

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 49TH SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HELD IN
THIMPHU FROM OCTOBER 25TH TO NOVEMBER 3, 1978**

1. **MATTER RELATING TO RESTRICTION OF THE SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS FOR
MEAT**

Bhutan, being a Buddhist country, many Assembly members felt that the unrestricted slaughter of animals for commercial purposes was not befitting. From now on, it was decided to minimize the slaughter of animals. The Home Minister would look into the matter and issue a circular as to how far the slaughter of animals was to be limited.

2. **MATTER RELATING TO FOREIGN TRADE**

In the National Assembly, the people's representatives stated that our government's trade should be developed not only with India but also with neighbouring and other foreign countries, and there was considerable discussion on this point. Regarding this, a trade agreement had been entered into between India and Bhutan in 1972, but in spite of this as minor problems developed in our foreign trade, this year on August 12, 1978, based on the existing agreement and after negotiations with the Government of India, a revised agreement was entered into to remove these problems. In this agreement, as all our requirements for foreign trade have been incorporated, it was felt that the agreement was adequate for the time. Also, as the agreement would expire in four years time, it was felt that at that time not only could the Royal Government take steps to remove all the problems but could seek to ensure that our products are exported to all countries which will give the highest returns.

Furthermore, some people's representatives stated that unless we developed trade with our northern neighbour now, if our neighbours India and China became friends again in spite of their previously strained relations, there was danger of India not attaching any importance to us as before. Besides this, when the two big countries become friends, if we cannot also develop similar friendship, there would be danger to us from the north. To this, His Majesty the King was pleased to command clearly that Indo-Bhutan relations were not based on the aid and assistance that India gives to Bhutan, but the most important factor for us is India's genuine and sincere friendship towards Bhutan, and as long as this enlightened policy continues, the friendship between India and Bhutan will always grow from strength to strength. His Majesty further added that in view of the extremely close and friendly relations

that we now have with India, there was no need to think of developing trade with the north. The National Assembly decided that we should act in conformity with this Royal Command.

3. MATTER RELATING TO TRADE IN PIPLA AND CHIRETO

The issue was raised that till date, only one private party had been carrying out trade in pipala and chireto. From January 1st, 1979, the trade would be handed after calling tenders and those ventures which will bring in the highest royalty would be undertaken.

4. MATTER RELATING TO FIXATION OF COMMODITY RATES

There was a great variation in the prices of different items because of the arbitrary fixation of prices by the Shopkeepers themselves. This was causing great inconvenience and the matter was raised in the Assembly. In this connection the Department of Trade had introduced a price list on important essential commodities. It was decided that the matter would be looked into by the department of Trade and the rates of all commodities would now be standardized.

5. MATTER RELATING TO RIGHT TO FELL TREES WITHIN REGISTERED LAND

In a previous Assembly, the right to fell trees on one's registered land was discussed. This was again raised in the Assembly. The Assembly said that the resolution on this had already been passed and the rules contained in the Land Act which were based on this resolution, must remain unchanged and be adhered to.

6. MATTER RELATING TO TRADE IN TIMBER

The question was raised as to whether trade in timber from trees surrounding villages and towns could be taken up by the local public as this was more convenient and also profitable. On this it was decided that the Government would assess the feasibility of such trade ventures, taking into consideration the people's capacity to manage the business. The Forest Department would present a report on this in the next Assembly.

7. MATTER RELATING TO THE ALLOTMENT OF LAND TO THE LANDLESS PEOPLE IN THE TASHIGANG AREA

A matter frequently brought up in the Assembly was the allotment of land to the landless from publicly and privately owned grazing land. Regarding this the Agriculture and Forest Department and the Dzongda were to ascertain the number of landless people and the suitability of the Government, public and private grazing land for cultivation. The extent of the grazing land which could be allotted was also to be reported to the Government which would then accord the approval for allotment.

8. MATTER RELATING TO MORE LAND FOR CASH CROPS

The members of Southern Bhutan stated that there was insufficient land to grow more cash crops and requested that more land be set aside for this purpose. Since His Majesty the King had given the Development Ministry the responsibility of looking into the matter and allocating suitable land, it was decided that this practice of land allotment was to continue.

9. MATTER RELATING TO INCREASING THE RATE OF CULTIVABLE LAND

According to government rule, the rate of wet cultivable land has been placed at Nu. 1,600/- per acre, and dry land at Nu.600/- per acre. With the passage of time and increase in the value of land, it was thought necessary by the National Assembly members to revise the existing land rate.

