

**RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE 50TH SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
HELD FROM 15TH JUNE TO 4TH JULY, 1979**

1. **MATTER RELATING TO ELECTIONS OF THE REPRESENTATIVES IN THE ROYAL
ADVISORY COUNCIL AND HIGH COURT**

In the resolution 44 of the 49th session, the National Assembly decided that the elections of the representatives for the Royal Advisory Council and the High Court will be held during the 50th Session.

During the current session it was pointed out that some candidates have not been nominated in an appropriate manner, while some districts have not submitted any nomination at all. While there is an existing regulations governing the elections of the Representatives in the Royal Advisory Council and High Court, the Government felt the need to revise it. After making the necessary amendments, the revised regulation will be circulated in the National Assembly during the current session. Within the framework of the new rules, candidates for the representatives in the Royal Advisory Council and High Court should be nominated by the public from their respective districts. The name of the candidates should be submitted to the office of the Speaker at least one month before the commencement of the 51st session of the National Assembly.

Therefore, the National Assembly resolved that the elections will be held during the 51st session.

2. **MATTER RELATING TO TIMBER BUSINESS**

Some chimis expressed that since the forests in their locality were protected from fires by the public, they should be given the contract to exploit the neighbouring forests. They felt that the neighbouring forests should not be allotted to private contractors.

On this issue, His Majesty was pleased to command the policy regarding allotment of forest coups to private contractors has been revised. His Majesty was also pleased to state that the Royal Government has taken the following decisions.

- i. The existing practice of allotting forest coups to private contractors has been discontinued. A complete ban on commercial felling has also been imposed in Southern Bhutan.
- ii. There are presently 26 saw mills established with the assistance of the Government. Although there is a need to close down these saw mills, the fact that these were established with the encouragement of the Government, it was decided that the saw mills will be encouraged to go only into wood product manufacturing ventures. Henceforth, they will be restricted from selling sawn timber.
- iii. For the benefit of the people and the country, the Government was planning to establish a plywood and other wood based industries. In the production of plywood, even inferior timber could be used. In place of inferior trees felled and fed to the factory, more valuable trees would be planted to ensure future forest revenues. If the above industries can be established, the Government would earn substantial revenues which in turn could bring many benefits to the public. When establishing these industries, the government would attempt to employ as many nationals as possible.

Realizing the great potential benefits that we could derive from forests, His Majesty was pleased to command that it was in the interest of the country to protect the valuable forests from fires and other hazards.

The Assembly unanimously supported His Majesty's command and resolved that henceforth all logging activities would be done by the Government, and that no private businessmen would be granted forest coups.

3. MATTER RELATING TO PREVENTION OF FOREST FIRES

Forests being an important resource of the nation, many points were raised for safeguarding the forests from fires and other hazards. Resolution 3 of the 30th session of the National Assembly pertaining to the prevention of forest fires was not enforced in Southern Bhutan upto now. However, Southern Bhutan being well endowed in forest resources, people expressed that it was necessary to safeguard the forests from destruction by fire.

Therefore, it was decided that the forest fire protection regulations passed in resolution 3 of the 30th session of the National Assembly would be enforced uniformly throughout the country. However, during this session, two amendments will be made on the resolution of the 30th session.

- i. As opposed to the previous rule, under the new regulations the public will not be liable to be penalized if they are unable to apprehend the party that set the forest on fire, or if they are unable to put the fire out. However, the public must go to put out any forest fire in their region.
 - ii. In the event the fire starts from India and spreads into Bhutan, all villagers in the neighbouring areas are required to go and put out the fire. However, they will not be penalized for not being able to apprehend the party responsible for starting the fire.
4. **MATTER RELATING TO TAX FOR TREES USED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF RURAL HOMES**

The Chimi from Wangdiphodrang pointed out in the Assembly that there was a difference in tax rates for trees granted for home construction at higher altitudes and lower altitudes. He proposed that the tax rates should be made uniform.

The Department of Forests explained that the tax structure for trees did not differ by altitudes but rather by the value of timber that was granted. However, even now the poor people who are unable to pay taxes for the trees required for the construction of their houses have been appealing to His Majesty for assistance. After ascertaining the genuineness of the appeal, His Majesty has not only been granting trees tax free, but also granting other assistance.

Therefore, the National Assembly resolved that there was no need for amending the existing timber tax structure.

5. **MATTER RELATING TO FELLING TREES WITHIN PRIVATE LAND AND FELLING TREES FOR ROOF SHINGLES**

Some chimis requested that they may be allowed to fell trees that were within their registered land. They also requested that they may be allowed to make shingles in the neighbouring forests.

After the deliberations, the National Assembly decided that the Government Land and Forest Acts respectively covered all matters relating to the above. The Assembly, therefore, resolved that no further amendments were necessary.

6. MATTER RELATING TO SUPPLY OF FIREWOOD TO THE CENTRAL MONK BODY AND RABDEYS

The Chimi from Thimphu explained to the Assembly that upto now, the public have been supplying the firewood requirements of the Central Monk Body and the Rabdeys. However, he expressed the increasing difficulties the public were facing to meet the firewood requirements after the introduction of forest regulations.

His Majesty was pleased to command that since supplying of firewood for our religious establishments was causing inconvenience to the public, and also causing damage to the forests, His Majesty commanded that with effect from 1st April, 1980, the Department of Forests will supply firewood in areas where they have logging activities and motorable roads. However, in areas where there were no logging activities and motorable roads, the Government would not be in a position to supply the firewood. In such areas, the public will continue to supply the firewood to the Rabdeys.

The National Assembly unanimously supported His Majesty's command.

7. MATTER RELATING TO PENDEN CEMENT FACTORY

The chimis from Samchi and Chirang raised several questions regarding the Penden Cement Factory.

In response, the Ministry of Trade, Industries and Forests explained that the Penden Cement Plant was established as the first major industry under the Government of India's assistance at the cost of Nu.13.55 crores. This amount included both the cash and equipment components. Before the construction of the plant, the Government had consulted both the Cement Corporation of India and Holtex to find out the feasibility of the project. The consultants, after investigation reported that the cement factory would be feasible, and that the factory after completion would have a productivity span of 40 years. The project has been started and the factory is near completion. However, due to lack of adequate supply of electricity from the neighbouring state of India, the factory has not been able to produce cement yet. It was hoped that while the electricity was not available from Bengal, the Government of India will kindly arrange to supply electricity from other states, such as Assam and Bihar. In the event the above arrangements can not be worked out, the Ministry of

Trade, Industries and Forests proposes to approach the Government of India to establish a captive generation plant nearby and to supply electricity to the Penden Cement Factory at subsidized rates. Discussions on the above are being held with the Government of India.

The Ministry of Trade, Industries and Forests will report the proceeding of the discussions to the next session of the Assembly.

8. MATTER RELATING TO ESTABLISHMENT OF A DALDA FACTORY

The Chimi from Lamidara proposed that a Dalda factory be set up in Bhutan.

During the deliberations, it was pointed out that the consumption of Dalda was injurious to health. However, it was decided that the Ministry of Trade, Industries and Forests would encourage and introduce the manufacturing of mustard oil and other indigenous edible oils.

Since there was no accurate information on the amount of mustard and other edible oils produced within the country, it was proposed that the Chimis would gather information on the quantity of mustard and other edible oils produced within their region and submit their reports to the Government. On receipt of the reports, the Ministry of Trade, Industries & Forests, Food Corporation of Bhutan and the Department of Agriculture will determine where factories for extracting edible oils could be located in relation to the oil bearing crops growing regions. They shall submit a report on the above to the next session of the National Assembly.

