে মানুহে অখাঢ় খাবলগীয়া হৈছে—এই কথা চৰকাৰে স্বীকাৰ কৰিবনে? (No reply.)

Shri Sadhan Ranjan Sarkar: My question was what is the total quantity held at the disposal of the Government?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: It is a question of simple arithmetic. The shortage is about 2.62 lakhs tonnes and by simple arithmetic we can have it.

Shri ATUL CHANDRA GOSWAMI: (d) প্ৰশ্নৰ ওচৰত চৰকাৰে Starvation death হোৱা নাই বুলি কৈছে। ক'গজে-পত্ৰই এই মৃত্যুৰ বাৰ্তা ওলালেও চৰকাৰে খাবলৈ নাপায় মৰা নাই বুলি কয় আৰু কয়, অথাচ গাইহে মৰিছে।

Shri RAMESH CHANDRA BAROOAH:—কোনো কোনো particular কেচত অথাচ খাই মানুহ মৰা বুলি শুনিছো।

M. Shamsul Huda: Was there any postmortem examination to find out why the death occurred?

Shri RAMESH CHANDRA BAROOAH:—কোনো কোনো কেচত প'ষ্টমৰ্টেমৰ আৱশ্যক হয়, সকলোতে নহয়।

M. Shamsul Huda: Whether the Government is aware of any death due to starvation?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: There was report, but on our enquiry from the district we could know that there was no starvation death.

Shri Giasuddin Ahmed: Whenever there is any allegation of starvation death, the Government denies that there is any starvation death. May I know what is the definition of starvation death?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I think I need not define what is starvation death.

Shri Kamini Mohan Sarma:—মন্ত্ৰী মহোদয়ে খাচু অনাটনৰ কাৰণে মানুহ মৰা নাই বুলি কৈছে। মই জনাব খুজিছো—ৰঙীয়া অঞ্চলৰ আমলি গাঁৱৰ দুজন মানুহ মৰিছে আৰু এজনী ছোৱালী মৰিছে। এই কথা মন্ত্ৰীমহোদয়ে বোধ কৰোঁ জানে। খাচু অনাটন আৰু তাৰ লগত জড়িত মানুহৰ মৃত্যু সংবাদ আদি আমি যোৱামাৰ্চ মাহৰ পৰাই জনাই আহিছো কিন্তু সেই সম্পৰ্কত চৰকাৰে কোনো প্ৰতিকাৰ কৰিব পৰা নাই।

Mr Deputy Speaker: There were two questions (1) Whether there was any starvation death and second one is, whether the Government were in a position to supply the adequate quantity of food stuff on the representation by the public. Put one by one. First you answer whether there was any starvation death at Rangiya? First you answer whether there

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I have already stated that our reports indicate there was no starvation death in any part of Assam.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Whether there was adequate supply of food stuff?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: It is not possible to say whether the food stuff was adequate or not, but whenever we received representations about shortage of food stuff we tried our best to send the food stuff.

Shri Promode Chandra Gogoi: Whether the food stuff supplied to Rangiya was adequate?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: We rushed in food. It may not be adequate.

M. A. Musawwir Choudhury: In Rangiya there was starvation death, do you agree?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: Never.

Shri Kabir Chandra Roy Pradhani:—কোনো কোনো অঞ্চলত নেকি ? starvation death ৰ খবৰ চৰকাৰে পাইছে

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah:—বেলেগ প্ৰশ্ন নহলে এই প্ৰশ্নৰ উত্তৰ দিব পৰা নহয় ।

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: Are we to understand from the statement that the Government is not in a position to apprise the august House whether the food supply was adequate or not? Are we to understand that the starvation deaths as has been mentioned by the hon. Members are proved?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: Those details can be given if a particular question is put on those points.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: Whether the Government can apprise this august House that during the months of May, June and July which were the areas where scarcity of food was prevailing?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: If a separate question is put, I can give these details.

Shri Promode Chandra Gogoi: The Minister is evading this question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, order. The question is whether Government has any information about the areas where scarcity was prevailing? You answer this first.

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: Yes, there were some areas particularly the Mangaldai area and also Dhubri subdivision.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: Are we to understand from the Minister's reply that since food had to be rushed to the Mangaldai and Nalbari areas due to acute scarcity of foodstuff in those areas, some people died of starvation before food could reach there?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I have not said that. I have always denied that there was any starvation death.

M. Shamsul Huda: May I know whether the Minister is aware of the fact that one daughter of Shri Ahmed Ali of Kandulimari gaon No. 2 died of starvation and the D.C. Nowgong paid a gratuity of Rs.25 to the surviving members of the family?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: About this particular case, I cannot say anything off hand.

Shri Rothindra Nath Sen: Since the Hon'ble Minister denies strongly that there was no starvation death, may we know whether he will agree with us that starvation can cause death?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: That is putting the question in a very cumbrous way. My reply is: there was no starvation death.

Shri Rothindra Nath Sen: If somebody starves constantly, will he die or will he survive?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: That is a hypothetical question.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: May I know from the Hon'ble Minister of Supply what is the correct definition of starvation?

(No reply)

Shri Rothindra Nath Sen: If we point out several families who are actually starving, what does the Government propose to do for them? Is there any provision for Government to do something for the starving families?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: That is a hypothetical question.

Shri Rothindra Nath Sen: That is not a hypothetical question. If the families are pointed out, whether Government is prepared to do something for these starving families?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: Yes, if they are pointed out, Government will take steps.

Shri Mohidhar Pegu : কেইবাদিনো লঘোনে থকা অৱশ্যে মৃত্যু হোৱা নাই, সেই অৱস্থাটো মৃত্যু তুল্য বুলি চৰকাৰে নাভাবে নেকি ?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah : সেইটো কথাৰ মোৰ খবৰ নাই। এই বিলাক ঘটনা ক'ত ঘটিছিল ?

Shri Mohidhar Pegu : গোৱালপাৰা জিলাৰ দুধনৈ Sub-Division ত ১৫ জন মানুহ মৰিছে। সেই কথা মাননীয় মন্ত্ৰী মহোদয়ে জানেনে ?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah : তেনে খবৰ পোৱা নাই।

Shri Kabir Chandra Roy Pradhani : আগুৱনি আঞ্চলিক পঞ্চায়ত এৰিয়াত চণ্ডীচৰণ দেবনাথ নামৰ এজন মানুহ খাছৰ অভাৱত মৰিছে সেই কথা চৰকাৰে জানেনে ?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah : এইদৰে প্ৰশ্নৰ যোগেদি যদি এই বিলাক কথা সোধা হয় তেন্তে এই কথা বিলাকৰ কেনেদৰে উত্তৰ দিব ?

Shri Kamini Moban Sarma : মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ে এই কথা জানেনে যে বড়ীয়া অঞ্চলৰ শলুয়া গাঁৱৰ Tribal মাউকী মানুহ গোৰাকীয়ে খাগৰ অভাৱত লৰা ছোৱালীক পুৱাৰ নোৱাৰাৰ কাৰণে গলত ফাঁচী লগাত দিছে ? এই কথা মাননীয় মুগামষ্টী মহোদয়ক বান প্ৰপীড়িত অঞ্চল চাবলৈ মাউতে জনাইছিল। সেই দিনয়ে চৰকাৰে কি ব্যৱস্থা কৰিছে। এই কথা মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ে জানেনে যে বড়ীয়া অঞ্চলৰ খাগৰ নাটনিত কষ্ট ভোগা প্ৰায় ৫৬ ভাগৰ জন লোকে প্ৰচৈচন কৰি S. D. C. অফিচ যোগাও কৰিছিল ?

(একটি অৰ কোন মাহত) June মাহত। সেই দিনয়ে চৰকাৰে কি ব্যৱস্থা হাতত লৈছে ? **Shri Bimala Prasad Chaliha :** (Chief Minister) উপাধ্যক্ষ মহোদয়, বড়ীয়া অঞ্চলত এনেকুৱা ঘটনা হব নোৱাৰে। তাৰ কাৰণ হৈছে মাননীয় সদস্যই নিজে অঞ্চলটোত সহায় কৰিবলৈ সাজু আছে আৰু আমাৰ সকলোবোৰ বেচৰকাৰী অনুষ্ঠান সক্ৰিয় হৈ আছিল। মানুহৰ চুগ-কষ্ট হৈছে যদিও মাননীয় সদস্য সকল থকাত এই প্ৰপীড়িত সকলে অনাহাৰে বা অন্ধাহাৰে থাকি মৃত্যু বৰণ কৰা নাই।

Shri Kandarpa Narayan Banikya: The Minister has very frankly stated that there was inadequate supply of foodstuff in Mangaldai Kamalpur and Rangiya areas. How can he then say there was no starvation?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: In reply to Mr. Shamsul Huda's question, I said that we sent foodstuff, which might be adequate or might not be adequate. That does not mean that this will lead to starvation.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: May I know from the Hon'ble Minister what are those places from which Government received reports of starvation and through which agencies Government examined the death cases on the basis of which they say those cases were not cases of starvation deaths?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: If a separate question is put, I can give all these details—not in reply to this supplementary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Whether Government have any information about the number of starvation deaths?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: As I have already said, we got reports of starvation death. We enquired and found that these were not cases of starvation death.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: Through which agencies these cases were examined?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: Through the agencies of Deputy Commissioners and Subdivisional Officers.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: May I know whether any medical examination was made in those cases and, if so, can we request the Hon'ble Minister to furnish the medical reports on those cases to this House?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: This is a repetition of the same question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Whether any post-mortem examination was made into those cases?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I have already stated that only in case of unnatural deaths, post-mortem is undertaken. As these were not cases of unnatural death, no question of post-mortem arose.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: Are we to understand that these cases were not examined by any medical authority?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: It was not considered necessary.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: Then how could Government establish that these were not cases of starvation deaths?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I have already said that enquiries were made by the D.C.s and the S.D.Os. and they submitted reports after enquiry that they were not cases of unnatural death.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: May I request the Hon'ble Minister to place those reports from the D.Cs, and S.D.Os. before the House?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: There were many such reports. If the hon. Member puts a separate question about particular areas, I shall be able to reply.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: I want to know about starvation deaths in Rangiya and Mangaldai areas.

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I have already said that on enquiry they were not found to be cases of starvation deaths.

Dr. Surendra Nath Das : কেন্দ্ৰৰ পৰা যিবিলাক মাকৈ আনিছে সেই বিলাক খাওঁশস্ত্ৰ যে অনুপযোগী সেই কথাটো মাননীয় মন্ত্ৰী মহোদয়ে জানেনে ?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah : সকলোবিলাক অনুপযোগী নহয় কিন্তু কিছু কিছু তেনে বেয়া বুলি গম পাইছোঁ।

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua : সেইটো অঞ্চলত কি অনুসন্ধানৰ পৰিকল্পনা কৰি Starvation death নোহোৱা বুলি কৈছিল সেই কথা পৰিস্কাৰ কৈ সদনত জনাব লাগে বুলি আমি দাবী জনাইছোঁ।

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: If it is the desire of the House I will submit the report.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: Will the Minister be pleased to get the report of the Deputy Commissioner and the Sub-Divisional Officer?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: Sir, if you direct me I will.

