

**Proceedings of the Ninth Session of the Assam
Legislative Assembly assembled after the First
General Election under the Sovereign Democratic
Republican Constitution of India**

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Shillong, at 1-30 P. M., on Friday, the 23rd March, 1956.

P R E S E N T

Shri Kuladhar Chaliha, B. L., Speaker, in the Chair, the nine Ministers, the two Deputy Ministers, the two Parliamentary Secretaries and sixty-seven Members.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STARRED QUESTIONS

(To which oral answers were given)

Post-Graduate Medical Classes in Assam

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI asked :

*14. Will the Minister-in-charge of Medical be pleased to state—

(a) Whether Government have in their contemplation to start Post-Graduate Medical Classes in Assam ?

(b) If so, where do the Government propose to open these classes ?

Shri RUPNATH BRAHMA (Minister) replied :

14. (a)—Yes.

(b)—In the Assam Medical College.

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: Did Government receive any representation regarding opening of these classes at Gauhati ?

Shri RUPNATH BRAHMA (Minister): Yes, Sir, we duly considered it, but the hon. Member should know that we have more teaching facilities in the Medical College than at Gauhati.

Shri MAL CHANDRA PEGU: May I know when does the Government propose to open the Post-Graduate classes in the Assam Medical College at Dibrugarh?

Shri RUPNATH BRAHMA (Minister): This will be done under the Second Five-Year Plan. For the information of the hon. Members, I may say that we shall have Post-Graduate classes in the following subjects, *viz.*, Surgery, Medicine, Ear, Nose and Throat, Ophthalmology and Gynaecology.

Mobile Library Units for the Rural Areas of Assam

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA asked:

*15. Will the Minister-in-charge of Education be pleased to state—

- (a) Whether a large number of Motor Vehicles were recently ordered for the Mobile Library Units meant for the rural areas of the State?
- (b) If so, what is their number?
- (c) The total expenditure that has been or will be incurred under this head?
- (d) Whether the Vehicles and the bodies thereof are so made as to be able to ply along the roads and paths in the rural areas?
- (e) If not, why were these at all accepted?
- (f) Who approved these Vehicles?

Shri OMEO KUMAR DAS (Minister) replied:

15. (a) & (b)—Four Library Vans.

(c)—Rupees one lakh already incurred.

(d)—Yes.

(e)—Does not arise.

(f)—The vehicles were examined by the Chief Automobile Engineer, State Transport, Assam, and approved by the Director of Public Instruction.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD UMARUDDIN: May I know, Sir, how these libraries will be used?

Shri OMEO KUMAR DAS (Minister): The question was about the cost of the vans and their capacity to move in the interior and reply has been given accordingly.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD UMARUDDIN: But what is the method by which people will get the benefit of reading the books?

Shri OMEO KUMAR DAS (Minister): Under the Scheme, only registered libraries will be issued books on loan.

Shri DHARANIDHAR BASUMATARI: Is it a fact that due to the big size of the vehicles, they cannot move in the interior places ?

Shri OMEO KUMAR DAS (Minister): It is not a fact that the vehicles cannot move to the interior.

Shri BISHNURAM MEDHI (Chief Minister): Sir, I am sure Umaruddin Saheb is aware that we are going to have State Libraries in all the districts and also some libraries in the important mofussil centres. These libraries will be registered and the mobile vans will go from place to place and distribute books to those libraries. The books may be kept in particular libraries for some time to enable the people of the area to read them, and then they will be shifted to other libraries.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD UMARUDDIN: Yes, that is what I wanted to know.

(Starred question No.16 standing in the name of Pu Lalma-wia was not put and answered as the hon. questioner was absent.)

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(To which answers were laid on the table)

Construction of Bor Ali from Nazira to Assam Trunk Road

Shri GIRINDRA NATH GOGOI asked :

37. Will the Public Works Department Minister be pleased to state—

(a) Whether it is a fact that the Subdivisional Development Board of Sibsagar had given top priorities in constructing Bor Ali from Nazira to Assam Trunk Road ?

(b) Whether it is a fact that this suggestion of the said Board was turned down by the Government ?

Shri SIDDHINATH SARMA (Minister) replied :

37. (a)—Yes.

(b)—No.

Names of High Schools that have been converted into multipurpose High Schools

Shri BAIKUNTHA NATH DAS asked :

38. Will the Minister-in-charge of Education be pleased to state the names of High Schools that have been converted into multipurpose High Schools up till now ?

Shri OMEO KUMAR DAS (Minister) replied :

38.—A list is placed on the Library table.

Total area under Reserve Forests in Assam

Shri HARIHAR CHOUDHURY asked :

39. Will the Minister-in-charge of Forests be pleased to state—

- (a) The total area under Reserve Forests in Assam before the Great Earthquake of 1950 ?
- (b) The total area of Reserve Forests dereserved for settlement with flood affected and river eroded persons after the said Earthquake ?
- (c) Total area of Reserve Forests opened as forest villages since 1950 to date ?
- (d) The number of families so settled as forest villagers ?
- (e) Total area of unsettled forests added to Reserve Forests during the said period ?
- (f) Total area of new plantations raised in the Reserve Forests during the said period ?
- (g) The amount spent in new plantations during the said period and the percentage thereto of the revenue on forest produces year by year ?

Shri RAMNATH DAS (Minister) replied :

39. (a)—6564 Sq. miles.

(b)—4778 acres.

(c) & (d)—Informations are not readily available and are being collected.

(e)—The total area of unsettled forests added to Reserve Forests during 1950-1955 is 32 Sq. miles approximately.

(f)—24907 acres during 1950-1955.

(g)—The amounts annually spent in new plantations during the period 1950-51 to 1954-55 are stated below indicating against each year the percentage of such expenditure as against the revenue earned on the forest produce :—

Year	Expenditure Rs.	Revenue earned on forest produce Rs.	Percentage of expenditure as against the revenue earned
1950-51	1,01,525	56,76,786	1.76 per cent.
1951-52	1,15,158	65,75,461	1.76 „
1952-33	1,28,542	58,32,906	2.2 „
1953-54	1,12,937	60,91,483	1.85 „
1954-55	1,60,516	67,06,799	2.39 „

Subankhata, Bhogpara Reclamation Project of Kamrup District

Shri BAIKUNTHA NATH DAS asked :

40. Will the Agriculture Minister be pleased to state—

(a) The amount of money spent up till now for Subankhata Bhogpara Reclamation Project of Kamrup district ?

(b) The area so reclaimed ?

(c) The number of families settled under this scheme ?

(d) Whether it is a fact that the settlers of this reclamation area could not grow paddy for want of irrigation facilities ?

(e) The amount of money spent up till now for irrigation purpose within this area ?

(f) Who is the officer responsible for the development of this area ?

41. (a) The premium fixed per bigha of the reclaimed land of Subankhata Bhogpara Reclamation area ?

(b) The duration and payment of premia ?

42.(a) The amount of money sanctioned for small irrigation projects during the year 1954-55 ?

(b) The amount of money spent for the purpose during that year ?

(c) The amount surrendered during that year ?

Shri RAMNATH DAS (Minister) replied :

40.(a)—Rupees 9,86,165-2-0 which includes Rs.5,82,505-10-0 being the value of machinery, implements, equipments, etc.

(b)—8098 bighas.

(c)—351 families.

(d)—Paddy crop was grown in about 10 per cent of the area reclaimed which had yielded an average crop. Due to irrigation channels constructed by the Agriculture Department being silted up by sand brought by the Diring River, a large area could not be grown with paddy. It is hoped that with the major irrigation project for which Public Works Department is undertaking a survey implemented a reasonable paddy crop for the reclaimed area will be assured.

(e)—Rupees 19,140.

(f)—For the reclamation work the Agricultural Engineer was responsible, but with the completion of the reclamation work the responsibility for developmental work devolved on the Development Committee set up by the Revenue Department with the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup as Chairman, Sub-Deputy Collector, Tihu as Secretary, Agricultural Engineer, District Agricultural Officer and several non-official local gentlemen as members. The constitution of the Committee is as follows :—

1. Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup—Chairman.
2. Sub-Deputy Collector, Tihu—Secretary.
3. Sub-Deputy Collector, Rangiya—Member.
4. Shri Dharanidhar Basumatari—Member.
5. Shri Provat Chandra Goswami—Member.
6. Shri Sriman Prafulla Goswami—Member.
7. Shri Mohadev Das—Member.
8. Shri Naranarayan Goswami—Member.

9. Shri Baikuntha Nath Das—Member.
10. Shri Akshoy Kumar Das—Member.
11. Dr. Homeswar Choudhury—Member.
12. Shri Haricharan Pathak, Nalbari—Member.
13. District Agricultural Officer, Gauhati—Member.
14. Agricultural Engineer, Gauhati—Member and two local nominated agriculturists.

41.(a)—Rupees 35 per bigha as premium and Rs.5 per bigha as development charges.

(b)—The premium is recoverable from the cultivators in 4 instalments.

