

**ASSEMBLY DECISIONS DURING THE 34TH SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
HELD FROM
APRIL 29TH - 21ST MAY, 1971**

1. MATTER RELATING TO WOODEN SHINGLE ROOFING AT WANGDI-PHODRANG

As per resolution No. 1 of the 31st session of the National Assembly held on the 6th month of the Earth Bird Year, it was decided that the wooden shingle roofing of Wangdiphodrang Dzong would be replaced by CGI sheets. However, it was felt that the wind at Wangdiphodrang being extremely strong, it would be risky to install CGI sheets. As such, the Assembly resolved that the wooden shingles would be kept intact till the government provided tile roofing later.

2. MATTER RELATING TO REPAIR AND RENOVATION OF LHUNTSHI DZONG

Resolution No. 8 of the 31st Assembly session stipulated the repair and renovation of Lhuntshi Dzong. However, the work had not yet started even after the expiry of two years, the delay being attributed to the construction of mule tracks at Senkhar (on the northern side of Kurteo) and the unavailability of labourers till the 30th day of the 12th month of the Iron Hog Year. It was decided that if the Dzong work could not be started till then, the renovation work should begin with effect from the 1st day of 1st month of the Water Rat Year, and the matter reported to the Hon'ble Home Minister. In the event that the instruction was not implemented, the Assembly resolved to penalize the Dzongda, Ramjams, four chimis and six gups of Lhuntshi Districts.

3. MATTER RELATING TO BAN ON SMUGGLED GOODS

Resolution No. 9 of the 33rd session of the Assembly held in the Iron Hog Year prohibited the entry of smuggled goods from Nepal. However, in view of a slight confusion in the resolution, the matter was again brought up in the Assembly, which decided that smuggled goods not only from Nepal but also from any other foreign country would be restricted entry into Bhutan. Accordingly, strict checks were to be conducted at all border posts of Southern Bhutan. This restriction, however, did not affect the import of foreign goods for Government use under proper license from the Government.

4. MATTER RELATING TO APPOINTMENT OF NEW SPEAKER

The stipulated three year term of Dasho Kesang as Speaker having expired, the Assembly nominated Dalop Tshewang Pelmo from the Monk Body, Dasho Shingkar Lam from Government officials and Mr. Koleyam from the public. In the subsequent ballot, Dasho Shingkar Lam obtained the majority vote of 107. As such he was elected Speaker with effect from the Iron Pig Year Session.

5. MATTER RELATING TO CONFIDENCE VOTE ON HIS MAJESTY THE KING

As per the decision taken on May 30, 1970 in the National Assembly according to the agreement (point No. 2) made in the constitutional monarchy, a second vote of confidence was taken on His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo on May 6, 1971. Out of the total strength of 137 members, 133 voted in favour of His Majesty the King and 4 against. As such His Majesty the King was empowered to continue to rule the Kingdom.

6. MATTER RELATING TO SUBMISSION OF POINTS TO THE ASSEMBLY

Some petitions presented to the current Assembly Session for deliberation were devoid of names and signatures. After debate on the matter it was decided that henceforth, in the event that the public of a particular district wished to submit a petition to the Assembly relating to their own grievances or to government matters, a meeting of the public of that district should be held before the session, and the petition drawn up with stamps affixed and signed by the Gups, Chimis (Representatives) and the Assistant Gups with their proper names. The petition should also be signed by 7 to 10 prominent persons of the district before being submitted to the Assembly. In case a member felt that he was unable to speak clearly in the Assembly he was required to draw up petition and submit it to the Speaker properly signed and stamped before the Assembly began.

7. MATTER RELATING TO DOCUMENTATION IN THE ASSEMBLY

It was decided that on the first day of the Assembly all petitions submitted should be placed on the Speaker's table. Each petition should be marked alphabetically and, after counting them the Hon'ble Home Minister should initial them. The petition should then be read and debated point by point. It was also resolved that all petitions and correspondence relating to the Assembly should be kept with the clerk of the National Assembly.

8. MATTER RELATING TO THE TAX ON APPLE ORCHARDS

Though previously apple orchards were not taxed, it was decided that hence-forth, after measurement in acres, a tax would be levied on them at the same rate as on dry land. For orchards where the number of fruit-bearing apple trees were less than 30, only land tax would be levied, whereas on orchards where the number of apple trees exceeded 31, and additional tax would also be levied @ Nu. 4/- per tree from the third years's crops onwards. People who had already planted orchards on government land would be exempted from paying the cost of land. However, from now onwards, those planting orchards on government would be required to pay the cost of land at the equivalent rate of dry land.