Shri Maneswar Boro : মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ে কৈছে যে গাবলৈ নেপাই মানুহ মৰা নাই। কিন্তু মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ে কৈছে যে ৩ লাখ ২২ হেক্টৰ টন গাবলৈ নাটনি আছিল। তেনেভাৱে গাবলৈ নেপাই মানুহ নমৰিবলৈ? সেই কাৰণে স্তম্ভিত সেই নাটনি গাবলৈ কিমান দিনৰ পিছত আৰু পালে আৰু অসমৰ মানুহক দৈনিক কিমান খাদ্য লাগে সেইটো মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ে জনাব নে?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah,: Sir, if the hon. Member goes through my reply he will find that it is replied. In reply (c) I have stated that 'action was taken to obtain rice and wheat from Government of India and maize, maize products, atta and suji from other States,' and that is in order to meet the shortage.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua : যদি চৰকাৰে action লৈছে তেন্তে কেন্দ্ৰীয় চৰকাৰৰ পৰা আহিব লগীয়া বস্তুখিনি আমাৰ চৰকাৰে পাইছিলে?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah : আমি বস্তু পাইয়েই আছো।

Shri Dulal Chandra Baruah: আমাৰ চৰকাৰে কিমান বস্তু বিচাৰিছিল, কেতিয়া বিচাৰিছিল আৰু কেতিয়া পালে?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah : এই হিচাবটো পিছতহে দিব পৰা যাব। কাৰণ বস্তু এতিয়াও আহিয়েই আছে।

Shri Dulal Chandra Baruah: What was our requirement.

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah : মই কৈছোৱেই যে বস্তু এতিয়াও আহিয়েই আছে।

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: We wanted to know from the Minister what was the actual requirement of the State and what was the quantity asked for from the Government of India?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The main question is whether you have received from the Government of India the actual quantity of foodstuff which were necessary to meet the situation. That is the plain question.

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I have replied to this question that there is a shortage of 2.62 lakh tonnes and from supply made by the Government of India we are meeting the shortage. It is a continuing process and at the end of year the position will be known.

Shri Jagannath Singha: Is the Minister aware that bamboo shoots are also included in the foodstuff?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I am not aware of that.

M. Shamsul Huda : মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ে কেইবাটাও অঞ্চলত হোৱা Food crisis ৰ কথা কৈছে। কিন্তু নগাঁৱৰ উত্তৰাঞ্চলত Food crisis হৈছিল নে নাই সেই কথাটো চৰকাৰে জানেনে?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah : অসমৰ বহুত ঠাইতে Food crisis হৈছিল। সেই কথা চৰকাৰে জানিবলৈ পাইছে।

M. Shamsul Huda : মই স্বধিব খুজিছো নগাঁৱৰ উত্তৰ অঞ্চলত হৈছিল নে নাই।

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah:—কোন অঞ্চলত হৈছিল তাৰ নাম কওঁক।

M. Shamsul Huda : নগাওঁ জিলাৰ টিং অঞ্চলৰ কথা মই স্বধিছো।

Re: Inspection held at a Corporation Godown in December 1967

M. SHAMSUL HUDA asked:

- *2. Will the Minister in-charge of Supply be pleased to state—
- (a) Whether it is a fact that the Deputy Commissioner, Nowgong along with Food Corporation Officer, held an inspection at a Corporation Godown in December 1967 regarding quality of paddy?
 - (b) Whether it is a fact that this inspection revealed contents of dirt, sand and other foreign materials ranging from 5 per cent to 17 per cent in paddy stocked by the Corporation?
 - (c) Whether it is a fact that this finding was confirmed by the Technical Experts (Officers) of the Food Corporation of India (Assam) also?
 - (d) Whether the Food Corporation of India in Assm is supposed to accept paddy without examining the quality?
 - (e) Whether this Organisation is compelled to accept paddy of any quality?
 - (f) If not, why and how there has been so much deterioration of the quality of paddy procured by the Food Corporation of India (Assam) in 1967-68?

Shri RAMESH CHANDRA BAROOAH (Minister, Supply) replied:

2. (a)—Yes. The Deputy Commissioner, Nowgong inspected two bags of paddy each at F.C.I. Godown at Kathatali and Dabaka.

(b)—Percentage of refraction in the e 4 bags varied from 3 per cent to 5 per cent.

(c)—No.

(d)—No.

(e)—No.

(f)—No bad quality paddy was procured.

M. Shamsul Huda: Sir, may I know from the Hon'ble Minister that in spite of the fact that the Food Corporation of India examined each and every bag of paddy before taking delivery and under the circumstances how so much deterioration there could be in the paddy procured by the F.C.I.?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: Sir, the Hon'ble Member's question pre-supposes all paddy was bad. But I do not know that all paddy was bad. Some paddy was found bad and necessary steps were taken in those cases.

M. Shamsul Huda: May I know whether it is a fact that there was pre-planned conspiracy to make the procurement of food commodities by the Corporation a unsuccessful one?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I am not aware. But the conspiracy by whom?

M. Shamsul Huda: By the interested parties.

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: Sir it is a vague question.

Shri Rabimuddin Ahmed:—F.C.I. এ যি paddy procure কৰিছে সেইটো আগতে আছিল 56% তাৰ ঠাইত এতিয়া 65% কৰিছে অৰ্থাৎ উপৰুক্ত অনুপাতে চাউল মিলাবে দিব লাগে। এতিয়া 65% কৈ মিল মালিকে দিছেনে ?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: This question can be answered in reply to question No. 4. There are details about it. If a supplementary is put the question will be answered.

M. Shamsul Huda:—মই মন্ত্ৰী মহোদয়ক সুধিব খুজিছো যে আমাৰ F.C.I. যেতিয়া ধান সংগ্ৰহ কৰি মিলক দিয়ে সেই সময়ত আমাৰ বাজ্যিক চৰকাৰৰ বিষয়াই চাই নে নেচাই ?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah:—এই বাৰুসাতো আছিল 'কঙু বহুতমানে F. C. I. বিষয়াইহে চায়। এতিয়া এইটো চোৱাৰ দায়িত্ব Food Corporation ৰ।

M. Shamsul Huda:—ধান 'মিলত দিয়াৰ পিছত supply বিভাগৰ কোনো দায়িত্ব নেথাকে। supply বিভাগৰ বিষয়াই পৰীক্ষা কৰে 'মিলত দিয়াৰ আগতে। বেয়া ধান ললে মিলত পৰীক্ষা কৰা দায়িত্ব আমাৰ supply বিভাগৰ বিষয়াৰ হাতত নথকাৰ অজুহাতত বেয়া চাউলৰ খাজ সবববাহ কৰা হৈছে। এই দুটাৰ ভিতৰত co-ordination কৰাৰ বাৰুসা চৰকাৰে কৰিছে নে?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah:—'মিল বিলাকে ভাল ধান চাই লব লাগে। গতিকে এই দায়িত্ব মিল মালিকৰ।

Shri Kamini Mohan Sarma:—ধান 'মিহলি চাউল দিয়া হয়নে চাউল মিহলি ধান দিয়া হয়?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah:—চাউল হে দিয়া হয়।

Shri Sarat Chandra Rava:—আমি দেখিছো এক কিলো চাউলত এপোৱা মান ধান ওলায়। এইটো কেনেকৈ হয়?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah:—আমাৰ consumers এ Resistance দিব লাগে। তেওঁলোকে চৰকাৰৰ ওচৰত আপত্তি জনাব লাগে আৰু যি থিনি বেয়া চাউল দিয়ে সেইখিনি লব নেলাগে। There is no consumers' resistance. If there is consumers' resistance, the millers will be forced to supply good quality rice.

M. Mainul Haque Chaudhury: Does the Minister mean that Government has no duty in the matter and they have abdicated their powers and left the matter to the buyers for consumers' resistance? They will go on giving third rate rice mixed with paddy, stones, glasses, and the Government Inspectors and the Supply Department will remain as silent spectators abdicating their responsibility to the consumers?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: Government surely have responsibility but buyers have got also corresponding responsibility.

Shri Gaurisankar Bhattacharyya:—মন্ত্ৰী ডাঙৰীয়াই—খং বা অভিমান কৰি যে এই কথা কৈছে সেইটো বুজিছো। কিন্তু আজি এনেকুৱা অৱস্থা হৈছে—চাউলৰ লগত শিল, কাচ, ধান আদি নানা ধৰণৰ লেটেৰা বস্তু মিহলি হৈ আছে আৰু সেই বিলাকৰ কাৰণে ৰাইজে প্ৰতিবাদ কৰিছে। এনে কাৰণতেই বিক্ষোভ দেখুৱা হৈছে, প্ৰয়োজন হলে পিচত আৰু কৰিব। কিন্তু কথা হৈছে, এই বিষয়ত চৰকাৰে কৰ্তব্য আছে। ৰাইজক খাওঁৰ নামত জানো অখাওঁ খুওৱা

হোৱা নাই। এই বিষয়ত চৰকাৰ কেন্সেল নক্সত শাসন কৰাৰে নহয়। যদি এই প্ৰশ্নৰ জৰিয়তে কেইটামান কথা হৈছে যে F.C.I. ৰ গুণগত ভেদাল বস্তু পেলোৱা গৈছে শতকৰা পাচ ভাগ তেনে মিতলি আছে। সেইবোৰক বস্তুত সোৱাওঁছে। সেইবিন্যাসক কৰাৰ চৰকাৰে কি ব্যৱস্থা কৰিছে? পৰৱৰ্তী সেই মাগুহ বিলাকক ধৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰিছেনে নাই?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah:—এই ভাৱ চৰকাৰৰ duty নাই বুলি কোৱা নাই। চৰকাৰৰ কৰ্ত্তব্য আছে। এই কৈটো ক্ৰেনাৰা সকলে (buyers) বেয়া বস্তু কিনিব নালাগে। এই কথাৰ বিচাৰৰ পাত্ৰ F.C.I. ৰ Quality Control Inspector এওঁটো কৰিছে। তেওঁলোকে এই বিষয়ে চাব

Shri Gaurisankar Bhattacharyya:—এটা Particular case পৰীক্ষা কৰি পোৱা গৈছে যে, ভাৱ শতকৰা ১ (পাচ) ভাগ ভেদাল মেতিয়া এটা particular case ধৰা পৰিছে—কোনো এই কাম কৰিছে সেইটো ধৰা পৰিছেনে নাই? এজন ধৰা পেলাই শাস্তি দিলে বাকীবিলোক সাধন হ'ব। এই ভেদাল কৰা বিলাকক ধৰাৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰিব পৰা হৈছেনে নাই?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah:—এই প্ৰশ্নৰ উত্তৰ পিচত খবৰ কৰিহে দিব পৰা হ'ব।

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua:—F.C.I. এ যি বস্তুৱেই নিদিয়ক যোগান বিভাগৰ কৰ্মচাৰী সকলৰ এই বিষয়ত কি দায়িত্ব নাই? তাৰ পিচত মিনিষ্টাৰে কৈছে Consumers এ বেয়া বস্তু দিলে তেওঁলোকে resist কৰিব লাগে। কিন্তু বস্তু নহলে Resist কৰি কি হ'ব বেয়াৰ পৰিবৰ্ত্তে ভাল খাদ্য বস্তু যোগান ধৰিবলৈ চৰকাৰে কি ব্যৱস্থা কৰিছে জনাবনে?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah:—মই ঠিক প্ৰশ্নটো ধৰিব পৰা নাই।

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua:—মোৰ প্ৰশ্ন হৈছে F.C.I. এ যি বিলাক চাউল যোগান ধৰিছে—সেই বিলাক অখাদ্য। তেওঁলোকৰ এই কাৰ্য্যত যোগান বিভাগৰ কৰ্মচাৰী সকলে চাব লাগেনে নালাগে?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah:—লাগে।

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua:—তেনে হলে মিনিষ্টাৰে এই বিষয়ে কি ব্যৱস্থা হাতত লৈছে।

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah:—যিবোৰ যোগান বিভাগৰ কৰ্মচাৰী সকলৰ ওপৰত Report আছে তাৰ ব্যৱস্থা লোৱা হৈছে।

Shri Bhupen Hazarika:—অলপ আগতে মিলবিলাকে কৈছে যে মিল বিলাকে চাই লব লাগে। He wants to blame the mills. How many mills have been peralised so far?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah:—মিলবিলাকে চাই লব লাগে।

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question is: Have you taken any followed up action, have you prosecuted any mill which has allowed entry of such grain into their godown?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: That information is not with me at the moment.

