

**PROCEEDINGS AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE 57TH SESSION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HELD FROM OCTOBER 29TH TO NOVEMBER 4, 1982**

1. MATTER REGARDING ROYALTY ON TREES GROWING ON PRIVATE REGISTERED LANDS

The Chimi of Dagapela requested that trees growing on land registered in a person's thram be allowed to be felled without payment of royalty as per the new Land Act.

In response, the Director of Forests, clarified that according to the new Land Act, felling of trees grown in registered land were exempted from royalty for domestic use. However, royalty would have to be paid for felling trees for commercial purpose. The Director stated that the Department of Forests was following the above stipulation in the new Land Act.

The Director further stated that the new Land Act had been circulated only recently and may not have been understood by the Forest Department personnel working in remote areas. If any inconvenience has been caused to the public due to any misunderstanding, he requested that the matter be reported to Forest Department Headquarters or to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Forests by the Chimis.

His Majesty the King was pleased to command that the question of payment of royalty on trees grown on private registered land should follow the provisions of the new Land Act. His Majesty stated that in accordance with the Fifth Plan policies, every household should plant atleast ten trees from 1981 onwards. Trees grown in private registered land under this programme would not be taxed. However, His Majesty further commanded that some persons may want to establish large-scale plantation of trees for commercial purpose which could affect the country's economy. Therefore, His Majesty commanded the Dzongdags to submit detailed reports to the Home Ministry on social forestry in each Dzongkhag. On the basis of the reports, the Government would decide on the numbers of trees to be exempted from royalties for each household under the social forestry programme.

The National Assembly resolved to abide by His Majesty's command.

2. MATTER REGARDING ALLOTMENT OF LAND TO THE LANDLESS FROM PASTURE LAND (CHADO)

The Chimi of Dorokha proposed that landless people be granted lands from pastures where there are few valuable trees and are suitable for agriculture.

In response, the Director of Forests stated that His Majesty bearing the peoples welfare in mind, had been granting 'Kidu' to landless people. The Home Ministry, the Department of Agriculture and Forests have been studying the possibilities of finding more lands for distribution at the command of His Majesty. He urged the Assembly that the matter need not be discussed further.

The Director further pointed out that forest were the main source of revenue and that most of the forest lay on pasture lands. Thus if the pasture lands were used for other purposes, it would adversely affect the ecology and economy of our country.

The National Assembly in its deliberations felt that the present system of allotment of land could be continued and resolved that the system of allotment of land to landless from pasture lands need not be introduced.

3. **MATTER REGARDING THE MERGING OF FOREST DEMARCATION SURVEY AND LAND REVENUE SURVEY INTO ONE UNIT**

The Chimi of Chirang enquired whether it would be possible to merge the forest demarcation survey and land revenue survey into one unit to cut down establishment cost.

In response, the Director of Forests stated that he appreciated the public's concern to cut down the establishment costs. The Government was taking appropriate steps to cut down costs wherever possible. However, as in this case the two Departments had different functions, their merging would not be possible due to technical problems.

On this matter, the Finance Secretary stated that no decision could be made without conducting a proper study. He proposed that both the Departments of Survey and Forests should study the problems and possibilities of a merger and submit a report to the next session of the National Assembly.

The National Assembly endorsed the proposal of the Finance Secretary.

4. MATTER REGARDING THE GONGKHOLA COPPER MINES

The Chimi of Chengmari requested to be informed of the progress on the Gongkhola Copper Mines.

In response, HRH Tengyel Lyonpo, the Minister for Trade, Industry and Forests reported that presently exploration works were being undertaken at the Gongkhola Copper Mines. So far 10,000 feet had been drilled and reports were satisfactory. As exploitation would involve enormous costs, proper investigation and survey had to be conducted to ascertain the economic viability before undertaking any venture. Further, drilling of 30,000 feet would have to be undertaken for which purpose two drilling machines were being acquired. Only after this was completed, could the exact extent of the quantity and the quality of the deposit could be ascertained.

HRH further stated that the drilling works will be completed by 1984 and a comprehensive report on the progress of the work and prospects would be presented to the National Assembly.

5. MATTER REGARDING MINERAL DEPOSITS IN DAGAPELA

The Chimi of Dagapela requested to be informed what the minerals Chilco pyrites and Beril were and whether any steps had been taken for their extraction.