9. MATTER RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CGI SHEETS, CEMENT AND STEEL RODS SUPPLY AGENCIES

The Chimis from Chirang and Samdrupjongkhar requested the Government to establish CGI sheets, cement steel rods and other construction material supplying agencies in each district for the convenience of public.

The Ministry of Trade, Industries and Forests explained that CGI sheets, cement and steel rods are controlled items in India and only a limited quota was made available to us. They further explained that since the quota was small, emphasis would be made to first meet the government and public welfare construction requirements. The surplus materials are being supplied to the public.

On this issue, His Majesty was pleased to command that the public will be supplied the surplus materials after meeting the Government requirements. However, His Majesty pointed out that in accordance with the Government policy of self-reliance, it would be better that the public do not rely totally on imported materials for their construction works. Every effort should be made to use indigenous materials for construction.

The National Assembly decided that the proposal to open imported construction materials supplying agencies in every district was presently unnecessary.

10. MATTER RELATING TO THE CONTROL OF MISUSE OF TRADE LICENCES

The Chimi of Gaylegphug pointed out in the National Assembly that most of the businessmen in Bhutan were non-nationals. On inspection, it was found that most of the trade licences were held by Bhutanese citizens, while the business was actually run by non-nationals. He proposed that the National Assembly pass a resolution prohibiting such misuse and practices.

On this issue, His Majesty commanded that persons misusing trade licences were penalized in all other countries and the Royal Government also intended to impose strict restrictions on such misuse. His Majesty also commanded that the Ministry of Trade, Industries and Forests would give all assistance to help Bhutanese businessmen.

In accordance with His Majesty's command, the National Assembly resolved that henceforth no Bhutanese holding a trade licence is allowed to let a non-national run the Business.

11. MATTER RELATING TO ALLOTMENT OF LAND TO SUKUMBASIS

The Chimis from Bhangtar reported to the National Assembly that the Sukumbasis who have been granted land by the Government have not received it yet. He expressed that if the Government could allot the land before the end of this cultivation season, the work in the land could start soon.

The Ministry of Development pointed out that all the Sukumbasis granted land by the Government will be allotted land. They have already started allotting land. It is proposed that by the end of the seventh Bhutanese month, all allotments will be completed.

His Majesty explained that allotment of land took time because before careful studies of the quality of the soil and irrigation possibilities had to be done. And even after good land was

found, scientific clearing of the Forest took a long time. Haphazard clearing of forests could cause heavy losses of valuable timber. However, the Government was attempting to allot land as soon as possible according to the convenience of both the Government and public. For other landless people, who have not yet been granted land by the Government, His Majesty commanded that if they wished, they could be employed in the industries and development works.

12. MATTER RELATING TO ALLOTMENT OF LAND IN THE INTERIOR

The Chimi from Gaylegphug proposed in the National Assembly that if land was not available in Southern Bhutan for allotment to landless people there, the Government could allot land to them in the interior. This, he explained, would also be consistent with the national integration policy.

His Majesty commanded that he was very pleased to hear this proposal to strengthen national integration and understanding. His Majesty further added that the Government has already adopted such a policy.

As commanded by His Majesty, the National Assembly unanimously passed the resolution that henceforth, landless people from Southern Bhutan will be granted land in the interior.

13. MATTER RELATING TO PURCHASE OF LAND BY CITIZENS

The Chimi from Chengmari proposed that the Government should permit a landless citizen to purchase land.

During the discussions, it was pointed out that there was no restriction against bonafide citizens purchasing land within the country. This is clearly provided in the Land Act of Bhutan.

The National Assembly resolved that the Land Act had adequate provisions to allow bonafide citizens to purchase land anywhere within the country.

14. MATTER RELATING TO ALLOTMENT OF LAND FOR CASH CROPS

The Chimis from Sibsoo, Gaylegphug, Daifam and Chengmari proposed that the Government allot land to the public for cultivation of cash crops.

His Majesty was pleased to command that it was he, who had encouraged the public to cultivate cash crops by allotting land. His Majesty was also pleased to point out that it was the wishes of the Southern Bhutanese people that priority be given to allot land to landless people first before allotting land for cash crops. He also said that the allotting land to landless people has not yet been completed.

The National Assembly resolved that the allotment of land for cultivation of cash crops was adequately covered in resolution 2 of the 46th session of the Assembly.

15. MATTER RELATING TO CARDAMOM BUSINESS

The Chimi from Sarbhang proposed that Bhutan should exercise its sovereign right to export our cardamom abroad. He stated that so far we have not been able to export any cardamom abroad.

Regarding this issue, His Majesty was pleased to command that there was nothing that hindered export of Bhutan's goods abroad. He explained that India had not restricted Bhutan's export of cardamom abroad, even to countries like Pakistan. However, what did stop our export was the prices offered for cardamom abroad were far less than what we expected. Therefore, even the foreign exchange we would earn from the export of cardamom would not compare favourably with the prices we pay here. In view of this, we had negotiated with the government of India to purchase our cardamom at prices favourable to us.

Considering the above facts, the National Assembly resolved that until such times, the export of cardamom would prove more lucrative to us, we can export our cardamom to India.

16. MATTER RELATING TO DEMARCATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY

Most of the chimis proposed that a thorough investigation of the international boundaries of Bhutan was necessary. They wanted that a detailed report and map giving particulars of exact location of all the boundary pillars be submitted to the National Assembly. They indicated that the boundary issue was raised in every session because so far no report has been submitted to the Assembly stating who had previously demarcated the Indo-Bhutan border and which areas were under dispute.

In response, the Chief of Survey explained that as the survey work has not yet been completed, the detailed report on the international boundary giving total number of boundary

pillars would be submitted only in the 51st session of the National Assembly. He also stated that the submission of a complete map of Bhutan would take same years, as the survey work in various districts have not yet been completed.

His Majesty was pleased to command that in accordance with resolution 29 of the 49th session of the Assembly, the Government of India and Bhutan are presently conducting joint investigations of the disputed areas, the result of these investigation will be submitted to a later session.

As commanded by His Majesty, the National Assembly unanimously resolved that they would await the findings of the joint Indo-Bhutan investigations of the disputed areas. They also resolved that the Chief of Survey will submit a report giving particulars of boundary pillars and their location in the 51st session of the Assembly.

17. MATTER RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RADIO STATION

The Chimi from Bhangtar proposed that a radio station should be established in the country to inform people about our development and progress as well as to inform them about world affairs.

In response, it was explained that the Royal Government was planning to set-up a radio station, but in the absence of qualified personnel, it was not possible to establish it yet.

The National Assembly resolved that the Government should train suitable personnel for the above purpose, so that a radio station can be established during the Fifth Five Year Plan.

18. MATTER RELATING TO INSTALLATION OF A TELEPHONE EXCHANGE AT DAMPHU, CHIRANG

The Chimi from Chirang proposed that the Government set-up a telephone exchange at Damphu, Chirang, connecting Chirang to Sarbhang.

The Ministry of Communications explained that there was no budget provision in the current plan for setting up a telephone exchange in Chirang. However, provision would be made in the Fifth Five Year Plan for the installation of a telephone exchange at Damphu.

The National Assembly supported the proposal of the Ministry of Communication.

19. MATTER RELATING TO RESTRICTION OF KEEPING FAMILIES OF ARMY PERSONNEL IN MILITARY CAMPS

Some Chimis proposed that henceforth all army personnel should be restricted from keeping their families with them in Military Camps.