M. Moinul Hoque Choudhury: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have got a question. The Hon'ble Minister says that there should be resistance from the consumers. I as a consumer of Gauhati want to resist. But how am I to resist? Has the Government provided any alternative source of getting essential food? Is it the advice of the Minister to resist with empty stomach?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: Resistance involves some amount of sacrifice.

M. Moinul Hoque Choudhury: Without a substitute being provided?

Shri Puspadhar Chaliha : যি চাউলৰ যোগান আমাৰ হোষ্টেলত ধৰিজে—সেইটো খোৱাৰ অনুপযোগী—এইকথা চৰকাৰে জানেনে?

(A voice: The Supply Minister should resign forthwith).

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I have not seen the quality of rice supplied to the hostel.

Shri Jagannath Singha: The Hon'ble Minister says that we should build up consumers resistance. What we poor M.L.As should do?

M. Moinul Hoque Choudhury: He wants all of us to starve.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: The Minister in his reply to the question of Shri Puspadhar Chaliha said that he has not seen the quality of rice supplied. Are we to understand that the Minister has no information about the quality of food-stuff supplied to the consumers in the State?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I have said that I have not seen the quality of rice supplied.

M. Moinul Hoque Choudhury: Does the Minister know that all over the State wherever there are Fair Price Shops the quality of rice supplied is almost not eatable?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I am not prepared to accept such a sweeping statement.

M. Moinul Hoque Choudhury: The Minister has not gone to the Assembly Members hostel and he has also not gone to any shop in the State. Then let him accept the view of the House that whatever rice is being supplied is not eatable and that the Government is not enforcing quality control and not penalising anybody.

Shri Kamini Mohan Sarma:—মই এটা চাউলৰ প্ৰশ্নটো বিচাৰিছোঁ। অসমৰ বাজপানী এটা চলা চহৰত বিলাক বেচনৰ দোকান আছে সেই বেচন দোকান বিলাকত এই অঞ্চল চাউল দিয়ে। আৰু বিলাকত কম পৰিমাণত হৈ জুলাই মাহত এদিন লাঠী চাউলকে মোম জতা বুলি চলাচলৰ বহুলায়ী ফোটাৰ বিক্রী কৰিবলৈ চৰকাৰে দিছিল। প্ৰকৃততে ই-জতা চাউল নহয়। জতা চাউল বুলি এই চাউলকে অতিপাত দামত বিক্রী কৰিছিল। সেইটো কম চৰকাৰে জানেনে?

Dr. Surendra Nath Das:—মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ে বেচনৰ চাউল খাব নে নাখায়? যদি নাখায় তেন্তে মোৱা চাউল কম পৰা জানে?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Now, the whole question is this two fold - that there has been entry into the godowns of the mills of foodstuffs which are either defective or bad, and the Supply Minister has stated that there is an Inspector to inspect the quality of rice at the entry, but still there is some defect in quality of rice. The second question is that the rice issued from the mills to the market is also mixed up with stones. These are the two pertinent questions.

M. Moinul Hoque Choudhury: I Would like to add one more, Sir, and that is what is found in the black-market is not mixed up with any foreign stuff!

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: There is no black-market, Sir, there is open market.

Shri Lakshyadhar Chaudhury:—উপাধ্যক্ষ মহোদয়, আমাৰ মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ে এটা উপদেশ দিছিল যে কোনোতা সকলে প্ৰতিৰোধ কৰিব লাগে। গুৱাহাটীৰ Fair-Price-Shop ত এনে বিলাক বস্তু বিক্রী কৰা হৈছিল তাৰ প্ৰতিৰোধ কৰিব বিচৰ হৈছিল। কিন্তু গুৱাহাটী যোগান বিভাগৰ পৰা এটা নিৰ্দেশ জাৰি কৰিছে যে যদি চেনি কিনা হয় তেতিয়া হলে এই বেয়া চাউল আৰু আটা কিনিবই লাগিব। এই কথাটো মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ে জানেনে?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah:—তেনেকুৱা এখন circular দিয়া হৈছিল; কিন্তু সেই খন এতিয়া উঠাই লোৱা হৈছে।

Jonab Rohimudin Ahmed:—মোৰ বিশ্বাস গৱৰ্ণমেণ্টক F.C.I.য়ে ফাঁকি দিছে। আছ চাউল ছবিধ। এবিধ ৰঙা আৰু আন বিধ বগা। চৰকাৰে চকু ৰাখি আমাৰ F.C.I. ক ভাল কৰিব লাগে। F.C.I. য়ে বগা চাউল চৰকাৰক নিদিয়। মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ে সদনত এটা সাংঘাতিক কথা কৈছে।

Shri Bimala Prasad Chaliha Chief Minister :—উপাধক্ষ মহোদয়, এই resistance কৰা কৰাটো হৈছে consumer ক resistance দিবলৈ গৈ এটা ডাঙৰ কাণ্ডয়ে কৰাৰ লাগিব। সেইটো নহয়। গ্ৰাহকক যোতয়া বেয়া বস্তু দিয়ে, তেতিয়া সেইটোত বাধা দিব। অৰ্থাৎ বস্তুটো প্ৰত্যক্ষান নকৰে। D.C. ক খবৰ দিব লাগিব। আৰু D.C. য়ে সেই কৰাটো তদন্ত কৰি গ্ৰাহকে যাতে ভাল বস্তু পাব পাৰে তাৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰিব। গতিকে এইটো কৰা হৈছিল যে দিনা প্ৰতিবোধে যাতে বেয়া বস্তুকে লৈ থাকিব নালাগে। ইয়াৰ অৰ্থ কাৰ্জিয়া কৰা নহয়।

Shri Gaurisankar Bhattacharyya :—উপাধক্ষ মহোদয়, তেতিয়া হলে চৰকাৰৰ পক্ষৰ পৰা কি ধৰনেই resistance দিব লাগিব সেই সম্পৰ্কে বিস্তৃত আচনি এটা দিয়া দৰকাৰ আছিল। এই বিষয়ে যি resistance হব সেইটো violent হব নে Non-violent resistance হব? বিশেষকৈ উত্তৰ কামৰূপৰ মানুহ বিলাক যি সময়ত বান প্ৰপীড়িত হৈছিল সেই মানুহ বিলাকৰ খাচৰ কাৰণে চৰকাৰৰ পক্ষৰ পৰা কিছুমান মাঠে গুৰি পঠাইছিল, যিবিলাকৰ বৰণ সেইজীয়া। এনে ধৰণৰ অখাচ বস্তুহে দিয়া হৈছিল। তাৰ ফলত বান প্ৰপীড়িত লোক সকলৰ হাঁই কাৰ। এফালে গো বধ আন ফালে ব্ৰহ্ম বধ। সেই লোক সকলৰে ভাগত হল এফালে বানপানী আনফালে খাবলৈ নাই। যি মাঠে গুৰি দিলে সিও অখাচ পঁচা আৰু ভেজাল। যিমান বিলাক বেয়া বস্তু আছে সেইবিলাক সেই বান প্ৰপীড়িত গাওঁ বিলাকলৈ দিয়ে। নেপালী চাউল আছিল বনা প্ৰপীড়িত গাওঁৰ কাৰণে, কিন্তু বিতৰন কৰিলে গুৱাহাটী আদি চহৰত। যি হওক এই যে সেইজীয়া মাঠে গুৰি বিলাক পিচত চহৰত দিব ধৰিলে। লগতে সন্ত আৰোপ কৰিলে যে এই পঁচা মাঠে গুৰি নহলে চেনী নাপায়।

Shri Gauri Sankar Bhattacharyya :—ইয়াৰ পিচত D.C. য়ে order দিলে যে, সেইজীয়া মাঠে গুৰি দিব লাগে। আৰু এই খিনি নিনিলে চেনী নাপায়। সেই কাৰণে দায়ত পৰি কিছুমানে চেনিৰ বাবে মাঠেৰ গুৰি কিনিছে। আৰু কিছুমানে Resistance ও দিছে। কিন্তু কিমানে Resistance দিব পাৰে? মানুহ বিলাকে যদি Resistance দিয়া হয় তেনে হলে সেই বাধাই অণু কপো লব পাৰে। সেই Resistance Active ও হব পাৰে, Passive ও হব পাৰে। আৰু সেই Resistance এ বিশৃঙ্খলাও সৃষ্টি কৰিব পাৰে। তাৰ ফলত চৰকাৰে গুলি চালনাও কৰিব লগা হব পাৰে। আৰু প্ৰকৃততে তাৰ হৈছেও। চৰকাৰৰ ফালৰ পৰা যদি Resistance দিয়াৰ কথা কোৱা হয় তেনে হলে কেনে ধৰনৰ Resistance হব লাগিব সেইটো বুজাই কোৱা উচিত। নহলে সেই কোনো প্ৰকাৰৰ প্ৰতিবোধে অণুকপ লবও পাৰে।

Shri Nakul Chandra Das : In view of the fact that rice supplied through the fairprice shops is of poor quality and in view of the resentment expressed in the House in the matter, will the Government of he make a thorough enquiry into the three factors, i.e., (1) the quality of

paddy supplied by the F.C.I. to the Milling Industry, (2) rice supplied by the Mills to the fair-price shops and (3) the whole distribution system. That will remove the doubts of the Hon. Members.

Sri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: Sir, the rice that has been supplied to the fair-price shops are Ahu rice. We have now procured only Ahu paddy and Ahu rice is generally of red colour which does not look very nice to the eyes or to the taste also.

(At this stage several Members from the Opposition stood up to speak).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, order. We have discussed threadbare this question and I would like the Minister to make an enquiry and take some effective measures so that these things may not happen in the mills and also in the open market. I think we should now pass on to the next question.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: Sir, we have no doubt that an enquiry will be made and that too through which agency is also known to us. Now the question is that such kind of things are going on merrily, i.e., bad quality of rice being supplied mixed up with foreign stuffs. I therefore suggest that a committee consisting of three members from this House should be constituted to go into it and submit a report to the House with its observation and recommendations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Your question is whether Government is prepared to constitute a committee to enquire into the matter?

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua: Yes Sir, with Members from this House.

Shri Bimala Prasad Chaliha Chief Minister: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the complaint that has been brought before the House is with regard to the quality of rice that the mills supply through the fair-price shops. That is the general complaint. Sir, I fully appreciate the strong feelings expressed by the Members of this House with regard to the quality of rice and in respect of maize atta and some other articles also. Now the question is how to effectively proceed in the matter so that there may be proper quality control. Poor quality of food-stuffs are not supplied either through the fair-price shops or in the market. For this purpose I would suggest that at the first instance we may invite some Members of the House and explain to them the existing procedure of functioning of the F.C.I. as well as the Supply Department. After that if the Hon. Members in that meeting feel that something else is to be done to improve the condition, they might suggest about it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: When the Chief Minister has given assurance that there will be some measures taken to enquire into the matter and to devise ways and means to strengthen the machinery with a view to ensure distribution of better quality of food-stuffs, I think we can now pass on to the 3rd question.

