APPENDIX

APPENDIX - I

MEMORANDUM

THE DISPLACED TRADERS' UNION, SIOCHAR.

MEMORANDUM ON THE QUESTION OF RELIEF & REHABILITATION TO DISPLACED TRADERS IN CACHAR DISTRICT.

Preliminary:

The displaced traders' Union, Siochar, is a representative organisation of displaced traders, businessmen, industrialists, manufacturers and contractors in Cachar districts. Its main object is to organise all those claims on a sound co-operative and collective footing as far as practicable, to promote their all-round well-being - social, cultural, educational, economical and political, to raise their general standard of living, to preserve business, to ensure industrial modernisation of the country, to organise industries, mills, factories, to prospect and develop mineral resources, to explore and exploit mineral wealth, geological, botanical and other resources: to safeguard the interests of these people and to instil and impart ownership, self-reliance and entail grievances to proper authorities through constitutional means. The displaced traders' Union is founded to be called the body of a firm believer in secular democracy and is loyal to the state of Indian Union.

Rehabilitation Scheme: Under Chief" DOWN TO AID DISTRICTS.

The causes of vital factors in the population: - There are infinite variation or samples of rehabilitation schemes - both rural and urban, now before the country. In so far as the knowledge of the Union goes, about 87% of the money have been spent alone in Cachar districts; but it is doubtful how many of the high sounding schemes have been translated into action on a well-organised and well-systematised basis in Cachar. Hardly there have been any correlation and co-ordination of different forces and elements in the displaced community that had flowed into this district from time to tim.
in the course of the last four or five years. In that respect no logical or scientific classification has been observed nor have the different needs and requirements of the various classes and sections of the people been carefully attended to in the matter of distribution of funds and allotment of lands, if any. It is a matter of deep regret that though displaced traders, businessmen, industrialists, manufacturers are vital factors in the production and distribution of wealth, they have been, for all practical purposes, neglected; and their most deserving cases have received scant consideration at the hands of the Rehabilitation Authorities. In this memorandum, the Union will confine itself mainly to the needs and requirements of this particular class and section of the people.

Land—the primary factor:—Whatever be the schemes of Rehabilitation, land must necessarily be the pivotal and basic factor. Without land, there can be no effective scheme of Rehabilitation; but the Union notices with deep regret that the entire scheme of Rehabilitation in Cachar district are being carried out without any consideration to this factor. Had land re-settlement and grant of loans gone pari passu and been properly correlated and adjusted, so much money would not have been wasted in the manner it has been and is being done.

Figures of displaced persons:—According to the July census of displaced persons (1949), the total number in Assam was calculated to be 1,14,597, out of which the Cachar figure came up to 56 thousand approximately. The general census of 1951 was held about a year after historic Exodus of 1947, when a very heavy number of Hindus—men, women and children, entered Cachar district due to widespread disturbances in East Pakistan. The provisional figures of the Assam census, however, revealed that there had been about 30 thousand displaced persons in Cachar district in this year of grace.
foregoing considerations, it will be evident, that those figures are incorrect and misleading on the very face of it. Presumably, due to the operation of various adverse forces and influences in this district, the census work could not be properly carried out, if the Union may be permitted to say so. It appears that the census instructions with regard to displaced persons have not been correctly interpreted and represented to the people concerned. Most probably old refugees and in some cases the newer ones did not correctly return themselves as refugees. Lure of citizenship and loaves and fishes of service, contracts, business facilities and educational benefits inseparable from it, might have blinded their sense and induced them to give incorrect returns. This might be the most active factor in the fall-off in census figures under the item - displaced person. This Union undertook a rough population survey; and it is its considered opinion that the number of displaced persons in Cachar district will not be less than 2,50,000 approximately. This cannot be said to be the last figure. Migration of Hindus from East Pakistan still continues to be a vigorous and active factor and it is apprehended in the context of recent happenings, that a larger influx from Pakistan may not be unlikely in the near future; and the Govt. should take a timely warning from now.

Housing schemes: - The Govt. of India decided to provide every family of displaced persons (having no property in India) with a house or a developed plot of land for the construction of a house. It is a matter of deep regret that the decision of the Govt. of India has not yet been implemented in Cachar district; and indications also are wanting for its implementations in the near future. Yet the largest number of refugees are going without any shelter and are now at the entire mercy of wind and rain.

Co-Operative Farming and Trading: - No such steps have yet been taken in Cachar district. Cachar is so rich in industrial and agricultural possibilities. There is absolutely no chance
of their utilisation even in the near future.

Refugee Colonies: Lack of imagination, foresight, creative ability, organising power and that of co-ordination and correlation seems to characterise the entire schemes of refugee colonies in Cachar district. It is rather a strange thing that no steps have been taken for the adjustment of living and means of livelihood. To say the least, the colonies are so many Quixotic projects.

Land policy in Assam: From the recent speeches of Assam Ministers, it appears that there is a welcome change in the land policy. It is understood that in some parts of this State there has been admirable allotment of lands to refugees. But in Cachar district where Rehabilitation is directly controlled by the Centre, no such steps have been taken. There being no adjustment and correlation between land and money allotments, rehabilitation has remained an airy dream. If things continue like that, oil will no doubt burn, but the house will be dark, as the Bengalee adage goes. Undoubtedly the needs of the landless indigenous people must be attended to. There is enough land in Cachar and Assam. All that is needed is an adjustment between excess and deficit. Govt. are committed to the liquidation of zamindaris. Natural presumption in such a case would be that every step should be taken for preventing resurrection of the ghost in any form or shape. This naturally involves a equitable distribution of land on a definite plan according to the size and requirements of a family.

Instead of sitting on the fence and giving out empty cries about the interests of landless indigenous people, it would have been far better and more beneficial, had this State of Assam taken concrete and vigorous steps towards the liquidation of zamindaris and more equitable distribution of lands amongst all classes of citizens, be they domiciled, native or displaced.

Is the Rehabilitation Firm at Silchar liquidating? From all indications, it is evident that the Rehabilitation business at Silchar is gradually being wound up.
into the air that Centre's Rehabilitation business at Silohar is being wound up by stages and that the whole process of liquidation will be completed by the end of December when elections will be over. The Union believes that it is simply a popular fancy and will ultimately turn out to be false.

But it is reported that admission to the Govt. homes for destitute women and children has already been closed, and that financial assistance to refugee pupils and students will be stopped with effect from the 1st August, 1951. The Union will be glad if the Rehabilitation authority at Silohar let it know as to whether there is any truth in such reports.

If there be even an iota of truth in them, the whole public may not be unjustified in believing that the whole show of Rehabilitation at Silohar is simply an election stunt. In that case, the Union will not be bold to say that the free citizens of the sovereign democratic Republic of Bharat are no longer so many dumb-driven cattle to be misled and deceived by such empty stunts. Sincerity and open-heartedness in Rehabilitation matters will certainly be the measure of success for contesting parties at forthcoming elections. It is sincerely believed that this warning will not go unheed. If the process of Rehabilitation goes on, in the manner it is going, the popular impression about the rehabilitation work will grow deeper and deeper, and it is not unlikely that this may prove a deciding factor in the casting of votes. People have, from long experience, learnt to go deeper into fundamentals; mob hysterics and waves of popular passion will not this time be able to cloud their reason and deter them from the correct path and procedure. With this note of warning the Union proceeds to give its plans and schemes of rehabilitation in the following pages. It is sincerely believed that this will receive attention and consideration adequate to their importance at the hands of the Rehabilitation Authorities, Local, Provincial and Central.