42.(a)—Rupees 7,85,000

(b)—Rupees 6,08,201.

(c)—Rupees 1,76,799.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD UMARUDDIN: With regard to (a), may I know whether the premium will be realised at a time or by instalments ?

Shri RAMNATH DAS (Minister): In four instalments.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD UMARUDDIN: May I know the cost of reclamation per bigha of the Subankhata Project ?

Shri RAMNATH DAS (Minister): If the whole amount of expenditure is divided by the area reclaimed, the cost per bigha will come out.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD UMARUDDIN: Does it or does it not exceed the premium ?

Shri RAMNATH DAS (Minister): Calculation will show that.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD UMARUDDIN: Has that calculation been made at all by Government ?

Shri RAMNATH DAS (Minister): The calculation was made but is not before me, but if the hon. Member takes a little trouble it will come out.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD UMARUDDIN: The point is it is generally assumed that premium is fixed in such a way as to cover the cost of reclamation. I want to know whether the premium fixed in this case will just cover the cost of reclamation.

Mr. SPEAKER: You can just work that out from the figures supplied.

Shri SIDDHINATH SARMA (Minister): If you divide the entire cost of Rs.9,86,165 by 8,098, it will come to about 120 or 123 rupees. It will be less if you deduct the cost of machinery because the machinery will fetch some money even after they are used.

Mr. SPEAKER: It will be about Rs.35 per bigha if you deduct the cost of machinery.

Shri DHARANIDHAR BASUMATARI: Is it a fact that due to scarcity of water, the cultivators have not been able to cultivate the land ?

Shri RAMNATH DAS (Minister): I have already replied to that in answer to question No.40(d).

Shri DHARANIDHAR BASUMATARI: May I inform the Government that irrigation has not been successful ?

Shri RAMNATH DAS (Minister): That is also admitted.

Shri DHARANIDHAR BASUMATARI: Are Government aware of the fact that recently the Public Works Department is investigating about irrigation from the Pagladia river crossing another river, Mara Pagladia, underground by tunnel ?

Shri RAMNATH DAS (Minister): I am afraid, Sir, the hon. Member has not read the reply I have given. I have already replied that the Public Works Department are carrying on investigations now to irrigate that area. But I do not know to what extent the investigations have proceeded and from which river the water will be drawn.

DEMAND FOR GRANTS

Grant No.2

“7.—Land Revenue”

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister): Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the recommendation of the Governor of Assam, I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 1,07,45,700 be granted to the Minister-in-charge to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending 31st March, 1957 for the administration of the head “7.—Land Revenue”.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Motion moved is:

That a sum of Rs. 1,07,45,700 be granted to the Minister-in-charge to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending 31st March, 1957 for the administration of the head “7.—Land Revenue”.

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs.1,07,45,700 under Grant No.2, Major head 7.—Land Revenue, at page 3 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.1,07,45,700 do stand reduced by Re.1.

(To discuss the necessity of fixing ceiling on urban holdings).

Again Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs.1,07,45,700 under Grant No.2, Major head 7.—Land Revenue, at page 3 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.1,07,45,700 do stand reduced by Re.1. (To discuss the land policy of the Government).

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs.1,07,45,700 under Grant No.2, Major head 7.—Land Revenue, at page 3 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.1,07,45,700 do stand reduced by Re.1. (To raise a general discussion).

Mr. SPEAKER: Cut Motions moved are:

(1) That the total provision of Rs.1,07,45,700 under Grant No.2, Major head—7.—Land Revenue, at page 3 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.1,07,45,700 do stand reduced by Re.1.

(2) That the total provision of Rs.1,07,45,700 under Grant No.2, Major head—7.—Land Revenue, at page 3 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1, *i.e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.1,07,45,700 do stand reduced by Re.1.

(3) That the total provision of Rs.1,07,45,700 under Grant No.2, Major head—"7.—Land Revenue", at page 3 of the Budget, be reduced Re.1, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.1,07,45,700 do stand reduced by Re.1.

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, in moving my Cut Motions my objective is firstly to fix, as we have done in the case of arable land, a ceiling on urban land holdings, and secondly to discuss the land policy of the Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have only one hour for this.

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI:** Today we have spared time in the question hour and as there are very few Cut Motions, we may be allowed to speak at length on this Cut Motion because it is the most important one.

Mr. SPEAKER: All right, we may extend the time by 15 or 20 minutes.

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI:** As we have stated so many times on the floor of this House, to an agricultural State like Assam, land problem is the most important problem.

Mr. SPEAKER: As regards the ceiling, there is a Bill, I think.

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI:** I am speaking about urban areas. Sir, land problem is the most important problem of our State and we must also say that up till now we have not been able to tackle even a fringe of this problem. The Minister-in-charge might say that we have legislations regarding the protection of *Adhiars*, he might say that we have got legislation regarding tenancy and he might also say that we are going to fix a ceiling on land holdings in the rural areas. But even then, the problem will not be solved unless we determine what kind of economy we are going to have. I am not referring to a socialistic pattern of economy or capitalistic economy but I am saying whether we would like to have a balanced economy in our State. If we have a balanced economy in our State, we have to look at the land problem in a different way. We have today a population of more than 90

lakhs and out of it, more than 75 per cent have to earn their bread by engaging themselves on agriculture or allied activities. Now, Sir, even if we get a socialistic pattern of State, we have to decide today what percentage of population we would like to have on agriculture because, Sir, as has been referred to it by many Friends that in Assam if we do not have a Zone east of East Pakistan and also make that Zone self-sufficient, the geographical position of the country and the question of strategic defence will lead us to a very critical position. Therefore if there could be a positive thinking regarding this problem also what percentage of population do we actually want to live on land, that would have been all right. If we decide to have 50 per cent of population to live on land as it will not be possible to have a balanced economy or say even 40 or 50 per cent then we have to see whether we can provide these people on the land that we have in our possession.

Sir, my submission here would be that we cannot think of providing more than 50 per cent of our people with land and that is an over-estimate also. As against that, if we consider that the available land justifies that estimate then we have to find out the various categories of people who are today living on land. This leads us to a fundamental question on which the Government must decide sooner or later and that fundamental question is to whom the land should belong. If we want that land should belong to tillers only then even today it would be possible to get out some land from people who are not tillers and that is the main crux of the problem. Unless we decide that land must belong to the tillers, any number of people would come in as agriculturists and yet they will not engage themselves in agriculture and live as parasites. A socialistic pattern of society cannot allow people other than tillers to live on land and here also the tiller has to be very accurately defined. In the legislation that we have got up till now, the tiller has been given a wider definition that it could also include other people who are not actually tillers. Sir, looking from that point of view.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Have you any idea of *per capita* holding for whole of India ?

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI:** The *per capita* holding is .85 acre, *i.e.*, one-fifth of an acre.

Mr. SPEAKER: If you nationalise what will happen ?

*Speech not corrected.

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI:** I am not speaking of nationalisation. All that I am saying is that land must belong to the tiller and this is to be proclaimed by Government and is to be followed as a positive policy. In that view to-day we find that there are people who are even living on land as *Adhiars* of whom there may be some persons like widows, orphans and aged people. For such persons we should provide some way of earning. There should be a provision of State Insurance Scheme for their livelihood than to allow them to have land in their name and get it tilled by other people, because that will keep the *Adhiars* open for unscrupulous methods, who, just for the sake of keeping their land in their possession, will call themselves agriculturists even if they are not agriculturists. In tea garden, we find that labourers who are earning themselves in the gardens are given land for cultivation. If we have a fair wage for these labourers that should be sufficient to maintain themselves and there should not be any question of allowing them to supplement their income by another means.

Mr. SPEAKER: Labour leaders will not like this.

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI:** When we give fair wage to the tea-labourers, and when the minimum wage is not accepted by them, we should not allow them land to supplement their income.

Considering from that point of view also, it is necessary to find out categories of people to whom we will give land and I have no doubt in my mind that only that person is entitled to get land who actually tills his land. If we make it the standard for settling the land, in that case, I have no doubt, sufficient land will be available. If we make 50 per cent agriculturists. that 50 per cent ought to be provided with land. The problem can be met and ways and means can be devised by which these actual tillers can be provided with land. I am not one to say that tomorrow everybody will be given land. I know, land position is not elastic. I know, land cannot be available to everybody. But what is most important to consider is whether the land that is available has been given to agriculturists or to tillers of the soil. If that is not the case then we will find that quite a good percentage of people who are not tillers and agriculturists will get land. Sooner we do away with *Adhiar* Protection Act the better. Sooner we can make it possible that land only belongs to tillers and there will be no second strata

between the tiller and the State, the better and quickly we will be able to give solution of the land problem.

