

15.54 hrs.

**ASSAM APPROPRIATION (SECOND
VOTE ON ACCOUNTS) BILL,*
1980**

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE
(SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN):** I beg
to move for leave to introduce a Bill
to provide for the withdrawal of cer-
tain sums from and out of the Conso-
lidated Fund of the State of Assam
for the services of a part of the finan-
cial year 1980-81.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

“That leave be granted to intro-
duce a Bill to provide for the with-
drawal of certain sums from and
out of the Consolidated Fund of the
State of Assam for the services of
a part of the financial year 1980-81.”

The motion was adopted.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: I in-
troduce** the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Technically
speaking, the Bill is introduced now.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: (Dai-
mond Harbour): I have given notice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let it be moved
first.

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE
(SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN):** I beg
to move††:

“That the Bill to provide for the
withdrawal of certain sums from
and out of the Consolidated Fund
of the State of Assam for the ser-
vices of a part of the financial year
1980-81 be taken into considera-
tion.”

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am allowing
you, Mr. Fernandes, technically speak-

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** Introduced with the recommendation
of the President.

†† Moved with the recommendation of the
President

ing the application should have men-
tioned the point which you want to
raise. I am not insisting on those
technicalities. Please speak for a very
short time.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: I have
given you notice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will allow you
also.

**SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES (Mu-
zaffarpur):** Political issues have been
debated in the House during the last
three days. It is not my desire to
speak on these issues. I wish to con-
fine myself only to the demands that
have been moved here. If I refer to
the overall economic situation, it has
created the political crisis in Assam.
Everyone has said that the root of
the present political crisis is the eco-
nomic backwardness of that State.
The Finance Minister said that the
Members while discussing the de-
mands were so carried away by the
political situation in that region that
they did not oppose the demands that
he has presented to the House. I am
here to precisely oppose that. The
hon. Minister spoke about the addi-
tional monies that are being made
available—Rs. 160 to Rs. 178 crores,
I presume that is to take care of fur-
ther fall in the value of the rupee
that is consistently taking place. But
apart from that during the last few
weeks, perhaps months, we have been
fed with quite a bit of information
on what the Government has been
doing—the new steps that are being
taken to tackle the basic economic
problems faced by the North Eastern
Region and particularly by Assam.
A new Committee to look into plan-
ning of the region has been appointed
some days ago. I think that was the
news in this country consisting mostly
of officials who either as Governors
or Advisers or in some other capacity
are responsible for creating the situa-
tion that exists so far as the economic
aspect of that area's development is
concerned. But, ultimately, if there
has been a new awareness in the
mind of the Government about the
economic problems of that region, if
there was any awareness that the

political crisis ultimately does stem from the economic backwardness of that region, that awareness is not reflected in this Second Vote on Account for expenditure of the Government of Assam that the Finance Minister has presented to the House. On it with great delight five minutes ago he said that no body has opposed. And then I said 'no'. I was not doing it just because I happened to sit in the Opposition, but because here is a document which is not alive to the situation that is prevailing in Assam. How does one go into the economic development of the region—Industry, other areas of investment.

17.00 hrs.

I would like these demands to be studied one by one. Now we do not have time for that. But I would like to draw your attention to a few salient points. Industry is one area where we are going to provide jobs to the unemployed in that region. What is the amount that you have demanded for the entire year? Rs. 25.30 lakhs. For sericulture and weaving which is another area where in the North Eastern part particularly in Assam, a large number of jobs could be made available, the amount is Rs. 3.66 crores. For dairy development—Rs. 1.18 crores; for irrigation Rs. 3.96 crores; soil and water conservation—Rs. 3.33 crores. Even for the welfare of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and others, that is the region where there is a large concentration of Scheduled Tribes, and the amount that you are demanding is Rs. 3.99 crores.

