

**RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE 53RD SESSION OF
THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HELD FROM 27TH OCTOBER TO 6TH NOVEMBER, 1980**

1. PRESENTATION OF A REPORT ON FOREST REVENUE

The Chimis of Gasengtshowom and Daga desired that a report on the revenue earnings of the Forest Department be presented before the National Assembly, as the forests were one of the main sources of revenue for the country.

In response, the Director of Forests agreed that a detailed report, showing the earnings, expenditure and the balance deposited as revenue with the government, will be presented at the next session of the Assembly.

2. ALLOTMENT OF LAND FOR CARDAMOM PLANTATIONS

The Chimis of Shingkhar and Shemgang proposed that as investments on the cultivation of cardamoms benefits both the government and the general public by giving returns in the shortest possible time, the Department of Forests should not restrict anyone wishing to grow cardamoms on lands, such as pastures etc.

In response, the Director of Forests stated that the allotment of land was governed by the rules prescribed under the Forest Act and the pastures Act, which is convenient both to the government and the general public and as such, the allotment of lands for cardamoms were being done accordingly.

On this issue, His Majesty was pleased to command that allotment of lands for growing cash crops were being made after a thorough investigation and taking into consideration the benefits for both the government and the general public. In the future, too, such allotments, if they were not harmful to the forests but of more benefits to the general public be continued to be done during the Fifth Five Year Plan.

3. RESTRICTION ON REARING GOATS

The Ministry of Trade, Industries and Forests proposed that as the forests were one of the main resources of the country, the rearing of goats, which are one of the chief causes of destruction to trees and vegetation, be banned in the country.

While the majority of the members in the Assembly agreed to this proposal, it was pointed out that a resolution to this effect had already been adopted under item 10 of the 45th session, wherein it was resolved that the rearing of goats, poultry, pigs, cattle and horses by imported labour are totally prohibited.

It was resolved, therefore, that the restriction imposed, as above, against the rearing of animals by imported labour be continued.

It was further resolved that the rearing of goats be totally prohibited throughout the country, excepting in some special cases where nationals will be allowed to rear a limited number of goats on the conditions that these goats be tied properly and confined to graze near their houses to ensure that they do not destroy crops, vegetation or trees belonging to others.

It was decided also that the Department of forests will draft rules on the rearing of animals and after receiving the approval of the government, circulate the rules to the general public.

4. SLATES FOR ROOFING PURPOSE

The Chimis of Kashi and Byisho requested for exemption of cost on slates used for roofing and the question of giving credit sales of slates by the Ministry of Trade and Industries to the general public, which was kept pending from the previous session to be discussed in the current session.

On these issue, the Director of Industries and Mining said that as the project of quarrying slates was just being developed and in accordance with the policy of making all projects self-reliant, the project will face enormous difficulties if the slates have to be given on credit.

His Majesty was pleased to explain further that since the project was still in its infancy and faced with many difficulties, if more difficulties were added to it, then the project could be written off. Instead, whenever the general public requested for some concessions, it would not be difficult for the Ministry of Trade and Industries to consider the requests once the project had been established on a sound footing and had achieved self-reliance.

5. OPENING OF FAIR PRICE SHOPS

The Chimis of Gaylegphug proposed that in order to control price of commodities, fair price shops should be opened at various locations within the country.

The Chimis of Nuba, Tongsa requested assistance from the government for opening a general store in their area and some chimis proposed introduction of price control.

In response, the Director of Trade and Commerce stated that the proposals for opening fair price shops at different locations, their operation and the type of good required should be decided in the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs and a report forwarded to the Ministry of Trade and Industries. On the receipt of such report, the Ministry will be in a position to consider the opening or assistance for fair price shops from the Fifth Five Year Plan according to the convenience of the government. He, however, said that it would not be possible to open such fair price shops in all the districts at one and the same time, but the shops will be opened progressively one by one in different districts.

The Director also explained that the government had already given thought on price control and that the control of prices were being introduced as far as practicable.

The National Assembly agreed with the suggestions made by the Director and a resolution to this effect was adopted accordingly.

6. ISSUE OF TRADE LICENCES

The Chimi of Gaylegphug proposed that for the convenience of petty shopkeepers, the local Dzongdas be authorized to issue trade licences for opening small shops in their respective districts, instead of the licences being issued from the Ministry of Trade.

In response, the Director of Trade and Commerce explained that as trade licences were processed by a Committee in the Ministry of Trade, if other departments started issuing trade licences, the control over trade and the facilities being now given to the shopkeepers could not be done properly, which would inconvenience all those concerned. As such, he suggested that the present practice of issuing trade licences to all big and small shops be continued.

The National Assembly while agreeing to the suggestion put forward by the Director of Trade and Commerce resolved that the present practice of issuing Trade Licences by the Ministry of Trade and Commerce be continued but suggested that the issue of the licences should not be kept pending for a period longer than necessary but issued within the shortest possible time.

7. OPENING BRANCHES OF THE DRUK TSHONGLEY

The Chimis of Chirang proposed opening branches of the Druk Tshongley in different locations in order to facilitate the supply of commodities from the Druk Tshongley for the convenience of the general public.

In response, the Director of Trade and Commerce explained that due to shortage of manpower, it had been possible, up till now, to open only offices at Phuntsholing and Calcutta, but the Ministry of Trade have planned to open more branches within the country during the next Fifth Five Year Plan.

The Assembly was pleased accordingly to accept the explanation put forward by the Ministry of Trade and Commerce.

8. SETTING UP A FACTORY FOR MANUFACTURING EDIBLE BY-PRODUCTS FROM POTATOES

The Chimis of Orong mentioned that a proposal for setting up a factory to manufacture edible by products from potatoes had been discussed in the previous session and he requested to know the present position.

In response, the Director of Trade and Industries stated that although by-products like alcohol, potatoes chips and other edible products could be manufactured from potatoes, to establish such a factory, firstly, a substantial amount of investment was required, secondly, for earning a worthwhile income even the present production of potatoes from all over the country would not suffice to run the factory economically. Moreover, the possibilities for finding an export market for the products and the likely prices that would be available also shall have to be explored. As such, the Ministry of Trade and Commerce was studying the feasibility of putting up such a factory and on the completion of a report, it would be presented to the Assembly in the forthcoming sessions.