Shri Bimala Prasad Chaliha Chief Minister:— উপাধ্যক্ষ মহোদয়, এই প্রশ্নত এইটো কথা, Resistance ৰ কথা যাতে ভাল বুজা বুজি

নহয় তাৰ কাৰণে কোৱা হৈছে। দোকান এখনলৈ বেয়া Quality ৰ বস্তু গলে গ্ৰাহকে সেই বস্তু গ্ৰহণ কৰিব নালাগে। বস্তু পক্ষক আপত্তি জনাব লাগে। ইয়াত ডাঙৰ সভা সমিতিৰ কথা কোৱা হোৱা নাই। এইটোৱেই কোৱা হৈছে যে, বেয়া বস্তু কোনো দোকানে বেচিলে সেই বস্তু নীৰৱে গ্ৰহণ নকৰি যাতে বস্তু পক্ষৰ দৃষ্টিগোচৰ কৰা হয় তাকে কোৱা হৈছে।

M. Samsul Huda:—চৰকাৰে এইটো তদন্ত কৰিবনে যে, কিছূমান দুৰ্নীতি পৰায়ন বাৱসায়ী F.C.I. ৰ লগ লাগি খাদ্য এই অৱস্থাৰ সৃষ্টি কৰিছে।

Particular area ৰ কথা কোৱা জানো কিবা প্ৰয়োজন আছে। কাৰণ চাউলত শিল, কাচ, ধান আৰু নানা ধৰণৰ অখাদ্য বস্তু মিহল কৰি চাউল সৰবৰাহ আমাৰ সকলো ঠাইতে হ'ব লাগিছে। এইটো Supply Dept. এ চাউল বিতৰণ কৰিবলৈ লোৱাৰ পৰা চলিয়েই আছে। চৰকাৰে যি ধান সংগ্ৰহ কৰে তাত, ধান, শিল; ফটা জোতাৰ টুকুৰা থকা চাউল গোটেই ৰাজ্য জুৰি Supply বিভাগে ধাৰাবাহিক ৰূপে সৰবৰাহ কৰিয়েই আছে। কোনো Particular area ৰ কথা মাত্ৰ মই কবলৈ বিচৰা নাই। এই গোটেই conspiracy supply বিভাগৰ দ্বাৰা কৰা বুলি মানুহে সন্দেহ কৰে। গতিকে চৰকাৰে এইটো তদন্ত কৰিবনে নকৰে। **There is a conspiracy to sabotage the procurement and the Supply Department.**

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: The hon. Member should give some concrete cases for our enquiry. At any rate, the whole thing will be reviewed before the next Kharif year, *i.e.*, by the month of October.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: This question has been threadbare, discussed from all points of view and the hon. Chief Minister has taken the matter very seriously and he said that he is going to enquire into the whole matter and will devise ways and means how these things will not happen again whether in the mills or in the market.

Re: Starvation Death in 1968

M. SHAMSUL HUDA asked:

*3. Will the Minister-in-charge of Supply be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether it is a fact that a number of persons died of starvation in 1968?
- (b) What factors led to these starvation death?
- (c) Whether acute food crisis and famine condition prevailed in the areas of these starvation death?
- (d) Whether the Government had any previous information of this food situation in the areas concerned?

(e) If so, whether any precaution was taken by the Government?

(f) Whether the precaution was effective?

Shri RAMESH CHANDRA BAROOAH (Minister, Supply) replied:

3. (a)—No.

(b)—Does not arise.

(c)—Starvation death occurred nowhere.

(d)—Government were aware of the food situation in the State including the areas where the scarcity condition prevailed.

(e)—Test relief schemes and gratuitous relief were undertaken to ease the distress of the people. Also, controlled foodstuffs were rushed to the areas affected.

(f)—Yes.

Shri Kandarpa Narayan Banikya:—উপাধ্যক্ষ মহোদয়, যোৰা মে মাহৰ ৮ তাৰিখে Shri Sarat Rava, Shri Kandarpa Banikya আৰু শ্ৰীবিনয় ঘোষ আদি এই ৩ জন বিধান সভাৰ সদস্যই Goalpara S. D. O ৰ ওচৰত এই কথা জনাইছিলো। চৰকাৰে এই বিষয়ে অনুসন্ধান কৰিছেনে?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah:—I have already denied and said that there was no starvation deaths.

Shri Sarat Chandra Rava:—ছধনৈ সমষ্টি অসমৰ বাহিৰত নে

কি ?

[No Reply]

যোৰা ৮ জুলাই তাৰিখে গোৱালপাৰা টাউনত যে, খাবলৈ নাপায় মানুহে Agitation কৰিছিল সেইকথা মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ে অস্বীকাৰ কৰিব খুজিছেনে কি?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah:—খাদ্য অভাবৰ বিষয়ে জানিবলৈ পোৱা হৈছিল কিন্তু ৮ তাৰিখে Agitation হৈছিল নে নাই সেই বিষয়ে চৰকাৰ অবগত নাছিল।

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika:—Supply Minister এ conspiracy কৰিছে যেন লাগিছে। সেই কাৰণে মই সুধিব খুজিছো কিমান S. D. O. আৰু D. C. প্ৰত্যেকে চৰকাৰক জনাইছে; চৰকাৰে অনুসন্ধান কৰিবনে ?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah :— খাদ্য অভাৱত মানুহ মৰিছে বুলি কোনো খবৰ অহা নাই গতিকে অনুসন্ধান কৰাৰ প্ৰশ্ন নুঠে।

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua:—মাননীয় সদনৰ ৩ জন সদস্যই যেতিয়া S. D. O. ক জনাইছে বুলি আমাৰ সদনৰ এজন মাননীয় সদস্যই ইয়াত ব্যক্ত

কবিছে এনেস্থলত S.D.O. ই চবকাবক জনাইছিলনে নাই? সেই কথা মই মন্ত্ৰী মহোদয়ৰ পৰা জানিব খোজো আৰু যদি নাই জনোৱা ভেনেহলে সেই বিষয়া জনৰ ওপৰত চবকাবে কোনো ব্যৱস্থা লবনে ?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Though, the question has been put elaborately the gist of the question is, whether three M.L.A's approached the S.D.O and informed him that there were 3 starvation deaths in Dudnai area, if so, whether this fact was brought to the Minister's notice?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: I have no such information.

Shri Dulal Chandra Baroa: Will the hon. Minister enquire into the matter?

Shri Ramesh Chandra Barooah: If the hon. Member gives the names and places of occurrence, we will enquire into it whether such deaths occurred.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question hour is over.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(To which replies were laid on the table)

Re: Primary Health Unit at Gohpur

Shri BISHNULAL UPADHYAYA asked:

1. Will the Minister, Health be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether it is a fact that the plan and estimates for construction of a Primary Health Unit at Gohpur under Chayduai Anchalik Panchayat has been approved by Government long ago?
- (b) If so, what is the estimated cost for construction of the buildings?
- (c) Whether it is a fact that fund has already been made available for this purpose and the construction work will be started very soon?

(d) If so, when?

Shri SATINDRA MOHAN DEV (Minister-in-charge, Health) replied:

1. (a)—No.

(b)—Does not arise.

(c)—No.

(d)—Does not arise.

Discussion regarding re-organisation of the State
of Assam

***Shri DULAL CHANDRA BARUA:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission may I request the Chief Minister to apprise this august House about the latest development in respect of re-organisation issue of this frontier State which has been previously assured to let this House know from time to time. Sir, it has been observed that the news has been published in the Newspapers and we have also heard that a decision has been taken by the A.P.C.C. yesterday on this particular issue. Sir, when the House is on Session, it ought to have been placed before the august House. Sir, I consider that it is not the question of the party in power, but it is the question of the entire people living in the frontier State of Assam. Therefore, I request the Chief Minister to apprise this House about the latest position in the context of the decision taken by the Government of India in respect of re-organisation of the State with relevant facts and documents so that the House can discuss the matter threadbare.

Calling Attention to a matter of Urgent Public Importance

Shri ROTHINDRA NATH SEN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. Sir, it is surprising to find the name of Shri Satindra Mohan Deb as Minister in charge of Health in the Unstarred Question supplied to us today. Sir, are we to understand that Shri Deb still holds the charge of Health Services? So far we know, Shri Teron is the Minister in charge of Health now.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This was printed before the port-folio of the Minister was changed.

Now, Shri Barua has made a reference on the matter of re-organisation of the State. As a matter of fact, I have been apprised by the Chief Minister by a letter addressed to me which was received by me at 9 A.M. today stating that he would be permitted to make a statement in the House on his recent visit to New Delhi and talks with the Prime Minister and Home Minister of India on the subject of re-organisation of Assam.

Now, I proposed to take up the "Call Attention" first and then the Chief Minister will give his statement.

Item No.2—Shri Govind Kalita.

Calling Attention to a matter of Urgent Public Importance—Missing of Article
worth Rs. 1 lakh.

Shri GOVINDA KALITA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to call the attention of the Minister in charge of Industry, under Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of the Legislative Assembly to the news item published on the "Asom Batori", dated the 7th July, 1968 under the caption—

এক লাখ টকা মূল্যৰ সামগ্ৰী অক্ষয়ন ক্ষুদ্র উদ্যোগ উন্নয়ন
কৰ্পৰেশনৰ চাৰিলাখ টকাৰ লোকচানৰ সম্মুখীন এই শিতানৰ সংবাদটো
মই পঢ়ি দিছো।

“ক্ষুদ্র উদ্যোগ উন্নয়ন কৰ্পৰেশনে যোৱা বিত্তীয় বছৰটোত মুঠ পায়
৪ লাখ টকা লোকচানৰ সম্মুখীন হৈছে। কৰ্পৰেশনৰ অধীনস্থ বিভিন্ন উদ্যোগত
ক্ষতিৰ পৰিমাণ হল এনেকুৱা : বন্দৰপুৰত অৱস্থিত কাছাৰ টেক্সটাইল ইণ্ডাষ্ট্ৰী :
৪৮,০০০ টকা, গুৱাহাটীৰ বাঁহ বেতৰ কাৰখানা : ৮০,০০০ টকা, বিছনাৰ জুইশলা
কাঠি তৈয়াৰী কাৰখানা : ৭৬,০০০ টকা, তিনিচুকিয়াৰ ফ্ৰেজবোৰ্ড ফেক্টৰী : ৫০,০০০
টকা : গুৱাহাটীৰ নিলাচল চাবোন ফেক্টৰী : ৭৪,০০০ টকা, তিনিচুকীয়া কেঁচা
মালৰ গুদাম : ১৪,০০০ টকা, আৰু অসম আয়ুৰ্বেদিক প্ৰডাক্টচ : ২৬,০০০ টকা
(এই সংখ্যাটো অৱশ্যে এতিয়াও সঠিক ভাৱে নিশ্চিত হোৱা নাই”)।

Shri BISWADEV SARMAH (Minister, Industries): Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, it is a fact that a shortage of raw materials worth about Rs.75,000 has been detected in the raw material depot of the Assam Small Industries Development Corporation. The Shortage was detected during the period from March to June, 1967. The loss mainly concerned shortages in the following articles (a) Galvanised Plain Sheets, (b) Cold Rolled Black Plain Sheets. These two items were imported from East European Countries and Japan during the period between December, 1965 to March, 1967 and were received through the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation (MMTC) of the Government of India. The raw material depot was originally run by the Directorate of Industries. In 1964 it was handed over to the Assam Small Industries Development Corporation. The same officer who was in charge of the depot when the depot was under the Director of Industries continued to look after the depot even after taking over the Corporation. In May 1967 a Controller of Stores was appointed by the Corporation. While this officer was taking over, the shortages were detected and reported. The Board of Directors of the Corporation were apprised of the matter in May, 1968, though the General Manager, Managing Director and the Raw Material Advisory Committee were informed about the shortages. After the matter come to the notice of the Board of Directors, the Board took serious notice of it and authorised one of the Directors to enquire into the matter. The Director's report is awaited. These consignments were received from the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation, New Delhi through the Assam Government Trade Adviser in Calcutta during the period 1965-67. It is not yet known whether the handling agent of the Trade Advisor weighed the consignment before taking delivery. This is being enquired into. But it is also a fact that the Small Industries Development Corporation of other States also made complaints to the M.M.T.C. regarding short weight of materials despatched by the former. However, it is also a fact that no complaints were made to the M.M.T.C. either by the Assam Small Industries Development Corporation or by the Director of Industries regarding short weights. Because no weightment could be made. One belated complaint was made which was naturally not accepted by the M.M.T.C. The findings of the Director who had enquired into the matter would be placed before the Board of Directors in its next meeting which will be held in the first week of September. After consideration of the

report the Board will take necessary steps on the basis of the findings of the enquiry. After the shortages were brought to light the system has been tightened up to avoid such occurrences in the future.