Of course, on the face of it, some of these figures may seem impressive, for instance, Rs. 3.99 crores for the welfare of Scheduled Castes; irrigation Rs. 3.96 crores; soil and water conservation Rs. 3.33 crores, but at another level, if you look at Item No. 22 which pertains to Police, the total demand for Police in Assam in the current

year's Budget is Rs. 28.19 crores. Would you like the people of Assam to believe that with a grant of Rs. 28.19 crores for the Police and a grant of Rs. 25 lakhs for industry, Rs. 3.66 crores for sericulture and weaving and 1.59 crores for fisheries, the economic problems of the people of Assam are going to be resolved? You are moving in the same direction. Where is the awareness? This is your Budget; this is not my Budget. You formulated this Budget in January. You first asked for vote on account in March, took your entitlements for the first four months and now you have come for the second instalment of four months. What is the economic problem that you are going to deal with in this Budget? 25 lakhs for industry and 28.19 crores for the Police in the current year. What is the hope? At another level, there is a provision made for Rs. 1.65 crores for jails. I am referring to jails not because you are putting people there in jail just now. But Item 42 is concerned with housing schemes for the people of Assam and Item 44 is concerned with urban development in Assam. Whereas you have made available Rs. 1.65 crores for jails, for 1.5 crores of people in Assam you have made available only Rs. 1.29 crores for housing. That means, jails would be more comfortable than your homes because for the inmates of jails, there is a provision of Rs. 1.65 crores and for housing in whole of Assam, you have made available 1.29 crores and for urban development 1.24 crores. I am only making this point because I want this Government to set things right. This is a part of lopsidedness. It is not merely a kind of the part of the lopsidedness of how much money the Centre is giving to the States. The Finance Minister has given certain statistics. But this is not the occasion to dispute that or debate that. But I want to be on record that I want to dispute them and I want to debate them and to point out as to how much Assam has been neglected. But since the Finance Minister made this point while replying to the

debate, there is one other aspect of the economic development where I would like him to make a definite commitment. That pertains to increasing oil royalty. It is all right to say that Gujarat is receiving the same amount of money. Perhaps even Maharashtra is receiving the same amount of money. Increase that of Gujarat also. In fact the Chief Ministers of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Assam had made a common demand on this question. Just because they are paying less to Gujarat, that is not the reason to justify what you are giving to Assam today. Rs. 1800 per tonne is the price at which you import oil and Rs. 42 per tonne is what you are giving to the people of Assam for a third of the oil that this country today is using. Somewhere there must be fairness, somewhere there must be justice. The people of Assam are not illiterate. There the people understand the problems of economic development. They are aware of the fact that the country is importing at Rs. 1800 a tonne and they are receiving Rs. 42 as royalty for the oil that is being drilled there and that is being utilised in the entire country.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER (Delhi Sadar): We are one nation.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Of course, we are a nation. But when one discusses this question, Sir, there is a very important reason. . . .

(Interruptions).

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN (Kanpur): How much you paid during the last three years on royalty on oil to Assam?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: The same amount. Therefore, today I am demanding that you increase the royalty. I am wiser by experience. You also show the wisdom. That is all I am telling you. If I am wiser by experience, why don't you also gain or learn a little from experience?

(Interruptions). Therefore, Mr. Chairman, my submission is: Let the Finance Minister make a positive commitment.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar): How many industries you put up there? You had gone to Silchar and you said, within three months time you would set up a paper mill. You had done nothing. Overnight you have become wiser.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: The rules of this House provide for Members asking questions of other Members by giving a formal notice and I shall require notice for the Member's question

(Interruptions).

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: You invited questions. Now that questions have been posed, you are. . .

(Interruptions).

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Yes, I will require notice. This question is a specific question.

(Interruptions).

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: You are not sincere.

(Interruptions).

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: I replied to your question. You asked your question. Your question is: Why did the earlier Government. . .

MR. CHARMAN: Mr. Fernandes, this Chair will feel honoured if the Chair is addressed.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Sir, his question is: Why is it that the predecessor Government did not do it, I mean the Government of which I was a part. The answer is: Well that Government did not do it. As far as I am concerned, I am wiser by experience. I am, therefore, today asking this Government also to learn from the experience of others. But if

there is a specific question as to how much of industry was taken into that region when I was Minister of Industry for two years, I require notice. That is a very valid reply and, therefore, I shall appreciate the Member giving a formal notice to the Speaker or in any other way that he would like me to reply and I shall be happy to reply.