Then, Sir, there is another factor to be considered for which we will have enough time, namely, about the ceiling which we will consider when it comes before the House. In my speech on the Budget, I said that this ceiling is really not necessary to be put for a State like Assam. The other day, we were shown pictures in the Assembly Hostel regarding scientific research by the American Information Service. We have seen what development in agriculture is achieved and it is possible even in 10 or 12 years we may be able to improve agriculture in that manner and we may be able to produce a considerable amount of produce in a small piece of land. These are not imaginary things but real, but at the moment, I will not speak so much about that problem because we will have opportunity to discuss it clause by clause when the Ceiling Bill comes before the House. But, Sir, in this connection, I will say that along with this ceiling in rural areas, there should not be a discrimination between town land and village land. We know from our experience that in certain towns, land holding has become such a lucrative position that people today think that the best investment is investment on town land. I would say that as we have decided to fix a ceiling on rural holdings, it is necessary for us also to fix a ceiling on town holding because our main objective is to remove disparity of income between one section and the other section of the people. When it is our objective that there should be a socialistic pattern of society in our State, this discrimination of town holding and village holding should be done away with. In urban or town holdings we should fix a ceiling of 5 or 10 bighas as maximum.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Goswami, is there any city anywhere in the world where a ceiling on town holding is fixed?

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI:** When we are thinking of a Socialistic pattern of society, we should fix the ceiling even in town land. There may not be any such ceiling in England or America but we must show an example to others. In Socialist States, like Russia, Czechoslovakia and some other countries, there is no ceiling but land belongs to the State. I am not going to that extent. All that I want to say is that it is immediate necessity of to-day to close up the disparity between different sections of the people and if we do not want to discriminate between town people and village

people and if we have decided to fix a ceiling on the village people, it is also necessary that there should be a ceiling in the case of town people because both are earning from land they possess, rather the income derived from a piece of land in a village is very little in comparison to the income derived in a town from a piece of similar size of land. I want that there should be ceiling on town holdings also and nobody should be allowed to hold more than 5 bighas of land. I know that there are people who have got more than 5 bighas of land while others have not got even one bigha. Sir, when we think of towns like Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Tezpur, etc., we will find that there are people who own even $\frac{1}{4}$ th or $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of the town itself. Sir, when we do not like the villagers—the agriculturists—to have their income, how can we on moral grounds and on grounds of equity allow the town people to derive their benefit?

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister): One thing is not clear, Sir, whether Mr. Goswami wants that one person should not have 5 bighas in one town only or as a total in different towns. One may have one bigha of land say in Gauhati, another bigha in Shillong, another in Jorhat and so on.

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI:** Sir, that is another wrong policy—we want to have boards everywhere. I do not see why one should have a house everywhere—in Shillong, in Gauhati in Nowgong, in Jorhat etc. Is it necessary for one person to have so many houses in different places? If that has been the practice, it should be stopped—5 bighas should be the total area that a man can have in the whole State. If under certain circumstances we find that it is necessary for one to live for a considerably long period in two different places, that may be allowed but in no case should the total exceed 5 bighas of land. I have only suggested 5 bighas just to accommodate such persons but I could have brought it further down.

So, Sir, regarding land, that has got to be done. In other words, there must be equal treatment for all people. Also in fixing the ceiling, as I have said, in the case of village lands also what is to be considered is not how much he can be

allowed to keep but what income should be considered to be the normal income of a man to manage his family, etc. If we find that with three or four bighas of land a man can keep himself in decent style or in a standard style of living, I would like to say that that should be the normal. But in all these things there must be proper calculation. I do not say that we should do these things without calculation or without a basis.

Mr. SPEAKER : Mr. Goswami, what is your present calculation ?

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI :** These things will have to be worked out with income tax, because we have got a taxation level by which we consider the average income of a man and on that average the income tax is calculated. That is the basis on which these things will have to be worked out.

Now, Sir, coming to the land problem, as I have said, we have not done anything up till now because this problem of landless agriculturists is yet very acute and this landlessness has of late increased due to natural calamities also. Erosion has also thrown out many people from their land. (A voice from the Treasury Benches: By human action also). Yes, Sir, human action as well as Governmental action too. By Governmental action, I refer to the many cases of evictions that are carried on everywhere. Is there any sense—any moral sense in it? If I use stronger language, is there any sense in driving out people who have been allowed to squat in one particular place for 10 or 12 years without giving them alternative lands? I consider it immoral, Sir, to do so. When we have allowed people to remain in one particular place for 10 years or in some cases for more and then suddenly to treat them as law-breakers is not moral, is not justifiable. If people are found to be law-breakers, they should be treated as such and immediate action should be taken. But what do we find actually? People for want of land go to a particular place, clear the jungle or erect houses, even some made good gardens and cultivate cultivable land and remain there peacefully for 10 or 12 years and suddenly somebody comes and says "Well, this is a Government reserve or Government land that these people have squatted, they should be evicted at once". Is it fair or, as I have said, is there any moral sense in such

actions ? We have got to be vigilant, Government must be vigilant ; if there is some violation of land laws, immediately those people should be punished. But if after allowing those people to remain in a particular place for quite a long time and if later they are suddenly asked to vacate, it will be very harsh on them.

But, Sir, it is not only the Government that do this, individuals also evict people at will. Therefore, Sir, we have to see that certain legislations are laid down to control those things. There are of course certain legislations that we have done in this regard but there is no legislation to control individuals. There is also no legislation to control the Executive which always does things as it desires. So, Sir, as I have said, all these things contribute to the growth of this army of landless people in our land. If we want to solve the problem of these landless people, we must do so effectively. Now, Sir, I would like to know from the Government during these five years how many families have been actually provided with lands.

Mr. SPEAKER : He has given you the information, I think.

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI :** That is one lakh or something. That was according to the Government's own survey of Darrang District, of Lakhimpur District or Sibsagar District. But from that we found that the total of actually landless people on the average will be not more than 12 per cent while on the other hand the total number of people who own land between 1 and 10 bighas will be more than 40 per cent. That is the position. If we consider these figures to find out how many people have been settled and what amount of land we have been able to make available to these landless people, we will find that we have not touched even the fringe of the problem.

Then, Sir, as I have been saying about the erosion-affected people and people who have suffered very much due to floods and due to silting up of the river, in the Budget speech I said that in the Gauhati Subdivision alone there are over 2,000 erosion-affected people and of these erosion-affected people except those of Palasbari, if we take the total number of families that have been settled, it will not be more than 300 or 400 families. This shows that we

have not been able to tackle the problem of the remaining 1,600 families up till now. When we consider the problem of these people who have got no land, we will see that it is but natural for them to go and squat anywhere they like. We have a moral obligation to provide lands to these people, we cannot leave them at the mercy of nature. Sir, as I have said, this problem has become very acute and the most cogent solution as to how to tackle this problem is for us to see that in all reclaimed areas or in areas where Government reserves are thrown open, first priority should be given to the erosion-affected people. Of course, I admit that there are many difficulties about this. The local people will not allow these people to remain there because they will not have enough land for their own purpose.

Sir, as I have said, the silting up of land has also created another problem. In Pub-Chamaria and Paschim-Chamaria Mouzas of the Kamrup District and then in certain areas in Majuli and Darrang, due to silting up of land, people cannot live and they cannot cultivate their land.

Then another problem is also there that the lands have been devoured by the Brahmaputra. After the lands have been devoured by the Brahmaputra, the Mouzadars have been realising land revenue from the people. I know in the south bank the Mouzadars have been realising land revenue from the people even when their lands have been devoured by the Brahmaputra. The Mouzadars consider that the land is still shown in the map, therefore, the people must pay the land revenue. This is a very bad position. I would request the Minister-in-charge to consider this aspect of the problem. Only land revenue has been realised immediately instead of allotting land to the erosion-affected people.

Recently also there has been a tendency on the part of the Government to increase the land revenue. I admit about the necessity of getting more finances to implement our various plans. But in doing so, we should consider that the land revenue in Assam (after Bombay) is the highest in India. Today if we go on increasing the land revenue, when there is new survey and there is no new assessment, the people immediately think that the land revenue is going to be increased. We have to see that we are not putting extra burden, by way of increasing the land revenue, on the people.

Mr. SPEAKER : It has not been changed for 30 years.

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI:** Sir, in re-settled areas, the land revenue is being increased.

***Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister):** In immatured areas the land revenue is not increased.

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI:** Sir, what I am going to say is that the incidence of land revenue today except Bombay is the highest in Assam. Ours is Re.1-12-0 all over Assam.

Mr. SPEAKER: I know ours is only Re.0-15-0 per bigha.

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI:** Sir, it is Re.1-12-0 per acre and this is the highest in India, except Bombay.

(Voices from the Treasury Benches—No, it is not the highest).

Sir, the figures are there, they will say.

***Shri BISHNURAM MEDHI (Chief Minister):** Sir, my Friend, Mr. Goswami, has probably forgotten that in Bengal land revenue is calculated on whatever amount is paid by the Zamindars to the Government. But what is the amount realised from the tenants by the Zamindars?

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI:** Sir, except Bombay the incidence of land revenue is the highest in Assam all over India.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Goswami, in Bengal the Zamindars are realising land revenue from the tenants at higher rates and the land revenue pass through their hands to the Government.