The Corporation has sustained a loss of Rs.3.84 lakhs in the year 1967-68. The main causes of loss have been the unprofitable working of its productive units among which are the Jax Board Factory and M/S Cachar Textiles. The Match Splint Factory at Bijni has also suffered a loss. The Assam Ayurvedic products another venture was started only in 1967 and as it has newly gone into production this also has suffered a marginal loss. The administration of the Corporation has been recently overhauled by appointing a whole time Managing Director. Some rationalisation in the deployment of staff has also been done. It is expected that the working of the Corporation will improve with these measures.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now I would request the Chief Minister to make a statement.

Statement made by the Chief Minister on the
re-organisation of the State of Assam

***Shri BIMALA PRASAD CHALIHA, (Chief Minister):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the proposal for re-organisation of the State has been a matter of anxiety for the people of our State for all these years. This question has a history behind it and there has been series of discussions on this subject. Various Commissions have enquired into this question and I need not take up the time of the House by giving the details. You will recollect, Sir, that at one time the members of this House also had the occasion of going to Delhi to have a discussion on the subject. Subsequently a Committee was constituted with Shri Ashoke Mehta as the Chairman and that Committee gave its recommendations which were unanimous although one of the political parties, namely All Party Hill Leaders' Conference decided not to co-operate with that Committee. Therefore, the recommendations of the Mehta Committee in which all the representatives of the various parties, excepting All Party Hill Leaders' Conference, were associated were unanimous. Subsequently Government of India, for reasons best known to them, gave some alternative proposal in which it was mentioned about the creation of an autonomous State within the State of Assam by transferring a very large number of subjects including law and order to that autonomous State. There were discussions on this subject with the Government of India and ourselves and we maintained consistent with the stand we took from the very beginning that in the interest of security and also for progress and development of this area there should be no dismemberment of Assam and there should be integrated administration with regional autonomy. Therefore, we maintain that if Assam has to be re-organised, the Ashoke Mehta Committee's recommendations provide the best solution for it.

Subsequently on the 22nd of this month the Home Minister was good enough to send me a message that he and the Prime Minister would like to meet me and therefore, I should be at Delhi by the 23rd. I had some difficulty in going to Delhi on the 23rd because I did not want to miss the first

*Speech not corrected

day of this august House as from our side as well as from the other side of the House it was our duty to pay our respect to our late Speaker of this House whom we lost very prematurely. Therefore, I did not want to miss that day. I pleaded that it would be convenient for me to go on the 27th but the Home Minister told me that I might be late and that he would arrange air transport for me. Therefore, I had to leave for Delhi on the 23rd but because of bad weather I had to halt at Bagdogra for the night and I reached Delhi on the 24th afternoon. My colleague the Minister for Revenue was in Delhi and I requested him to stay on so that we might meet the Home Minister as well as Prime Minister together. We met the Home Minister at 11.30 and the Home Minister expressed his anxiety to take a decision on this re-organisation issue of Assam as soon as possible and if possible during the current session of the Parliament and he gave us some idea how their mind was working. Of course, I could understand that they were yet to finalise the proposal but nevertheless he gave us some indication of what they were thinking about it, and he wanted our views. The matter being very urgent I felt that I should have discussion with my colleagues and give my views after consultation with them. I do not know whether I should formally say it before it is finalised. The proposal is not yet finalised and it is still in the process of thinking. In any case according to the new ideas which have been introduced the present thinking is that the autonomous State that was contemplated in the earlier scheme in which it was thought that the law and order should be transferred, the present contemplation is that the law and order for the autonomous State should be a subject reserved for the Governor at his discretion. But the Governor will be acting as the agent of the Government of India and not as constitutional Governor. Therefore, this is the change that was contemplated in the scheme. So, in the earlier proposal the option that was given to North Cachar Hills, Mikir Hills and Mizo Hills, if they are in favour of joining or not joining the autonomous State was by a simple majority. Against that the present contemplation is that the majority should be by two-thirds. That means if the North Cachar Hills District Council or Mikir Hills District Council or Mizo Hills District Council are in favour of joining the autonomous State, they may do so by a decision with two-third majority.

There is another contemplation in this revised scheme. That is because of the geographical situation of the whole of this area lying in the north-eastern part of India, in the matters of security as well as planning and development, there should be co-ordinated approach for which it is contemplated that there should be a Council of Inter-State with the Governor as the Chairman and the Chief Minister or the administrators of these areas, namely Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura and N.E.F.A. There should be a Council in which problems relating to security in this area as well as planning and development would be discussed. Precisely, these were the changes or the ideas which were in the mind of the Home Minister which he told us. I pleaded for time so that I may consult my colleagues here. Before leaving for Delhi also I requested my colleagues, the members of the Cabinet to give their guidance or advice in this matter. They felt that I should go to Delhi and know the mind of the Home Minister and to find out what is exactly in their mind of the Home Minister and to find out what is exactly in their mind and then come back and discuss with them and convey to them our proposal. I have omitted to mention that the alternative to the autonomous State scheme is the creation of Union Territories of the hill districts of Assam, particularly

Garo Hills Khasi Hills, Mizo Hills as well as North Cachar Hills and Mikir Hills otherwise Mikir Hills & North Cachar Hills might continue to remain in Assam Under the Union Territory, no option to Mikir Hills or North Cachar Hills was given but the District Councils or the district administration would be given the status as was contemplated in the Asoka Mehta Scheme. That means the district of Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Garo Hills and Mizo Hills would be Union Territories and Mikir and North Cachar Hills district would be as contemplated in the Asoka Mehta Scheme.

Shri DULAL CHANDRA BARUA: I am not clear about the last part of his statement, that is in respect of North Cachar Hills and Mikir Hills.

Shri BIMALA PRASAD CHALIHA (Chief Minister): It is also said that in respect of financial assistance from the Government of India, it will be at par with the rest of the districts. That means although Mikir and North Cachar Hills would not be Union Territories, but so far as financial assistance is concerned, it would be at par with the rest of the hill districts of Assam.

Now, as a matter of fact, I was advised to give our reaction to this proposal and to communicate our reaction to this proposal to-day. That is the present position. I do not know what would be the final shape of this re-organisation proposal. We have tentatively considered these proposals, and from these considerations we think that because of the large measure of support and agreement, the Asoka Mehta proposal would be the best proposal for re-organisation of Assam. That is how we propose to inform the Government of India. So far as the first part namely the co-ordination of Inter-State Council is concerned, we have felt that there is necessity of this co-ordination and discussion in this area. But that is a matter which can be taken up separately and need not be linked up with this re-organisation of Assam. And on that also there are some matters which will have to be gone into deeply. The idea is that there should be forum or some consultative arrangements to discuss about the security and development problems. This seems to be a favourable thing but it needs a lot of consideration—how it should be done and what should be its powers. Whether it would be only an advisory body. Therefore, on that matter also we need time to say. With regard to the rest of the re-organisation proposal we have not been able to think of any better arrangement than what was recommended in the Asoka Mehta Committee's recommendation.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the statement which is given by the Chief Minister is of great importance as he has said that the Government of India expects a reply or a reaction from this side, if possible, within to-day. Probably it would be in the fitness of things, if we can discuss this statement and send the view of the legislature as such to the Government. And for that purpose, if necessary, there should be a substantive motion on the statement given by the Chief Minister from this side of the House. We have already given notice of such a substantive motion. I do urge, Sir, that in view of certain very extraordinary matters involved in the Government of India's latest proposal, namely, this law and order being taken away from the State List and even from the Hills representatives to a nominated bureaucrat the latest proposal is reactionary. Secondly, discrimina-

between some Hills of Assam and other Hills is not only reactionary, but also mischievous. Thirdly, the N.E.F.A. area is surreptitiously being given a different political personality by bringing it in the general council as a separate political entity. It appears that in the Reorganisation Scheme and even in the alternative proposal of Union Territory there is being kept discrimination between the Garo and Khasi and Jaintia and Mizo Hills on the one hand and the Mikir and North Cachar Hills on the other. This matter probably requires a closer examination and for making our proposal effective probably it will be better if the House immediately takes up the matter and discuss this issue. Of course we had accepted what is generally known as the Mehta Committee's recommendation not because they were the best but because they were most acceptable under the circumstances. And if the Government of India agrees to that then of course it is different, but if they re-open the matter then from our side also we have to re-open the matter and re-judge the issues.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have received a Notice of Motion from Shri Dulal Chandra Barua and Shri Sailen Medhi. The House do taken into consideration the Statement made by the Chief Minister on 27th August 1968 on the issue of Re-organisation of Assam. It can be discussed. The Motion is in order under Rule 131 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Assam Legislative Assembly.

Any Motion can be moved by any Member to discuss a statement made by a Minister under Rule 131(5). The Speaker may after considering the state of business in the House and in consultation with the Leader of the House allot a day or days or part of a day for the discussion of any such motion. This Motion is an important one and I am asking the Chief Minister whether it should be taken up to-day or tomorrow.

The Statement made by the Minister in a matter of public importance.

Shri BIMALA PRASAD CHALIHA (Chief Minister): Sir, the importance of this subject needs no mention and as I said before the exigency of the re-organisation is certain and that is why I requested them that we should be given time to give our opinion on the 28th but it was said that it will be better if we can give it on 26th. Therefore, I think this discussion if the House decides it should be held to-day and after the lunch because sometime will be necessary for preparation of papers and all that. I shall also be glad if it could be concluded to-day.

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua:—আপুনি যে Party ত আলোচনা কৰিলে সেইটোনো কি ভিত্তিত আলোচনা কৰিলে? তেনেকুৱা কোনো document বা কাগজ পত্ৰ আছে যদি সেইখিনিকে সদনৰ আলোচনাৰ্থে দিব লাগে।

Shri Bimala Prasad Chaliha (Chief Minister):—তেনেকুৱা কোনো document নাই। আৰু কোনো প্ৰস্তাৱ সিদ্ধান্ত কৰাৰ কাৰণেও দিয়া নাই। এখন কাগজ অৱশ্যে আছে, সেই কাগজখন আলোচনাৰ কাৰণে দিবপৰা অধিকাৰ মোৰ নাই। আজি আলোচনা কৰিবলৈ হলে মই যিটো বিবৃতি দিছো সেইটোৰ ওপৰতেই ভিত্তি কৰি আলোচনা কৰিলে ভাল হ'ব।

Shri Dulal Chandra Barua:—এই সম্পর্কিত Home Ministry ৰ পৰা কোনো কাগজ পত্ৰ পোৱা নাই নেকি ?

Shri Bimala Prasad Chaliha:—Home Ministry য়ে তেনে একো কাগজ পত্ৰ দিয়া নাই। কথাখিনি আলোচনা কৰাৰ অৱশ্যে কাগজ এখন আছে, কিন্তু সেই কাগজখন সদনত বিতৰণ কৰিবলৈ দিয়াৰ অধিকাৰ মোৰ নাই।

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He has already stated that it is not meant for distribution. It is something secret. Now in view of the urgency of the matter I fix 2 P.M. after lunch to-day and all other business remaining standing will adjusted after discussion of this motion at 2 P.M.

Now item No.3

Shri DULAL CHANDRA BARUA: In the meantime shall we get copy of the statement?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Sarma has already requested the Chief Minister to circulate the statement made by him. I have asked the Assembly Secretariat to circulate the copy.

Panel of Chairmen

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now I announce the names as panel of Chairmen:

(1) Shri Jogen Saikia. (2) Shri Ataur Rahman, (3) Shri Phani Bora and (4) Shri Rathindra Nath Sen.

Election of Speaker

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Next item is the election of Speaker. We have the names proposed: (1) Shri Lakshyadhar Choudhury, proposed by Shri Gaurisankar Bhattacharjee, Shri Rothindra Nath Sen, Mvi. M. A. Chowdhury and Shri Shamsul Huda and seconded by Shri Atul Goswami, Shri Dulal Chandra Barua, Shri Motilal Kanu and Shri Kehoram Hazarika.