In response, HRH Tengyel Lyonpo the Minister for Trade, Industry and Forests stated that Chilco pyrites, found in Dagapela could be used in manufacturing medicine, paper and car batteries. This mineral was also available in other parts of the country. Regarding Beril, HRH stated that this mineral was like strong aluminium and used by aircraft manufacturers. There were only small deposits of this mineral in Bhutan. The Government had no intention of mining of this minerals presently as cost would be high and returns low.

HRH Tengyel Lyonpo added that in future when indication of more deposits in other parts of the country were known and qualified nationals available, the exploration and exploitation of these minerals would be undertaken. He also asked the members who wished to know more about the minerals, to visit his office for further explanation and to see the samples.

6. MATTER REGARDING GRADING OF LAND

The Chimi of Dorokha stated for tax purposes, land was presently graded into three categories. He proposed that a fourth grade on infertile lands at reduced rates of tax be introduced.

In response the Finance Secretary, stated that the gradation of land into three categories had existed since a long time, if a new gradation was introduced, it would call for changes in the 'Thrams' entailing more work and recruitment of more staff. Thus it would affect the Government's policy of reducing the establishment costs.

The Finance Secretary stated the tax rates of Bhutan were low compared to rates in other countries. The fixation of taxes had been done in 1967 and till now taxes had not been increased. Further, in 1972, HRH Ashi Sonam Choden Wangchuk, the Representative of His Majesty in the Ministry of Finance had granted exemption of taxes on land, house and cattle etc.

The Finance Secretary further pointed out that during discussions on the policy of self-reliance in the previous National Assembly sessions, the public representatives had stated that the people were willing to forego the exemptions granted by Ashi Sonam Choden Wangchuk, in order to increase the revenue of the Government. However, His Majesty the King, bearing in mind the welfare of the poor people, had commanded that the exemptions be retained. Subsequently, additional exemptions on land and cattle had been granted. Therefore if tax exemptions were granted every two to three years, the country would not be able to achieve the goal of self-reliance. The Finance Secretary urged the National Assembly to give enough thought and consideration to the matter. Keeping in mind the national policy of self-reliance, the National Assembly resolved not to change the existing system of grading land. The National Assembly decided that if proper survey has not been conducted, then the work of re-survey could be started from Dorokha sub-division.

7. MATTER REGARDING OPENING OF BANK BRANCH AT DAGAPELA

The Chimi of Dagapela requested that a Bank branch be opened at Dagapela for the convenience of the people after the completion of the Damphu-Daga road.

In response, the Finance Secretary said that there are at present 14 bank branches in the country and four more branches are planned this year. Regarding the opening of bank at Dagapela, the Finance Secretary said that first, a study of the commercial activities in the area would be done. Secondly, the place should be accessible by motorable road. After the survey, if it was found feasible, a branch will be opened.

The Finance Secretary further stated that past experience has shown that the public and the monastic bodies do not keep their money in the bank. If this attitude prevails, the bank would not be able to give benefit to the public or the country. He requested that the public should keep their money in the nearest bank.

8. MATTER RELATING TO DZONGKHAG REVENUE

The Chimi of Chirang suggested that the record of all revenues should be maintained in the Dzongkhag so that a clear picture of the earnings and expenditure will be available.

The Finance Secretary stated that the records of the revenue can be obtained at the Dzongkhag Headquarters. The Revenue Department of the Ministry of Finance also maintained records of all revenues of each Dzongkhag separately from which the earning and expenditure of the Dzongkhags could be compared.

Regarding utilization of the revenues in Dzongkhags, the Finance Secretary said that the present revenue of the Dzongkhag cannot meet its expenditure. As an example, he said that Chirang Dzongkhag's establishment cost for this year amounted to Nu. 3,012,000 while the revenue was only Nu. 329,000. He expressed the hope that if the country achieves the goals of the Fifth Plan, the revenue of the high revenue-earning Dzongkhags would be given for utilization in the Dzongkhags from 1985 onwards.

9. MATTER REGARDING DEPARTMENTAL PLAN BUDGET

Chimi of Gaylegphug requested clarification on the earnings and expenditure of Government Departments.