On this it was passed that the Royal Advisory Council would examine the situation and submit their recommendations for revision of the land rates to the next Assembly for approval.

10. MATTER RELATING TO PUBLIC LAND FALLING UNDER TOWNSHIP AREA

The issue was raised regarding the sale of the remainder of the public land adjoining the Gaylegphug Township area which did not come under the proposed township plan. The right to sell this land ought to be granted to the owners of the land.

It was stated that the Town Planning Committee was presently working on a sketch map of the Gaylegphug Township. This would be completed within 5 months after the conclusion of this Assembly.

It would then be permitted to sell the adjoining land not falling under the Township plan, in accordance with the Land Act.

11. MATTER RELATING TO DEFENCE MATTERS

The people's representatives from Southern Bhutan pointed out that keeping substantial numbers of Indian army personnel along our northern border was not desirable and, secondly the presence of large numbers of foreign army personnel could pose a big threat to the country in future. Furthermore, the Thimphu members enquired as to why we could not look after our defence and if it was necessary to seek outside assistance although most of our young men had joined the army and the Royal Bhutan Army has now been established for many years.

To this, the Royal Bhutan Army representative denied that there were any armed Indian Army personnel on our northern border and stated that we were making every effort to defend our border with our own army personnel.

To the second question, His Majesty the King was pleased to command that if the responsibility for our country's defence cannot be shouldered by our army then there would be no justification for maintaining an army. Furthermore, we are firstly a Buddhist country and, secondly we are a small country located between two big countries. We do not have any intention of maintaining a large army. Uptil now our friend India has never told us that they want to keep substantial numbers of Indian soldiers in Bhutan. Regarding IMTRAT, they have come to impart training to our soldiers and not for staying here permanently. Besides this, uptil now our Indian friends have been repeatedly telling us that we must shoulder the responsibility for our country's defence ourselves, and it is for this reason that they are giving big assistance to our army. Having as much concern as the National Assembly members, we are trying hard to shoulder the responsibility for our country's defence as best as we can. In addition, what is important for our country and people are developmental activities, and if possible the army will start to help in such activities by 1979, or if this is not possible, then by 1980 at the latest.

The National Assembly decided that we should act in conformity with the above Royal Command.

12. MATTER RELATING TO IMPROVEMENT OF ARMY PERSONNEL WELFARE

The members from Southern Bhutan said that more attention should be given to promoting the welfare of army personnel. To this, the representative of the Army said that the welfare facilities available to the army were the same but not less than the facilities given by other

government departments to their staff. He also expressed his thanks to the Assembly members for having given thought to the matter.

13. MATTER RELATING TO TRADE ACT

The representative of businessmen pointed out the necessity of formulating a specific Trade Act for the convenience of all businessmen. Accordingly it was decided that this would be done by the government Trade Committee in consultation with the Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Finance.

14. MATTER RELATING TO PUNISHMENT OF LAW SUIT PETITIONERS

It has become a common practice for many petitioners who are dissatisfied with the decision of the Thrimpon Court to present their case directly to His Majesty. On investigation of these cases, if the judgement is seen to be unfair and the claims of the petitioner are justified, the concerned Thrimpon will be given disciplinary action. If the claims are proved baseless, however, the petitioner will be doubly fined and be liable for suitable punishment. This is in accordance with His Majesty's earlier command will continue to be carried out, if the petition is found to be in the next interests of the public and the petitioner is found innocent there will be no punitive measures taken against the petitioner.

15. MATTER RELATING TO ESTABLISHING UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE IN BHUTAN

A proposal to establish a resident representative of the UNDP which has been giving much assistance to developmental projects in Bhutan was put forward. The Royal Government had already considered this matter and had decided, in consultation with India, that a UNDP resident representative office would be established in Bhutan by June 1979. Furthermore, it had been decided to seek membership in the International Fund for Agricultural Development which would help to promote agricultural development in Bhutan. The Foreign Minister also explained that by becoming a member of this body, Bhutan would be able to obtain a good amount of financial assistance for the development of her agricultural projects.

16. MATTER RELATING TO EXCHANGE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN BHUTAN AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

It was pointed out in the National Assembly that since Bhutan was a sovereign independent country and a member of the UN, she should not limit her diplomatic relations to India only, but also establish diplomatic relations with other neighbouring countries. To this, the Foreign Minister stated that Bhutan had diplomatic relations not only with India but also with Bangladesh. However, it had not been possible to establish diplomatic relations with other neighbouring countries because of financial and manpower constraints. What-ever manpower were presently available were being utilized for the internal development of the country. The Foreign Minister also expressed the view that the reason for maintaining diplomatic relations was to maintain contact between countries and that at present no need had been felt by us to establish formal diplomatic relations with other countries, because the Embassy in Delhi and the Permanent Mission in UN were continuously carrying out the task of maintaining contacts with neighbouring and other countries. This view was accepted by the National Assembly and the matter decided accordingly.