The army representative explained that there was an existing army regulation which permitted only the wife and children of military personnel to live in the camp. The above regulation also clearly states that the military personnel are allowed to keep their families with them only in the major military camps, no families are permitted in the border posts.

The National Assembly acknowledged that the army personnel were making great sacrifice to serve the country, and as such they resolved that the existing army regulations were sufficient. However, the National Assembly resolved that the regulations should be strictly adhered to and no other family members except the wife and children should be allowed to live with them. Other family members are required to live at home and be registered in the annual census of their respective villages.

20. MATTER RELATING TO CONSTRUCTION OF MOTORABLE ROAD TO YALANG, TASHIGANG

The Chimi from Yalang proposed to the National Assembly that the Government construct a motorable road to Yalang. He expressed that this road would have an important impact on the development of agriculture in Yalang, Bartsam and Bidung region. He also added that substantial timber could be extracted along this road.

The National Assembly resolved that the decision to construct this road will only be taken after the Ministry of Development carries out a thorough investigation.

While on the subject of construction of roads, His Majesty was pleased to command that he was happy that the public were willing to provide the labour for road constructions. His Majesty was also pleased to command that if all road projects could be undertaken with close co-operation between the Government and people, this will enable us to construct the required roads easily. However, no roads would be constructed by employing imported labour.

21. MATTER RELATING TO IMPORTED LABOUR

The Chimis from Chengmari and Samchi proposed that the Government grant permission to families not having sufficient manpower to employ non-nationals as domestic helpers. This issue had been discussed on several occasions in the past session of the Assembly. They had pointed out that while this would be helpful at the present, it would create problems in the future, and therefore they resolved that no imported labour would be allowed to be employed by the public.

The present session of the Assembly resolved that they would adhere to the resolution passed in the previous session.

22. MATTER RELATING TO PASTURE LAND

The Chimi from Kurtoe and Khaling proposed to the National Assembly that the Government prohibit cattle owners from grazing in other locality.

The National Assembly pointed out that the pasture regulations in the Land Act sufficiently covered this issue. Therefore, they resolved that they would abide by the provision in the Land Act. The National Assembly also resolved that in accordance with the Ministry of Home Affairs' notification, the public need not obtain permission to graze their cattle by their village (Tsachhu Ngingkhorma). This had not been clearly covered in the Land Act.

23. MATTER RELATING TO GOVERNING COMPENSATION FOR LAND AND HOUSES REQUISITIONED BY THE GOVERNMENT

In resolution 9 of the 49th session of the Assembly, it was decided that the Royal Advisory Council will frame and submit draft regulations governing the payment of compensation for

land and houses requisitioned by the Government to the 50th session of the Assembly. In accordance with the above, the Royal Advisory Council submitted the draft regulations for approval by the Assembly. After the necessary amendments were made, the National Assembly approved the draft regulations.

24. MATTER RELATING TO THE LAND AND MARRIAGE ACTS

Several Chimis enquired in the National Assembly when the approval of the Land Act would be accorded.

In response, the Royal Advisory Council explained that after the necessary amendments proposed by the National Assembly were incorporated into the Land Act, it was submitted to the Cabinet for final approval. Once their approval is accorded, the Land Act will be published and distributed widely.

Some Chimis raised certain issues regarding marriage and divorce laws in the Assembly.

In response, the Royal Advisory Council circulated the new draft Marriage Act. They requested that the members of the Assembly examine the draft carefully. Any proposed amendments to the draft should be submitted to the Law Committee of the Royal Advisory Council well before the next session of the Assembly. The National Assembly resolved that the finalization and approval of the Marriage Act would be done during the next session.

The National Assembly also resolved that any other laws and acts to be adopted should be submitted first in draft from the National Assembly for discussions.

25. MATTER RELATING TO MARRIAGE OF CITIZENS TO FOREIGNERS

The Chimi from Chengmari proposed that the Government should not penalize Bhutanese citizens who have married foreigners.

The National Assembly decided that resolution 7 of the 46th session had adequately covered this issue. They resolved that no amendments were necessary.

The Chimi from Lamidara pointed out to the National Assembly that there was no clear rules determining the position of Bhutanese Women who marry foreigners. He stressed that there

should be clear regulations stating whether their husbands would be granted Bhutanese citizenship or whether they would have to leave Bhutan to live in their husband's country. The Assembly decided that this was also adequately covered in resolution 8 of the 46th session of the Assembly.

The Chimi from Lamidara also requested the Government to clarify what benefits would be provided to people who intermarry between north and south Bhutan.

The National Assembly decided that no fixed procedure could be formulated presently, as there had been cases where people inter-marry just to derive the benefits provided by the Government. However, after careful consideration, certain procedures will be formulated, and submitted to the next session of the Assembly.

26. MATTER RELATING TO SETTLEMENT OF MINOR DISPUTES INTERNALLY

The Chimis from Chirang and Lamidara proposed to the National Assembly that the settlement of minor disputes settled internally by five people (Panchayat) in the village be accepted by the court, and that no fines or punishment be imposed by the court to the mediators. In addition, the Chimis from Sarbhang and Samchi wanted to know what extent the settlement of Panchayat was recognized by the court.

During the discussions, it was pointed out that minor disputes were settled in village by the Gups and other elders of the village without necessarily having a panel of five people. Moreover, in clauses DA 3-1 and DA 3-2 of the Thrimshung enacted in 1957 provides that disputes that did not involve thefts, robbery, murder, treason and breaking of Government laws could be settled internally in the village. While the Thrimshung provided that disputes could be settled internally, the Thrimshung also states that the more serious disputes should be taken to the courts for settlement. The Thrimshung clearly defines what kind of disputes can be settled internally and what kind of disputes will have to be settled by the courts. Any settlements made internally contrary to the provisions made in the Thrimshung, the mediators are liable to be penalized by the court. The Thrimshung, in clause DA 3-3, provides that only on successful settlement of disputes are the mediators allowed to collect a fee of Nu. 20/-.

It was further explained in the National Assembly that in clause DA 1-1 of the Thrimshung, the mediator is allowed to make internal settlement of disputes, on no occasion is the mediator allowed to pass judgement or impose fine. All disputes involving fines and judgements can only be settled by the courts.

The National Assembly expressed that the Thrimshung had made adequate provisions to settle minor disputes internally. Therefore, they resolved that the endorsement of the Panchayat system was not necessary.

27. MATTER RELATING TO SALES TAX ON BAMBOO PRODUCTS

The Chimi from Wangdiphodrang proposed that the government exempt the sales tax on bamboo products sold by those who are solely dependent on that occupation.

It was explained in the Assembly that following the 49th session, His Majesty had commanded that people whose livelihood was entirely dependent on producing bamboo products would be exempted from paying royalty.

In accordance with His Majesty's command, the National Assembly resolved that such people would be exempted from paying royalty to the Government. The government until now had not collected any tax on the sales of bamboo products in the rural areas. However, sales of bamboo products in urban areas will be subject to pay sales tax.

28. MATTER RELATING TO EXEMPTION OF TAX ON RICE FOR HOME CONSUMPTION

The Chimi from Tashigang proposed that the Government exempt the bazaar tax levied on rice purchased for home consumption.

The National Assembly resolved that after the Dzongda had verified that the rice was meant for home consumption, no tax will be levied.

29. MATTER RELATING TO LAND RECORD OFFICE

The Chimi from Chirang proposed to the National Assembly that the Government set-up a land record office in every district for the convenience of the public.