In response, the Deputy Minister, Planning Commission stated that while drafting the Fifth Plan, the establishment cost of the Government Departments amount to Nu. 162 crores. In accordance with His Majesty's command to effect reduction and the Government's policy to

cut down establishment expenditure, the Planning Commission had three rounds of consultations with various Departments during which possible ways of further reducing the expenditure were explored. With great difficulty Nu.45.60 crores was cut bringing the total down to Nu.116.40 crores.

The Deputy Minister further stated that a final check of the Departmental budget would be made and a full report on the matter would be presented to the next session of the National Assembly.

10. MATTER REGARDING POSTING OF A THRIMCHHAB AT DAGAPELA

The Chimi of Dagapela requested that a Thrimchhab be posted at Dagapela as the Thrimpon Office at Damphu was far away from the Drungkhag.

In response, the Representative of the High Court stated that earlier legal matters had easily been settled at the Drungkhag itself. However, with the decentralization policy in the Fifth Plan, Dungpas were now entrusted with developmental works and the legal matters of the Drungkhag had to be looked after by the Thrimpon's Court. He stated that this problem was not only confined to Dagapela. Lingtshi and Dungna Drungkhags, which are situated far away from Dzongkhag Headquarters faced similar problems. Realizing their problems, the High Court had planned to appoint Thrimpons at Drungkhag, however, at present it was difficult to find suitable candidates. Funds would also have to be made available for the establishment of the offices. However, the Government make arrangements to appoint Thrimpons in needy Drungkhags from next year.

11. MATTER REGARDING THE ENFORCEMENT OF LOAN ACT (THRIMSUNG NGA)

Thrimsung Nga (Loan Act), framed by the Law Committee was distributed by the High Court in the current session and approved.

The National Assembly resolved that the Act would come into force henceforth.

12. MATTER RELATING TO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Chimi of Tewang and Bjimey expressed appreciation and gratitude to the Royal Government for having established Honorary Consulates at Singapore and Hong Kong, in

accordance with the repeated requests of the public to establish diplomatic relations with other countries.

He proposed the Royal Government exchange diplomatic missions with Nepal. He pointed out that many Bhutanese go to Nepal on pilgrimage. Therefore, a mission there would not only be beneficial to the country, but would also remove such inconvenience to travellers.

In response, the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that the question of establishing diplomatic relations with other countries has been raised in the previous sessions. As stated in earlier sessions, he explained that the Royal Government was considering the matter. He further explained that in order to establish diplomatic relations, first, it was necessary to have properly trained manpower and second adequate funds in hard currency were also necessary. The Minister stated that the Government would appoint more ambassadors when the country has sufficient manpower and fund, and when it was necessary.

13. MATTER REGARDING DEMARCATION OF THE NORTHERN BOUNDARY

The Chimi of Chengmari requested the Government to inform the Assembly on the progress of the demarcation of border between Bhutan and China. The Chimi of Tewang and Bjimey stated that the National Assembly had resolved in the previous session that the demarcation of the northern boundary be undertaken. He requested that the Government take the task of demarcation when the situation seemed favourable. He expressed the hope that the Government of India render help in this regard.

In response, the Chief of Survey stated that the Government had sent communication to the People's Republic of China stating that till now Bhutan had been following the traditional boundary and that a formal demarcation of the boundary between the two countries was important.

He stated that the Chinese Government appreciated the proposal that the demarcation be undertaken. However, they had stated that they would have to make preparations and that they would inform the Royal Government when they were ready. He stated that there had been no further developments on the issue.

The National Assembly stressing the importance of border demarcation resolved that the Royal Government undertake the task at the earliest.

14. MATTER REGARDING THE PROPOSAL FOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION TO TENDUTAR IN SIBSOO

The Chimi of Sibsoo requested that a motorable road from Gola to Tendutar via Sibsoo be constructed by the RBA for the benefit of both the Army and the Public.

The Goongleon of the Royal Bhutan Army stated that if the road proposed by the public could be constructed, both the public and the army would benefit. However, to take up the construction, substantial funds would be required. Even if adequate funds were available, there is an acute shortage of manpower as most villagers were engaged in other developmental works and Government policy did not permit the import of labour.

With regard to the army undertaking the construction of the road, he pointed out that the main work of the RBA was to train for the defence of the country. Besides there were other problems and difficulties.