9. MATTER RELATING TO REVISION OF CARDAMOM TAX

Till now the export tax on cardamom per maund was Nu. 15/-. In view of the good market the product fetched, the Assembly resolved to revise the export tax on cardamom to Nu. 20/- per maund with effect from 1971.

10. MATTER RELATING TO TOLL TAX ON EXPORT OF TIMBER

Till now no Toll tax had been levied on exported timber, and it was decided that no tax would be levied on timber already sold outside Bhutan by the Department of Forest up to May, 1971. Henceforth, however, a tax of Nu.15/- per truck load would be imposed on timber exported either on a coupe or a tender basis. The Forest Department was required to inform the Finance Ministry of the time and date of sale of timber so that the said Ministry could collect the tax accordingly.

11. MATTER RELATING TO INCREASE OF INCOME TAX

Till now income tax at the rate of 1% was levied on persons drawing above Nu. 200/- as their basic pay. It was decided that there would be an increase in the rate with effect from June 1, 1971 as follows:

Upto	Nu 299	- No Income Tax			
	Nu. 300	- Nu. 899	- Income Tax at	2%	
	Nu. 900	- Nu. 1,499	“ “	3%	
	Nu. 1,500	- Nu. 1,999	“ “	4%	
	Nu. 2,000	- and above	“ “		5%

12. MATTER RELATING TO FIXATION OF REVENUE STAMPS FOR CASH TRANSACTIONS

Hitherto, in all government accounts, a revenue stamps worth 10 ch. was required to be affixed for all cash withdrawals above Nu. 20/-. The Assembly resolved that henceforth a revenue stamp worth 20 ch. should be affixed for all cash withdrawals above Nu. 50/-.

13. MATTER RELATING TO TAX ON ORANGE TREES

Till now, orange tax had been levied only on the people of Southern Bhutan, but not on the people of interior Bhutan. Henceforth, the Assembly resolved that orange tax would also be levied on the owners of orange plantations in interior Bhutan on a par with that levied in Southern Bhutan, i.e. @ 50 ch per tree.

14. MATTER RELATING TO EXPORT OF POTATOES

To date, in view of the unpromising potato export market, no tax was imposed on the export of potatoes. Now, with the potato export market having turned highly profitable, the Assembly resolved to levy a tax of Nu. 2/- per maund on the export of potatoes.

15. MATTER RELATING TO THE APPROVAL OF THE CIVIL BUDGETS

As per resolution No. 6 of the 33rd session of the National Assembly of Bhutan held in the 9th month of the Iron Hog Year, the Hon'ble Finance Minister had prepared a budget estimate indicating the income and the expenditure of the government for the calendar year 1971, which was submitted to the Assembly for scrutiny. The Assembly gave it seal of approval to the documents, which was duly countersigned by the Speaker and returned to the Hon'ble Finance Minister.

16. MATTER RELATING TO RURAL INSURANCE OF PUBLIC HOUSE

It was reported that the people whose houses were gutted by fire, washed away by floods or destroyed by the earthquake faced great problems. As such, it was decided that private houses should be insured against fire, flood and earthquake. The insurance premiums should be deposited with the government annually. However, the compensations thereof would be paid in the following manner with effect from 1st June 1971. Those not paying the premium

would not be entitled to the compensation. In the event of any of the above mishaps, the government's responsibility would cease after payment of compensation. The concerned Dzongda, Gups and Chimis would investigate the mishap and report accordingly to the government.

Class of houses Premium to be pai Compensation

Class I house	Nu. 4 per year	8,000.00
Class II house	Nu. 3 per year	6,000.00
Class III house	Nu. 2 per year	4,000.00
Class IV house	Nu. 1 per year	2,000.00

17. MATTER RELATING TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF SUSPENSION BRIDGE

As discussed before, the Ministry of Development had planned to construct 26 suspension bridges but owing to the curtailments of the budget by the Indian Government, the number of bridges to be constructed had to be reduced. Accordingly it was decided that it would not be possible to construct the following bridges during the 3rd Five Year Plan.

- i. Tongsa Pangchu ii. Chummauney
- iii. Roglai Nadi iv. Galochhu Khola
- v. Chamkhar Zam vi. Bongo Chumizom

Thus, of the 20 suspension bridges remaining on the list, it was decided that 8 bridges be constructed in the following places during 1971, they were scheduled to be completed by 1972.

- i. Dorokha ii. Khenphangkhar iii. Chengmari iv. Punakha Pochu
- v. Lamidara vi. Tashigang Dukti
- vii. Shar Dangchu viii. Punakha Mochu

However, the expenditure for the construction of Mochu bridge in Punakha would be met from the budget of road construction and was therefore excluded from the suspension bridge budget. For the construction of the even other bridges, labourers would have to be supplied by the people of the concerned areas, and their wages would be paid by the Ministry of

Development at the rate of Nu.3/- per male and Nu.2.50 per female per day. The Assembly has resolved that until the completion of these bridges, the Ministry of Development would provide rations for the labourers at subsidized rates.