(2) Shri Mohi Kanta Das, proposed by Shri Mahendra Mohan Choudhury, Shri Nakul Chandra Das and Rani Manjula Devi and seconded by Shri Nakul Chandra Das and Shri Mathura Mohan Singha.

These are all in order.

Now the rule concerning the election of Speaker says "in the case of a new Assembly, the person appointed by the Governor to perform the duties of the office of the Speaker pending the election of a Speaker and in any other case the Deputy Speaker or other person presiding shall read out to the Assembly the names of the members who have been duly nominated together with those of the proposers and seconders and if only one member has been so nominated, shall declare that member to be elected. If more than one member has been so nominated, the Assembly shall proceed to elect the Speaker by

ballot, and in case of two candidates the candidate obtaining the larger number of votes shall be declared elected. In case of equality of votes, it shall be determined by the drawing of lots." Now as I have been proposed as a candidate, in the selection of Speaker I do not feel happy to preside over the election which concerns me. I will take my seat in the Deputy Speaker's seat and in the meantime I will request one of the Chairmen, Shri Jogen Saikia to conduct the election of the Speaker. Thank you.

(At this state the Deputy Speaker vacated the Chair and Shri Jogen Saikia occupied the Chair)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: As has been read out by the Deputy Speaker the rule covering the election of Speaker is like this "in the case of a new Assembly, the person appointed by the Governor to perform the duties of the office of the Speaker pending the election of a Speaker and in any other case the Deputy Speaker or other person presiding shall read out to the Assembly the names of the members who have been duly nominated together with those proposers and seconders and if only one member has been so nominated, shall declare to be elected. If more than one member has been so nominated the Assembly shall proceed to elect a Speaker by ballot, and in case of two candidates the candidate obtaining the larger number of votes shall be declared elected. In case of equality of votes, it shall be determined by the drawing of lots." Now I read out the names of the persons nominated:

Name proposed: Shri Lakshyadhar Choudhury.

Proposers: Shri Gaurisankar Bhattacharya, Shri Rathindra Nath Sen, Mvi. Mussabir Ali Choudhury, Shri Shamsul Huda.

Seconders: Shri Atul Chandra Goswami, Shri Dulal Chandra Barua, Shri Motilal Kanu and Shri Kehoram Hazarika.

Name proposed: Shri Mohi Kanta Das.

Proposers: Shri Mohendra Mohan Choudhury, Shri Nakul Das, Rani Manjula Devi.

Seconders: Shri Nakul Das, Shri Mathura Mohan Singha.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There being only two candidates we need not go to the other rules relevant in the case of the Speaker's election. We will remain confined to this particular rule 74.

Shri DULAL CHANDRA BARUA: Sir, may I have a clarification. Whether one particular Hon'ble Member can be a proposer and at the same time a seconder.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: In one nomination paper one and the same person cannot be a proposer and also a seconder. If more than one nomination papers are submitted, if one becomes a proposer in one paper he can become a seconder in another. Now, the procedure will be like this. The ballot box will be placed here on the table and the Hon'ble Members will be called to the table according to the serial number maintained in the Secretariat. They will be given one ballot paper each, then they will go into the 'Noes' lobby where there will be two tables. There they will mark the ballot papers, come

out of the lobby and then put it in the box placed on the table here. The usual mark used for ballot is 'X' against the person. The instruction is there on the ballot paper.

Shri Jogen Saikia:—এতিয়া আমাৰ অধ্যক্ষ নিৰ্বাচনৰ কাৰনে ছুজন সদস্যৰ নাম প্রস্তাৱিত হৈছে। এই নিৰ্বাচনত এই ছুজন সদস্যৰ মাজত প্রতিদ্বন্দিতা হব। নিয়মিত মতে সেই নিৰ্বাচন বেলট যোগে হব লাগে। তাৰ বাবে প্রত্যেকজন মাননীয় সদস্যক একোজনকৈ বেলট দিয়া হব। আৰু তালিকা মতে সদস্য সকলক মতা হব। মাননীয় সদস্য জনে যি জন প্রস্তাৱিত সদস্যৰ নামত ভোট দিব খোজে তেঁখেতৰ নামৰ বিপৰীতে পূৰণ চিন দি ইয়াত থকা বেলট বাকচত বেলট পেপাৰ খন ভৰাই দি যাব। কেনেকৈ ভোট দিব লাগে তাৰ নিয়ম বেলট কাগজ খনতেই দিয়া আছে। যেতিয়া একোজন সদস্য ইয়ালৈ আহিব তেতিয়া বেলট কাগজত Indentity mark দিয়া হব। যাতে একেখন বেলট পেপাৰ দুবাৰ ব্যৱহাৰ হব নোৱাৰে। বেলট কাগজ খন আমাৰ চেফ্ৰেটাৰীয়ে বিলাই দিব।

Shri RATHINDRA NATH SEN: If somebody is present but not inside the Chamber when his name is being called, will be allowed to vote if he enters the Chamber later on?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Shri KAMAKHYA PRASAD TRIPATHI: What is the time limit for voting?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There is no provision in the rules regarding the time to be fixed. What I proposed to do is this: I will call the names according to the list. If somebody is found absent but enters the chamber before the list is exhausted he will be allowed to vote.

M. MOINUL HAQUE CHOUDHURY: Mr. Chairman. Time will have to be fixed, otherwise the election will be void. So time has got to be fixed. It may be 11.30 or 12.30.

Shri Gaurisankar Bhattacharyya:—আমাৰ কলত বিশেষ নিৰ্দেশ নাই যদিও আমি ধৰি লব পাৰো যে ১ টা বজাৰ ভিতৰতে নিৰ্বাচন শেষ হব লাগে। ১ বজাৰ পিচত ছুৱাৰ বন্ধ কৰি দিয়া হব আৰু তাৰ পাচত কোনো সদস্য সোমাৰ নোৱাৰিব।

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Is that the sense of the House? (*Voices: Yes*). Then we may fix 1 P.M. as the time limit. Till then Members will be allowed to come into the Chamber for voting. The Secretary will read out the names one by one.

Mr. Chairman : The counting of ballot papers concluded. The result will be announced at 2 P. M. when the House will re-assemble.

The House stand adjourned till 2 P. M.

(The House rose at 1. 20 P. M.)

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 2 p.m. for lunch.

After Lunch

(Shri JOGEN SAIKIA, Chairman in the Chair.)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Now I shall announce the result of the election of the Speaker. Assam Legislative Assembly held to-day, the 27th August, 1968.

Total number of votes cast—109.

Votes rejected —1.

Total number of valid votes—108.

Votes cast in favour of Shri Mohi Kanta Das—69.

Votes cast in favour of Shri Lakhyadhar Choudhury—39.

I, therefore, declare Shri Mohi Kanta Das as elected (*Applause*).

Now, I would request the newly elected Speaker to take the Chair.

(Shri MOHI KANTA DAS, newly elected Speaker, was conducted to the Chair by the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition.)

Felicitation to the Speaker on his election

*Shri BIMALA PRASAD CHALIHA (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, Sir, I congratulate you on the occasion of your election to this very high office. You are a person who is known for your sacrifice and the great contribution which you made to the freedom struggle of this country. You have been devoting your life for the cause of the people. You were one of the best workers of our State and large number of youngmen get inspiration from you for serving the people. You have suffered imprisonment not only once but on more than one occasion in the freedom struggle of the country. You have gained enough experience in your life in the various fields including a number of institutions and local self-governing organisations during your career. You have also during this period gained adequate experience as a parliamentarian, a very active parliamentarian, and after that when you held the office of the Deputy Speakership, you have had occasion to serve this House and to conduct its proceedings. Your present election raised you in a still higher status with much greater responsibility. You are the custodian of this House;

you have to uphold this institution which is the most important institution in a democracy. And I have no doubt that with the sincerity with which you have served the country so long with all your background of sacrifice and sufferings you can proudly claim yourself one of the persons who work for freeing this country from dependence and also to establish democracy. We assure you, Sir our full co-operation and I have no doubt that everybody in this House will love you, respect you and you will certainly get their full co-operation. This is a great responsibility and I have no doubt that you will be able to discharge it to the satisfaction of everybody.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have great pleasure in associating myself in giving felicitations to you on your election to this exalted position which was occupied in the past by many illustrious parliamentarians of this country.

Sir, the honour given to you is a recognition given to a long and devoted service for the cause of Country's freedom and independence and service to the people. From your early youth, you have been devoting yourself to the cause of the teeming millions, and you had in fact, sacrificed your profession and your personal comforts for the good of the country. Therefore, the honour which has been given to you by this House is very well deserved. Sir, you have been one of the seniormost members of this House, and since after independence, from the very first General Election held in 1952, you have been continuously a member of this House. And as such, you know the tone and tenor of this House and I am sure you will be able to cope with the problems that you shall have to face from time to time in this House. In this arduous and at the same time responsible task, we assure you our fullest co-operation and help and we only hope that you will please remember that though you were a very active member of the ruling party, now that you have been elected to the position which demands, under the present state of things, some amount of non-partisanship, you will always remember that you are the custodian not only of the rights and interests of the ruling party but of both sides of the House. And on your conduct, behaviour and dignity, to a very great extent, will depend the dignity of this House and dignity of the parliamentary system of democracy in this country. We hope and trust that you will rise to that occasion and we shall have the pleasure of associating with you in this great, responsible and patriotic job. With these few words, Sir, I offer my heartiest and sincerest felicitations to you on your being elected to this exalted position.

Shri Phani Bora:—অধ্যক্ষ মহোদয় আপোনাৰ এই অধ্যক্ষ পদত সদনৰ পৰা নিৰ্বাচিত হোৱাৰ এই সময়ত মই আপোনাক আন্তৰিক অভিনন্দন জ্ঞাপন কৰিছো। এই সদনৰ অভিজ্ঞতা আপোনাৰেই আতাইতকৈ বেচি। আৰু বিশেষকৈ এই সময় চোৱাত এই সদনৰ যি অৱস্থা সেইটো আপুনি নিজেই উপাধ্যক্ষ হিচাপে লক্ষ্য কৰিছে। এই অৱস্থাত যি মহান দায়িত্ব আপোনাৰ ওপৰত অৰ্পণ কৰা হৈছে, মই বিশ্বাস কৰো যে আপুনি সেই দায়িত্ব পালন কৰিবলৈ সমৰ্থ হব। আৰু এই বিধান সভাত কাৰ্যক্ৰমনিকা পৰিচালনাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত আৰু এই বিধান সভাৰ যি দায়িত্ব আৰু সদনৰ যি বিশিষ্ট সন্মান তাক ৰক্ষা কৰা ক্ষেত্ৰত আপোনাৰ লগতে আমাৰো সহায় সহযোগিতা নিশ্চয় থাকিব। মই আশা কৰো আপুনি এই সদনত ২ পক্ষৰ মাজত নিৰক্ষিপ হিচাপে সদনৰ কৰ্যকলাপ পৰিচালনা কৰাৰ কাৰণে চেফ্টা

কৰিব। ইয়াকে কৈ আকৌ আপোনাক অভিনন্দন জনাই মোৰ বক্তব্যৰ সামৰণি মাৰিলো।

Shree Lakshyadhar Choudhury:—মাননীয় অধ্যক্ষ মহোদয়, আপুনি সদনৰ সৰ্বশ্ৰেষ্ঠ আৰু পবিত্ৰ আসনত অধিস্থিত হোৱাত মই এই ফালৰ পৰা আৰু মোৰ নিজৰ তৰফৰ পৰা আপোনাক আন্তৰিক অভিনন্দন জনাইছো। আজিৰ নিৰ্বাচনে প্ৰমাণ কৰি দিছে যে তাগৰ দ্বাৰাই মাহুহে উচ্চ আসনত উঠিব পাৰে। আপোনাৰ অমায়িক আৰু সবল ব্যৱহাৰে আমাক আপুত কৰি ৰাখিছে। আশ কৰো আপোনাৰ আজিৰ এই আসনত অধিস্থিত হোৱাৰ পিচৰ কালতো যেন আপোনাৰ এই ব্যৱহাৰ অটুট থাকে। ইয়াকে কৈ মই আপোনালৈ পুণৰ অভিনন্দন জ্ঞাপন কৰিলো—।

Mr. SPEAKER: Hon. Leader of the House, Shri Bhattacharya, Shri Bora, Shri Choudhury. I am extremely grateful for the honour that you have conferred to me by electing me to the high office of Speaker of this House. I am also grateful for the kind words said about me by the Leader of the House, and the other friends mentioned above.