But, Sir, I am making the reply to the Finance Minister in the context of the points that he made in so far as the development of that region is concerned. No. 1: Will you increase the royalty for the oil in Assam? And when I make this demand, I am aware of the fact that ultimately we are a nation. But if you look at the economic situation in the country, there are three States which are the richest in terms of mineral resources—the three States are Assam, Bihar and Orissa—in terms of coal, in terms of oil, in terms of ore, in terms of every kind of mineral deposits in this country. It is these three States which are the richest States of the Union. Yet, in terms of *per capita* income, in terms of development, these three are the poorest States of the Union, starting from the bottom up. Why? Because these States have been exploited. You take the coal out of Bihar and the ore out of Orissa and develop the metropolitan cities. The lopsided development to which the Finance Minister referred, which was started by the British, was continued, and therefore Bihar is exploited, Orissa is exploited, Assam is exploited. And therefore my question is: will the Finance Minister...

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: You are exploiting the situation why don't you accept this as one nation?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Therefore, firstly increase the royalty on oil. Secondly, you have the tea estates there. Some hon. Member said that tea is allowed to be moved. So, the only thing that Assam is receiving on account of tea is the

wages of the workers who are employed there. What does Assam get in terms of excise duty, companies' head offices, there profits and taxes thereon? Everything goes to Bombay or Calcutta or some other metropolitan city, Assam gets nothing out of it. Similarly, it is Assam's bamboo that is feeding paper mills in the country. What royalty is given to them? Is it adequate? Would the Finance Minister make any positive announcement, since he spoke about taking care of the problems of the people of Assam?

Therefore, when I say I am opposing these Grants, and when I rise to oppose the Appropriation Bill, it is precisely for the reason that there is no awareness shown by the Government in so far as the genuine economic problems of that region are concerned. It is the same old Budget, the same old rut with the same old priorities. Police and jails will get much more than industry or irrigation or fisheries or weavers or housing or rural development. If this is how they go on, it is obvious there will be no solution even to the political problem, because ultimately it is related to the economic problem. You will be only aggravating the economic problem. Therefore on these grounds I oppose this Appropriation Bill.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): I heard with rapt attention the exchange of compliments between my friends on the left and my friend on the right. Our assessment is that, as far as economic issues are concerned, the Janata Party followed the Congress path, and the Congress Party is following the Janata path, and therefore there is nothing much to choose between them.

I have known Assam intimately from my very young days. As a young subaltern I was posted there, and I have been visiting Assam frequently. I have written several let-

ters to the Finance, Agriculture and Home Ministers that we are sitting over a volcano as far as the north-eastern region is concerned.

They set up a Northeastern Council. What was the outer cover of Development activity. As the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, I summoned the Secretary of the Northeastern Council and asked him to give the details of development projects. Later on, on enquiry I found out that Mr. Bhattacharya, the Secretary of the Council was a senior official of the Research & Analysis Wing doing intelligence work in Assam. That is the development we have done so far.

In 1967 there was a movement in Assam, mainly on the economic grounds. That did not wake up the stupid set of politicians that we are. Thirteen years have passed, and now they have come inside the fire of the volcano, and they are trying to get fire extinguishers to put out the fire.

Coming to the royalty part, it is not the royalty alone. Also, royalty should be fixed properly. There should be some norm as to the real material value of the commodity in terms of the Indian rupee at constant value. That is the question. But let us see how much Assam is contributing in the shape of foreign exchange earnings, in export of tea. If you ask the Government to tell us precisely how much Assam tea garden are paying Central excise, foreign exchange and other taxes, they will evade you by saying: "We do not keep separate accounts." But we know how much it is. There is tea, jute, wood, forest products—the plywood industry is the biggest centre in Assam—and there is the bamboo, as my hon. friend, Mr. George Fernandes, pointed out, without which paper mills cannot be run. Where is Mr. D. K. Borooah who had said, "India is Indira, Indira is India"? What is his address I do not know. What that man did, as a gimmick before the elections, was that they

went to Cachar and laid a foundation—stone for a paper mill and another in Nowgong. And nothing happened besides acquisition of agricultural land. It was neither fish nor flesh; it was neither industry nor agriculture. It is all because of these wonderful congressmen sitting around us.

The whole State of Assam is divided by the river Brahmaputra. Today, if you go to Assam, Sir, and I request you to kindly visit Assam after the monsoon—it is now very difficult politically and otherwise, climatically too—you will find that if you do not have several bridges connecting both the banks of the river Brahmaputra in Assam, the economic growth will become extremely difficult. With great difficulty they were able to get one rail-cum-road bridge after a lot of agitation. They have been demanding a broad-gauge railway upto the end of Assam. For how many years? Since the time they got into power. But what has happened? Very little has been done. As a result, a man in Assam has to pay at least 50 per cent more, if not twice as much for a commodity that we are required to pay in Calcutta or in Patna or in Delhi. Why should it be so? In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, the subsidies were given for national reasons. Although we wrote several times that Assam deserved national subsidy for consumer items, it was turned down time and again. Why is it so? Now, today, you understand what Assamese people are capable of doing.