The Goongleon further pointed out that the construction of army camp, transportation of ration, arms and ammunition were public's responsibilities. However, in accordance with His Majesty's command, at present the army itself did these tasks. One of the country's biggest irrigation channel had also been constructed by army. The irrigation channel had distributed among 350 army families and among some other people. In accordance with His Majesty's command, army personnel have also started planting of sugarcane on 500 acres at Gaylegphug. The plantation would not only benefit the army personnel welfare but also provide villagers sugarcane seedlings free of cost. The project would buy sugarcane from the public at prices substantially higher than the market price prevailing in India.

The Goongleon stated that RBA was also engaged in the renovation of the Tongsa Dzong. This was actually the Public's responsibility. Last year the army was engaged in the extraction of timber. There is now the possibility that the army would also have to undertake the renovation of the Wangdiphodrang Dzong. In view of such responsibilities, he requested that the problems and difficulties of the RBA be borne in mind while discussing the issue. Moreover, he added that the construction of roads in border areas were not in keeping with the national security policy. Therefore, it would not be possible to construct the road to Tendutar.

In the subsequent deliberations, the National Assembly was made aware that two major road projects, Samchi to Sibsoo and Samchi to Dorokha would be undertaken in the Fifth Plan in Samchi Dzongkhag. Therefore, the Tendutar road could not be included in the plan. The National Assembly resolved that the Tendutar road would not be constructed presently.

15. MATTER REGARDING TO INTRODUCTION OF CATTLE MARKETS

The Chimi of Sarbhang suggested that cattle markets be introduced in every Dzongkhag and Dungkhag under the Department of Animal Husbandry for the benefit of the public.

The Director of Animal Husbandry Department appreciating the Chimi's proposal stated that the introduction of cattle markets was important and is in keeping with Government policy. He suggested that meeting be held between the Dzongdags, National Assembly Members and Officials of the Department of Animal Husbandry to discuss how such cattle markets should be introduced to help spread good quality of cattle in the country.

The National Assembly endorsed the Director's statement.

16. MATTER REGARDING RADIO BROADCASTING

The Chimis of Chengmari and Dagapela proposed that in accordance with the resolution of the 54th session of the National Assembly a national radio station be established. They further proposed that daily news broadcasting be introduced on NYAB radio and arrangement be made to improve the reception.

In response, the Hon'ble Minister for communications and Tourism stated that the establishment of the national radio was not included in the Fifth Plan. However, in view of its importance and the command of His Majesty the King, the matter had been discussed with the Government of India for provision of a separate budget to establish a national radio station within the Fifth Plan period. He further explained that much time had to be spend in considering the kind of equipments to be installed and the methods of operations and maintenance. Now that negotiations on the above details had been completed, the radio would be established during the Fifth Plan period.

With regard to broadcasting of daily news and improvement of existing receptions, the Minister stated that radio NYAB was brought under the Ministry of Communications only in 1979. The NYAB at that time was broadcasting three times a week, on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Each broadcast was two hours duration which was eventually increased to three hours. As far as the improvement of reception was concerned, he pointed out that the transmitter presently being used was of 400 volts and the power could not be increased. However, a new transmitter was expected soon. Once it was installed, reception would improve and programme including one hour of news would be introduced on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. It was proposed that the broadcasting time would be increased by eight hours per week in 1983, by seven hours per week in 1984, by 14 hours per week in 1985, and by 21 hours per week in 1986. A transmitter worth 10 lakhs had also been ordered.

The Minister further stated that the broadcast would be in four languages as it was being done now in accordance with Government policy. He expressed the hope that the programme would benefit the people enormously.

In view of its importance to the public and the Minister's statement, the National Assembly resolved that radio station be established within the Fifth Plan.

During the deliberations, the Chimi of Bumthang requested that news and other programmes be broadcast in the Bumthap languages for the benefit of the people of Bumthang, Tongsa, Kurteo and Shemgang Dzongkhag.

17. MATTER REGARDING SANSKRIT SCHOOL

The Chimi of Bhangtar requested that the sanskrit School be affiliated to the National Board of Education. The Chimi of Sarbhang also requested that Sanskrit be included as one of the subjects in the Schools.