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI:** Then, Sir, I come to another problem regarding the remission of land revenue in flood-affected areas. The remission is given according to the Government orders. But, Sir, I know of three or four cases where the Mouzadar has realised land revenue in Gomi area of my constituency—whether he has received Government orders or not.

Then also another thing—as soon as there is any damage caused to the land due to storm and strong wind, as it happened yesterday, the Land Revenue Department should be prompt in rendering relief to the people. These things are very important when people suffer from such calamities.

With these few words, I would only request the Minister-in-charge to tackle the land problem very seriously. The landless people have to be provided with land ; where the land will have to be settled with such landless people, that should be decided and what percentage of the landless people will have to be provided with land, that will have to be decided and whether the land belongs to the tillers also that will have to be decided. Unless these things are decided by the Government, the solution of the land problem will remain as it is.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I shall confine myself only to two points, in view of the fact that Mr. Goswami has covered a lot of my points which I wanted to raise.

The two points on which I propose to speak are with regard to land settlement, and collection of land revenue. Now, it is an admitted fact that the peasantry is the back-bone of our State. Seventy per cent of our people depend on land, and over 40 per cent of our peasantry have either no land or if they have any land it is below the economic holding. So the question of settlement of land with those peasants who have no land or who have land which is below the economic holding, is an urgent question for the Government. It is a fact that with the growth of population, the surface of the earth cannot be expanded, there fore, the area of Assam cannot be expanded, and land-hunger is bound to be there. Unless and until the present productive system of land is not changed by the basic solution of industrialisation of the country, pressure on land will remain. Industrialisation of the country does not come all of a sudden and we cannot march on the road of progress if the agrarian sector remains as it is. This agrarian sector is an important sector. Therefore, it is urgently necessary that Government should have a clear-cut policy with regard to settlement of land, and a clear-cut policy with regard to the method of cultivation so that the country will be kept on the path of progress.

Now in this connection, the question arises— where is the land? I have repeated, Sir, on the floor of the House several times that land is even now available in certain sectors of our country. When I was going through the report on the Land Revenue Administration in Assam, 1950-51 there I find that those people who are lesser in number but stronger in finances, have been occupying more land and those who are larger in number but weaker in economic position have been holding less land. We find here at page 2 of the Report that the total settled area of the State including revenue free estate was 81,62,669 acres and out of this we find that as much as 1,71,627 acres were under permanent settlement estates, and we find that in Tea Gardens, the number of which is 971 the area actually under tea is 3,83,460 acres while 10,23,530 acres are under the Tea Estates but without any tea or its ancillary. So we find that there is quite a big amount of land under the Tea Estates. That is three times the area which is actually under tea cultivation. There is no necessity of this 75 per cent of the total area under the tea estates to be lying fallow. A fair portion of this land can be had for settlement with the landless people. There are also other lands. Apart from that even when the Government has certain settlements to do, they do not do it in a quick and efficient manner. For example, there is a Professional Grazing Reserve in my own constituency on the verge of the constituency of the Finance Minister. It is called the Maloibari Reserve, on the southern side of the river Kolong. It has 9,957 bighas of land. Of these 4,957 bighas were opened for cultivation as early as 1949, but up till now the different persons who have gone there have not been shown their respective allotments, that is to say, no area has been specified to them, individually. Of the total area of the Reserve about half the area was opened for settlement and the remaining half was left for grazing purposes. Now, during the last seven years, since the resolution for throwing open the reserve was adopted, the demarcation line, that is to say, what is the actual boundary between the reserved and dereserved portion, nobody can say. Only recently after a great deal of agitation, the Deputy Commissioner has issued an order to demarcate the boundary which has not yet been implemented. Not to speak of demarcating the individual holdings of the different persons who have been allotted lands there, even the boundary line between the reserved and dereserved portion has not been shown, the result being that there is almost a clash between the graziers and those who have gone there and settled there by constructing some structures. If there would have been proper demarcation,

there would not have been any question of crossing the boundary line and the occasion for the clashes between the new settlers and the graziers. But due to the inaction of the Government during these long 7 years, there have been cases both criminal and civil, between the peasants themselves, for getting better type of land. So, it is clear that the delay in the matter of settlement defeats the purpose, in spite of good resolutions, sometimes. Moreover, we have seen in Kamrup District, according to the Government Land Revenue Record of 1950-51 that there was no Colonisation Officer in the Sadar and the Sub-Deputy Collector, Chaigoan Circle was asked to prepare Toujibahir revenue collection, and he found that about 2,700 people were squatting on Government land in 1951 without holding any Patta but paying Touzibahir revenue. Now recently the Government has issued orders to the effect that these people may be given Patta provided they voluntarily withdraw from that land. If they abide by the law, then only they may be given land, otherwise not. Now it appears that they are living there from 1950 or prior to that. They have built up some sort of structures. They were either erosion-affected people or landless people; they were living on paying Taojibahir revenue. If Government now order demolition of their houses, that will mean a national waste. They may be asked to pay a nominal fine for breach of this technical provision, but they should not go and demolish their houses.

I do not understand why this sort of orders should be there specially when Taujibahir revenue has already been collected from these people. Not only that, even though the cultivating season this year has already begun, these lands have not been as yet demarcated. As Shri Goswami has just now stated, some difficulties have cropped up because of the disputes between some people with some others. Because people from such places as Simna and Fatauri have also been allotted lands there, the local people think that they should get preference over those who come from distant places. Again eroded and flooded people also claim that their claims should have more favourable consideration than the others. All these claims and counter-claims are there. This delay in demarcation of lands by the land record staff has further accentuated the disputes and aggravated the troubles. All these things have happened due to the delay in the matter of settlement. I need not give many more instances. We also find in town lands as well as in the village lands that at the time of allotment the principle followed is not quite sound and as a result of that certain things are done without proper consideration of

the repurcussion that might follow in the long run as a result of such haphazared settlement of lands. I know of certain cases where lands have been allotted to peasants who are not really landless. Lands have been allotted to persons who are not cultivators also. It might be said that although to-day they are not cultivators, in future they may be cultivators.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is a little weakness in your argument. What about the Scheduled Castes ?

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: I am speaking now about the urban people who have been allotted lands in rural areas. But so far as the Scheduled Castes people are concerned, I do not think if agricultural lands are settled with these Scheduled Castes people who are town dwellers they will at once give up their age old profession and at once come to villages to take cultivation. I therefore think, the Urban Scheduled Castes people also should not be settled with agricultural lands. They should rather be given jobs in the State Transport, jobs may be secured for them in factories and workshops. They may be given some Fishery Mahals. Jobs secured for them in different factories and workshops may not be very lucrative to begin with, but these people provided with jobs in the manner I have suggested, can be offered better jobs in course of time when with the passing of time they will gain in experience as well as when our country will be gradually more industrialised. Instead of doing that if we now try to push the people of Uzanbazar or Bharalumukh to the agricultural land, well then our already over-burdened land problem will be still more acute and baffle all solution. Then again বরাহ অবতার will be necessary and we shall have to sing ক্ষিত্তিবিহ বিপুলতবে তব তিষ্ঠতি পৃষ্টে, etc.

Mr. SPEAKER: Logically it follows that Government should consider whether land should be given or not even if they are landless.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Yes, Sir, my whole contention is that land should not be thrown open to any body and everybody. In order to be settled with agricultural land, one should be a peasant. If a plot of agricultural land is settled with me, I do not think Government will be justified in doing so as I can use my labour in some other field to earn my livelihood. A peasant has not such opportunity, and therefore, unless he is given some agricultural land, he will have no means to earn his livelihood.

Mr SPEAKER: Then you will be debarring a whole class of people.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Yes, sometimes it might be necessary. For example, those people who never cultivate land, they should be provided with some other means of livelihood and not lands. I do not think anybody and everybody should be given lands like the 'Batasas' in a Nam Sankirtan.

Sir, our economy is not a balanced economy nor it is a progressive economy. That is why more emphasis has been given in our Second Five-Year Plan on industrialisation of the country than on the agricultural sector so that we may not have to depend for our national economy on agriculture in future to the extent as we do to-day. That is why Government should try to industrialise the country on the one hand and on the other, they should give lands only to those who are actually peasants so that total productivity of the country both in agricultural and industrial sector may increase and become balanced. I think, this is the policy also of the Planning Commission and I hope, also of our Government. But unfortunately in actual implementation there are serious defects, lacunae and the like and my intention is to point it out to the Government so that such weakness may be removed and the professed goal may be achieved speedily and efficiently. In doing that we should see that more consideration is given to the broader aspect of the national economy than to the finer subtleties of law. Sometimes an unauthorised occupation may have to be excused if it is in the interest of the national economy.