17. MATTER RELATING TO DECISIONS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND ANSWERS

It had been observed that the decisions passed in the National Assembly were not being brought into effect by the various departments. It was decided that the Speaker would send a copy of proceedings of the National Assembly to each department along with a separate circular so that the relevant resolutions would be implemented effectively. In addition a copy of proceedings and the circular would also be sent to person directly connected with the projects.

18. MATTER RELATING TO RESTRICTIONS ON FOOD COMMODITIES BY BHUTAN CUSTOMS

In order to restrict the smuggling of essential commodities including food commodities between India and Bhutan, the Bhutan Custom have been set up in various areas. There have been reports, however, that the checking of the documents of purchase has been causing some inconvenience to the public. The Finance Minister said that in consideration of public welfare, a circular had already been issued by him earlier stating that there should be no restrictions on food commodities. To this, it was said that if such a circular had already been sent, the matter did not require further discussion.

19. MATTER RELATING TO TRAINING FOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY PROJECT

It was pointed out that our young Bhutanese nationals should be attached to the GSI Unit in Bhutan for training. To this, the Department of Trade said that for some time now, Bhutanese nationals had been assisting the GSI unit in Bhutan in its work and also acquiring on-the-job training. Some students had also been sent abroad to study geology. The Royal Government will, however, be taking greater consideration in this matter.

20. MATTER RELATING TO IMPORTED LABOURERS FOR AGRICULTURE WORK

On the question of the employment of imported labourers in the border areas of Southern Bhutan for the plucking and transportation of oranges during the orange season, it was stated that the Royal Government had already laid down a rule that labourers could be imported seasonally in certain specified areas by bonafide Bhutanese after obtaining a temporary permit. After the season, the Dzongdas and Ramjam Gom of the concerned areas would be responsible for ensuring that all the imported labourers had left. This rule is valid for a period of 3 years, and was also approved by the Assembly regarding employment of imported labourers for agricultural and other projects, it was pointed out that the rules laid down in the Foreign Labourers Act which was passed by an earlier Assembly were to be followed. The permanent employment of foreign labourers by any persons was also prohibited.

21. MATTER RELATING TO UN CHARTER

In order to enable Bhutan as a member of the UN, to honour the charter of the UN, it was pointed out that the National Assembly Members should also be given the opportunity to understand the principles of the charter. However, there was some difficulty in translating the Charter which contained III articles in the Assembly in session. Translation in Dzongkha and Nepali would be undertaken, however, after the Assembly was over. It was also desired by the Assembly members that the rights and powers and responsibilities of the Permanent Representative and the advantages of having a Permanent Representative be clearly written and presented at the next Assembly by the Foreign Ministry.

22. MATTER RELATING TO LOAN FOR THE WELFARE OF POOR PEOPLE

In accordance with His Majesty's desire to promote the welfare of the people, the Department of Agriculture and FCB have been advancing loans to encourage the cultivation of cash

crops. However, many people were facing difficulties due to factors like death, divorce cases etc, which were not covered by the policy.

The Assembly members enquired as to whether it would be possible for loans to be granted to such needy people at lower rates of interest after obtaining the support from their Gups and Chimi and a letter of recommendation from the respective Dzongda. The Finance, the Development Ministries and FCB would examine the feasibility of such cases to the National Assembly.

23. MATTER RELATING TO COMPENSATION FOR DEATH WHILE IN SERVICE

The need to have graded system of compensation for the cases of death and injury occurring while working for the PWD and other departments was pointed out. In this connection it was stated that the Development Ministry had already set up a graded compensation system. It was decided however, that this matter must be made more definite and after being put up to the Finance Committee, would be presented to the next Assembly.

24. MATTER RELATING TO INDO-BHUTAN TREATY

The view was expressed in the National Assembly that it was necessary to revise the 1949 treaty of peace and friendship between India and Bhutan in view of the changed circumstances.