In response, the Director of Education stated that the need to establish a Board of Education and Training had been felt and as such the present policy provided for its establishment. However, the Department had not yet been able to establish the Board and therefore, the affiliation of the Sanskrit Schools to the board could not be decided at present. The Director further stated that Sanskrit Schools in Southern Bhutan had been started privately.

Nevertheless, the teacher's salaries and stationery were being provided by the Government on sympathetic consideration by His Majesty the King.

With regard to introduction of Sanskrit in Schools, the Director stated that it would be beneficial if children could study it. However, there were many important subjects which the children already have to study. If Sanskrit was added to the present syllabus, there was a likelihood that more students would fail. This would ultimately effect the country's requirement of qualified persons in the long run.

During deliberation, most members felt that there were already five Sanskrit Schools in the South and if the need for higher studies arose, the students would go to India to study it. They also felt that sufficient numbers of students had not acquired knowledge and the education in the required technical fields, because of which the country had to depend on non-nationals. Therefore, it was felt that more emphasis should be given to scientific and other allied subjects than Sanskrit.

The National Assembly resolved that the possibility of affiliation of Sanskrit Schools would be studied after the establishment of the Board of Education and Training and that Sanskrit would not be introduced as a subject in the Schools.

18. MATTER REGARDING THE REVISION OF EDUCATION POLICY

The Chimi of Gaylegphug requested for information on the contents of the new Education policy. He suggested that the views of the public be taken into consideration while framing the policies.

The Director of Education stated that till now the Department of Education had been following the policy formulated in 1976. However, realizing the importance of Education, His Majesty had commanded in 1981 to revise the policy. Accordingly, a UN expert had been hired to help draft the new policy. The draft policy had not yet been presented to the Cabinet for approval and therefore, a statement on it could not be made in the present session. He added that while framing the policies, the needs of both the people and the Government, and the national interest were given due consideration. With regard to consultation with the public, he stated that he was not aware of any practice where under such circumstances, consultation were held at the drafting stage.

19. MATTER RELATING TO HOSTEL FACILITIES IN GAYLEGPUG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The Chimi of Gaylegphug stated that he had been informed that hostel facilities in Gaylegphug Junior High School were being abolished. If this was true, he requested that the hostel facilities not to be abolished in view of the importance of the school in the districts.

The Director of Education stated that the hostel facilities in the Gaylegphug Junior High School would be abolished from 1983 onwards. He explained that Gaylegphug was climatically too hot and the health of several students had been affected. Many reports on this matter had been received by the Department of Education. Therefore, the hostel facilities available at Gaylegphug school would be shifted to Chirang, which was climatically more suitable and a hostel had also been built. The students staying in Gaylegphug school hostel who came from far off places would be transferred to Chirang. In Gaylegphug, arrangement for lunch for students who lived some distance from the school was necessary, the department would consider the matter.

The Director also explained how school hostels were introduced in the country. He stated that when schools had been opened, the public were not aware of the importance of education and they also had problems of feeding their children. Thus they had been reluctant to send their children to school. The department had opened hostels to overcome such problems. However, now the people were well aware of the importance of education. He pointed out that out of 31 under-developed countries in the world, only Bhutan provided free food and hostel facilities to the students.

The Director informed the Assembly in detail on the education budget during the Fifth Plan. He said that during the plan period, Nu.310 million would be spent for education out of which Nu.185 million would go to pay for the hostel facilities, salaries of teachers and stationeries. Therefore, if the country was to achieve the policy of self-reliance, some changes in hostel facilities would have to be brought about. Only students who lived far away from schools would be eligible for hostel facilities. Those who could come in the morning and go in the evening would be treated as day scholars.

The National Assembly endorsed the Director of Education's statement and the policy with regard to hostel facilities.

20. MATTER WITH REGARD TO ADULT EDUCATION IN DZONGKHA LANGUAGE

The Chimi of Dorokha requested that since Dzongkha was the National Language and most of the people of Southern Bhutan could not understand and talk fluently, adult education courses in Dzongkha be started in Dungkhags/ Dzongkhags.

The Director of Education, while commending the wish and desire of the public to learn the National Language, pointed out that there were problems of manpower and fund. He however, stated that if the National Assembly decided to hold such courses, the Department would undertake the work.