It was pointed out during the discussions that presently all matters relating to land records were being handled by the Dzongdas satisfactorily. In the event this system was not found satisfactory, the Government would work out another method.

The National Assembly resolved that the Government system of land record was satisfactory, and that no district land record office was necessary at present.

30. MATTER RELATING TO SALE OF LOCAL BREW

The Chimi from Geta Bongo proposed that the Government exempt the fines imposed on local brew which the villagers had prepared for domestic consumption.

In response, the Ministry of Finance explained that under the Excise Act, only people selling alcoholic drinks in town or by the national highways without a valid licence had been fined. The government had not imposed any fines on persons both in rural and urban areas for brewing alcoholic drinks for their domestic consumption.

The National Assembly resolved that the sale of alcoholic drinks in towns and highways without licence will be fined and penalized in accordance with the Excise Act. However, brewing alcoholic drinks for domestic use will not be penalized.

31. MATTER RELATING TO GRANTING OF TRAVELLING ALLOWANCES TO GUPS

In resolution 34 of the 49th session, the Assembly had decided that they would discuss whether the Government could pay travelling allowances to Gups in this session.

The Ministry of Finance explained that the Government was not in a position to pay any travelling allowances to Gups. However, in view of the difficulties faced by Gups, the government has decided to pay Nu. 300/- per year to Gups residing far away from the Dzongs, Nu.250/- to Gups who are fairly far away from the Dzongs and Nu. 200/- to Gups who live near the Dzongs. This allowance will be made effective from 1st July, 1979.

The National Assembly resolved that the allowance proposed above were satisfactory.

32. MATTER RELATING TO LOANS FOR PUBLIC WELFARE

In resolution 22 of the 49th session of the Assembly, it was decided that means of granting loans for public welfare at minimum interest rates would be finalized during the 50th session.

During the deliberations, it was explained that in keeping with His Majesty's policy for increasing agricultural productivity, the Agriculture Department has already introduced the Rural Credit Scheme.

In order to meet the credit requirements of poor people, the Food Corporation of Bhutan has also introduced the Rural Welfare Center which will grant loans upto Nu.1,000/- for each family, out of which Nu.700/- must be taken in kind and Nu.300/- in cash.

Furthermore, in order to assist the public in the construction of homes, performance of pujas, death and marriage ceremonies, the Ministry of Finance has introduced facilities of making loans available from the Bank of Bhutan. For the construction of houses, the Bank will make available Nu.2,500/- at the rate of 7% interest subject to repayment within four years. For other purposes, the Bank will grant Nu.1,500/- also at the rate of 7% interest, repayable within two years.

The National Assembly resolved that systems of credit outlined above were satisfactory. They further resolved that if a family takes a loan from any one of the above schemes, they are not entitled to take loan from the other two schemes. They also stated that the procedure of granting and collecting loans will be worked out by the Dzongdas and the Department concerned in a meeting at a later date.

33. MATTER RELATING TO PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION TO LABOUR

Under resolution 23 of the 49th session, the Assembly had decided that the Ministry of Development would submit a draft regulations governing payment of compensation to labourers who had sustained partial or total disablement or had died while working. The Ministry of Development submitted the draft regulations during this session. After necessary amendments, the Assembly resolved that the regulations will be adopted.

34. MATTER RELATING TO EXTENSION OF CARDAMOM PURCHASE PERIOD

The Chimi from Sarbhang proposed to the National Assembly that the FCB purchase cardamom throughout the year instead of the period specified by them.

The FCB explained that they would extend the period of purchase of cardamom from September to March, during which all people are expected to sell their cardamom to the FCB.

The FCB also explained that they would agree to purchase any cardamom that the public have for sale this year.

The National Assembly resolved that the arrangement made by the FCB was acceptable. They also resolved that payment by cash or cheque for any purchases made by the FCB should be done at the purchasing centre.

35. MATTER RELATING TO MAINTENANCE OF ROAD TO NGANGLAM

The Chimi from Norbugang requested the Government to maintain the road between Nganglam and Kokelabari in Assam.

In response, the Ministry of Development explained that there is a proposal to construct a motorable road through Nganglam under the Capital Development Fund.

Therefore, the National Assembly resolved that maintenance of the existing road was not necessary.

36. MATTER RELATING TO CONSTRUCTION OF MOTORABLE ROAD FROM OKHALDUNGA TO BHANGTAR

The Chimi from Bhangtar requested the Government to construct a motorable road from Okhaldunga to Bhangtar.

In response, the Ministry of Development explained that in accordance with His Majesty's command, this road has already been included in the current plan and will be undertaken before the end of the plan.

The National Assembly resolved that this road project be taken up at the earliest.

37. MATTER RELATING TO CONSTRUCTION OF A ROAD TO BUCCA (TADING)

The Chimi from Samchi requested that the government approved the construction of motorable road from Simanadara to Totopara in Jalpaiguri.

The National Assembly resolved that since Totopara is in India, the Phuntsholing Dzongda will investigate whether this road can be taken up or not. The Dzongda will submit a report to the government.

38. MATTER RELATING TO ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRAL SCHOOL IN CHIRANG DISTRICT

The Chimi from Chirang requested the Government to open a Central School with hostel facilities in Chirang by upgrading the Damphu Junior High School.

In response, the Education Department explained that provision has been made in the 1979-80 budget for the construction of a hostel at the Damphu Junior High School. The construction is expected to be complete by 1980. The Education Department further explained that in accordance with the Education Policy, opening of Central Schools in the country depends upon the number of students in Class IX and X. At present, there is no immediate need of a Central School at Damphu. However, depending on the need, the Government will incorporate this request in the 5th Five Year Plan.

The National Assembly resolved that the decision of the Education Department was satisfactory.

39. MATTER RELATING TO THE EDUCATION POLICY

Some Chimis from Southern Bhutan requested the National Assembly that the Government depute Dzongkha teachers who have elementary knowledge of either English or Nepali in the schools in southern Bhutan. They also requested the government to consider the cases of students failing in Dzongkha sympathetically by giving two or four grace marks. Some Chimis also requested the government to upgrade some Primary Schools to Junior High Schools.

The Department of Education explained that there was problem of getting adequate number of Dzongkha teachers to cope up with the rapidly increasing number of schools in the country. It was very difficult to get Dzongkha teachers who had elementary knowledge of either English or Nepali. However, the Department of Education has now introduced the teaching of elementary English to the Dzongkha teachers. The Department will make efforts to depute Dzongkha teachers who know English or Nepali for Schools in southern Bhutan. It was further added that simplified Dzongkha text books were being published. The Department of Education pointed out that adequate grace marks were being given to students failing in Dzongkha.

With regard to upgrading of Primary Schools to Junior High Schools, the Education Department explained that it will be done in a phased manner in accordance with the manpower requirement and the National Education Policy.

The National Assembly resolved that the decisions taken by the Education Department with regard to the above were satisfactory.

40. MATTER RELATING TO CULTURE AND DISCIPLINE

The Chimi from Sarbhang expressed in the National Assembly that in order to maintain our culture and national heritage, the public especially the students, should be educated about our culture and customs.

The National Assembly unanimously agreed that the above issue was of utmost importance. They resolved that the government and the public must attempt to promote and maintain our national culture and customs. Furthermore, they endorsed resolutions 8,9 and 10 of the 20th session and resolutions 19 and 20 of the 30th session, which provide the necessary regulations required to promote and maintain our culture.