This exalted Chair was occupied in the past by the giants in the field of parliamentary democracy and their endeavour and selfless services have established healthy traditions and exemplary conventions which are conducive to the growth of parliamentary democracy in the country. The last among them was our late Speaker, Shri Hareswar Goswami, who within a short span of his Speakership left marks of notable changes almost in every sphere.

I feel diffident when I think of the high responsibilities attached to this office but it is your kind words of assurance and the spirit of co-operation which I had experienced during my short tenure as Deputy Speaker of this House which has infused in me immense courage to shoulder this responsibility. I assure you, my friends, that it will be my sincere effort and earnest endeavour to uphold the dignity and decorum of the House and see that the rights and privileges of the Members of this august House are safeguarded.

I am confident that hon. members will uphold the healthy traditions of this House. I am sure that in the discharge of my duties I will get the co-operation and help from all of you.

With these words I thank you for the honour bestowed on me and I assure my complete devotion to the service of the House. Thank you. Jai Hind.

(After a pause)

Now, as I have been elected to the office of the Speaker, I hereby resign my post as Deputy Speaker. The date of election of the Deputy Speaker will be announced later on.

Discussion on the Statement made by the Chief Minister
on the Re-organisation of Assam

Mr. SPEAKER: Now, we will go on with the motion, other business will remain outstanding till to-morrow. We have already taken 20 minutes. Therefore, I want to fix the time upto 6.30 for discussion of this motion. For reply I want to fix 45 minutes or half an hour and the rest will be covered by the discussions. As it is a very important subject, I would request the hon. members to be brief so that many hon. members may participate.

With these few words, I would now request Shri Dulal Chandra Barua to move the motion.

Shri DULAL CHANDRA BARUA: Sir, I move the motion.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, while supporting the motion, I beg to submit that after the discussions in this House are over, it will probably be in the fitness of things if the House can come to a unanimous recommendation to be forwarded to the Government of India for necessary consideration. And if the recommendation, and that too a unanimous recommendation, goes from this House, I think even at this late hour, the Government of India will see their way to avoid the catastrophe that is apprehended if the proposed scheme is put to action. Sir, this is a very delicate matter and naturally various conflicting and at times, contradictory trends worked and are even now working. There are various lobbies functioning centering round this problem, and therefore, we shall be failing in our duty if we do not under the present circumstances keep our heads cool and hearts stout. On the decision that will be taken on this issue, not only the fate of future Assam but the pattern that might develop in the whole of India will to a great extent depend.

I therefore, wish and pray that I may not be swayed away by any cheap sentimentalism or emotionalism and I wish that the House also be sufficiently responsive to the great responsibility that is there on us and before us. I make it absolutely clear and unequivocal that I stand for the unity of Assam and unity of India. Anything that hampers or weakens that unity will be a great blow in my opinion not only for the present generation but also for the generations to come. That unity, however, in my humble opinion can develop and fructify only on the basis of voluntary co-operation and collaboration of all the citizens of India. That is no unity which is imposed against will. And therefore for strengthening the Unity of Assam and India if some re-adjustment of certain existing pattern be absolutely necessary we should not hesitate to rise up to that occasion. But then the perspective should be unity and more unity, never vivisection and centrifugalism. Looking from that point of view, Sir, I am constrained to submit that the latest proposal or thinking, whatever may be called, of the Government of India as stated by the Chief Minister today is worse than division of Assam; because there has been an attack on some basic fundamentals. These fundamentals concern not only Assam but the whole of India. I shall not go to the details, I shall concern myself only to a few items, because I hope that so far as the other items and aspects are concerned, other Honourable Members will with more lucidity and more information help this House and help the country.

First of all, Sir, one aspect, one great change that is proposed is the question of Law and Order. Now, the subjects Law and Order are in the State List. They are as a matter of fact the first and second items of the State List and this Law and Order in the Mehta Plan was kept also in the State List. But there were certain aspects of Law and Order for example, local police which even under the existing provisions of the Constitution are to be found in the Sixth Schedule. These were considered to be appropriate even under the existing circumstances. Now, in the present proposal this law and order is sought to be taken away from the State List not to be given to the "Sub-State", if I may use that word, but to be given to an arch-bureaucrat who is not responsible either to the people of the State as a whole or to the people of the Sub-State. That officer appointed by the Home Department of the Government of India being made the custodian of Law and Order is a retrograde step which is not going forward which is not decentralising power, but which is centralising all power which is making the strong centre all the stronger and with the economic collaboration with the growing power of the monopolists in the economic sphere and with their increased and increasing stranglehold on the administration in the centre will pave the way for State Monopoly Capitalism in India and it will be only a step back from the Fascism. I don't say that the Centre is already on the verge of Fascism. But the way in which the trends are growing bad to that direction. The way power is being centralised at the service of monopoly capitalism is a dangerous thing for Indian democracy. Sir, it is a fact that economics is the basis and politics is only the Super-structure of a society. It is also a fact that so far as the economic sphere of India is concerned the power of the capitalist-cum-land lord exploiting classes is being concentrated, being intensified rather than being weakened under the present regime. But, those exploiting people are not satisfied with this alone, and therefore, we see that there has been more and more interference in the political super-structure and in the administrative machinery of the country by this Land Lord cum Capitalist exploiting classes of India. The only possible guarantee is if there be real decentralisation of power and if the power be answerable to the people, to the elected representatives. Therefore, it is not only the question of weakening the State of Assam, it is not only a question of creating a State within a State. It is also a question of responsibility to the people and deprivation of peoples' right. Therefore, this is a particular aspect on which I think, this House should be very particular in its representation to the Central Government that we cannot be a party to this retrograde reactionary step. In this connection Sir, I beg also to submit that the Governor's power as proposed is the real power and not simply, ornamental power. Governor's power is sought to be made more effective more biting, more venomous under the proposed scheme. Sir, when the institution of Governor was being considered in the Constituent Assembly, the consensus was that even if there be a Governor he should be more or less an ornamental figure head. He would be so to say a liaison officer between the Centre and the State. And with regard to his function he would be acting on the advice, euphemistically so called of the elected representatives of the people, viz; the Ministry. There were only a few items and that too even then particularly with reference to Assam, Sir, that the Governor has had some extra powers. Now, we will find Sir, that the Governor has had some extra of the Constitution of India that when we compare Article 74 and Article 163 position of the President. But there was some difference. The difference between Article 74 Clause I and Article 163 Clause I is that the Article 163

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Clause I speaks of any function required by the Constitution to be exercised by the Governor in his discretion. I emphasise the word 'required' because the Governor cannot use his individual discretion anywhere and everywhere. It is only in those spheres where the Constitution itself "requires" it to use his individual discretion in other words, where the Constitution puts it in black and white that he would use his individual discretion only there the Governor can or should use his discretion. And, that individual discretion is also the discretion of the Home Ministry. Now, the only instances of function "required" by the Constitution to be exercised by the Governor in his discretion are the case of the Governor of Assam under paragraph 9 and 18 of the Sixth Schedule and the function of a Governor appointed to be an Administrator of a Union Territory under Article 239 Clause II. There is no other matter in respect of which a Governor may under the Constitution act in his discretion. The explanation in his discretion in Article 163 Clause III should also be read in that spirit. Now, let us leave aside this individual discretion of the Governor with regard to the Union Territories as under Article 239 (II). Let us see wherein the Sixth Schedule the Governor can use his discretion. These are only with regard to the two paragraphs and not for the whole Sixth Schedule. Even when the Governor under full guidance of the Ministry, under full guidance of the Government of Assam. Now, what are these two paragraphs, 9 and 18 of the Sixth Schedule. Paragraph 9 relates to licences or leases for the purpose of prospecting for or extracting of minerals in the Sixth Schedule areas. This Article reads like this—"Such share of the royalties accruing each year from licences or leases for the purposes of prospecting for or for the extracting of minerals granted by the Government of Assam in respect of any area within a autonomous district is may be agreed upon between the Government of Assam and the District Council of such District shall be made over to that District Council. If any dispute arises as to the share of such royalties to be made over to the District Council it shall be referred to the Governor for determination and the amount determined by the Governor in his discretion shall be deemed to be amount payable under sub-paragraph I to the District Council and the decision of the Governor shall be final." That is one. The other is paragraph 18(1) "The Governor may—(a) subject to the previous approval of the President, by public notification, apply all or any of the foregoing provisions of this Schedule to any tribal area specified in Part B of the table appended to paragraph 20 of this Schedule or any part of such area and thereupon such area or part shall be administered in accordance with such provisions, and (b) with like approval, by public notification, exclude from the said table any tribal area specified in Part B of that table, exclude from the said table any tribal area specified in Part B of that table or any part of such area. (2) Until a notification is issued under sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph in respect of any tribal area specified in Part B of the said table or any part of such area, the administration of such area or part thereof, as the case may be, shall be carried on by the President through the Governor of Assam as his agent and the provisions of Article 240 shall apply thereto as if such area or part thereof were a Union Territory specified in that article. (3) In the discharge of his functions under sub-paragraph (2) of this paragraph as the agent of the President the Governor shall act in his discretion."

These are the two solitary instances in the entire Sixth Schedule where the Governor ought to function in his discretion. In all other matters the

State Government ought to advise and the Governor according to the Constitution was bound to obey the advice of the State Government. But the misfortune was that this State Government of Assam that is the Congress Ministry of Assam for the last 20 years failed in its duty. All the Acts passed by the District Council ought to have been vetted by the Government. But, I can tell you Sir, this Assam Government abdicated this responsibility all these years. As soon as the District Councils passed the Bills, the Governor almost automatically approved them but never sent them to the Ministry.

Shri CHATRASING FERON (Minister, L.A.D.): That is not exactly the fact. Because as soon as the bill is submitted by the District Council it is sent to the Law Department for examination and scrutiny, and after that it is sent to the Governor for assent.

Shri GAURI SANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Sir, there are many bills that have been passed by the District Council but these have not been placed in the Cabinet. I am not concerned with the Law Department. Law Department is not the Cabinet of Assam. Let the House not be misled. Law Department is there to see whether a particular bill is in conformity with the Constitution, whether it is in conformity with the public policy. Not only the District Councils' bills but the Legislature's bill are also examined by the Law Department. So, from that point of view that is not the issue I made. I made something else. My issue was that after a bill (be that examined by the Law Department or not, does not matter. I am not concerned with that). After a bill has been passed by the District Council and before it gets the stamp of approval of the Governor, according to the Constitution that bill should be examined by the Cabinet of Assam and I say that it was never placed before the Cabinet for the last 20 years.