9. SETTING UP OF A PAPER MILL

The Chimi of Gaylegphug proposed that it would be beneficial for the country to have a paper mill as the raw materials for manufacturing paper were available in the country.

In response, the Director of Forests replied that the Government had, in fact, as far back as six years ago, given thought on this project and experts from Japan, Sweden and India had visited the country to study the feasibility of putting up a Paper Mill, but on studying their reports, it was found that although there was sufficiency of raw materials for manufacturing paper in the country, a very substantial investment was required for establishing the mill, as well as, electrical power and technical personnel with the knowledge of manufacturing paper. As the country did not have such large funds available at present for investment and because of the lack of electricity and of technical personnel, it was suggested that although a paper mill was an absolute necessity for the benefit of the country, the project could only be taken up when electrical power was available and our own people trained to run a paper mill.

10. SETTING UP FOOD PROCESSING FACTORIES FROM ORANGES AND PINEAPPLE

The Chimis of Gaylegphug proposed that since large quantities of oranges and fruits were grown in Southern Bhutan, Food Processing Factories should be set up in the country.

In response, the Director of Industries and Mining replied that the Export Division of the Ministry were already arranging to export these fruits and that there was a Food Processing Factory at Samchi. The Ministry had however, taken up the matter with the UNDP, and, as a first step, funds have been made available for setting up one cold storage unit at Nanglam, two units at Gaylegphug and one at Phuntsholing. In addition, a fruit juice extracting plant was also being set up at Nanglam. The Ministry, therefore, felt that these projects already in the plan should be carried out firstly and after studying the benefits and income derived from such projects, the setting up of other Food Processing Factories could be taken up.

11. ROYAL BHUTAN AIRLINES

The Chimi of the business community referred to the resolutions that had been adopted in the previous sessions for opening a Royal Bhutan Airlines for the benefit of the Government and the general public and especially for the furtherance of trade and business. He requested to know when the airlines would start operating.

The Chimis of Mewang, Gyene and Dagala of Thimphu requested to know if on establishing such an Airline whether it would be a national airline.

On this issue, His Majesty was pleased to say that the establishment of Airline is very essential and important for the country. The general public, too, were emphasizing for its establishment on several occasions and the Assembly had also passed resolutions to this

effect. His Majesty was pleased to add that the government had definitely decided to establish an Airline and the government of India had also committed to give the required assistance for its establishment. The only problem left was regarding the type of Airlines to be operated. This question will have to be discussed with the Government of India and as it was a very essential matter, His Majesty himself on his visit to India would discuss and finalize the matter with the government of India. In His Majesty's opinion, since the establishment of an Airline would not be against the interests of India but on the contrary the country beneficial for our country, he hoped that the government of India would also give its concurrence in helping us to achieve our aims of establishing the Airlines.

12. FOOD CORPORATION OF BHUTAN

The Chimis of Gaylegphug proposed that it would be more beneficial for the Food Corporation of Bhutan to be established as an independent organization then to be put under a Ministry.

In response, the Acting Director of the Food Corporation of Bhutan replied that a review of the workings and organization of the Food Corporation of Bhutan had been prepared and submitted to the government, and the government after studying the review would be able to take a decision on whether the Food Corporation of Bhutan should be an independent organization or kept under a Ministry.

13. PROPOSAL FOR OPENING BRANCHES OF THE FOOD CORPORATION OF BHUTAN

The Chimis of Talo and Chubu, Punakha proposed that for the benefit of the general public, the Food Corporation of Bhutan arrange to supply essential commodities required by the general public.

The Chimis of Kashi and Nyisho, Wangdiphodrang, requested for opening a branch of the Food Corporation for the convenience of their local villagers.

In response, the officiating Managing Director of the Food Corporation of Bhutan explained that the Food Corporation branches in all the districts are supplying essential commodities required by the general public as far as possible but as the Food Corporation was not aware of particular requirements of different localities, he suggested that such matter be put up by the concerned people to their respective Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs and when the requests for the particular requirements were received by the corporation through the Dzongkhag

Yargye Tshogchungs, the Food Corporation will try, as far as possible, to arrange the supply of the particular requirements for the different localities.

Regarding the proposal of opening a branch at Chu-Zomsa, Wangdiphodrang district, the officiating Managing Director stated that as the Food Corporation had branches in all the Districts, if additional branches are required then the matter should be discussed at the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs and if it was decided to open additional branches, then the Government had desired that such branches should be run by the local people themselves. The Food Corporation will, however, arrange the supply and control the price of the required commodities and the person running the branch will be paid a commission from 3% to 4%. If such a suggestion is accepted, it would be convenient to both the government and the general public and a programme would be introduced from the Fifth Five Year Plan.

The Assembly accepted the suggestions put forward by the Food Corporation of Bhutan and a resolution to this effect was adopted accordingly.

14. SETTING UP OF A CREF UNIT IN ROYAL BHUTAN ARMY

The Chimis of Samchi proposed that in accordance with the desires of His Majesty and the policy of making the country self-reliant, a unit should be formed in the Royal Bhutan Army for constructing roads and undertaking other development constructions.

In reply, the Representative of the Royal Bhutan Army said that in accordance with the policy of self-reliance emphasized by the public, the Royal Bhutan Army were till now undertaking emergency constructions required by the army as and when ordered by the government. Moreover, the army personnel were fully engaged as the manpower was limited and to establish a separate unit, new recruitments would have to be made, which would cause some inconveniences especially due to shortage of funds. It was felt, therefore, that at present it would not be possible to organize a separate unit. However, in spite of the limited number of personnel the army were able to cope with the construction works as ordered by the government from time to time and would in future, continue to render such service to the country whenever so commanded.

His Majesty was pleased to add that at present the maintenance of the roads was the responsibility of the Public Works Department and the department was managing its responsibilities. Where new roads had to be constructed and where other development works had to be undertaken, the Royal Bhutan Army were undertaking these works whenever so

desired and in the future also it would not be beyond the capabilities of the Royal Bhutan Army to undertake such works.

15. CARRIAGE OF ARMY STORES TOWARDS GASA

The Chimis of Zoma, Lingmu, Shengana and Guna proposed that hiring charges for army animal transport used in transporting army stores should not be levied on those villagers who when their turn comes are not able to carry the army stores.