41. MATTER RELATING TO SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY TO CHIRANG

The Chimi from Chirang requested the government to extend the electricity line from Sarbhang to Chirang until power was made available from the Burichhu Hydel Project.

The government explained that while provision would be made to electrify Chirang in the 5th Plan, it was doubted whether sufficient electricity would be available from Assam. However, the government assured that they would make every attempt to supply electricity to Chirang as soon as possible.

The National Assembly endorsed the government's decision.

42. MATTER RELATING TO FOLLOW-UP ON RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Some Chimis pointed out in the National Assembly that the government departments were not taking action on the resolutions passed by the Assembly.

It was pointed out during the discussions that the resolution 25 of the 35th session required that the departments should follow up on the resolutions passed by the Assembly. Furthermore, it was pointed out that resolution 17 of the 49th session provided that the Speaker of the National Assembly must circulate the Assembly resolutions among the government departments.

The National Assembly resolved that the above decisions had clearly made adequate provisions to enable the government to implement the Assembly resolutions. However, they added that in the event there were cases where the resolutions of the Assembly were not being implemented, the Chimis must report to their respective Dzongdas, who will take up the matter with the departments concerned.

43. MATTER RELATING TO THE PROHIBITION OF SALE OF ANTIQUES

The Chimi from Tashigang reported to the National Assembly that the government must prohibit the sale of antiques outside the country.

It was pointed out that a prohibition on the sale of antiques had already been imposed in resolution 1 of the 35th session and resolution 2 of the 38th the session. While the above two resolutions provided that the government will impose a ban, the National Assembly resolved that henceforth, the public must co-operate with the government to make the ban effective.

44. MATTER RELATING TO PERSONS WHO HAVE BEEN GRANTED BHUTANESE CITIZENSHIP

The Chimi from Lamidara proposed in the National Assembly that persons who have been granted Bhutanese Citizenships should not be allowed to keep their relatives with them in Bhutan. He enquired as to how the persons who have been granted citizenship were being incorporated in the national census. He also enquired how they were being taxed and imposed woola (labour).

After the deliberations, the Assembly resolved that the above issues were adequately covered in the Bhutan Citizenship Act of 1977.

45. MATTER RELATING TO THE PROPOSAL TO ISSUE IDENTITY CARDS TO ALL CITIZENS

The Chimi from Lamidara stated in the National Assembly that Bhutan is peaceful because there is a strong unity among our citizens. However, he expressed his concern that outsiders could easily pose as citizens and create trouble in the country. Therefore, for the future security, he proposed that the Royal Government introduce a system of issuing cards to all our citizens.

His Majesty was pleased to command that he was happy that the public were concerned with the security of the country. His Majesty commanded that the matter will be studied by the Cabinet and a draft proposal will be submitted to the 51st session of the Assembly, as requested by the people.

The National Assembly resolved that they would await the draft proposal.

46. MATTER RELATING TO THE SETTING UP OF A DRAFTING COMMITTEE FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

In resolution 45 of the 49th session, the Assembly had decided to postpone the discussions on setting up of a Drafting Committee for the National Assembly to the 50th session.

During this session, His Majesty was pleased to command that the present system of having the resolutions read out by Assembly Secretary in front of the whole Assembly was satisfactory, and therefore a separate Drafting Committee was unnecessary.

In keeping with His Majesty's command, the National Assembly resolved that setting up of a Drafting Committee for the National Assembly was unnecessary.

47. MATTER RELATING TO THE SETTING UP OF AN INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE

The Chimi from Tewang reminded the National Assembly that during the 49th session, they had decided that an International Airline would be set up. He enquired whether the Government had taken any steps towards setting up the Airline.

His Majesty kindly pointed out that recently a representative of the Government of India held talks with our Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the talks, he stated that India would support and co-operate with Bhutan in her efforts to set-up an International Airline. A team from India is expected to visit Bhutan soon for the final talks, to enable us to start the Airline

before the end of this year. His Majesty said that if the Government of India help us to start our own Air Service, this would go a long way in strengthening Indo-Bhutan friendship. His Majesty also mentioned that if India fulfils our people's cherished aspirations, the people of Bhutan would always fully reciprocate with sincerity and genuine friendship.

The National Assembly resolved that the Airline must be set-up as soon as possible.

48. MATTER RELATING TO SEA AND RIVER TRANSPORTATION

The Chimi from Tewang proposed in the National Assembly that Bhutan must make arrangement to ply our own ships for transporting our exports and imports.

The Ministry of Trade, Industries and Forests explained that the Government was in the process of negotiating with the governments of India and Bangladesh. They had both given their assurance that they would allow our boats and ships to sail in their waters and deck in their ports. However, after the final agreement has been reached, the Ministry of Trade, Industries and Forests will submit a report to the National Assembly.

The National Assembly resolved that the government must introduce vessels for river and sea transportation of our exports and imports.

49. MATTER RELATING TO SETTING UP OF A FLOOD CONTROL DEPARTMENT

The Chimi from Sarbhang proposed in the National Assembly that the Government establish a new department for flood control in the 5th Five Year Plan.

During the discussions, it was pointed out that the work of soil conservation and flood protection was carried out by the Department of Forests, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry. The Ministry of Development proposed that the work of the flood protection and soil conservation be continued to be entrusted to the above departments.

The National Assembly resolved that the proposal of the Ministry of Development was acceptable and that setting up a new department for flood control was unnecessary. Furthermore, the National Assembly resolved that the public must provide labour for flood-protection works.

50. MATTER RELATING TO DAMAGES CAUSED BY DOLOMITE MINING IN PUGLI

The Chimi from Samchi stated in the National Assembly that he was concerned that the dolomite mining operations would damage the fields and villages in the area.

During the discussions, the Phuntsholing Dzongda pointed out that Department of Agriculture was making plans to protect the land from mining damages. However, they were unable to do any work yet as no budget provision was made.

The National Assembly resolved that the protection works can be carried out jointly by the Department of Agriculture and Ministry of Trade, Industries and Forests. However, they added that the public must supply the labour needed for these works.

51. MATTER RELATING TO FIRE INSURANCE

The Chimi from Dagapela requested in the National Assembly that the Ministry of Finance resume the collection of the fire insurance premiums from the public.

The Ministry of Finance explained that the Government had not stopped the collection of fire insurance premiums, but it had not been collected because of the delay in payment. The Ministry of Finance explained that henceforth, all the fire insurance premiums must be paid to the Dzongda office by the first week of January.

The National Assembly endorsed the proposal of the Ministry of Finance. They resolved that the Dzongdas must inform the public and collect the premium before the deadline.

52. MATTER RELATING TO THE APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT RULES GOVERNING ELECTIONS OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE ROYAL ADVISORY COUNCIL AND THE HIGH COURT

In accordance with His Majesty's command, the Royal Advisory Council submitted the draft rules governing the elections of representatives for the Royal Advisory Council and the High Court to the National Assembly. After reviewing the draft, the National Assembly endorsed and adopted the proposed rules.

53. MATTER RELATING TO STANDARDIZATION OF DE AND SANG

Some Chimis proposed to the National Assembly that the government must fix a uniform standard for the De and Sang.

The National Assembly resolved that the metric system will be used in the town areas. The rural areas will be allowed to continue using the De and Sang. However, in order to have uniform weights and measures in the country, the Ministry of Finance will send samples of a standard De and a standard Sang to all the gups.

54. MATTER RELATING TO ISSUING OF CERTIFICATES FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Some Chimis pointed out in the National Assembly that some people in the villages refuse to be included in the woola census claiming that they are in government service.