In the matter of allotment of land in the rural areas non-agriculturist should not be given preference. Similarly for allotting lands in towns also we should be very careful. In this connection I would like to refer to settlement of lands made at Shillong. This question was raised on the floor of this House before this also, and many of our friends from the Congress side also made certain criticism and while doing so, some of them had said some very good things. This is a very important town, and in the matter of settlement of land here many things are to be considered. Sir, from 1950 to 1955, according to my information, at Shillong 424 plots of lands were distributed by the Government. These plots were procured in this way: Government purchased 10.40 acres, acquired 114.25 acres and resumed 8.03 acres and in this way 424 plots were distributed. Of these 424 plots, 364 plots were given to Government officers and the

rest to others. But out of the total allottees what is the number of Khasis who are the people of this district? Their number is only 12, and this has embittered, and very rightly too, the feelings of the Khasis to a very great extent. Why should not they get preference? Why so many plots of land in their district headquarters should be given to others? In this matter also Government should be very particular because those who are yet not sufficiently advanced economically as others are bound to be sensitive and their feelings are hurt and as a result in spite of the best intention of the Government or the Ministers many unfortunate things may happen. I am not unnecessarily accusing the Government or the Ministers. What I am saying is that sufficient caution was not taken in this regard. I hope in future at the time of making allotment of lands, especially in such areas like Shillong Government should be very careful so that it does not give any offence to the children of the soil.

I now come to another question with regard to revenue collection. This report shows that coercive measures are really increasing at the time of revenue collection in cases of default and this default is due to economic distress of the peasantry. The economic standard of the peasantry has not really improved, rather in certain places it has badly gone down in spite of the statistics generally given by my Friend, Shri Deka. The actual position of the lower strata of the peasantry has not improved the total number of cases of attachment of movables increased from 55,564 to 83,692 and the amount of realisation involved was Rs.16,06,759 in the year under review. The movable property had to be sold in 500 cases and 93,065 estates against 6,673 in the preceding year were notified for sale. My Friend, Mr. Goswami has already said that the economic distress of the peasantry has led to such default and the consequence is that there is coercive measure at the time of revenue collection by the local officers, and at times there is some amount of callousness on the part of such officers. Sometimes the remission orders are not properly reported to the District Officer or even if reported the remission orders do not go in time. There are instances. For example, in my own Mouza many flood-affected people who were granted remission actually did not get the orders in time and so they had to pay the revenue even by borrowing. Government should see that when people are in distress and when they are given relief such relief is given in time.

I do not accuse the Mouzadars because if they do not get the information in time that the remission has been granted they must collect the revenue, otherwise their properties will also be put to auction or they will be in trouble. Government should direct that whenever such remission is granted, the information should reach the Mouzadars and the peasants in time.

My Friend, Mr. Goswami has raised a question with regard to the increase in revenue. So far as I know, in certain areas where settlement operations are being done—they are of course periodic settlement—it is sometimes necessary to raise the revenue. That also I admit. But while Government had declared previously that it would not exceed 25 or 26 per cent in Cachar, I am reported that in certain areas this has exceeded 40 per cent. Government should make certain enquiries into that.

Another point with regard to this is the premium of Rs.5 per bigha for converting the annual Patta land into periodic. I have already said something about this in my previous speeches and again I would urge upon the Government to consider that there are some people who are really very very poor and who cannot manage to pay this specially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people. Many of them have got annual Patta lands and they are really too poor to pay this premium. If they are not given some concession, if they are not made free from making this payment, there will be great difficulty for them. Government should consider that also. In this connection Government should also consider another thing. While converting the annual Pattas into periodic in urban areas they do not charge flat rate premium (Shri Motiram Bora: No. More than that premium is charged). There is no flat rate, but they consider each case on its merit. In making the town land periodic they consider every single case on its merit. So my submission is that at the time of making the annual Pattas into periodic in the rural areas also Government should consider every case on its merit. I do not just now demand that any premium may not be charged from anybody, because there will be found people ready and capable of paying it. We were urging upon the Government for the last two years for making the annual Patta into periodic, and my Friend, Mr. Umaruddin, who has now crossed the floor, also made certain declaration that

“we would not mind paying even some premium if the annual Pattas are made periodic”. Those who can pay let them pay, as I have stated. But there are certain sections of the people who are really very poor specially, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people and in their case some concession should be given.

These are the few suggestions that I want to place before the Government. I am very grateful to you, Sir, for kindly giving me this opportunity. With these words I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister) Mr. Speaker Sir, there are three Cut Motions on this Demand: two are in the name of Shri Hareswar Goswami and the other in the name of Shri Bhattacharyya. These Cut Motions have been brought by my Friends sitting in the Opposition with a view to raise certain discussion of a general nature. At the outset I should like to express my thanks to both the movers of the Cut Motions for the restraint and sober, way in which they have made their criticisms and also for the constructive suggestions they have offered while speaking on their Cut Motions. The points raised by my Friends, need no elaborate discussion. As a matter of fact all those points are not new. They were discussed thread—bare on several occasion in the past. I will therefore touch only the important points raised by my Friends. The first point I should like to take up is about fixation of some ceiling on town lands. My Friend, Mr. Goswami, has very eloquently and strenuously pleaded about the urgency and importance of fixing some ceiling on urban land-holdings. He said when Government could fix a ceiling on holding of land in rural areas, why the Government should not come forward to fix some ceiling in urban areas. In support of his contention he cited several cases. He has cited cases of people living in urban areas who have not got an inch of land, while there are some who have got plenty of land in the towns and earning a big income from rent. This is unearned income. When we are going to establish a socialistic pattern of society, is there any justification, he asks, for allowing this huge unearned income to people who have got plenty of land in the towns while we do not allow the agriculturists, who are the tillers of the soil or who help in producing food for us, to possess more than a fixed quantity of land? He, therefore, asks

us to introduce some kind of ceiling on holding of town lands also, at least to control unrestricted possession of wealth through this means. Sir, the other day, a friend of mine had pointedly drawn my attention to some such cases. You know, Sir, that in our State there are some very growing and prosperous areas, the importance of which is even greater than some of the subdivisional headquarters. In those towns there are people who are holding almost two-third area of the town. The people holding such big areas in these prosperous towns are naturally earning huge amounts. I do not want to mention any particular case because many hon. Members know about these cases. My friend asked me that when Government are going to fix a ceiling on land holdings in rural areas, why should not Government come forward with a legislation to control or restrain the people who are holding such big areas of land in towns. Sir, this is a point which appears very plausible and reasonable and when I was hearing my Friend, Mr. Goswami, I was almost inclined to accept his suggestion. If you give relief to the agriculturists why not give relief to the people in the towns also? But, Sir, though the suggestion is worth considering, there are certain practical difficulties, which I should like to mention. This does not mean that Government will not take the suggestion into consideration. As a matter of fact, I have already directed the office to examine this question how far we can go, what we can do in this matter; having decided to fix a ceiling in rural areas should Government sit tight and not try to do something with regard to land holdings in towns? I have asked the Department to examine these things. But, as I said, Sir, certain difficulties appear to me at present. I can illustrate those difficulties by citing instances. Take the case of Fancy Bazar area of Gauhati town. It is quite possible that there are some landholders who may be poorer than the tenants and if some of the surplus land from these landholders are taken away, equity will demand that they should be given to their tenants who are in occupation of these lands. This will only be giving benefit to rich tenants by expropriating the poor owners. Then, on the other hand, there may be some tenants who are poor. They may be occupying some houses on rent. Now, if any particular house is considered surplus and taken away from the owner and if we want to give it to the tenant, will the tenant, being poor, be in a position to purchase it or give adequate compensation to the owner. It may be also difficult for Government to acquire these lands and houses and administer them directly

through a department created for the purpose. A lot of things is involved, *e.g.* acquiring the property, letting it out on hire, collecting rent, etc. These are some of the difficulties standing in the way of fixing a ceiling on urban land holding immediately. But, Sir, no problem is free from difficulties and they have got to be tackled. I have, therefore, asked the Department to examine the question. I hope that will satisfy my Friend, Mr. Goswami. For the information of the House I should like to state that Planning Commission has not asked us to fix ceiling on town lands and no other State in Indian Union except Bengal has made any attempt in this direction.

