

**PROCEEDINGS AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED IN THE 25TH SESSION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF BHUTAN HELD ON 22ND SEPTEMBER, 1966**

1. MATTER RELATING TO UNIFORMITY IN TAXATION IN SOUTHERN AND INTERIOR BHUTAN

The House noted that there were two different taxation policies in the country under the one King. Therefore, with a view of ensure uniformity in taxation, the Assembly resolved that, after the classification of land in Southern Bhutan by a special team, taxes there would henceforth be levied at par with those of Interior Bhutan.

2. MATTER RELATING TO UNPAID WAGES

The Assembly was informed that owing to discrepancies in the muster roll regarding father's name/village, some labourers had not been paid their wages. As such, it was decided that the district Thrimpons and Chimis/Gups should enquire into the matter and submit the list of labourers with the required details to the Secretariat, Royal Government of Bhutan, for the settlement of the unpaid wages. At the same time, the fund for unpaid wages which was with the road construction authorities was to be handed over to the Secretariat.

3. MATTER RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PETROL PUMPS

With a view to easing the petrol problem of the Gaylegphug/Samdrupjongkhar areas, the Assembly resolved that new petrol pumps be installed at both the places by the Co-operative Society (Chithuen Tshong Khang).

4. MATTER RELATING TO BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

The house was informed that the Dzongkha books supplied to schools in various Dzongkhags by the Education Department should be collected back since they were not in accordance with Chhoekha, the classical language. As such, the Assembly decided that the teaching of classical language should continue as before. However, the Education Department was to appoint competent Dzongkha teachers to schools in Southern and Eastern Bhutan to teach Dzongkha.

5. MATTER RELATING TO THE COST OF EXPROPRIATED LAND

Some Assembly members requested that the sum of Nu. 200/- per 'Langdo' paid for the public land expropriated by the government for developmental works be enhanced. The Assembly rejected the request.

6. MATTER RELATING TO EXEMPTION OF SALES TAX ON POTATOES

The public of Chapcha, Khen and Samdrupjongkhar requested that they be exempted from sales tax on potatoes. In view of the fact the sale tax levied on potatoes sold in the domestic market was only nominal, the Assembly resolved not to accord the said exemption.

7. MATTER RELATING TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT TO THE ASSEMBLY

Under the command of His Majesty the King, HRH Prince Namgye Wangchuck, Paro Penlop, accompanied by Secretary General, Dawa Tsering and Bhutan Trade Commissioner Mr. Bakshi visited Delhi, India, for a series of meetings with the Indian Foreign Minister Mr. Swaran Singh, the Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Dinesh Singh, the Foreign Secretary Mr. Batkamar and Mr. Bhutani. The decisions arrived at during their meetings and as reported to the National Assembly by the Secretary General were as follows :

- i) With a view to affirming Bhutan's independence and sovereignty, His Majesty the King had earlier approached the government of India regarding Bhutan's proposed membership of the Universal Postal Union. However, the Government of India had kept the matter pending.

Informing the house that the Universal Postal Union comprised of 130 member states, the Secretary General stated that the government of India had formally written for Bhutan's membership to the Universal Postal Union, and that the confirmation in this regard was expected to arrive within 10 days. While spelling out the reasons why Bhutan had sought membership of the Universal Postal Union, the Secretary General explained that it would both consolidate Bhutan's status as an independent country and help generate revenue through the export of postal stamps.

- ii) It was observed that money orders were taking a great deal of time in reaching their destination for they were being routed through many post office in India. Therefore,

in order to receive immediate responses in regard to the money orders, it was now finalized to make smooth arrangements. In view of the fact that the government of India levied charges on the trunk calls booked from Bhutan to India, the Royal Government also decided to do the same for trunk calls used from India to Bhutan. Considering this problem, it was resolved to execute an agreement between the two countries so that the revenue earned through such trunk calls could be shared equally.