Therefore, they proposed that the government give certificates to all the government employees. The government employees can produce their certificates to the Gups in order to be excluded from the woola census.

The National Assembly resolved that such a system was unnecessary. However, in the event there were any doubts, the Dzongdas must be consulted.

55. MATTER RELATING TO THE ANNUAL CENSUS

The Chimi from Chirang requested the National Assembly to include the names of people who had been omitted from the annual census for sometime, after a proper investigation.

During the discussions, it was pointed out that if these people were bonafide citizens, they must be included in the annual census. However, there was considerable doubt as to how these people have been omitted from the census. Therefore, they will be included in the census only after a thorough investigation is carried out by the Dzongdas. The Ministry of Home Affairs will re-examine and will make the final decisions as to whether these persons should be included in the census or not. People found to be falsely claiming to be citizens, will be penalized.

The National Assembly resolved that the Ministry of Home Affairs will formulate and circulate regulations based on the above decisions.

56. MATTER RELATING TO GRANTING OF TECHNICAL ALLOWANCE

The Chimi from Gaylegphug proposed in the National Assembly that the Government should encourage more students into the technical fields by granting them technical allowances.

It was explained during the discussions that the government was already paying allowances to degree and diploma holders in technical fields.

Therefore, the National Assembly resolved that it was not necessary to make any changes.

57. MATTER RELATING TO THE USE OF LOUD SPEAKERS

The Chimi from Samchi requested the National Assembly to permit the public to use loud Speakers during marriages and pujas.

It was pointed out that loud speakers were not absolutely essential for marriages and pujas. Moreover, on the 24th September, 1973, the Lhengye Shungtshog passed a rule stating that only the government was permitted to use loud speakers during official functions.

The National Assembly resolved that they would abide by the Cabinet decision.

58. MATTER RELATING TO THE APPROACH ROAD TO CHARGAREY

The Chimi from Chengmari put up before the Assembly that the approach road from India to Chargarey was not open for public use at all times. They requested that the government may kindly look into the matter and make arrangements to solve this inconvenience.

The National Assembly resolved that since the road is not within Bhutanese territory, the Phuntsholing Dzongda should investigate and find a suitable solution to the problem.

59. MATTER RELATING TO LAND DISPUTES BETWEEN THE DISTRICT OF HAA AND CHENGMARI SUB-DIVISION

The Chimi from Chengmari requested the National Assembly to settle the land dispute between Ha and Chengmari Sub-division.

The National Assembly resolved that the Dzongdas of Ha and Phuntsholing will investigate the dispute and submit their report to the Ministry of Home Affairs for the final settlement.

60. MATTER RELATING TO TAX ON ORANGE ORCHARDS

The Chimi from Lamidara requested the National Assembly to reduce the tax on orange orchards which are located far away from the motorable roads.

In response, the Ministry of Finance explained that there were different tax rates for orange orchards depending on their location. The Government pointed out that while the income from orange orchards were increasing yearly, there has been no increase in the tax.

His Majesty pointed out that the tax rates in Bhutan compared to any other country was very low. This policy, he said, would continue so long as the people fully participate with the government in all development activities.

61. MATTER RELATING TO THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

Many Chimis of the National Assembly wanted the government to clarify the understanding between the government of India and the Royal Government about the terms under which the Geological survey of India was functioning here. They also stated that in the previous sessions, the Assembly had decided that the Geological Survey of India must be reconstituted as the Geological Survey of Bhutan. They enquired why the government had not been able to do this yet. They further expressed that while the Geological Survey of India has been working in Bhutan for the last twenty years, no substantial results have been achieved. They also suggested that until such time the Bhutanese were able to man the Geological Survey, further exploration should be deferred.

In response to the above queries, the Ministry of Trade, Industries and Forests submitted a report explaining that the Geological Survey of India was engaged only in exploration and did not involve in extracting minerals. Besides, there are Bhutanese personnel attached with the Geological Survey of India. They further explained that increasing numbers of Bhutanese personnel were being trained in geology abroad, so that by 1985 the Ministry of Trade, Industries and Forests could man the geological survey unit by our own personnel.

Based on the above discussions, the National Assembly resolved that the Geological Survey of India will continue the present task until 1985. By then, the Ministry of Trade, Industries and Forests will take over and man the geological department.

62. MATTER RELATING TO THE DZONGKHAG YARGEY TSHOGCHUNG

The Chimi from Lamidara requested the National Assembly to instruct all heads of departments to attend the Dzongkhag yargey Tshogchung Meetings in all districts.

During the discussions, it was pointed that there were many districts within the country, and it would not be possible for the heads of departments to attend all the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchung meetings. Even now, depending on the agenda of Dzongkhag yargey Tshogchung, some heads of departments are attending the meetings. In all the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchung meeting, the Departments are well represented by their district officials.

In view of the above, the National Assembly resolved that it would not be essential for the heads of departments to attend all the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchung meetings. Issues raised in the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchung will be forwarded to the heads of departments for appropriate action.

The National Assembly further resolved that if the issues forwarded to the heads of departments could not be dealt by them, then they should be raised in the National Assembly.

63. MATTER RELATING TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Foreign Ministry submitted its annual report to the National Assembly entitled “Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the 50th session of the National Assembly” which covered a review of activities during the past one year, Bhutan’s position on various bilateral and multilateral issues and conferences attended by Bhutan during this period. In addition the Foreign Ministry, submitted a report entitled ‘Special Report to the 50th Session of the National Assembly on the activities of the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the United Nations’ giving a comprehensive report of the responsibility and functions of the Mission since its establishment in 1971. The charter of the United Nations was also distributed along with this report.

The Chimis of the National Assembly asked the Foreign Ministry three questions :

- i. The first question was the extent to which the Foreign Policy of Bhutan was controlled by India. The Foreign Minister explained in detail the factors which go into the making of a country's foreign policy and thereafter he explained that the Foreign Ministry was trying its utmost to promote the two main national interests of Bhutan, viz., strengthening of the sovereignty and independence of Bhutan, and attainment of the national objective of economic self-reliance. In this regard, the Foreign Minister said that the Prime Minister of India, Shri Morarji Desai, had categorically told him in Darjeeling at the end of May, 1979 that every country should be free to decide its foreign relations and that India had no right to dictate terms to any country. The Foreign Minister said that the statement of a high dignitary like the Prime Minister of India who was also a person of the highest integrity and principles should be more than adequate to reassure the National Assembly members that India was not interfering in the implementation of Bhutan's foreign policy. His Majesty the King was pleased to command that it was the international practice for friendly countries to consult with each other, and there was, therefore, no harm if India and Bhutan consulted with each other from time to time on matters relating to mutual interest. His Majesty was further pleased to state that while Bhutan may discuss with India on foreign policy issues, Bhutan has the right to take decisions on any issues in keeping with Bhutan's national interests.
- ii. The second question related to the establishment of diplomatic relations with countries such as Nepal, Japan and China. The Foreign Minister in reply said that there was no need at present to establish diplomatic relations with these countries, as Bhutan already had adequate contacts with all the countries of the world through the Royal Bhutanese Embassy in New Delhi and the Permanent Mission of Bhutan to the United Nations. His Majesty the King was pleased to command that if Bhutan's sovereignty had to be strengthened, we must achieve economic self-reliance, unless we achieve this goal, merely opening many embassies would not strengthen our sovereignty. However, in the future if we find that establishment of diplomatic relations with some countries would help us in our efforts to achieve economic self reliance, we shall certainly establish diplomatic relations with these countries.
- iii. The third question related to the establishment of a UNDP office in Thimphu. The Foreign Minister reported to the National Assembly that the office of the Resident Representative of the UNDP in Bhutan had been opened jointly by His Majesty the King and the Administrator of the UNDP in Thimphu on 14th May, 1979. The

Foreign Minister also said that apart from channelizing multilateral assistance from the various United Nations bodies to Bhutan, the UNDP office will also act as a channel through which various countries can give assistance to Bhutan for her socio-economic development.