His Majesty the King appreciated the fact that this view had been expressed in the country's best interests, and stated that although minor problems may seem apparent in the wording of the treaty, what was important is that in the actual implementation of the treaty no major problems have arisen so far because of the good Indo-Bhutan friendship, and as such His Majesty felt that there was no real need to revise the treaty. His Majesty then went on to say that what was most important for the country at present was to achieve self-reliance, namely, to meet our government expenditure from our revenues and to carry out our activities with our own manpower. In order to achieve the progress of our country, it is essential to establish trade relations with other countries. Formerly, our country was facing some problems in developing our foreign trade, but with the assistance of India these problems have been removed.

Secondly, in order to enable Bhutan to receive substantial assistance for development purposes, it has been decided to appoint a UNDP representative in Bhutan. Thirdly, in order

to have trade relations with other countries and obtain external assistance it is important to have transit facilities. It has been decided, therefore, to set up an international airline with the help of the Government of India. This fulfillment of our desired objectives have made us happy and also had done much to strengthen the friendship between India and Bhutan. There is, therefore, no reason for any major concern over the existing Indo-Bhutan treaty. In the event of any big differences arising between India and Bhutan, the terms of the treaty expressly provides that these differences can be resolved through negotiation. Therefore, in keeping with the Royal Command in the National Assembly, the members decided that there was no further need to discuss the treaty.

25. MATTER RELATING TO SKETCH MAP OF TOWN PLANNING

The members of Chirang brought up the point that if the sketch maps of the Township were not drawn up speedily, the development of market areas would be delayed. To this the Central Town Planning Committee said that the sketch maps of different Townships were being gradually drawn up. The completed town plan and design of the shops along with the maps would be circulated shortly.

26. MATTER RELATING TO RESTRICTION ON THE MOVEMENT OF EATABLE COMMODITIES THROUGH INDIAN TERRITORY

It was put forward that there should be freedom of the movement of eatable commodities through Indian territory. These minor problems must be solved by Dzongdas of the respective areas. If any cases cannot be solved in the concerned areas and are brought to the notice of the higher authorities, then the Royal Government will take suitable action on these matters.

27. MATTER RELATING TO TEA GARDEN IN MALANGTAR AND BHANGTAR AREA

The Assembly members raised the issue about the desirability of beginning a tea garden in the Malangtar and Bhangtar area where a large tract of fallow land was available. However, since the Government is still considering the feasibility and the benefit derived from such a scheme, project, it was decided that a report would be submitted to the National Assembly after the assessment was completed.

28. MATTER RELATING TO CHANGE OF SETTLEMENT OF BHUTANESE TO DIFFERENT SUB-DIVISIONS

The movement of settlement of Bhutanese to different subdivisions had been causing some problems in places where there is a scarcity of land. It was decided that in future the concerned sub-divisional officers would examine the adequacy of available land and movement would be allowed only if the land available was sufficient.

29. MATTER RELATING TO BORDER BETWEEN BHUTAN AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

A point was raised about the borders between Bhutan and her neighbours. It was revealed that in the South some land belonging to Bhutan fell within Indian territory although Land Tax was being paid to the Royal Government. There were also some problems regarding the demarcation of the border in the Gaylegphug, Sarbhang area. The members also enquired as to what was being done about the demarcation of the Northern border.

The Chief of Survey clarified certain points and said that the southern border had been demarcated in 1878 when India was under British rule and before the time of the first King. The survey department had till now only found out where the 1878 boundary were situated without changing their position from one place to another. Regarding the Eastern grazing lands it was stated that previously there had been no definite decision arrived at on them, but with the friendly relations between India and Bhutan, it had now been possible to put up boundary pillars in the area.

It was also raised that at the boundary in the Sarbhang/Gaylegphug area, 4 km of motorable road fell within Indian territory. To this it was stated that as commanded by His Majesty the King, there would be discussions on the matter this winter with India. Regarding the Northern Boundary, the point was put forward that since 90% of the border areas in the north was covered by Himalayan snows, there was no border problem there. However, some demarcation was necessary in the North Eastern and North Western borders. In the Earth Ox Year of the Bhutanese calendar, a treaty of friendship had been signed between Bhutan and Tibet. Since the treaty was still being honoured by China, no necessity had been felt to undertake demarcation of the North Eastern and North Western boundary for the time being. Later on, with the establishment of more friendly relations with our Northern Neighbour, the issue of boundary demarcation would be put forward at an appropriate time. At this, His Majesty the King commanded that although the survey department was carrying out its work,

the Chief of survey was to re-examine the border issue more thoroughly and submit the matter to the Cabinet which would in turn forward the case for discussion in the National Assembly.