During the discussions on this issue, it was ascertained that the carriage involved was not of army stores but for stores belonging to other department where army animal transport had been used for hire to carry the stores.

The Assembly felt that such disputes between the army and the local people were a minor issue and such issues should not have been discussed in the Assembly. It was suggested by the Assembly that in future such disputes should be reported to the concerned local Dzongda and the Royal Bhutan Army Headquarters for settlement, failing which, the matter could be referred to the Home Minister for final decision.

16. CITIZENSHIP ACT

The Chimis of Gasey Tsowom, Daga, Phangyue, Gangten, Tsogom, Nahi, Theytsho, Kashi and Nyisho of Wangdiphodrang district referred to the resolution passed in the 52nd session regarding the amendments in the Citizenship Act which were to be drafted by the Royal Advisory Council and forwarded to the Lhengye Shuntshog for presentation to the Assembly.

On this issue, the Chairman, Royal Advisory Council, said that the enquiry to be conducted for the Citizenship Act by the Councillors had not been completed as yet and a report consequently had not been forwarded to the Royal Advisory Council. He added, however, that after the conclusion of the current session, the report would be completed by the Royal Advisory Council and the matter put in the next session for approving the amendments and additions as required for the Act.

17. WORKMAN COMPENSATION RULE

The Chimis of Tashigang proposed that compensation be given to labour conscripted for government projects should they fall sick and die on their return to the camp site or to their homes.

The Chimi of Sibsoo proposed that the Workmen Compensation Rules should be circulated in the current session so that the Rules should be introduced, which were given for amendments in the previous session.

The Chairman, Royal Advisory Council, in reply explained that the Workmens' Compensation Rules presented in the last session was prepared by the Planning Commission for the Chhukha Hydel Project and as it had to be introduced in all the districts, it had to be amended to conform with the national laws of the country, as some portions were not in accordance with the national laws of the country. As such, the amended draft had not been submitted to the Government. However, the draft will be completed after the current session and submitted to the government for approval during the next session. The Chairman added that the point raised by the Chimis of Tashigang would also be included in the draft.

The Assembly while accepting the explanations given by the Chairman, Royal Advisory Council, proposed that until the enactment of the new Workmen Compensation Rules the old Workman Compensation Rules be continued in use.

18. PUNISHMENT FOR GIVING FALSE STATEMENT

The Chimis of Gasey Tshowom, Nahi, Theytsho and Gasey Tshowom and Daga proposed that a limit should be laid down to the number of times a person causes disturbances and creates trouble by giving false statements and that such an offender be punished.

In response, the Representative of the High Court explained that provisions have already been prescribed in the THRIMSUNG and the Criminal Court Procedure for the imposition of penalties on offenders giving such false statement depending upon the gravity of the case.

During the discussion on this issue, the Assembly pointed out as there are already provisions under the laws for imposition of penalties on persons making false statements which might threaten the security of the country or cause misunderstanding between the general public and the government, some exceptions may have to be considered where such false statements are given by persons who are ignorant of the laws and as such the High Court might consider such cases accordingly.

The Assembly resolved, therefore, that since provisions have already been prescribed under the laws of the country regarding taking action on such false statements, there was no necessity of formulating any additional laws.

19. MEMBERSHIP OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE

The Chimi of Sibsoo proposed that it would be beneficial to have all the Councillors of the Royal Advisory Council members of the Special Committee.

In reply, the Foreign Minister on behalf of the Special Committee said that the Royal Advisory Councillors are fully engaged in their respective duties and as Thimphu was the capital, there were naturally several committees in which it was possible to have one or two members only from the Royal Advisory Council. As such, the Chairman, Royal Advisory Council and Dasho Pralad Gurung, People's Representative in the Royal Advisory Council, were members of the Special Committee. The Foreign Minister further stated that if all the Councillors were made members of the Special Committee, it would inconvenience the work of the Royal Advisory Council. He was of the view that the present set up of the Special Committee should not be disturbed.

The Assembly accepted the views expressed by the Foreign Minister and resolved that the present set up of the Special Committee should remain as it is.

20. BENEFITS FOR GUPS AND LOWER GRADE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

The Chimi of Sibsoo wished to be clarified as to why only the People's Representative in the Royal Advisory Council were covered by the Bhutan Civil Service Rules and not the Chimis and the Gups.

The Chimi of Dagapela proposed gratuities for Gups who have rendered service for several number years.

The Chimi of Gaylegphug proposed increase of benefits to the Lower Grade Government employees.

On this issue, the Finance Secretary explained that His Majesty had already been pleased to command the setting up of Special Committee and the Special Committee had been formed to look into such proposals made by the public. As such, he would include the proposals made by the Chimis in the Special Committee regarding whether or not the Gups and Chimis

were to be covered by the Bhutan Civil Service Rules and whether or not gratuities should be given to the Gups. A report then would be presented accordingly in the next session of the Assembly.

Regarding increased benefits to the Lower Grade Government employees, the Finance Secretary added that the Government was well aware of the difficulties being faced by such staff. In fact, two or three meetings had already been held to discuss the matter and he hoped that within a few months time the matter would be finalized.

The Assembly felt that the question of granting gratuities to the Gups and Chimis should not have been raised because it was the policy of the government to have Gups and Chimis for a period of three years only and then changed, as such the question of their rendering service for a long period did not arise. However, the Assembly agreed with the suggestions made by the Finance Secretary that the questions of granting gratuities to the Gups would be considered in the meetings of the Special Committee and a resolution was, therefore, passed to this effect.

21. INVESTIGATION ON MISUSE OF GOVERNMENT FUNDS

The Chimis of Radi, Tashigang, Dokar and Shemgang wished to know what penalties had been imposed on the offenders guilty of misuse of government funds and stores following the investigations conducted by the Enquiry Commission as resolved in the 52nd session.

The Chairman, Royal Advisory Council, on behalf of the Enquiry Commission, replied that in accordance with the resolution adopted in the 52nd session detailed investigations were made regarding the report on the misuse of government funds and stores and a report had been submitted to the government.

In consequence, a case had been instituted by the alleged offender against the member who had reported the matter in the Assembly.