64. MATTER RELATING TO TIBETAN REFUGEES

During the Assembly, many Chimis raised the issue that despite the fact that the Royal Government of Bhutan had extended extraordinary privileges and assistance to the Tibetan Refugees, greater even than those accorded to the Bhutanese nationals themselves, Tibetan Refugees had spurned all these efforts of the Royal Government and had made known in writing, their desire to leave the country. Such ingratitude and action were though serious and intolerable and it was proposed that some firm and definite decision should be made by this National Assembly on the issue of the Tibetan Refugees. On this, the Royal Government made the following statement :

The Tibetan refugees first came to Bhutan in 1959, after they had fled from their homeland. Out of deep concern for their plight, the Royal Government and the people of Bhutan accepted them on compassionate grounds, and everything possible was done to ease their suffering.

However, with the continued influx of refugees for about four or five years, the consequent increase in the refugees population in Bhutan began to be seen as a possible threat to our national security.

Therefore, on August 17, 1964, during the 20th session of the National Assembly held in Paro, the following decisions were adopted in resolution 17 of the Assembly :

- i. With effect from this Assembly, Tibetan will be settled in different districts in households proportionate to the Bhutanese population in the concerned localities.
- ii. Once settled, the male Tibetans should shorten their hair and everyone should adopt Bhutanese dress, in accordance with traditional Bhutanese customs.
- iii. Tibetan children being sent to India for studies should be sent through the Department of Education as in the case of Bhutanese children. Otherwise, they

should be enrolled in the Bhutanese schools in their respective districts, as other Bhutanese children.

- iv. The aid from India for the support of the Tibetan refugees in Bhutan should be distributed by the two Rehabilitation officers, as they had been doing earlier. However, they shall not be authorized to issue any other directives to the Tibetans without the approval of the district authorities.

The 20th session of the National Assembly emphasized that the above four points of resolution 17 must be strictly adhered to.

However, following adoption of the above resolution the two Tibetan Rehabilitation Officers, Mr. Taring and his colleague, submitted a petition to the National Assembly stating that they will provide lists of Tibetans who are willing to concede to resolution 17 and remain in Bhutan and those who are unwilling to concede and wish to proceed to India to the District authorities. It was resolved that on receipt of these lists, those wishing to leave Bhutan must be sent across the border, along with their properties.

It was further decided that the above 4 terms of resolution 17 will be implemented in a gradual manner by those refugees who have conceded to them and will be staying in Bhutan.

Although more than a decade has passed since such strict legislation was formulated, until now the refugees have not observed the stipulated conditions and this was again thought to pose a possible threat to Bhutan's security. Hence, in 1974, two discussions were held with the Tibetan authorities in Dharamsala regarding the offer of Bhutanese citizenship to Tibetan refugees in Bhutan. In these discussions, the Royal Government gave the firm assurance that if the refugees accepted Bhutanese citizenship, they would be accorded equal status with other Bhutanese nationals, from the day they become Bhutanese citizens. However, the Dharamsala authorities refused this offer on the grounds that if the refugees accepted Bhutanese citizenship, the Tibetans living in India, Nepal and other countries would follow suit, and there would be the danger of losing the purpose of the struggle for Tibetan independence.

On three occasions in 1975, and twice in 1976, similar talks were held. However, Dharamsala did not change its stand at all. Besides this, in 1977, three Tibetan Kalyons came from Dharamsala and held discussions with the Hon'ble Home Minister, the Hon'ble Foreign

Minister and Royal Advisory Councillor Lam Sanga. The Royal Government's stand on the occasion was the following :

- i. The Tibetan refugees living in Bhutan must accept Bhutanese citizenship.
- ii. The Tibetans must move from the refugee settlements and live as one people with the Bhutanese. If this was done, the Royal Government would ascertain and grant all the assistance they need in different fields.

If the Dharamsala authorities agreed to the above, whatever misunderstanding existed between the Tibetans and the Bhutanese would be cleared. Furthermore, Tibetan children would be able to avail of the educational and medical facilities provided to Bhutanese Nationals, and Tibetans would be able to move freely within and outside the country.

Over and above these facilities, His Majesty had agreed, and the Royal Government guaranteed the following:

- i. Tibetans would be given land.
- ii. They would be provided with livestock
- iii. Assistance such as tools and implements for agricultural purposes and necessary help for building their homes would be provided.
- iv. Even grants of money would be given as special bonus.

However, Dharamsala demanded the following:

- i. That Tibetans should not be moved out from their existing settlements.
- ii. The Royal Government should not enforce Bhutanese Citizenship on the Tibetan refugees in Bhutan.
- iii. The Dharamsala authorities would give the Royal Government their written assurance that the Tibetans living in Bhutan would not indulge in any activities that would endanger the security of Bhutan.

- iv. To look after the affairs of Tibetans in Bhutan and to act as a liaison for dealing with any inconvenience in the relations between Dharamsala authorities and the Royal Government, a Tibetan representative should be appointed in Bhutan.

On the points raised by the Royal Government, the Dharamsala representatives did not give any decision stating that they would have to consult with their authorities in Dharamsala.

Even after granting generous benefits and advantages, the Royal Government of Bhutan's offers were rejected by the representative of Dharamsala.

In 1978, when Tibetan representative Mr. Sadutshang came to Bhutan, he expressed the following views:

- i. He said that before he had left Dharamsala, the Tibetan representative in the United States of America had submitted a petition to the United Nations stating that the Tibetan refugees living in Bhutan were being subjected to gross ill-treatment by the Royal Government. He stated that Dharamsala had no prior knowledge of this petition and requested the Royal Government to accept the apologies of Dharamsala in this regard.
- ii. Mr. Sadutshang requested that after the renovation of the existing Tibetan refugees schools, permission be granted to appoint teachers from Dharamsala.

On this point, the Hon'ble Home Minister pointed out that for the education of Tibetan children, there were many Bhutanese Schools and the renovation of Tibetan refugees schools and the appointment of teachers were not necessary nor was it permissible.

In response, Mr. Sadutshang said if that was the case, Tibetans in Bhutan should be permitted to educate their children wherever they wished.

During Mr. Sadutshang's audience with His Majesty in 1978, His Majesty had kindly agreed to grant many benefits and assistance greater than those specified in the 1977 offer to the Tibetan refugees, if they accept Bhutanese citizenship and integrated into our society. His Majesty kindly consented to grant the following benefits :

- i. No taxes would be imposed to the Tibetan refugees for 5 years.
- ii. Cash bonuses would be granted.
- iii. Free transportation facilities would be given for moving Tibetans' properties from their existing settlement to new areas.
- iv. For construction of their homes and clearing of their new land, no royalty would be charged for trees.
- v. If the Tibetan refugees consented to move from their existing settlements, more land would be given to them.
- vi. In response to Mr. Sadutshang's suggestion, that the release of Tibetans imprisoned would facilitate Dharamsala's consideration for their acceptance of Bhutanese citizenship, His Majesty assured that from the day, Tibetans accepted Bhutanese citizenship, the Tibetans imprisoned would be released.