What is the net irrigated area in Assam? You have allowed an amount which is very insignificant. It is one of the lowest in the country. What is the allocation? I will not go into details and take the time of the House. Under the head "Revenue", it is Rs. 1.32 crores. For a State, what is the expenditure? It is a drop in the ocean. About rural electrification, I would request the Finance Minister to get a chart and he will see that Assami name in figuring nearer the

bottom. About the communication, it is the poorest in the country. Now that army has to be moved, para-military force have to be moved and paratroopers have to be grounded the communications may be set up, not otherwise.

I also ask the Finance Minister to tell this House. What is the share of the people of Assam in the civil and defence service. It is next to nothing. Therefore, you cannot blame if the people are agitated for economic reasons. Assam has been converted by the Congressmen sitting here as a capital and raw material exporting State. Today, that is precisely why there is so much of unemployment and there is so much of agitation. The whole thing starts from economic disaster. Therefore, I disapprove the Appropriation Bill and oppose it.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am sorry I prompted my hon. friend, Mr. George Fernandes, to oppose the Appropriation Bill. Otherwise, if I had not mentioned not one person opposed this demand for grant, he would have forgotten to oppose it.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: You have been very unkind. You kindly get the notice, date and rules quoted under which I gave.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: I was telling Mr. George Fernandes.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: We are both sitting together.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Mr. Chairman, Shri George is a juggler—a juggler in figures, not in anything else. He brings out a few figures from here and there and says 'You have given only one crore and even Cottage Industries has got two crores' and so on. That is not the way to look at the budget. You must look at the total allocation under each Head, and it is distributed over several parts of the budget paper. Some are in the Revenue account and some are in the Capital account and

therefore, unless you get a total picture of those in the Capital account and Revenue account you will not know how much is really allocated for this purpose.

I have worked out these figures—anticipating, of course, my friend George to some extent. He made it appear that the allocation for Industry was very small, Irrigation was very small and Agriculture was very small. Out of the 178 crores which I had mentioned, the total allocation under Plan—Revenue and Capital accounts, will be Rs. 34,56,00,000/- for Agriculture and allied services; then for Irrigation, Flood Control and Power it will be Rs. 81,71,00,000/- and for Industries and Minerals it would be Rs. 6,19,00,000/- I have got these figures.

Therefore, what I want to submit to the House is that, if you pick out from the budget paper any one item, it will not give a correct picture. Actually, you will have to total up those in the Plan account, non-Plan account, Revenue account and Capital account and put all these together. Then alone you will get a correct picture. The picture I have got shows that although I will not say it is very generous—I have always said there is room for greater improvement in the allocation to Assam and that, really, we should do something more for Assam (I have said it in my earlier speech)—none-the-less, the point made by Mr. George is not borne out.

The other question he raised was about, the oil royalty. He said that the royalty which we pay to the Assam refineries is very small and the imported price for crude is very high. It is true. But then, what we do is that we pool the price of local oil as well as that of imported oil and then supply it at a moderate price, at the pooled price, to the public. If we gave a larger amount for local crude then, to that extent, the price to the consumers—to the public—will go up. Therefore, what

we do in all these cases, both for fertilizer imports and fertilizers manufactured in the country and for oil imports and the oil produced in the country, we pool the prices . . . (Interruptions).

You may be right or you may be wrong. I am only explaining what we are doing and why it is so.

The pooled price is one which will be advantageous to the public at large, to the consumer at large because, if you paid the same price as you paid for imported crude . . .

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: You must have some relation.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: So, this is the position.

Therefore, I want to point out that this policy which has been followed, namely of pooling the price of the local produce with the high imported oil cost, and then supplying it at an average price lower than what the imported oil cost would be to the public, would be in the general public interest and that it, why it has been followed.

Another point which my friend made is about the Ministerial Committee. There is a Committee of Officers set up; that is the point made by Mr. George. I wish to point out that it is a Ministerial Committee and Officers are assisting it. The Ministerial Committee has already set to work and has allocated more cement, more wagons, railway extension schemes etc. and has taken up a number of highways and so on. So the Ministerial Committee is now looking into the problems and is trying to rectify the imbalances that have been created in the past.