On this, the

Assembly passed a resolution that the case should be forwarded to the High Court and tried accordingly and the person found guilty penalized as prescribed under the THRIMSHUNG. As such, the case has now been forwarded to the High Court.

22. MAINTENANCE OF DZONGS

The Chimi of Tangsibi suggested the repairing of Tongsa Dzong. The Representative of the Districts Monk Society, Wangdiphodrang and the Chimis of Gasey Tsowom, Nahi and Theytsho suggested repairs of Wangdiphodrang Dzong.

The Chimi of Yangtshi requested roofing of the Yangtshi Dzong be undertaken by the Government.

During the deliberation on these issues, it was pointed out that His Majesty had been pleased to give command already to the Home Minister to estimate the repairing works required for Tongsa Dzong. The Assembly, therefore, decided that, similarly, the Home Minister should take up estimates for the repairs works to be done for Wangdiphodrang Dzong and the roofing of Yangtshi Dzong and the estimates forwarded to the Lhengye Shungtshog. The government would then take a decision, on the basis of the reports furnished by the Home Minister, as to which work be given the priority and the release of the funds for the repairs would be phased out from year to year as and when the repairs are undertaken.

The Assembly further decided that labour required for repairs of Tongsa Dzong shall be given by the people of Eastern Bhutan as was the practice since old times. Similarly, labour for Wangdiphodrang will be given by the People of Sha and the question of whether or not the new settlers coming into the district of Wangdiphodrang be included for this labour be decided between the permanent residents and the new comers.

23. MAINTENANCE OF CHUNGDI GOMPA

The Representative of the Wangdiphodrang Rabdey proposed the maintenance of the Chungdi Gumpa.

On this issue, the Assembly pointed out that as the Chungdi Gumpa was a Government Gumpa and as all government Gompas were being looked after by Her Majesty the Queen Mother, the Gompas on Wangdiphodrang areas in time will also be taken up for maintenance, as the works proceed.

The Assembly resolved, therefore, that a report for the maintenance of the Chungdi Gumpa be submitted directly to Her Majesty the Queen Mother.

24. UTILISATION OF MONEY RECOVERED AS FINES IMPOSED FOR MISSING ARTICLES FROM TEMPLES ON INVESTIGATION

The chimis of Gasey Tshowom, Nahi and Theytsho proposed that steps be taken to avoid waste of money recovered as fines for articles found missing from temples on investigations.

On this issue, the Assembly decided that such fines be utilized to purchase article required for that particular temple for which fines have been imposed for the articles found missing.

25. LIMITATION ON FEES TO BE PAID TO MONKS

The Chimis of Gasey Tshowom and Daga proposed that a limit on the fees for monks performing religious rites be laid down as in the past as the more well-to-do families were paying more than the prescribed limits and the poorer families suffering in consequence.

During the deliberations on this issue, it was pointed out that a limitation to such fees had already been passed in resolution 19 of the 31st session and that the monks were abiding to these limitations. It was, however, the people themselves who being satisfied with the monks were giving higher fees and not because of any coercion by the monks.

The Assembly, therefore, resolved that there was no need to repeat the resolution limiting such fees.

26. INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY

The Chimis of Tewang and Bjime, Thimphu and the Chimis from the business community stressed the importance of demarcating the international boundaries of the country to ensure the future security of the country and proposed that as resolved in the previous sessions, the demarcation of the boundary which is almost complete in the southern side be carried out similarly on the northern side and that the demarcation should not be kept pending longer by the Government.

In response, the Chief of Survey explained that he too was aware of the importance and necessity of demarcating the international boundaries of the country, and, as stated by him in the previous session, the boundary demarcation for the southern sector was almost complete except for a minor adjustment of the alignment of the boundary at Gaylegphug. Regarding the demarcation on the northern section, both our government and the government of our northern neighbour will have to hold talks. Our government had already selected the members of the commission which would hold such talks and the government of India has also agreed to give any assistance, if required. Our government was now waiting for a suitable time to hold the talks and we on our part were prepared and ready to hold the talks.

The Assembly, therefore, resolved that the government while waiting for a suitable time should not keep the matter pending for a long period but hold the talks with the government of our northern neighbour as quickly as possible.

27. DEMARCATION OF DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

The Chimis of Shemgang proposed that in order to avoid any inconvenience to the general public, the demarcation of the district boundaries be completed as quickly as possible by referring to the records in the old Thrams and documents.

In response, the Chief of Survey stated that the demarcation of the district boundaries had been completed except for the sector between Shemgang and Gaylegphug in which a dispute had arisen. As already represented in the previous session, the Chief of Survey suggested that to decide this matter, the concerned Chimis and Dzongdas of the two districts accompanied by the Chief of Survey should meet the Home Minister.

The Assembly agreed with the suggestion put forward by the Chief of Survey and agreed that should any difficulties arise, the matter could be put up at the next session.

28. CLASSIFICATION OF CULTIVATED FIELDS

The Chimis of Tsento, Paro re-classification of cultivated fields be undertaken.

On this issue, the Assembly resolved that the re-classification of the land will be carried out in all the districts in the presence of the concerned Dzongda, the land owner, the Gup and Chimi and

- an agricultural expert. The re-classification so made will then be reported to the Government so that the amendments would be made accordingly in the government Land Registrar,
29. BAMBOO FIELDS AND KHAR BARIS IN SOUTHERN BHUTAN,

The Chimi of Chirang proposed that bamboo fields and khar baris in Southern Bhutan be classified in the same category as sogshings of the interior districts.

During the discussions, to find out the suitability of classifying bamboo fields and khar baris as sogshing, it was learnt that vegetable fields in Southern Bhutan are not classified separately but included as dry fields. It was agreed, therefore, that the Home Minister together with the district Dzongdas and officials from the department of Forests will decide whether or not separate classifications were required for bamboo fields, khar baris and vegetables fields in southern Bhutan.

30. PAYMENT OF LAND TAX BY A PERSONS OWNING LAND OUTSIDE HIS DISTRICT OF DOMICILE

The Chimis of Shemgang and Dorokha proposed that the registration and tax of a land owned by a person who is not a domicile in the district where he owns land be registered and taxed in the district where the land is located and not in the district of his domicile.

On this issue, the Assembly resolved that the Ministry of Finance should thoroughly examine the matter and find out the most suitable procedure. The Government would then consider the case accordingly.