30. MATTER RELATING TO NEED FOR TECHNICAL TRAINING

The public felt that the progress of the country depended greatly on good technical training and demanded that more facilities for technical training be made available. The Development Ministry expressed that specific and separate commands had been given by His Majesty and the Manpower Department had been entrusted with the responsibility of arranging training in technical fields.

31. MATTER RELATING TO BUS SERVICE AT DIFFERENT PLACES

In order to facilitate travel from one place to another it was pointed out, that adequate bus services must be arranged. It was decided that the people of the different areas must apply for the services required by them. The Finance Ministry would then study the condition of the roads, number of passengers available and the profitability of the service schemes before introducing any new bus services.

32. MATTER RELATING TO CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT

The Bhutan customs have been prohibiting the bringing in of small goods by the needy people even though these goods were purchased in India and not in other Foreign countries. The members said that for the welfare of the people, the bringing in of such articles should be allowed by the Customs Department.

Regarding this it was passed that the Finance and Trade Ministries would study the desirability of this relaxation and amend the customs rules and regulations accordingly.

33. MATTER RELATING TO AUDIT OF GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS

Some members expressed that it was necessary to establish a new enquiry commission to examine government accounts. Further, the audit department was conducting monthly and annual audits of government accounts. His Majesty the King had also appointed a special court of vigilance to check the issue of public funds and work is being carried out

satisfactorily by them. It was thus thought unnecessary to establish another commission to check government accounts.

34. MATTER RELATING TO TRAVEL ALLOWANCE FOR VILLAGE HEADMEN WHILE ON DUTY

The question was raised as to whether it was possible for village headman to be granted transportation fare while travelling to and fro from their villages to district headquarters on official duty. On this, it was remarked that it would not be consistent to grant allowances only to those headman who could travel by motorable road. In order to bring uniformity in the travelling allowances, it was decided that the Finance Ministry would examine the expenditure involved and the available funds, and would report the matter to the next Assembly.

35. MATTER RELATING TO GRAZING LAND FOR DROKPAS (YAK HERDERS)

In the Government Land Act a chapter mentions the allotment of grazing land belonging to Drokpas for cultivation purposes. Since these grazing lands are all situated at very high altitudes and are not suitable for cultivation and amendment in the grazing land act was thought necessary. On this it was decided that His Majesty the King would study the situation himself and issue a written command (Kasho) in the best interests and for the welfare of the Drokpas. An amendment was thus not required.

36. MATTER RELATING TO COMMON PERMIT (TSACHHU NYOKHOR) FOR GRAZING LAND

Till now it has been the customs to issue grazing land permits to individual households. The question was raised as to whether it would be possible to have instead one common permit for all the houses under one Chipon. In this respect it has been decided that the concerned Dzongdas, the Home Minister, Finance Minister and the Royal Advisory Council would decide on the course of action which will accordingly be accepted.

37. MATTER RELATING TO LIMIT OF GRAZING LAND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NUMBER OF CATTLE OWNED

It was pointed out that in the best interest of the public and the government when grazing land was being allotted for cultivation purposes, the acreage of the grazing land should be fixed according to the number of cattle owned. To this, it was stated that till date, the total grazing level land had not been measured thoroughly because of the difficult geographical position of the grazing land areas.

38. MATTER RELATING TO CONSTRUCTION OF MOTORABLE ROAD

The public of various places expressed that there should be construction of motorable roads in the following places from Chirang to Wangdiphodrang through Daga dzong; from Daifam to Sibsoo; from Okhaldunga to Bhangtar market (S. Jongkhar District); from Daifam to Shingkar Lauri; from Sarbhang Darechhu to Dagomchhu and from Paro Iusina to Nabisar. In this connection, the Government would consider the feasibility of constructing these roads, the advantages and disadvantages of the road construction and how they would be maintained after their construction. A decision would then be taken as to whether to include the construction of these roads under the Fifth Five Year Plan.

39. MATTER RELATING TO TEACHING OF GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF BHUTAN IN SCHOOLS

It was pointed out in the Assembly that it was very necessary for our school students to have a knowledge of the geography, history and culture of Bhutan, and a study of this should be given prime importance in the schools. In this respect it was stated the Education Department had compiled a history and geography of Bhutan and this is being printed at present. The teaching of these subject would then be introduced into the schools, in accordance with the decision of the National Assembly.

40. MATTER RELATING TO CENTRAL SCHOOLS IN SAMDRUPJONGKHAR

It was pointed out in the Assembly that it was necessary to establish Central School in Samdrupjongkhar. Regarding this, it was stated that based on a survey of the population and in line with the country's present requirement for educated people, a National policy of Education which also covered the establishments of different schools had already been framed. It had been decided that for the present this educational policy would be adhered to.