Then, Sir, Mr. Goswami has raised other points also and these are akin to the points raised by my Friend, Mr. Bhattacharyya. Both of them spoke about solution of the land problem, giving land to the landless, and so on. Sir, all these matters were raised times without number. Even the other day in course of the general discussion on the budget these points were raised by my Friends. I had also very clearly stated that this is a problem which is not peculiar to Assam alone; it exists in all States of India in a much more acute form than it is here. It is a problem which is sought to be tackled by all States and all Governments including the Government of India and the Planning Commission. How to solve this problem in a country with a predominantly agricultural economy? In our State, Sir, there are lots of landless people; then there are people who have been rendered landless by erosion, earthquake, deposit of silt, etc. Then, there are large number of refugees who are coming from Pakistan; many of them are landless agriculturists. Sir, only yesterday I got a telegram from the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, that influx of refugees has begun in a large number in that district. The day before yesterday as many as 107 families had come to Bongaigaon. The influx has already begun in right earnest and it has created a problem which has become almost insoluble. How to find land for landless people? Our people are also multiplying and besides that others are coming from outside and from natural causes number of landless people are increasing daily. We have a very large section of people who used to live on certain types of occupations, but circumstances have so changed that they cannot now maintain their families with the income they derive from these sources. Take for instance the case of our Kaibarta people, the number of which is very big now in our State. They used to maintain their families from the income they derived from fishing but due to circumstances, such as, influx of a class of

people who are expert fishermen, and for not being able to compete with these people they are now losing their means of livelihood and every year these people are being thrown into the land. In this way, there are other sections of the population who used to earn their livelihood from a certain kind of avocation but due to similar reasons they have also come into the land. Thus the pressure on land has increased considerably. Wherefrom Government will find land? We have thrown open village grazing reserves, professional grazing reserves wherever possible and which are considered not necessary and also we have reclaimed low lying or other kinds of waste lands by irrigation and have settled these lands with landless people, but the number of these people have grown so big that it is not possible to provide land to everyone of them. We can meet this problem partially by resorting to intensive and scientific cultivation and we are trying in that respect. We are also trying to shift a large number of people to industry. We are also encouraging people to take to cottage industry with a view to supplement their meagre income. This land problem has baffled solution not only in our State but in all other States in India and its solution will be gradual process in the very nature of things. Sir, Mr. Bhattacharyya said that we should acquire lands which are lying waste in tea gardens for settling with landless people and that in his view really much less area of tea garden lands is under tea cultivation. For the information of the House, I may say that we have already considered this matter and last year an Additional Assistant Director of Land Records was appointed to go from garden to garden and find out how much land is lying unused for the purpose of tea. After making a thorough enquiry he recommended for requisition of some lands from tea gardens and we are taking steps to requisition the same and to settle them with landless cultivators. But in this also there are some difficulties. Our cultivators are not accustomed to cultivate in high lands which are only available in tea gardens. In fact, some of the people who were evicted by erosion in Dibrugarh and Majuli were given settlement of land requisitioned from tea gardens, but they did not like to settle in these lands with the result that Government have derequisitioned these lands and had to pay large amount of money to the owners. We can requisition land from tea gardens, but we cannot insist on our cultivators to take them if they do not like them. This is an important point which should always be kept in mind when we requisition land from tea gardens.

We are conscious of the fact that we should give better right on land to our tenants, to our Adhiars and to our people in

towns who are in possession of land as tenants. We are making legislations for these purposes. We are also trying to give our people alternative employment, but unfortunately we have not been able to achieve our objective fully for reasons beyond our control.

My Friends, Messrs. Goswami and Bhattacharyya said that in Assam the tendency of the Government is to enhance the land revenue. Mr. Goswami also said that incidence of land revenue is higher in Assam than other States in India except Bombay. These views are not correct. The position of incidence of land revenue was exhaustively gone into by the Taxation Enquiry Commission and also the Finance Commission and their recommendation is that there are still more scope to get more revenue from this source and according to them our people are not paying land revenue in accordance with or in proportion to the income they derive from land. For instance, a man having a bigha of land pays land revenue to the amount of rupee one and anna one but in this bigha of land there may be 12 clumps of bamboos totalling about 1,000 pieces and for each piece he gets a price of about annas 12. When a bamboo fetches annas.12, he can easily earn a big amount by selling bamboos each year for his clumps but he is paying land revenue of only Re.1-1-0 for this bigha of land. Therefore, to say that the incidence of revenue in our State is greater is not true. Again, Sir, let us take the matter from another angle, say for instance, a man doing paddy cultivation. Now, what quantity of jute he can get from one bigha of land? It will be at least five maunds.: what is the price of this five maunds of jute? It will be more than 100 rupees. If after the jute season is over that same man takes to paddy cultivation in the land and he will certainly get not less than six maunds of paddy from that same bigha of land, that also will give him at least another fifty rupees. Thus taking the two crops together the income of that man from his one bigha of land will be not less than 150 rupees, but the revenue that will come to Government will be only one rupee. Therefore, Sir, as I have already said, to say that the incidence of revenue of our population is greater is not true, it is not borne out by facts.

Now, Sir, my Friend, Mr. Bhattacharyya, said that in Cachar we had increased the revenue by over 25 per cent and that is not allowed by law. But taking the average, we have not

increased the revenue by more than 25 per cent taking the district as a whole. But taking a particular place the increase may be presumed to have exceeded 25 per cent, but if you take this average of the district, as laid down in law, it will come to below 25 per cent. Now let us take the case of Gauhati for illustration of my point. As a matter of fact I do not know why my Friend needs go to Cachar when in his own place where he lives the revenue has increased by 200 or 300 per cent in some places. For example in Fancy Bazar the revenue had to be increased 200 or 300 times. Let me explain to my Friend, Sir, why the revenue in Fancy Bazar has so much increased. It is because the people holding land in that area make so to say, an unconceivable profit from the rent; so if you do not at least take equitable proportion of revenue from those people, it will not be justified. So also is the case with Silchar town—if the revenue there is increased by 100 per cent in the business areas of that place, he need not be surprised at that. Therefore, the assertion of my Friend, Mr. Bhattacharyya, is not wholly correct.

Then let me come to the question of remission of revenue given by Government. In this connection I do agree that in certain cases the remission orders of the Government do not reach the authorities concerned in time. But there are cogent reasons for that also because in granting land revenue remission Government has to follow certain prescribed procedure. That is to say, when any person or persons apply for remission of land revenue, those petitions have to be enquired into whether the reasons for asking remission are genuine or not. For this the Mandal has to move from field to field to make the enquiries. He must make a field to field enquiry to ascertain whether crops have been actually damaged or to see for himself whether the remission petitions are deserving cases and things of that nature. After that the Mandal has to submit a report of his survey. That report in turn will have to be verified by the Supervisor Kanungo and then by the Sub-Deputy Collector concerned and lastly the report will come to the Government through the Deputy Commissioner, who, if satisfied, passed necessary remission orders. All these precautions are necessary, Sir, when dealing with remission cases. So, for taking all these precautions it naturally takes time—it is inevitable. I think my Friend must appreciate the pains and precautions taken by Government in this regard, because if these precautions are not taken, my Friend will be the first to jump upon Government and say that there is a lot of abuses here, that those persons who

are not deserving, are getting remission, while those who are deserving do not get it. Therefore, all these precautions are taken and these are laid down by the law of the land. But by this seeming delay the person concerned does not lose anything because if he does not get the remission order in time, he gets refund and for this refund he need not go to the Deputy Commissioner, the Mauzadar's office can do that—the Mauzadars can either refund the money or adjust it to subsequent revenue as the case may be. But, Sir, I confess that in spite of so much precautions taken by Government, we still have some report of abuses by land records staff.

Sir, my Friend raised another point that we are resorting to coercive measure in the matter of collection of revenue. That is also not correct. If any coercive measure is taken, it is taken against those collecting Mauzadars who are negligent to correct them. But I have received complaints to the contrary from the Land Record staff to the effect that Government are rather too lenient in the matter of collection of revenue. The Deputy Commissioners also complain of too much leniency shown by Government in this matter of collection of revenue in that even in clear cases deserving employment of coercive measures, the Deputy Commissioner feels that he could not do that because of the restraint put by Government on him not to resort to coercive measures very freely. That also is another side of the picture, Sir. When collection is bad, the Deputy Commissioner lays the blame on the Government for it because they are too lenient according to him.

My Friend raised another pertinent question about conversion of annual Patta lands. Sir, not only my Friend, Mr. Bhat-tacharyya has objected to this, but there are some other Friends also who share his view in this regard. It is true that Government have decided to levy some premium for this conversion, but in this too there is another side of the picture. That is this. By conversion what happens? In annual lands, the Mondal's whim is supreme. In these annual lands the owner has got no right over the land, he cannot sell or transfer it. What he gets from it is only the crop. By conversion, the value of the land rises at least to one hundred times.

But without that conversion he cannot dispose the land in any way. As soon as the land becomes periodic, there is less

trouble for the owner of the land from the Land Record staff as is alleged by people. Thus the owner of the land gets a precious right. For getting this precious right if the owner of the land parts with a small amount of money to Government, I do not see that there can be any objection to it. I do not think the honourable Members of this House will grudge this. Without money we cannot carry on with our development works.

Shri NILMANI PHOOKAN : Sir, whether it is a fact that the Mandals also realise invisible premium on such conversion ?

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA : Mandals also get invisible premium.

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister) : Sir, according to Mr. Phookan, the Mandals also get invisible premium. If it is true, the land owner now saves himself from troubles from the Mandals and the land becomes a very precious property for him, and out of that valuable property if the land owner gives a very small percentage to the Government as premium, I don't think, Sir, there can be any serious objection from the honourable Members of this House.