During the deliberations, most members stated that such courses in Dzongkha would be beneficial to villagers and Government officials. They stated that the service and Dzongkha Language Teacher or any other persons knowledgeable in Dzongkha could be enlisted on payment of honorarium.

The National Assembly resolved that adult education courses in Dzongkha for villagers should be started after consultation between the National Religious Committee, Dzongkha Language Committee, Planning Commission and the Finance Ministry were held.

21. MATTER REGARDING DRUK AIRLINES

The Chimi of Chengmari enquired why Druk Airlines had not started service in 1981 as resolved in earlier sessions of the National Assembly.

In response, Hon'ble Foreign Minister stated that he had mentioned in the last session that the Druk Airline would be started in January, 1983. The Government had formed a Committee to process and do the groundworks and in accordance with the decision of the last session, arrangements for its establishment were going on. He also explained the difficulties of setting up offices, recruitments of people and budgetary problems of the task.

22. MATTER RELATING TO APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS MAJESTY IN THE DZONGKHAGS

The Chimi of Gaylegphug stated that His Majesty in looking after the welfare of the people, may find it difficult to keep in close touch with the general public and be aware of their

trouble and difficulties. Therefore, he proposed that some arrangements be made between His Majesty the King and the people to keep His Majesty informed of the problems and difficulties of people in remote areas and of the implementation of law and order.

During the deliberations in the House, other members pointed out that for the welfare of the people and implementation of law and order, the Government has appointed Dzongdags, Thrimpons and other officials, who are the representative of His Majesty in the Dzongkhags. Moreover if there were any problems, the members could report directly to His Majesty when they met twice a year in the National Assembly.

In view of the above, the National Assembly resolved not to appoint Representative of His Majesty in the Dzongkhags.

23. MATTERS REGARDING IMPORT AND EXPORT OF FOOD COMMODITIES

The Chimi of Chirang requested to be informed of the quantum of export and import of different items of food commodities so that the people could increase internal production of those items which were imported heavily from other countries.

The Director of Trade and Commerce, appreciating the proposal of the public stated that the Government had set up 10 customs check-posts along the border to maintain records of commodities coming in and going out of the country. The Indo-Bhutan treaty provided for free transit of goods through the border between Bhutan and India. As restriction on the transit of goods and other commodities, would cause inconvenience to the public, a proper record could not be maintained so far. However, more efforts were being made to collect goods data.

The Director also informed the House of the import and export figures for 1981. He stated that the country's export during that year was worth Nu.20 crores and the items included 500 tons of rice, 800 tons of cardamom, 14,000 tons of oranges and 1000 tons of apple. The import was worth Nu.100 crores and included 5000 tons of rice and 1000 tons of wheat. He said that the country has not been able to increase its export to other countries other than India. Last year only 300 tons of cardamom was exported to Singapore. Imports were mainly vehicles.

The Director informed the House that Nepal had been the largest exporter of cardamom last year. But this year Bhutan had become the largest exporter. In this regard, he expressed the view that if the production of cardamom increased, it may become difficult to get remunerative prices. As this would adversely affect the growers, the National Assembly would have to give deep thought and careful consideration to the matter.

24. MATTER RELATING TO ELECTION OF ROYAL ADVISORY COUNCILLORS

The Chimi of Chirang stated that during the election of a Royal Advisory Councillor, a candidate nominated by the Public had to again contest an election in the capital during which all members of the Assembly cast votes. In this manner of voting, members were not always aware of the qualifications and capabilities of the candidates and as a result unsuitable candidates could get elected. Therefore, he requested to be informed of the election procedures for Royal Advisory Councillors.

During deliberation in the Assembly, it was pointed out that a Councillor's constituency covered more than one Dzongkhag. Therefore, all candidates nominated from the Dzongkhags of a particular constituency could not be elected as Councillors with regard to casting of votes during the election of Councillors by all the National Assembly Members, it was pointed out that a councillor did not work for one particular constituency but for the whole country and therefore, must be elected by votes cast by all members. On the question of lack of knowledge and capabilities of the councillors standing for elections by the members, it was pointed that the bio-data of the candidates were read to the House before the elections.