31. PLANS DRAWN UP BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION

The Chimi of Chirang said that the people were not satisfied with the present plans and proposed that in the future when drawing up plans, the people at the district level be consulted.

The Deputy Minister for planning explained that His Majesty had been pleased to establish Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs when the Fourth Five Year Plan was introduced and the Dzongdas, Gups, Chimis and Heads of Department had sat down together to draft the plan which was then presented and passed by the National Assembly. He said, therefore, that the question of anyone being not satisfied with the drawing up of the plan should not arise. In the future even the Fifth Five Year Plan would be drawn up at the district level in keeping with

the policy of the government which is also known to all the members of the Assembly.

32. PRICE CONTROL ON FOOD COMMODITIES.

The Chimi of Lamidara proposed that part of the foreign aid being received from other countries should be taken in kind in order to maintain control over food prices for the benefit of the general public.

The Foreign Minister in reply explained that the high price of commodities was a problem not confined to this country only but was prevalent in all the countries of the world. Moreover, some food commodities were more expensive in other countries than in our own country and, as such, it would not be practical at all to have control over the prices in this way. Instead, he suggested, that first of all, we should try to increase the produce of our own country required for our own consumption and secondly, we should utilize our own products, as far as possible, so that we are able to import less quantities from other countries. This would be a better way to keep control over the prices and all of us should bear this in mind. He added that at present the Food Corporation had proposed in the current session the opinion of fair price shops in the 5th Five Year Plan and this would help a great deal in maintaining control over the prices

The Assembly, therefore, endorsed the views expressed by the Foreign Minister.

33. SETTING UP OF WOMEN ASSOCIATION

The Chimi of Chumey proposed that Women Association be set up in the country under the Chairmanship of one of Her Royal Highnesses so that women could also render service in emergencies as men for the country.

During the deliberation on this proposal, Mrs. Dawa Dem, Royal Advisory Councillor and the Deputy Minister for planning while appreciating the proposal pointed out that one of the aims of forming Women Association was to seek equal rights as men, but in our country women have been enjoying equal rights and those who were educated have been given full responsibilities in the Government. The government had also given thought on this matter and of helping women in the villages. For this purpose some girls had been sent to foreign countries to receive training and on their return they would help in forming Women's Association.

On this issue, His Majesty was pleased to appreciate the proposal as it was encouraging to see that even the women of our country were coming forward and wished to serve the country. His Majesty was pleased to add that as mentioned before, when the girls who had gone abroad return after completing their training, the government will arrange to sponsor forming Women's Association in the country, as these will not be of harm to the country's interest but on the contrary, the country will be benefitted.

The Assembly also agreed to the suggestions put forward and resolved that Women's Association be formed under the sponsorship of the government.

34. INCLUSION OF FOREST RESEARCH IN NATIONAL SERVICE.

The Chimi of Sibsoo proposed that students on completion of their school finals be sent for forest research also under the National Service Scheme so that they would become aware of the importance of forests.

On this issue, the Director of Forests and the Director of Education stated that it was a good proposal to include forest research in the National Service Programme because then the public would become more aware of the importance of forests and their preservation would be more successful. At present, they added, only those students who would be joining the Forests Department were being sent to do National Service in forests, but from now on, the number of students for forest research under National Service Programme would be increased.

35. TRANSLATION VERSIONS OF GOVERNMENT CIRCULARS

The Chimis of Sibsoo, Chengmari and Chirang proposed that it would be more convenient if government circulars written in the National Languages which are sent to Southern Bhutan districts be sent with a translated version either in Nepali or English.

During the deliberations on this issue, the Assembly pointed out that the Government circulars in Dzongkhag were first sent directly to the Dzongdags or Senior Ramjams who had to translate the circulars in the local regional language before circulating the notice to the public, but it was resolved that if any Department sent circulars in Dzongkha directly to the public, then a translated version in either English or Nepali be sent.

36. CELEBRATION OF REGIONAL NEW YEAR FESTIVALS

The Chimi of Sibsoo desired to be placed on record the appreciation of the local people of Southern Bhutan, whose religious new year festival was celebrated this year on 19th October, for its declaration now as an official government holiday.

37. BENEFITS FOR GUPS

The Chimis of Thangrong of Mongar, Lamgong of Paro, Orong of Samdrupjongkhar and Taloe and Chhubu of Punakha proposed that as the system of Chunidom labour has been abolished from the 52nd session, then as resolved in the previous sessions, the Gups and Chipons should either have their salaries increased or given some benefit of THEN-CHA from the MI-TSI labour.

In response, the Finance Secretary replied that whether or not increase in the salaries of the Gups could be made in keeping with the revenue earnings shall have to be referred to the Special Committee first and a report subsequently presented at the next session.

The Assembly, therefore, resolved that until the decision on the increment of the salaries of the Gups could be made, the concerned Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs should decide the benefits to be given to the Gups as THEN-CHA from the MI-TSI labour

38. INCREASE ON COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL TAXES

The Chimi of Khen Shingkhari mentioned that in the 52nd session a resolution had been adopted for a plan to be put up by the Ministry of Finance for increase in the commercial and industrial taxes.

In response, the Finance Secretary replied that a resolution had been passed in the previous session to increase the commercial and industrial taxes to make our country self-reliant and accordingly a proposal had been submitted to the National Commission on development for Trade and Industries.

The Finance Secretary added further that before taxes are increased, the matter has to be carefully examined, otherwise it may lead to complications later on and, as such, the National Commission for developing Trade and Industries were studying the proposals very carefully and it may be possible to put up a proposal in the next session.

The Finance Secretary also explained that as desired by the Government all projects already started should become self-reliant from the Fifth Five Year Plan. For this purpose, a sum of Nu.100 crores were required and in order to have this amount from the revenue, the main revenue earning sources like forests, mining and Industries shall have to increase their revenues to more than double the present earnings and a plan to this effect was under preparation. The Finance Secretary also said that there was a proposal by the Department to allot 50% of their net profits after deducting taxes to the government. In conclusion, the Finance Secretary, on behalf of the Ministry of Finance, wished to place on record their appreciation to the Assembly Members, the concerned departments of Forests, Mining and Industries for their generous assistance in giving part of their earnings to achieve the aims of making our country self-reliant.