My honourable Friend, Shri Bhattacharyya, said that for conversion of annual Patta land to the periodic, the poorer section of the people should be exempted from paying any premium to the Government, and that some consideration, according to him, should be shown to the poorer section of the people. For the information of the House, Sir, I would like to say that the poor man and the rich man will get the same benefit, and if we exempt the poor man from paying any premium to the Government that would be something like discrimination between the poor man and the rich man. If this is done, there would be scope for corruption and abuse by some of our Land Record staff. For these very reasons, and after a good deal of discussions we had decided to levy premium on all such lands and with a view to raise some money for financing our development plans.

My honourable Friend, Shri Bhattacharyya, also spoke the land settlement in Shillong. He feels that Government should take back the land from the allottees so that certain things may be avoided. He says that we are making all sorts of discrimination in the matter of land settlement in Shillong. On this matter, the Leader of the House also made a statement yesterday or some days previously. I do not exactly remember the date. For the information of the House, I would like to repeat it again. After Independence the functions of the Government have become multiplied in such a way that Shillong was almost over-flooded by a lot of Government officers and office Assistants, etc., the house problem which was already acuter in Shillong became acuttest due to influx of officers and office assistants in Shillong. We thought some how this house problem in Shillong would have to be solved. At the beginning Government thought of having Government quarters made for these officers, and accordingly we took up the scheme of having Government quarters constructed under the direct supervision of the Public Works Department. But to have so many houses immediately in Shillong became a difficult task for the Government. Therefore, the Government decided that if some land could be made available for building residential quarters, then the officers and the office assistants could construct their houses by taking some money as house building advance from the Government.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Sir, on a point of information. Out of the allottees, 60 are not Government servants.

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister): Sir, for the information of the House. I would like to say that out of the total number of allottees which is 460, 400 are Government servants.

Shri GOURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: No, Sir, it is 364.

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister): Alright, at least by giving land to 364 persons Government have partially solved the housing problem of our officers in Shillong. We were trying to give land to Government servants and in doing so we have not made any discrimination between Assamese, Bengalees, Khasi

etc. Out of the total allottees there are 12 Khasis also. The allotment is made purely in consideration of need.

Sir, according to Mr. Bhattacharyya 60 persons out of the total number of allottees are not Government servants. For his information I should like to say that a fairly large number of refugees have been given land also. In Bhagyakul colony the number of refugees who have been given land will not be less than 12 in number.

Of course, Sir, some non-officials have been given land. After all, this is not Government land. The land had been purchased from the Nawab of Dacca. After the Partition, the Nawab of Dacca wanted to sell the land to some people. When the matter came to notice of Government, I intervened in the matter, and purchased the land for Government. After purchasing the land from the Nawab of Dacca the land was settled with our officers and a certain percentage of the land was given to the non-officials also who were considered by the Government as deserving persons. Similarly Bhagyakul colony was purchased by the Government and fairly large number of refugees were given land there and also some other persons whom the Government considered that they need land in Shillong for residential purposes.

Therefore, Sir, if he looks it from that point of view, he will find that it was not a communal, or racial question but it was purely an economic and administrative question. The Government was confronted with a very big problem and in order to solve that they had to do it. There was no distinction made against anyone. Now, Sir, my Friend Shri Bhattacharyya spoke of some people who have been evicted by the Government. Sir, how can the Government support the case of persons who have no respect for law of the land and encroached up the Government land? If we support their action and allow them to stay on and grant settlement of land with them, that will mean that Government surrenders to those who do not respect the law of the land. In that case the landless people of the neighbouring areas who out of respect for the law of the land have not encroached upon the Government land will think that Government will give land to those persons who can forcibly occupy Government land. Can my Friend Shri Bhattacharyya support the case of such persons? In that case the law abiding persons will cease to have any respect for the law of the land.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: But they are living there for a long time. Instead of evicting them you can grant the settlement now.

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister): Sir, we want to clear the area of encroachment. After that, each case will be considered on its own merit. The cases of these persons and other landless persons will then be considered on its own merit. Again, he has said that why did you allow them so long to stay. Sir, it takes some time to detect such cases of encroachment. The Mandal cannot be expected to visit the same place every day.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Not every in 5 years? (*Laughter*).

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister): I do not think there is any case where the encroacher is staying for such a period. Sir, as soon as it is found that there is any encroacher, the Mandal sends the report to the Sub-Deputy Collector and the Sub-Deputy Collector in turn sends the report to the Deputy Commissioner concerned. The Deputy Commissioner then issues a notice to the encroacher asking him to show cause why he should not be evicted for such illegal occupation. Three months' time is generally allowed to show the cause. My Friend, Shri Bhattacharyya, said that there are some people who are living in certain Government land unlawfully for the last ten years. That is an astounding news to me. I have not come across with any such cases. If he can give me instances of specific cases, certainly I shall look into that matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think you are concluding.

Shri MOTIRAM BORA (Minister): Yes, Sir. I have tried to explain the difficulties of the Government in the matter of settlement of land and also on other points raised by Friends in the opposite, and I think at least I have been able to explain the matter to my satisfaction (*Laughter*) and I hope that my Friend, will now be pleased to withdraw the cut motions.

(The Cut Motions were by leave of the House, withdrawn.)

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that a sum of Rs. 1,07,45,700 (Rupees one crore, seven lakhs, forty-five thousand and seven hundred), be granted to the Minister in charge to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st March, 1957 for the administration of the head "7-Land Revenue".

(The Motion was adopted.)

GRANT No. 47

"XLVIA.—Road Transport Schemes—Working Expenses.

Shri SIDDHINATH SARMA (Minister): Mr. Speaker. Sir, on the recommendation of the Governor of Assam, I beg to move that a sum of Rs.85,58,600 (Rupees eighty-five lakhs, fifty-eight thousand and six hundred) be granted to the Minister-in-charge to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending 31st March, 1957 for the administration of the head "XLVIA.—Road Transport Schemes—Working Expenses."

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion moved is that a sum of Rs.85,58,600 be granted to the Minister-in-charge to defray certain charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending 31st March, 1957 for the administration of the head, "XLVIA.—Road Transport Schemes—Working Expenses."

Mr. Goswami, you have got only 10 minutes.

***Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the total provision of Rs.85,58,600 under grant No.47, Major head— XLVIA.— Road Transport Schemes—Working Expenses, at page 514 of the Budget, be reduced by Re.1, *i. e.*, the amount of the whole grant of Rs.85,58,600 do stand reduced by Re.1.

In moving this resolution, Sir, I want to draw the pointed attention of the Minister-in-Charge to certain difficulties experienced by the road transport employees. It is known to this House that this organisation has come to stay and it is making increasing profit every year. Under the circumstances the proper thing would be that a part of this profit should be allowed to be enjoyed by the employees in the shape increased salaries and amenities, etc.

Sir, although the Transport Organisation has been in operation for more than 9 years, the State Transport employees have not been considered till now to be permanent. In the last session of the House a resolution was moved to the effect that these employees should be treated as permanent employees. Although Government had given us an assurance, yet in this year's Budget we do not find that these people have been treated as permanent employees, nor did we see any indication to this effect in the Governor's address. The assurance so far given that they will be treated at one time as permanent employees. This attitude of the Government has subjected the employees of this organisation to a great lot of inconvenience. As for instance, these employees have been denied of the housing loans and such other amenities usually enjoyed by other Government servants with the result that these State Transport employees do not feel inspired to give their best to the discharge of their respective responsibilities. The housing facilities given to the State Transport employees both in Gauhati and Shillong are also absolutely inadequate and unsatisfactory. At Shillong many of the employees have not been provided with quarters. Some of them have got to come to Shillong or Gauhati, as the case may be and leave next day early morning passing the night either in hotels or with relations with great difficulties. This matter requires immediate attention of the Government. The question regarding their pay scale also requires to be considered sympathetically by Government. Although a Pay Committee has been appointed to go into the question of Government employees, yet I would like to urge upon Government that this question is such which should not be kept hanging for any indefinite length of time. Unless you give them better pay, better amenities, how will these employees feel that this organisation which has been built up with the sweat of their brows, really belong to them and they should, therefore try to give the best of them for future prosperity of the organisation?

With these few words I commend my Cut Motion for the acceptance of the House.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in supporting the motion of my Friend, Shri Hareswar Goswami, I would like to say that the State Transport Organisation has proved that Government can also do profitable business. On an analysis of the respect and expenditure of the State Transport, we find in 1952-53, receipt was Rs.54 lakhs 29 thousand, expenditure 26 lakhs 89 thousand and surplus 27 lakhs, 40 thousand. In 1953-54, receipt 83 lakhs 4 thousand,

expenditure 49 lakhs 6 thousand and surplus 33 lakhs 98 thousand. In 1954-55, receipt 88 lakhs 86 thousand, expenditure 89 lakhs 27 thousand and no surplus but a deficit of Rs.41 thousand. But in 1954-55 (revised) receipt is 93 lakhs 79 thousand, expenditure 69 lakhs 89 thousand, and surplus 23 lakhs 90 thousand. And in this year expected receipt is 88,28 thousand, expenditure 66,81 thousand and surplus 21,47 thousand.