We have also the Brahmaputra Valley Development Authority which has a very big scheme for harnessing the waters of the Brahmaputra. It is a multi-million dollar scheme and we

are asking for aid from other countries for the fulfilment of this project. Therefore, if that goes through, it would be possible to handle the very turbulent river—Brahmaputra is as turbulent as Assam—and we may be able to harness it and train it for the use of the people.

The broad-gauge also has been taken up. It is a legacy which my friend Mr. Dandavate has left, and the Ministerial Committee has now decided to go ahead with the project?

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: The broad-gauge line we have been demanding for donkey's years. Mr. Dandavate, you are also hearing?

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: I do not mind your calling me . . .

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: What about subsidy for consumer goods? We have given to Jammu & Kashmir. Why should the people of Assam be discriminated against? What about bridging the Brahmaputra at different places?

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: I do not mind his calling me a donkey, but I object to his calling Prof. Madhu Dandavate a donkey.

There was another point made about Harijans—that the amount was small. Here I have the figures: social and community services, including Harijans Rs. 33 crores. This is the total which includes Harijans Scheduled Castes, their social services, and so on. This has been arrived at by calculating the amounts under various sub-heads which have been given; this is the break-up.

Now, I hope, my friend, Mr. George, will withdraw his objection. I request the House to accept the motion.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: You made a pointed reference. My plea is this. We had increased the

allocation for broad gauge, Bongai-gaon to Gauhati. I hope, in geometrical progression the same allocation will increase. That will pay rich dividends.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: You cannot anticipate the Railway Budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill to provide for the withdrawal of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of the State of Assam for the services of a part of the financial year 1980-81, be taken into consideration

The motion was adopted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are no amendments. The question is:

"That Clauses 2 and 3 and the Schedule stand part of the Bill.

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 and 3 and the Schedule were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

STATEMENT RE: ARREST AND RELEASE OF SOME MLAs AND OTHERS FROM ASSAM

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY

AFFAIRS. (SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH): Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to make the following statement:—

At about 10.45 A.M. on 11-6-1980, 28 persons were arrested at the Rafi Marg-Rajpath Crossing for violation of prohibitory orders under section 144 Cr. P. C. A case, FIR No. 326, under section 188, IPC, at Police Station, Parliament Street, has been registered.

Out of the 28 arrested persons, 17 are MLAs from Assam, including Shri Golap Borbora, ex-Chief Minister of Assam, and Shri Dulal Chandra Barua. The remaining 11 persons are from the Yuva Janata. Their leader, who has been arrested, is Shri Vikram Singh. The 28 persons courted arrest peacefully.

It may also be mentioned that the 17 MLAs had been sitting on dharna since 9th June, 1980. This was converted into a 24-hour fast on 10th June. Today, they courted arrest. They were produced before the Metropolitan Magistrate, Parliament Street, today. They were admonished by the Magistrate and released.

श्री मनीराम बागडी (हिंसार) : सभापति महोदय, मैं जानकारी गृह मंत्री जी से चाहूंगा। जो गिरफ्तारियां हुई हैं गिरफ्तारी से पहले वह गृह मंत्री जी से मिले थे या नहीं और उन्होंने अपनी मस्य्या रखी थी या नहीं? अगर रखी थी तो आप ने उस का कोई मुकम्मिल जवाब दिया या उसका कुछ हल निकालने कि कोशिश आपने की या नहीं की । (इंटरप्शंस)

क्या गृह मंत्री बतायेगे कि सत्याग्रह से पहले (व्यवधान) में तो पृष्ठकर ही छोड़गां। आखिर इसमें एक्स चीफ मिनिस्टर गिरफ्तार होने पर मजबूर हुए हैं और इसमें एम०एल०एज० भी गिरफ्तार हुए हैं। आप यह भी सोचें कि वे गैर हिन्दी भाषी इलाके के लोग हैं। आप इसका मजाक मत उढाये बल्कि आप बडी संजीदगी के साथ इस पर सोचें। यह कोई मामूली बात नहीं है।।

सभापति महोदय : ऐसे जो स्टेटमेन्ट्स हीते हैं उन देर एक्सप्लेनेशन बगैरह नहीं होना है। आपने सजकरने चाहा तो मैंने मना नहीं किया।