39. IMPOSITION OF TAXES

The Chimis of Ghumauney and Lamidara proposed that taxes should not be levied directly by different government departments in absence of Her Royal Highness, the Representative of His Majesty in the Ministry of Finance or the Home Minister but in such cases, approval should be sought from either the National Assembly or His Majesty the King.

During the discussions on this issue, the Assembly Members pointed out that firstly the Registration department had imposed a tax on foreign labour and had subsequently withdrawn it. Secondly, the Irrigation Department and the Finance Secretary had sent out circulars to impose tax on water from channels but actually these circulars were meant to be sent to the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs for their view and not directly to the people.

The Finance Secretary explained that generally when taxes have to be imposed, the proposal was firstly examined thoroughly by the Ministry of Finance and then submitted to Her Royal Highness the Representative of His Majesty in the Ministry of Finance for approval, if Her Royal Highness was absent or was not able to give approval, then the matter was referred to the Lhengye Shungtshog or His Majesty, and, if required to the Assembly. This was the present system being followed for imposition of taxes. Besides this procedure, no department had the right to impose taxes directly and as far as he knew, no department had exceeded this right and imposed taxes directly.

40. INCREASE OF TAXES

The Chimis of Gaylegphug proposed that taxes on luxury items like tobacco, liquors and spirits should be increased but taxes on essential commodities reduced.

In response, the Finance Secretary replied that the present taxes on luxury items and excisable items were more than double the cost of these items and felt that increase in the taxes on such items were not suitable at present, but the matter had been referred to the National Commission for the development of Trade and Industries where it was being examined.

Similarly, the reduction on taxes on essential commodities was less than in other countries and he felt that at present it was not necessary to have further reductions.

41. LESS CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL

The Chimis of Sarbhang proposed that in order to avoid waste of time and damage to health, the government should formulate a policy to control the consumption of alcoholic drinks.

On this issue, the Assembly appreciated the importance and the benefits of encouraging less consumption of alcoholic drinks. In fact this proposal had also been presented in the previous sessions. The Assembly, therefore, suggested that in keeping with the times and as suitable to the country, the government should consider to evolve a plan to gradually decrease the consumption of alcoholic drinks.

42. CLARIFICATION ON REVENUE EARNINGS FROM BHUTAN GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT SERVICES, BHUTAN MOTOR TRANSPORT CORPORATION AND EXCISE DUTY

The Chimis of Gyelta and Bongo requested to be enlightened on the revenue earnings from the Bhutan Government Transport Service, the Bhutan Motor Transport Corporation and Excise.

The Chimis of Gaylegphug proposed that a report be given on the revenue earnings of the Bhutan Government Transport Service.

In response, the Finance Secretary replied that a written statement in a chart form showing the earnings and expenditure of the Bhutan Government Transport Service had been circulated amongst the members of the Assembly. Also the report on the revenue earnings

from excise and the Motor Transport Corporation have already been given in detail to the Assembly.

The Finance Secretary also explained that the Bhutan Government Transport Service was running with its own earnings and any surplus earnings were used to purchase new buses and trucks and the balance utilized for the maintenance of the vehicle. The policy of the Government was to make the Bhutan Government Transport Service a self-reliant organization and it had succeeded so far. As such, there were no revenue earnings for the Government from the Bhutan Government Transport Service and neither does the government allocate any fund to it.

43. BHUTAN GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT SERVICE AND BHUTAN TRANSPORT CORPORATION

The Chimi of Phangyue and Gangten proposed that where there are no Bhutan Government Transport Services vehicles, the public be permitted to travel on Motor Transport Corporation vehicles and also the Bhutan Government Transport Service and the Motor Transport Corporation be amalgamated into one organization.

Some Chimis also proposed whether it would not be more beneficial to convert the Bhutan Government Transport Service into private bus services.

In reply, the Finance Secretary stated that till 1967 the Bhutan Government Transport Service and the Motor Transport Syndicate, as it was then known, was one department but as it was inconvenient to the public, the general public themselves had requested the government to establish a separate department and thus in 1967 the Bhutan Transport Syndicate came into being as a private organization. At present the Bhutan Transport Corporation is earning a handsome revenue and therefore in the future, it is suggested that it would be more beneficial to keep the Bhutan Government Transport Service and the Bhutan Motor Transport Corporation as separate organizations.

Regarding, the proposal for converting the Bhutan Government Transport Service bus service into a private organizations, the Finance Secretary explained that the Bhutan Government Transport Service was not established as an organization to earn revenue but to serve the general public. On the plains road where the road surface was good the Bhutan Government Transport Service was making some profit but on hilly roads where the road surface was not in a good condition, the Bhutan Government Transport Service was running at a loss.

Therefore, the profits and loss were balanced so that the Bhutan Government Transport Service could run economically. If the Bhutan Government Transport Service bus service were converted to private service, then later on the private operators will be running at a loss which would inconvenience the general public. It is, therefore, suggested that the Bhutan Government Transport Service bus service remain under the Government.

The Assembly, therefore, resolved that the Bhutan Government Transport Service and the Motor Transport Corporation be kept as separate organizations and in those locations where Bhutan Government Transport Service buses do not ply, because of lack of passengers, the matter should be referred to the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs who would write to the Bhutan Government Transport Service and a bus service provided, as far as possible, at the convenience of the Bhutan Government Transport Service but the Bhutan Government Transport Service must serve the general public. The Bhutan Government Transport Service will not be converted into a private organization and will continue to be kept as a separate government organization.

44. LIFE INSURANCE SCHEME TO INSURE LIVES OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC

The Chimi of Tewang and Bjimey, Thimphu proposed that as suggested by the general public of Ha in the previous sessions, a scheme should be made for general insurance of the public so that assistance for the welfare of their families when they die could be provided, and, loans, if required, should also be sanctioned for performance of the funeral rites and proposed that a system should be formulated to insure lives of all those persons who are above 10 years.

The Finance Secretary explained that in accordance with the resolution adopted in the last session regarding general life insurance for the public, the matter was discussed with the Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan and it was found that without the government or the Insurance Corporation deriving any profits from such a scheme, if a person paid insurance premium of Nu.28/- at the end of one year that person would be able to have Nu.1,000/. It was suggested that for the welfare of the public, the people would pay Nu. 20/- as premium and the balance of Nu. 8/- be contributed by the government. If the scheme is accepted, then it could be reviewed again after one year of its inception and if loss for the government is not much, then the premium of Nu. 20/- could be reduced.