Now coming to the depreciation side in 1954-55 it was budgeted as 9 lakhs 5 thousand but in actuals 32 lakhs 84 thousand were drawn.

Mr. SPEAKER : This system of accounting does not seem to be quite good.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA : That is why I am discussing this matter. It does not give an accurate picture. In 1954-55 there was an abnormal increase in the allocation in the depreciation fund. In this year's Budget depreciation is shown however, according to the normal procedure.

Shri SIDDHINATH SARMA (Minister) : That was so as deposit on this account was not shown in the previous year.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA : What I want to show is that the year was not a year of loss.

Shri SIDDHINATH SARMA (Minister) : Yes, you are right, there was no loss.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA : There was profit but in accounting there was some 'garbar'; so it has been shown as loss.

My contention is that the State Transport have shown a tendency towards improvement so far as its profit is concerned. That is why we say that the question of making the Department permanent deserves very serious consideration. Even in States like West Bengal where the Organisation has been run on a loss, it has been made permanent. Some other States also likewise made their States Transport Organisations permanent. But the State Transport of Assam which has been run on profit continuously for several years has not yet been made permanent. The total profit since the year 1952-53 comes to Rs.130

lakhs 22 thousand. As against this a sum of Rs.26 lakhs 4 thousand has to be reserved in the depreciation fund on the average per year. Even if we put the reserve in the Depreciation fund at Rs.50 lakhs and add to it the five years' total profit of Rs.130 22 lakhs, the total surplus will come to about Rs.180 lakhs. Therefore, I maintain that there is no reason why the Department should not be made permanent.

Then I come to the great disparity in salaries of different categories of officers and workers. Although it is purely a State controlled organisation, a great disparity exists in pay scale. 26 per cent of the employees get about 9.1 per cent of the total pay bill and 1.8 per cent of the top officers get 9.1 per cent of the pay bill. This shows the extent of disparity. That is why the lot of those who are less paid should be improved. If a driver is to make only one trip with the diesel engine he gets only Rs.2-2-0 and the conductor of the same gets annas 8 only. A truck driver gets Rs.3 for the first trip, and only Rs. 4 for double trip. That is not sufficient. If a driver runs more than one trip he gets proportionately less. Sometimes a driver runs 4 trips a day. In case of one trip there is nothing to be said. But if he is to run 2 trips it is irregular, if he is to run 3 trips it is more irregular, but if he is to run 4 trips it is very irregular indeed. Over and above their pay, their trip allowance should be a little raised, and they should not be allowed to run more than 2 trips a day. If driver is allowed to run more than 2 trips, that will tell up on his health ultimately.

Sir, sometimes heavy recoveries are made from the drivers. In one case a recovery of Rs.2,699 has got to be made and this amount is still to be realised. After all, an engine is an engine and accident is an accident and for such accidents there should be no recovery from the staff.

Then in the matter of disposal of cases there should be no delay. There is a circular from the Department of Finance or Appointment and that circular should be followed by the State Transport Department and there should be more care in the matter of giving promotion, pension and gratuity.

Shri SIDDHINATH SARMA (Minister): Sir, as there is very little time left to me I shall only point out the difficulties in making the State Transport Department permanent. I shall first read out the resolution adopted by the Board of Control in this respect.

“The Board considered that the question of making the State Transport Organisation permanent with the posts so far sanctioned, should be taken up by Government at an early date. In the meantime the working of the various routes should be reviewed from its inception during at least a period of five years so that a decision may be taken on the basis of commercial success of the lines. The Board desires that the question of superannuation benefit by way of pension or gratuity should be examined in the light of information available regarding similar benefit admitted by the former and present Railway services and of the possible financial implications.” This Resolution was first adopted on 3rd October 1955 and again reiterated on 10th October 1955 and this is under active consideration of the Government.

Now, Sir, I refer to page 146 of the Second Five Year Plan (Draft outline). There the Planning Commission laid down a policy. I shall read out only the relevant portion of it. “The Government Road Transport should be managed by a corporation in which the Railway and private operators participate along with the State Government.” In the revised Draft Second Five Year of Assam Plan at page 198, last paragraph says, “the Planning Commission has allocated a sum of Rs.110 lakhs for the above road transport scheme leaving a sum of Rs.70 lakhs to be contributed by the Railways. The question of Railway participation and the formation of a corporation is under examination.” Now the question of Railways participation and the formation of a corporation is under examination. The total allocation for this road transport schemes is a sum of Rs.180 lakhs and of this, a sum of Rs.70 lakhs is to be contributed by the Railways. It has therefore created a difficulty to make the State Transport Department permanent. Without referring the matter to the Railway authorities we cannot take any decision in this matter. If we do not receive the entire amount we cannot execute the proposed plan and if we do not agree to the policy laid down, as I have stated, then the Planning Commission may not grant us any money on this account. In view of this difficulty Government have not yet been able to come to a decision. In case Railways agree to contribute the sum of Rs.70 lakhs towards the formation of a corporation, then corporation will have to take a decision in this matter. (*A voice*: It should be made earlier). I am trying my best. But without knowing the position from the Railways about formation of a corporation we cannot proceed in the matter. I have in the meantime collected information from

other States also in this respect. A few States have in the meantime made their Transport Organisations permanent. It is not yet known whether State Transport Organisation will be under a corporation or it should be under the State Road Transport Act, passed by the House. This House has passed a legislation and it has been assented to by the President. Now this is going to be an Act, we shall see whether this can come under this Act.

As regards profit I will now give the figures. The total capital investment upto 31st March 1956 as audited in the current year is Rs.61,62,266 since inception. In the current year it is estimated at Rs.34,30,290. The total comes to Rs.95,92,556.

The total capital investment since inception upto 31st March 1955 (audited) is Rs.61,62,266 and for the current year, it is estimated to be Rs.34,30,290; the total comes to Rs.95,92,556.

The total amount deposited into the Depreciation, Renewal and Reserve Fund is Rs.38,06,042 ; *minus* Rs.2 lakhs of this year, the total comes to Rs.36,06,042.

The total interest paid to Government at 4 per cent upto 31st March 1955 comes to Rs.4,32,436 and this year we shall have to pay Rs.1,30,000 ; thus the total interest comes to Rs.5,82,436.

Mr. SPEAKER : What are your working expenses ? The rest is possibly your working expenses and there may not be any profit

Shri SIDDHINATH SARMA (Minister) : There is net profit. The net profit paid to Government upto 31st March 1955 is Rs.1,01,15,201 audited and this year we are expecting a profit of Rs.21 lakhs ; so, the total profit will come to Rs.1,22,15,201, excluding working expenses.

The vehicle tax and road permit fees paid upto 31st March 1955 comes to Rs.25,46,137 and with this year's 5 lakhs, it will come to Rs.30,46,137.

Then, Sir, we are also spending a lot of money on the amenities for the employees. The total expenditure on construction of building upto 1955-56 comes to Rs.19 lakhs ; of this 8 lakhs have been spent only for staff quarters.

Mr. SPEAKER : But they go to Public Works Department's Account. Yours is not like a corporation.

Shri SIDDHINATH SARMA (Minister): Rupees 1,01,15,201 is the audited net profit till 31st March, 1955. The Government expect net profit of Rs.21,00,000 this year. The buildings are constructed by the Public Works Department. They cannot take up all the works in a year and that is why we have not been able to provide quarters to all employees who are entitled to it by rules. I can also give the details about the units already constructed.

Shri GAURISANKAR BHATTACHARYYA: Shillong, Gauhati and Dibrugarh should be given special consideration.

Shri SIDDHINATH SARMA (Minister): We have completed certain units at Gauhati and many other proposals are pending implementation, but due to want of materials the Public Works Department is not in a position to take up.

Maulavi MUHAMMAD UMARUDDIN: There is some confusion, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, it is not like a corporation. It shows only the gross profits and the working expenses and nothing else.

Shri SIDDHINATH SARMA (Minister): I have already shown the net profit earned by the Department.

Mr. SPEAKER: What about the motions. Are they going to be withdrawn ?

Shri HARESWAR GOSWAMI: Yes, Sir.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that a sum of Rs.85,58,600 be granted to the Minister-in-charge to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending 31st March 1957, for the administration of the head "XLVIA-Road Transport Schemes—Working Expenses."
(The Motion was adopted.)

Grant No.3

"8.—State Excise Duties"

Rev. J. J. M. NICHOLS-ROY (Minister): Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the recommendation of Governor of Assam, I beg to move that a sum of Rs.15,97,600 be granted to the Minister-in-charge

to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending 31st March 1957, for the administration of the head "8.—State Excise Duties."

Mr. SPEAKER: Motion moved is that a sum of Rs.15,97,600 be granted to the Minister-in-charge to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending 31st March 1957, for the administration of the head "8.—State Excise Duties."

(The Motion was put by the Chair as a question before the House and was adopted).

Adjournment

The Assembly was then adjourned till 10 A.M., on Saturday, the 24th March, 1956.

Shillong :
The 7th February, 1957.

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