As an exemplary gesture of good faith, seven Tibetan prisoners were also released.

- vii. His Majesty had also stated that accepting Bhutanese citizenship would not be detrimental to the cause of Tibetans, as the Royal Government would allow even those Tibetans who had become Bhutanese citizens to go back to their homeland, if it was ever possible.

Mr. Sadutshang said that the response to the above would be submitted from Dharamsala after his return.

Later, the Royal Government received a letter stating that the offer of Bhutanese citizenship to the refugees in Bhutan was not acceptable to Dharamsala.

After eight months, in the tenth month of Bhutanese Earth Horse Year (1978), Mr. Sadutshang again visited Bhutan and conveyed the following :

- i. Dharamsala had categorically decided that Bhutanese citizenship would not be accepted by the Tibetan refugees, nor would they agree to move from their existing settlements. The Dalai Lama had approved this decision.
- ii. Rather than accept Bhutanese citizenship, the Tibetan refugees would be taken to India for resettlement.
- iii. Mr. Sadutshang also stated that the government of India had accepted the proposal of withdrawing the Tibetan refugees to India.
- iv. He requested the Royal Government to grant permission to the Tibetan refugees to go to India after disposing their properties.
- v. He also requested if the Royal Government could render any possible assistance to the refugees for moving to India, the Dharamsala Authorities would be very grateful.
- vi. He stated that in the 12th month of Earth Horse Year (two months later), three Tibetan officials would be sent to escort the Tibetan refugees to India.

His Majesty strongly felt that even after offering generous benefits and advantages, if the Tibetans still wanted to leave Bhutan rather than accept Bhutanese citizenship and integrate into our society, it would be very dangerous for the security of our country to detain them. Therefore, His Majesty commanded the Foreign Minister to agree to the points put forward by Mr. Sadutshang.

Mr. Sadutshang then held meetings at various Tibetan settlements and told them that those who did not wish to accept Bhutanese Citizenship should complete disposing of their properties within the twelfth month of the Bhutanese Calendar (he gave them two months' time). The Tibetans then began disposing of their properties from the tenth Bhutanese month.

On Mr. Sadutshang's return to Delhi, he was reprimanded by the Government of India for having made false statement to the Bhutanese Government, since India had made it very clear from the beginning that they would not accept the Tibetan refugees. Although, the Dharamsala authorities had known about the Indian refusal to accept the Tibetan refugees before the tenth month of the Earth Horse Year, they did not inform our Ambassador in Delhi

until the second month of the Earth Sheep Year (1979). Consequently, about 4,000 Tibetans by the end of the twelfth month, had sold their belonging with the result they are now facing great hardship.

After Dharamsala had made it clearly known to us, that we could not send the Tibetan refugees to India, their true intentions were revealed. In February, 1979, the Tibetan refugees wrote a formal letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requesting the 15 representatives (two from each of the refugees settlements and one from the business community) be permitted to attend a meeting at Dharamsala.

Even though the Royal Government realized that this was directly against our country's interests and posed a serious security threat, the Royal Government allowed them to attend the Dharamsala meeting in order to observe their motivations carefully.

The Royal Government later learnt that the following had taken place in the Dharamsala :

- i. The Khasaka settlement in Bhutan had been awarded the first prize among all the Tibetan settlements under Dharamsala.
- ii. Unlike in previous years when Tibetan representatives used to attend the Dharamsala annual meeting on the false pretext of going to India on business, they formally decided that henceforth the 15 Tibetan refugees representatives from Bhutan must attend their meeting.
- iii. They had also decided that henceforth, they will openly levy a monthly tax of Nu. 1/- for every Tibetan refugees and remit it to Dharamsala.

All these matters were seriously discussed in the current National Assembly by the people's representatives, Monk Body and Government officials. The following were pointed out during the discussions.

- i. Out of sympathy for the plight of the Tibetan refugees, and in consideration of the age old ties between the Tibetan and Bhutanese, the Royal Government and people of Bhutan had repeatedly delayed the resolution of the matters relating to the Tibetan refugees, and conceded as far as possible to their demands. However, no favourable response had been given to us, nor did the Tibetans have any feelings of gratitude for

the assistance and hospitality that Bhutan had extended to them, even more than what we could offer to our own people.

- ii. Although the Tibetan refugees here have been accepted as a part of the Bhutanese family and are enjoying more facilities than what the government can offer to our people, they have been paying taxes to Dharamsala for the last 15 years, and have been attending the yearly meeting at Dharamsala. From their constant activities, we are convinced that they are seriously trying to establish a state of Tibet in Bhutan.
- iii. Moreover, the members of the National Assembly, very strongly felt that we had not made any extraordinary demands, which was difficult for the Tibetan refugees to concede, nor had we made any demands which were outside the internationally accepted procedures.
- iv. While the Tibetan considered acceptance of Bhutanese Citizenship detrimental to the cause of their struggle for independence, it was agreed that this argument did not have any basis, as many Tibetan refugees have already accepted citizenship in many countries. It was pointed out during the discussions that about 8,000 Tibetan refugees had already become Nepali citizens and many Tibetans have either received or are attempting to become the citizens of Australia, Canada, Switzerland, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, and other European countries. Moreover, all Tibetan refugees born in India after 1950 are automatically India citizens. Therefore, this clearly proves that there is a deep ulterior motive of the Tibetan refugees in Bhutan for not accepting Bhutanese citizenship.
- v. The National Assembly was very concerned about the activities of the Tibetan population in Bhutan and therefore, stated that this serious matter be carefully investigated and necessary security measures be taken. The Assembly members also strongly expressed that Bhutan being a sovereign country, they saw no reason why our government had consulted Dharamsala, or for having considered their demands.

In view of all the above discussions, the National Assembly resolved that the Government must take the following actions:-

1. About 2,300 Tibetans who have applied for Bhutanese citizenship will be separated from other refugees, they will be granted Bhutanese citizenship and all assistance formally agreed to by the Government will be accorded to them.

2. The 4,000 or so Tibetans who had clearly stated that they wanted to leave Bhutan rather than accept Bhutanese citizenship and integrate into our society, will immediately be expelled from the country. Detaining them by force against their will in Bhutan would not be in the interest of the country.
3. Since the Government of India has already refused to accept them the National Assembly decided that they should be sent back to their own country.

His Majesty pointed out that Bhutan being a Buddhist country and also on humanitarian grounds, we should not immediately take a decision and repatriate the Tibetan refugees from Bhutan. His Majesty said that first priority should be given for sending the Tibetans who wanted to leave Bhutan to countries who will accept these refugees. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was commanded to look into the possibilities of sending them to those countries and then submit a report to the next session of the National Assembly.

His Majesty further explained that since the Government of India is already over burdened with more than 80,000 Tibetan refugees, and have also stated that they will be unable to absorb the Tibetan refugees from Bhutan, we should refrain from causing further inconvenience and problems to India in view of our very good and close relations.

The National Assembly decided that they will abide by His Majesty's command. However, the Assembly members unanimously decided that if no country is willing to accept the Tibetan refugees, they must definitely be repatriated.

4. It was further resolved that those Tibetans who wanted to leave Bhutan rather than accept Bhutanese citizenship and integrate into our society must be assembled and detained at a suitable locality by the Ministry of Home Affairs. This must be completed before convening the next session of the National Assembly.
5. The National Assembly decided that from now on, we should not acknowledge the exiled Tibetan authorities and we should have no dealings whatsoever with Dharamsala.