Regarding loans to people for performance of funeral rites, the Finance Secretary stated that as resolved in the previous session a loan of Nu.50/- lakhs had been taken from the Bank and distributed as loan in all the districts to needy and deserving persons and if the public wanted more loans, then until the repayments on these loans were received, the government had no additional funds available to give further loan.

During the deliberation on this issue, some members suggested reduction on the premium of Nu. 20/- and increase on the payment of Nu.1,000/-.

His Majesty was then pleased to say that the general insurance scheme for the public would be thoroughly discussed further with the Royal Insurance Corporation to find out if the premium could be reduced and afterwards a full report will be sent to all the district to obtain their views which could be discussed at the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs. Therefore, the introduction of the general life insurance for the public should be kept pending till the next session.

The Assembly accepted the suggestions graciously given by His Majesty and also resolved that as the life insurance scheme would be able to provide relief to the people, it was not necessary to have more discussions on granting loans to persons.

45. CLARIFICATION ON FIRE INSURANCE OF HOUSES

The Chimi of Lamidara proposed that the government should have made some profits from the premiums paid on fire insurance of houses and that those persons who had paid such insurance should be given assistance for building houses from the accrued profits.

In reply, the Finance Secretary said that the government had so far paid a sum of more than Nu. 14/- lakhs as damages caused by fire and the premiums paid on the fire insurance so far had not been able to cover these payments and in fact, the government had been incurring loss in meeting these payments.

46. CROP INSURANCE AND RELIEF WHEN CROPS ARE DAMAGED BY INCLEMENT WEATHER

The Chimi of Gaylegphug proposed that the Government should introduce crop insurance.

The Chimi of Sibsoo wanted to know what facilities were being provided by government when crops are destroyed through inclement weather.

The Finance Secretary replied that even in developed countries the question of crop insurance was still under consideration and had not been introduced any where. As such, our country being still in the development stage, it would be difficult for both the government and the public, if crops insurance was introduced now. He felt, therefore, that at present crop insurance was not necessary.

Regarding relief arrangements when crops are damaged through inclement weather, the Director of Agriculture stated that the department was issuing seeds and fertilizers and this practice would be continued in the Fifth Five Year Plan also.

On this issue, His Majesty was pleased to clarify that the statement given by the Director of Agriculture was for the general welfare but whenever famine occurred in different blocks where crops were destroyed by natural causes, the government was providing special assistance and in the future also, whether such special assistance was included in the plan or not, the Government would continue to provide the special assistance.

47. UNIFORMITY OF OFFICIAL MEASUREMENT OF DEY AND SANG

The Chimi of Taloe and Chubu proposed that in order to have uniformity in the measures of volume and weight the government should send for sale to the villages the officials Gyaltshi Khalowa measures of DEY and SANG.

In response, the Finance Secretary stated that as resolved in the previous sessions of the Assembly, the Ministry of Finance was presently distributing the samples of the official measures of DEY and SANG for sale to the districts and such samples should soon be available in the locality from where the chimis have represented.

48. RIVER EMBANKMENTS AT PARO

The Chimi of Lamgong, Paro, proposed erection of river embankments on the main river at Paro. The Chimi of Deytang and Doshar of Paro proposed construction of river embankments to straighten the Deybar river.

On these issues, the Director of Agriculture stated that the government was aware of the necessity of constructing river embankments on some rivers and had prepared plans accordingly. Unfortunately the works could not be taken up due to lack of funds as these were major undertakings. But the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) agency of the United Nations had been approached for the funds and as the funds are now available, the works will be taken up during the 5th Five Year Plan. However, concerned local people will have to co-operate in the scheme by undertaking to supply the required labour.

49. SHIFTING OF SILT AND BOULDERS AT TSAMMI ZAMPA ON THE WANGDIPHODRANG RIVER

The Chimi of Leptsogo and Bajothangup proposed the shifting of the silt and boulders that had collected below Tsammi Zampa which makes it risky during the summer months for the village houses, fields and cattle when the river overflows its bank at this point.

In reply, the Director of Agriculture said that the silt and boulders had collected at this point during the flood of 1968 and even from that very year the government had been attempting to clean the blockage but without success. The engineers too, were not willing to take up the task as they felt that the works could not be done. The government under the circumstances are now, instead, preparing a plan to control the river at this point so that the overflow could be checked.

50. IRRIGATION CHANNELS CONSTRUCTED AT BOUNDARY

The Chimi of Gaylegphug stated that as their fields were being damaged by water from the water channels being drawn from our boundary by the neighbouring Indian villagers, the Government should find out a way to solve this problem.

On this issue, the Dzongda of Gaylegphug explained that excluding the other districts in Southern Bhutan, in the district of Gaylegphug alone there were six such water channels being taken by the neighbouring Indian villagers and that some of these channels were causing heavy damage to our cultivated fields. He requested, therefore, that the National Assembly consider this matter seriously.

On this issue, His Majesty was pleased to comment that the point raised by the people of Gaylegphug was very important but the government up till now were not aware of this matter. The government will certainly take up this issue and the Home Minister and the Foreign Minister were being instructed to thoroughly investigate the case not only in

Gaylegphug but in other districts too, and they will refer the matter subsequently to the Lhengyel Shungtshog where it would be convenient to arrive at a solution. Should no solution be reached then, His Majesty was pleased to comment that the issue will be discussed at the next session.

The Assembly accepted the comments graciously given by His Majesty and resolved that action should be taken accordingly.

51. TAX ON IRRIGATION CHANNELS

The Chimis of Zoma, Shengana, Gyon and Guma of Punakha district and the Chimi of Dorokha requested a reduction on the tax on water drawn from Irrigation Channels.

During the deliberation on this request, the Ministry of Finance and the Irrigation Department stated that a proposal had been sent to the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs to discuss the increase or reduction of taxes on water being drawn from government provided water channels. Therefore, the matter could be reported to the government for reduction of the tax on the water from the irrigation channels only after a decision has been arrived at the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs.