- iii) The Secretary General reported that the petrol purchased from India had been subjected to import duties of Nu. 500/- to Nu. 600/- on Nu. 1000/- worth of petrol. While talks on the exemption of import duties on petrol were being held, the quantity of oil imported to date would be checked by the customs authorities of Jaigaon, India and the sub-divisional officer of Southern Bhutan. The information would then be submitted to Gongto Saheb (political officer) in Gangtok for the government of India, who would arrange to refund the amount in question to the government of Bhutan. In this context, the house was informed that the Gongto Saheb had agreed to refund Nu.16 lakhs on account of import duties on petrol collected by the Government of India since 1964.
- iv) With a view to generating more revenue, it was decided to establish three industries in the country. These included gypsum manure industry at Shumar, Samdrupjongkhar, cement industry at Samchi and tea ball industry in any suitable location of Southern Bhutan. The financial assistance needed for the establishment of these industries was being sought from the government of India. The government of India stated that it would be necessary to study the feasibility of the three projects, which may cost over two lakhs. As such, the government of India suggested that these projects be implemented in the 2nd Five Year Plan. The Government of Bhutan hoped that the financial help being requested would be made available to it by the Government of India.
- v) The house was informed of His Majesty's command to mint one crore Tigchung in India. As the minting (Tigtsa) were not available in India, it would have to be imported. This would cost the government of Bhutan about 9 lakhs in hard currency which was being procured. The House also learnt that the country would be benefited by Nu. 36 lakhs after having paid the costs for the minting materials and the minting charges.

- vi) The House was also informed that the budget estimate during the 2nd Five Year Plan had been estimated at Nu.22 crores. The Government of India had advised that the heads of expenditure be submitted for verification or else that Indian deputanists in Bhutan be invited for discussions on the questions. The Indian Government had already pointed out that agriculture, education and engineering should be the priority sectors during 2nd Five Year Plan.
- vii) The Government of India had intimated that it would be better for the Royal Government if the Department under development submitted their revenues after meeting their expenditure. During his discussions with Indian officials, the Secretary General responded that the balance from the revenues after meeting expenditure were being utilized for maintenance in the Ministry of Finance. The Secretary General informed the Assembly regarding the statement of an Indian news paper that Bhutan's security was being fully protected by the Government of India. When the matter was brought up with Indian officials in the meeting, they later clarified that the report had been published without the knowledge of the Government of India, which had neither given the said information nor deemed it necessary to do so.

8. MATTER RELATING TO SHEMGANG RABDEY

The public of Shemgang pointed out that the villages in Shemgang being isolated from the rest of the country, it was a great problem for the public to contact monks during such occasions as death/birth ceremonies and puja performances. It was therefore requested that a Rabdey be established in Shemgang, for which the people themselves would provide the rations. The Assembly resolved that a Rabdey comprising 16 monks would be established in Shemgang, and that stipends and rations would be supplied by the Government.

9. MATTER RELATING TO THE VISIT OF OCULISTS.

The House was informed that a group of Indian oculists would soon be visiting Bhutan for treating people with eye problems. The group which would also distribute spectacles free of cost, would visit Ha, Paro, Thimphu, Tashigang, Sarbhang and Samchi. Therefore the Gups/Chimis were directed to notify all the blind/eye patients to be present at any one of the above places. The expenditure for the oculists would be borne by the Ministry of Development.

10. MATTER RELATING TO THE AMALGAMATION OF SHINGKCHAR LAURI WITH SOUTHERN ZONE

Shingkhari Lauri was merged with the Southern Zone as it was located close to the border. However, the house resolved to accept the request of the public of Shingkhari Lauri that their village be reamalgamated with Tashigang Dzongkhag.

11. MATTER RELATING TO THE REDUCTION OF VEHICLE FARE

The following vehicles fares were fixed with effect from 1.10.1966

- 1 Phuntsholing to Thimphu by Truck - Nu. 12/- per man Nu. 15/- in front seat.
2. Phuntsholing to Paro - Nu. 11/- per man Nu. 15/- front seat.
3. Phuntsholing to Thimphu by bus - Nu. 16/- per man Nu. 16/- in front seat.
4. Phuntsholing to Paro by bus - Nu. 15/- per man Nu. 15/- in front seat.
5. Paro to Thimphu by truck - Nu. 4/- per man Nu. 4/- in front seat.
6. Paro to Thimphu by bus - Nu. 5.50 per man Nu. 5.50 in front seat.
7. S/Jongkhar to T/Gang by truck - Nu. 12/- per man Nu. 15/- in front seat.
8. S/Jongkhar to T/Gang by bus - Nu. 18/- per man Nu. 18/- in front seat.