M. MOINUL HAQUE CHOUDHURY: Which article the Hon'ble member is referring to?

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: I am talking of Sixth Schedule. Except paragraphs 9 and 18 all other paragraphs are subject to the control of the Government of Assam. But this control, Government of Assam not only did not exercise, it also did not discharge its duty and responsibility. That is one point I have made. The second thing I wanted to make in this connection is that in the Sixth Schedule itself there is a provision that the accounts of the different District Councils should be examined periodically, and this should be done by the Government of Assam. Now for the State finances there is Accountant General to examine the accounts, for the Government of India there is the Comptroller and Auditor General. So far as the allocations for District Councils seldom have been examined and perhaps those members who were present during the Delhi Conference will remember that when this point was raised by Shri E. Sangma in the Conference the A.P.H.L.C. members felt nervous, but there was no reply to it, because they had been given a free hand which the Constitution did not contemplate. They were given the freedom which the Constitution did not contemplate, with the result that it is only a stamp of formality. So that is also one of the reasons. If from the very beginning caution and proper care were exercised the District Council would have developed on healthy lines, they would have known how to utilise the money and not merely spend-

ing. So these flaws and lacunae encouraged them to go on as they pleased. They were free to spend in whatever way they liked. There were no examination, no brake to all these sorts of things. Even in this House different Ministers come and they take grants. As soon as they go to the Tribal Areas Department the money is spent. Now everybody knows that other than Accountant General nobody knows actually how these are spent. When the different departments face the Public Accounts Committee they say 'we did not spend the grant, we only took it.' The T.A.D. does not come there to answer because they did not take the grant. The results have been that the Public Accounts Committee is ineffective with regard to T.A.D. So far as the expenditure of the District Councils or in the T.A.D. are concerned in that way also they have been given a very long rope. The result is that they have become pampered. It is, therefore, our own folly, our own failure which to a great extent rendered us to direct to these difficulties. While we shall criticise others for not understanding our difficulties, and our problems, we should also make a self-analysis whether we are responsible to a very great extent in creating prodigal sons and pampered children. That is one aspect. There is another aspect. That aspect is that in India, and Assam is after all the epitome of India, two trends are working. One trend is, if I am allowed to use that word a big brotherly attitude and the other is a small brotherly sectarianism. I may not call it chauvinistic sectarianism. These are the questions of nations. But in the nation itself there are nationalities or at least national groups or at least tribal groups and they are in different stages of development. When we tackle a problem, we should always remember that the older is the person the more responsible and more humble he should be in tackling the problem. If you do the same thing it makes a lot of difference when you do it in good grace and not in a high-browed manner you can expect some good results. I do not name anybody but in the last two decades many a thing was done in the hills but not always in good grace, not always with humility. One may be doing his duty in good grace, some others with the high-brow attitude. As though he is carrying the white-man's burden, as though he is going only to uplift who are low. That attitude is a dangerous thing, because in free India everybody should be equal not only in letters but also in behaviour, in performance. No body should feel that he is inferior in any way to another citizen. Even when many good things are done, I am sorry, they have not always been done in good grace. There is another reason why there has been psychological resistance to present elements and certain things. It is that though we have made our Constitution a secular Constitution and though we declare that we have a secular State, the reality is that in the present stage of our development religious forces do act. Not only religion, even caste questions and caste considerations have their play in our politics not only in the hills but also in the plains. Now, I think and I hope that I shall not be misunderstood that in the hills while some religious institutions are doing very laudable humanitarian work these laudable works are not without politics. There is a lot of politics even in these laudable, humanitarian, egalitarian, educational and other things. We cannot also just ignore or just forget that apart from ourselves, we the inhabitant of this region, there are others who have got their present interest and also prospects of future interest in this region. We cannot also be blind of the fact that from the days of Readings, and Lorry Hammonds to the days of Andrew Clow and Coupland there were schemes and proposals, and not for nothing, not simply for intellectual exercise. We should also remember that

those who did take so much of trouble have not abandoned all their hopes and have not buried all those schemes and designs, in other words, to be absolutely can did, I may be permitted to say that in regard to this region not only the people of this region are interested and are taking interest, the people of the rest of India, nay, the people from outside India, are also taking keen interest in the developments and possible developments in this region, and, their interest is not simply intellectual exercise. It is not entirely subjective, there is a lot of objective, if I do not use the word interference, at least objective interest in those matters, and when we look to this problem, these things we cannot lose sight of. Another factor is that in spite of thousands of tons of bombs being poured on the poor people of Vietnam, that region is not going to remain the play-ground of the Wall Street Monopolists and war mongers. The resistance movement in that region is growing from strength to strength, and these Wall Street war mongers will sooner or later, probably sooner rather than later be ousted from that place. So they want some other place where they can have their footing so that like a over-powering giant these war mongers can keep a watch over this eastern Asiatic region and may interfere for what they say their way of life. They think that from the point of view of different factors which I have already mentioned this region if it can be given a particular status which will be of their liking then they will have a very firm footing indeed. So they are also interested in these matters. That lobby is very powerful in New Delhi. That lobby can present their case or its case much better than we can do. I think I shall not be exaggerating if I say that the Assam Government's case and the case of the people of Assam in general is very weakly represented in New Delhi, or the New Delhi rulers very rarely try to appreciate our presentation. There also there are reasons; because New Delhi itself is dependant on the bounties of that lobby, and, therefore, they cannot forget that he who pays the piper calls the tune. Our economic dependence on the Wall Street is one of the reasons why New Delhi is so very unresponsive to all our wailings and all our arguments. Now, in the face of all this, we shall have to do our best to settle the problem ourselves. That we can do only if we can win the willing co-operation of the people of the hills region to our line of thinking. We cannot force anything against their will. If we go to do that then willy nilly we will push them to the line which the Naga hostiles took, the line which the Mizo rebels are taking, the line which is being threatened of even in the Khasi & Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills. Now for that purpose, I think there is scope for more dialogue, there is scope for more give and take, and in my humble opinion taking everything into consideration, the Mehta Committee's recommendations were, though might not be most ideal, the best workable programme or scheme. It is very unfortunate that the Government of India has not seen the reasonableness of that scheme probably because they have already made certain commitments without going deep into the matter, and probably because they have or some of them have got some half-baked half-digested conception of what they call self-determination. Self-determination of whom? Self-determination to the status of Statehood can be only for nations. Every nationality or every ethnic or tribal group or a conglomeration of some ethnic groups do not necessarily have or can have the stage of self-determination which is appropriate for a nation.

Even in the Soviet Union where the issue of national self-determination was for the first time put into action, every tribe or every nationality have not

been given the statehood or regional councils. There are States, there are Autonomous Regions, there are areas and others are given just cultural rights. They have made four Stages, namely, (1) State, (2) Region, (3) Locality and (4) Recognition as a national minority group or cultural group.

But then because we take things straight, this is being wrongly understood and wrongly interpreted by some big guys of the Home Ministry of the Government of India. Be that as it may, it is a fact that as a result of the historical process, as a result of many of our omissions and commissions, as a result of the growing aspirations in this region, the people of the Sixth Schedule areas are not satisfied with the status which has been given to them and which is being enjoyed by them upto now. If we do not improve their status and if we do not agree to help them grow according to their genius, then there will be difficulty. Therefore, on principle, we cannot oppose the very idea of re-organisation, a political re-organisation and not merely administrative re-organisation of the State of Assam. I beg to submit that even in that political reorganisation the maximum that the Government of India should concede under the existing circumstances is the Mehta Plan. Now, another thing. The present proposal has taken into consideration only the Hills districts. This scheme does not appear to have taken into consideration the peculiar problems of Cachar. This point was raised during that Conference at Delhi and with maps and facts and figures it was shown that in the event of creation of a Hill State Cachar will be isolated from the rest of the Plains Districts. At that time it was said that after all it will remain in India. That was probably what was stated, is not it? Well, this is no argument. If that is so, then there could have been States with some portions here and some portions there. It is a common knowledge and an ordinary rudimentary thing that in States in this Federal Union there should be contiguity. Then a question may be raised. Where is the contiguity between West Pakistan and East Pakistan? Are they not States? Well, they are contiguous, they are contiguous by the vast sea. A vast stretch of water extends from West Pakistan to East Pakistan, and in that way they have contiguity. But in a Federal State is there any instance where there is no contiguity? If contiguity is no consideration, well Cachar could have been a part of West Bengal. During the pre-independence days the district of Cachar as well as the district of Sylhet were parts of the B.P.C.C. But because there is no contiguity, Cachar is no longer a part of West Bengal. So this Cachar problem and its peculiar geographical and historical position ought to have been considered by the framers of the new proposal. That has been completely missed. Another thing is also not clear. Now that paper is not circulated or that could not probably be circulated. These K. & J. Hills, Garo Hills and Mizos Hills—whether all of them will be one Union territory or the Mizo Hills will have a separate Union territory?

Shri BIMALA PRASAD CHALIHA (Chief Minister) : So far as the Union Territory is concerned, the proposal envisages that there will be two Union Territories—Garo Hills and United K. & J. Hills one and the Mizo Hills another).

Thank you, Sir. I am not supporting, I am only advancing an argument. If all the other Hills districts should have a status, if that be a status—of course

it is not a status, it is only pocketification by the Home Department—but if this is considered as a status, and if all these Hills—K. & J. Hills, Garo Hills and Mizo Hills—get a status, why not Mikir & North Cachar Hills? Because they have not threatened violence or direct action or have not disobeyed the law, have not gone the Naga way, is it because of this that the Government of India by the latest proposal ignored this district and have said to the people of the Mikir Hills and North Cachar Hills, “well, you are too docile to go the Naga hostiles’ way and so you are not entitled to this status.” This is a monstrous logic, a thoroughly reactionary idea and to the detriment of the interest of India. This is extremely bad and most unacceptable. Well, if backwardness be the consideration, then everybody will admit that Mikir and North Cachar Hills are the most backward area and if anybody ought to have got special consideration it is this North Cachar & Mikir Hills district that ought to have got it. But backwardness is not the consideration of the Government of India. I do not want to disclose any private opinion, but it was probably Shri Sarmah who said about an Hon. Minister. Another person highly placed in Indian politics had said to me in presence of Shri Romesh Kauli and Shri Tarapada Bhattacharya and others, “I do not care whether there is one State or a dozen States. After all it is in our interest to have a number of small and weak States in that region so that our Army can tackle with them easily.” That was what a top leader of India said. It is Delhi’s interest not to have a strong States so that they can tackle these weak small States, so that the Army can be more effective in dealing with them. That was very frankly and openly said and not in confidence but in presence of others, not by an ordinary man but by a big guy in New Delhi. This is monstrous. If that be the idea with which they want to solve the problem, they will simply invite the fate of the Moghal Empire. These Nababs and Subedars under the Moghuls—well, they might have thought that those Nababs and Subedars acted as their agents, but sometimes they became the disintegrating force. We do not consider the Government of India as the Moghul Emperors; we consider them as “our” Government, and we cannot allow them to go the Moghul way. (*Speaker’s bell rang*). Only one minute, Sir, and I finish. That point is that a Zonal Council is to be formed so that there may be some zonal understanding among the people of the region. I would like to know whether this Zonal Council will be presided over by the Governor and the members nominated to it. If there be a Zonal Council that shall have to be manned only by the elected representatives of the States or territories. Whatever that be, they have created a political status for NEFA by the back door; because in that Zonal Council they propose to have NEFA’s representation as that of the State of Assam or the State of Naga Land or the Union Territories of Manipur or Tripura. In other words, though in the Constitution NEFA has not yet been given any political status, these people by their present proposal want to make it a fait-accompli so as to be able to say later on that we are giving only a formal status as it is already existing.

Therefore, without going into further details, I would submit that it would be proper if this House sends its opinion to the Government of India, without being bitter or biting that the people of Assam do not consider the latest proposals to be acceptable in the best interest not only of this State but for the whole of India, because, once vivisection or division starts in Assam, it will not remain confined within this territory, it will spread to other States in India,

it will not only raise ugly heads in Bihar, not only in Orissa, it will also raise its head even in Chavan's State—Maharashtra as already the question of Bidarva is there. It should be considered whether by such vivisection or divisions and, that is, cutting India into pieces,—whether India is cut into 100 pieces or more—whatever the Ministers at the top may say in this regard, whether they care or not—our House should care for such an issue and I submit that there should be no discrimination, one should not be subjugated or denied equal right and in this there should be no encouragement for division or vivisection of India in any form. Let us work for equality of all and justice to all and above all for unity of India as a whole.