The Assembly therefore stated that the decisions should be awaited from the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs and as such no resolution on this request was required during the current session.

52. CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD FROM CHA-CHEY TO PATALI

The Chimi of Chirang desired to know what was being done by the government on the proposed road construction from Cha-Chey to Patali.

In response, the Director, Public Works Department. replied that during the Fifth Five Year Plan, there was a scheme to construct 100 kms of roads which are of national interest but the roads which are to be covered under this scheme had not been finalized as yet and as such he was not in a position to say whether or not the Cha-Chey to Patali road would be taken up. After a decision has been taken, he would be able to give the information.

53. BLACK-TOPPING OF MOTOR ROAD FROM WANGDIPHODRANG TO BYAKAR VIA TONGSA

The Chimi of Nuba, Tongsa, proposed the black topping of the motor road from Wangdiphodrang to Byakar via Tongsa.

On this issue, His Majesty was pleased to say that the government of India had been requested to help in black topping this road. The Government of India had decided also to undertake the works and now only the funds have to be released. If necessary, our government will take up the matter again with the government of India.

54. MATTER RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

The Chimis of Taloe and Chubu and the Chimi of Nuba, Tongsa requested the government for distribution of seeds, manure, barbed wire, hoes and axes for the benefit of the farmers and reduction on the hire charges of power tillers and other farming machineries whenever utilized.

In response, the Director of Agriculture replied that the main occupation in our country is agriculture and the government had accordingly in the Fourth Five Year Plan given top priority to Agriculture and Animal Husbandry. As such the farmers were given special help from the Fifth Five Year Plan, he added, according to the policy of making the country self-reliant, the Department of Agriculture is also programmed for self-reliance. As such, the public and the government must join hands and co-operate to increase agricultural production and in keeping with this policy of self-reliance, the Department of Agriculture will give aid, as far as possible.

55. RIGNEY INSTITUTE OF EASTERN BHUTAN

The Chimi of Nanon and Lumang, Tashigang, requested that as our country professes Buddhism, a Rigney Institute be established at Tashigang as the one at Simtokha is too far for the people from Eastern Bhutan.

On this point, the Director of Education also stressed that our country was a Buddhist country and it was a very good idea to establish another Rigney Institute but a Rigney Institute was not an Institute for ordinary studies but one where the highest religious studies could be imparted. Therefore, highly qualified teachers were required for such Institutes and so far even the Institute at Simtokha had not been able to reach the required standard. As such, it

would not be feasible to have a Rigney Institute in Eastern Bhutan at present but may be in some future years.

He added that the difficulty, at present, was because of the distance. This problem, however, could be solved because once students were admitted in any educational institute, if the local Dzongdas certify that the student is from a poor family then the Department of Education gives such students to and fro journey expenses from the schools to their homes, and the Department will continue this practice in the future too.

56. PROPOSAL TO SET UP HYDEL POWER STATION AT GAYLEGPUG

The Chimis of Gaylegphug stressed the importance given by the government to Gaylegphug where several industries are being planned and proposed that Hydel Power Station be set up there.

In reply, the Director of Hydel said that it was necessary to set up a high capacity Hydel Power Station at Gaylegphug and the Government also had examined the feasibility of putting up such schemes. It was found, however, that with the water resources available there a Hydel Power Station of only 1,400 KWs was possible to be set up and it was being planned to undertake the construction in the Fifth Five Year Plan.

During the deliberations on this issue, the Assembly stressed that electricity was very essential for Gaylegphug and as a Hydel Power Station generating 1,400 KWs did not meet the requirements, it was suggested that the government should initiate a major plan for generating at least 7 megawatts of electricity.

The Assembly, therefore, resolved that in order to generate high capacity electrical power, the plans should be initiated as quickly as possible and the feasibility of generating higher power be re-examined.

57. HYDEL POWER STATION AT DAGAPELA

The Chimi of Dagapela proposed that a Hydel Power Station be constructed at Dagapela on the completion of the motorable road.

In response, the Director of Hydel said that the feasibility of putting up a Hydel Power Station at Dagapela will have to be thoroughly investigated and during the Fifth Five Year Plan period it would be possible only to complete the investigations.

58. EXPLOITATION OF MINERALS

The Chimi of Sarbhang desired to know about the progress of the copper mines at Gong Khola in Gaylegphug district, the quantity of the deposit and how it would benefit the country and whether the mineral is being extracted.

The Chimi of Tewang and Bjimey proposed that unless some valuable minerals have to be exploited now, the other minerals deposits in the country should not be worked until our future generation acquire the technique themselves to exploit these deposits.

The Chimi of Chirang wanted to know if the government were planning to exploit minerals discovered in Chirang.

On these issues, the Director of Industries and Mining explained that the Gong Khola a Copper Deposit survey had been going on for the last three years and two more years still required to complete the survey. Roughly the deposits of copper ore there was about 700 lakh tonnes out of which about 2% would be copper content.

The Director further added that for extracting this copper a factory will have to be put up which would cost about Nu. 300 million. In addition a motorable road and a vast amount of electricity as well as skilled workers will be required. Therefore, the government felt that at this initial stage, those minerals which could be extracted more easily be exploited, such as dolomite, coal, graphite and gypsum. With this is view, the government had been giving leases to private organizations and our public to exploit these minerals and after gaining experience, bigger projects like Gong Khola could be tackled.

Regarding the exploitation of minerals at Chirang, the Director said that mica limestone and tungsten have been discovered there, the biggest deposit was of mica but since our neighbouring country India had better quality and more quantities of mica, it would be very difficult to find a profitable export market for it at present and the government had, therefore, not thought it worthwhile to exploit the mica.

The Director also said that there are more mineral deposits in the country but funds will be required for their survey and exploitation. The Government was of the opinion that we should ourselves exploit these minerals according to our country's abilities.

The Director further added that there are 55 nationals serving in the Geological Survey at present and in addition some have been sent to foreign countries to be trained and after their return it is hoped that the Geological Survey would be done by our own people.

In conclusion the Director said that as resolved in resolution 61 of the 51st session, our government would be taking over the organization of the Geological Survey of India at Samchi in April, 1981. The organization will then change its name to the Geological Survey of Bhutan and where we are not able to carry out the Geological works, the Geological Survey of India have agreed to take the work on contract basis.