

**The Honourable Rev. J. J. M. Nichols Roy** (Assam : General): Sir, I gave notice of an amendment-which, however, I am not moving.

The amendment reads as follows :

"That on the export duty levied by the Government of India on jute or jute-products and tea, such sums of at least fifty per cent. or any higher percentage as may be prescribed shall be charged on the Consolidated Fund of India in each year as grants-in-aid of the revenues of the States which are the producing units of these commodities."

I find that the Drafting Committee have changed their former draft and a modified draft has been moved by Dr. Ambedkar this afternoon. In this new amendment the principle of giving a share of the export duty on jute and jute-products to the States has been conceded. "Such sums as may be prescribed by the President", will be given to the States mentioned in the amendment, but no percentage whatever is mentioned in this new amendment. The Drafting Committee has also indicated the idea that the grants-in-aid to the States of Bengal, Bihar, Assam and Orissa, which are the producing units of jute and jute-products, will be given until the expiration of ten years or so long as export duty on jute or jute-products continues, whichever is earlier. There is no certainty, however, how much each producing unit will get. This article as amended by the Drafting Committee deals only with the export duty on jute and jute-products. It does not deal with any other export duty. We in Assam feel that it should have dealt with the export duty on tea also. At least two-thirds of the tea produced in India is produced in Assam. About 395 million pounds of tea is produced in Assam. From the export duty on tea produced in Assam, the Government of India realised in that he last five years about 19 (nineteen) crores and 90 (ninety) lakhs of rupees. Now, from the year 1947-48, the Government of India have been realising annually about six crores of rupees from export duty on tea produced in Assam. We felt that Assam should get a share from this export duty and we have not been paid anything from the Central Government out of this export duty. Assam has got only a subvention of about 30 lakhs. This is nothing compared with the amount of money which the Centre is taking from the export duty on tea.

Sir, when we calculate all the export duty on jute and tea produced in Assam, we find that the Centre is getting from the duties on Assam products about eight crores of rupees annually. In all, we find that the excise duty as well as the export duty on tea and jute produced from Assam and the Income-tax realised in Assam bring in to the coffers of the Central Government about ten crores of rupees, whereas we are given by them only 120 lakhs in the shape of Income-tax and forty lakhs in the shape of jute duty and thirty lakhs of subvention, totalling 190 lakhs.

Now, surely we feel that there has not been a just treatment of the province of Assam by the Centre up to the present time. We hope somehow or other the present

Government which is our own Government will consider all these points and give Assam at least a good subvention, if not a share from the tea duty. As the Centre is taking away about ten crores of rupees in the shape of income-tax and also in the shape of export duties and excise duties, we are entitled from the standpoint of justice to get at least half of that amount from them.

It appears that the attitude of this House and of the Government of India is that no share should be given to any province from the export duty, with the exception of jute export duty. I cannot understand why this exception was made. Dr. Ambedkar stated that at the time when this was given, Bengal was in great financial difficulty, and the Government at that time departed from the general principle of giving no share of the export duty or other duties to the provinces. But, Sir, that principle might be extended a little bit further to help Assam province that is now in reality in a state of bankruptcy. We have already stated that Assam has a deficit of one crore of rupees. From the official report sent to the Government of India by Assam and the other provincial Governments and submitted to the Expert Committee on financial provisions of the Union Constitution, which has been published in a book form it will be found that when all the schemes and institutions taken up now under the post war grant of the Government of India are completed and also that if prohibition of alcoholic liquor is taken on hand by Assam as advocated by the Congress Party in India, Assam will have an overall deficit of about ten crores of rupees in future years.

Sir, in view of this I would request that this matter may be considered and that something may be done for the province of Assam. If this is not to be done from the duty on tea, it should be done by means of a subvention. But I see no hope of that when I look at the article dealing with Financial relationship between the Centre and the State. Look at article 253. This altogether prevents the Government of India from giving any help to the provinces unless it is done by Parliament. Also article 255 will not give any power to the Government of India unless it is done by Parliament to give some grants-in-aid to those provinces which are in deficit.

Often it is difficult for a small province to get its desires carried out through any Parliament. Those provinces which have a large number of members in Parliament are able to pull the strings and get what they want. Small provinces sometimes go without being taken care of. I hope that such may not be the case in these matters. But if the House will consider these points I believe the Drafting Committee would reconsider the provisions under reference and treat the case of Assam as a special case in the matter of the tea duty as the former Government did in the case of the province of Bengal in the matter of the jute duty.

Sir, I am sorry I am not able to press my amendment before this House for reasons which are known to honourable Members. But I would request that this matter may be considered carefully by this House whose members are also members of Parliament and by the present Government of India. With these words I hope that these conditions of Assam will be considered by the present Government and that, when the time comes for considering the grant of subventions that will be given to the different province, Assam's case will be carefully considered and that a subvention will be given to Assam which will help her to carry on her administration and raise her standard to the level of the administration in other parts of India.