The Chairman of the Royal Advisory Council stated that there were rules and regulations which the Royal Advisory Council followed. However, the present rules and regulations were being revised at the command of His Majesty the King. The revised rules and regulations would be presented to the next session of the National Assembly.

25. MATTER REGARDING A DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Chimi of Gaylegphug stated that there had been discussions on appointment of a Deputy Speaker earlier. As there had been no appointment so far, he requested for clarification.

The Hon'ble Speaker stated that earlier there had been discussions on the appointment of a Deputy Speaker. However, for short period in the absence of the Speaker, the Assembly Secretary could also function as the Speaker under the guidance of His Majesty the King or a new Speaker could be elected from among the members if circumstances so demand.

26. MATTERS REGARDING TO ACCOMODATION FOR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS IN THIMPHU

The Chimi of Dagapela requested that accommodation for the National Assembly members be provided during Assembly sessions in Thimphu.

The Finance Secretary pointed out that accommodation for the members had been provided once at the Changlimithang guest house, together with bus for their local transport. However, only a few member had stayed there and since the guest house was lying empty it was turned into the office of the Thimphu Dzongkhag Administration. He agreed that it was important to provide accommodation for the National Assembly members, but the proposal could not be included in the Fifth Plan. Therefore, the proposal would be considered for the Sixth Plan.

The Assembly endorsed the Finance Secretary's statement.

27. MATTERS RELATING TO NATIONAL LANGUAGE

The Chimi of Chang and Babesa, and Geta and Bongo requested that in order to maintain national identity, house and vehicle numbers and account records be written in Dzongkha. This would enable persons educated in the National Language to be employed, thereby reducing expenditure and dependence on non-nationals.

On behalf of the Government, the Finance Secretary stated that the public proposal and the Government intentions were similar. In this regard some action had already been taken. He stated that a notification directing that all concerned official correspondence and accounts to be conducted in Dzongkha had already been circulated. With regard to vehicle numbers, while the idea was good, it was necessary to study whether such actions would cause any inconvenience. He stated that the Home Ministry, the Royal Bhutan Police and the Finance Ministry would study the proposal. If no inconvenience are encountered, then the change into Dzongkha would be made. He further stated that house numbers and office sign boards would be written both in Dzongkha and English. However, possible, accounts would be maintained in Dzongkha.

The National Assembly endorsed the Finance Secretary's statement and resolved that correspondence, accounts, sign boards of offices, house numbers and milestone would be as far as possible be written in Dzongkha.

28. MATTER REGARDING SACRIFICE OF ANIMALS DURING RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES

The Chimi of Sarbhang proposed that as a religious Country, the sacrifice of animals for religious ceremonies be banned.

The Representative of the Central Monastic Body, Tshenyi Lopen stated that the Central Monastic Body and other monastic bodies had been following the resolutions passed in the earlier sessions. He pointed out that killing for religious ceremonies was like killing a son and offering him to the mother. Therefore, he strongly recommended a ban on the sacrifice of animals.

During the deliberations, it was pointed that in Tashigang area, people had voluntarily stopped sacrificing animals for religious ceremonies. Similarly, the Assembly felt that the ban on sacrifice of animals should be introduced in all Dzongkhags. During the course of discussion some members also raised the question of decreasing the price of meat.

The National Assembly resolved that the sacrifice of animals for religious ceremonies would be banned. With regard to the price of meat, the National Assembly decided that the Trade Ministry in consultation with Finance Ministry study the prices and present a report to the next session.

29. MATTER REGARDING THE INCREASE OF PORTER WAGES

The Chimi of Lingshi requested that porter wages for carrying Government and military goods be increased.

In response, the Goongleon, explained that during earlier sessions, the public themselves had agreed to transport military goods. However, realizing the problems of the people the army itself had taken the task of transporting military goods. Whenever porters were hired, the army paid Nu. 7/- per day, yet often porters were not available. He added that the public

should also consider such problems and difficulties of the army. With regard to the increase of wages, he stated that, the Royal Bhutan Army would abide by whatever rates the Royal Government decided.

On this issue the Finance Secretary pointed out that before increasing the wages, a study will have to be carried on the requirement and availability of fund. If the increase in wages did not effect the plan budget, decision on wage increase would be taken in consultation with the Home Ministry.

The National Assembly endorsed the statement of the Finance Secretary.

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