41. MATTER RELATING TO IRRIGATION PROJECT FOR CULTIVATION OF VACANT LAND IN THE BORDER AREAS

The public of some areas brought up the point that there was cultivable land lying vacant in border areas. The extension of irrigation facilities to these areas, would help greatly in promoting self sufficiency in food, which is an aim upheld by both the government and the public.

42. MATTER RELATING TO FREE AMBULANCE SERVICE FOR THE PUBLIC

The public of Samchi stated that for the public good it was necessary to have ambulance service free of charge. To this, it was pointed out that for the welfare of the people, the government had made all ambulance services free and therefore there had been some error on the part of the authorities in the Samchi area. In future there must be uniformity of practice in all the districts and ambulance services will be provided free of charge.

43. MATTER RELATING TO CHUKHA HYDRO-ELECTRICITY

It was pointed out in the Assembly, that the work on the Chukha Hydel Project must be carried out speedily. Questions were also raised on the funds available for the project, the authority the Royal Government had over the project and how far we would be able to maintain the project. Mention was also made of the possible inconvenience of bringing electricity from Chukha to Thimphu. To this, the Secretary (Development) replied that HRH Ashi Dechen Wangmo Wangchuck was the head of the Chukha Hydel Project Committee which had been delegated with full decision making authority. An officer from the Royal Government had also been appointed for the Chukha Project. Although most of the officials at the Chukha Hydel were from India, they had not come from the Indian Government but were on deputation. As far as possible, however, efforts were being made to employ Bhutanese personnel. Planning for the required manpower to man the project in the future, as well as training arrangements for them had also been done. The Secretary said that there was, therefore, no need for concern on this matter. He admitted that work on the Project had been progressing at a rather slow rate since it had begun. However, in the last two years, the work had been speeded up considerably. Much of the work which was carried out on a contract basis was being given to those private Indian contractors who would carry out the work quickly. At the present rate of the work, the Secretary said, it would probably be possible to set up 4 generators by 1984. He also remarked that the belief that bringing electricity to

Thimphu from Chukha involved some difficulties was unfounded and there was no difficulty involved at all. The funds for the electrification of Thimphu from the Chukha Project, had already been allocated in the Budget and work on the installation of the electrical line would commence shortly.

Regarding the funds for the Chukha Project, it was revealed that 60% had been obtained as a grant from the Government of India and 40% as a loan from the same government. The loan was repayable within 15 years of the commissioning of the project. The interest on the loan had been fixed at 5%. The Secretary went on to say that after the domestic demand for electricity had been met, the surplus power would be sold. An agreement had been made with India for the sake of convenience, specifying the arrangements that would exist after the project begins functioning.

44. MATTER RELATING TO TENURE OF THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES (ROYAL ADVISORY COUNCILLORS) AND MINISTERS.

The public raised the question as to what the term for the People's Representatives in the Royal Advisory Council and the High Court was. To this, His Majesty said that the tenure for the people's representatives in the Royal Advisory Council and the High Court was 5 years but since the existing officials and ministers were carrying out their work efficiently and there had been no complaints made against them by the people, their term in office had been extended beyond the specified time limit. As from now, in accordance with the resolution passed by the National Assembly, fresh elections could be held for those officials who had completed their 5 years term, with effect from the next Assembly. His Majesty then said that although at present there was no harm in holding elections every 5 years, in the future problems could arise because of differing view points and if Ministers were to be more interested in promoting their own self interests this would have undesirable consequences on the country. His Majesty therefore suggested that if the Assembly members were willing, the practice of having fresh elections for ministers every year should be abolished. If, however, one third of the National Assembly Members presented a petition to the Assembly or to His Majesty for the removal of any ministers even though he may have been in office for just one year, voting on the issue would be done in the Assembly. The National Assembly members unanimously supported His Majesty's suggestion for the abolition of elections every 5 years.

45. MATTER RELATING TO SET UP A DRAFTING COMMITTEE FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

In view of the changed circumstances and the development of our country, it was felt that there was the necessity to have a drafting committee for the Assembly during its session. It was decided that His Majesty would examine the matter to see if there was a real necessity for such a committee, and would decide on which government, monk body and public representatives were to comprise the committee. His Majesty's decision would then be made known to the next Assembly.

Dated : November 3/78

Sd/-

(T.Jagar)

Speaker

National Assembly