18. MATTER RELATING TO ENTITLEMENTS OF CHUNIDOM PERSONEL FOR EXEMPTION

As per resolution No. 23 of the 32nd session of the National Assembly of Bhutan, the entitlements of Thencha from Shaptolayme were withdrawn for the sake of the public welfare. However, it was reported that this withdrawal had caused inconvenience to the villagers. Following considerable discussion on the matter, it was decided that henceforth the exemption of persons from labour would be revised as follows :

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| i. | Ministers | - 4 servants |
| ii. | Deputy Ministers | - 3 servants |
| iii. | Red Scarf Officers | - 2 servants |
| iv. | Ramjams | - 1 servant |
| v. | Village Headman (gup) | - 4 persons |
| vi. | Chimis | - 3 persons |
| vii. | Chipons and Gups clerk | - 3 persons each |

However, in the light of the spiritual service rendered by the monk bodies, it was resolved to accord the following exemptions:

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| i. | His Holiness Je Khenpo | - 5 servants |
| ii. | Ex-Khenpos | - 3 servants |
| iii. | Four Lopens | - 2 each. |
| iv. | All Lam Netens of different Dzongs | - 1 each |
| v. | Paro Dongkai Lam, Thimphu Lhuntsholam, Talakshai Lam, Paro Dompala Lam, Shelnga Nepa Lam, Thimphu Chising Lam, Punakha Ritsho Lam, Cheri Omzay, Paro Taktsang Lam and Bumthang Choda Lam and the Secretary (Lhakhang) for Rabdeys are entitled to exempt one servant each while the Secretary (Lhakhang) of Central Monk Body is entitled to exempt 2 persons. | |

19. MATTER RELATING TO CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGES IN DIFFERENT VILLAGES

Except in the case of suspension bridges, no fund would be made available for the renovation of small village bridges. However, cement, T&P and blasting materials as required for the work would be provided by the Ministry of Development for the repair or construction of these small bridges. It was resolved that, since the blasting materials were dangerous, they would be given to the Dzongda concerned who would in turn distribute them to the concerned Gups, who would be responsible for any risks.

20. MATTER RELATING TO MEAT BUSINESS

Bhutan being a Buddhist country, there had hitherto been a restriction on the import of animals such as cattle, pigs, sheep, goats and fowls for consumption from the border to the interior. However, taking into consideration both the public requirement and the changing times, the Assembly decided to lift the above ban. As such permission was granted to import the above animals for sale. Regarding the prices of the same it was decided that if changes were found necessary, the rate could be fixed by the cabinet ministers in consultation with the Royal Advisory Council.

21. MATTER RELATING TO RENOVATION OF MONASTERIES

Previously the people settling in the vicinity of monasteries were not required to pay internal tax (Nangthrel) or to provide compulsory labour as they had to undertake the repair and renovation works of the monasteries in their respective places. With the launching of development projects in the country they were providing labour and paying internal tax (Nangthrel) like other members of the public, because of which the monasteries began to be badly affected for want of repair and renovation. In view of the deep religious significance of the monasteries the Assembly resolved that the people settling in their vicinity would be exempted from tax and labour works, instead of which they would be required to carry out the repairs and renovation of the monasteries as before, irrespective of whether they belonged to the government or the public. However, they would have to pay Juthrel.

22. MATTER RELATING TO THE EXPENDITURE ON PA-ZANGPA OF PUNAKHA

In keeping with tradition, 150 Pa-Zangpa (heroes) from Tshochen and 18 from Lingmu came to Punakha Dzong annually for the ceremony of Gewang Dupchu, for which their expenses were borne by the public themselves. However, in view of the hardships thus suffered by the

public, the Assembly resolved that henceforth the expenses of the Pa-Zangpa including their clothing would be provided by the Government. It was decided to fix the number of Pa-Zangpa including Gups and Zimpons to 148. The Gho, Hat, Shoes, Woolen shawls (chari) Tego and Khamar required as per tradition would be given by the government and should be kept with the Dzongda.

23. MATTER RELATING TO RECRUITMENT OF ARMY OFFICERS

It was found that there were comparatively few Army officers in the defence forces. After discussing the matter, the Assembly decided that henceforth 16 students from the matriculate level and above would be recruited every year for a period of three years with effect from 1971. First division students would be employed in civil departments as per their choice, whereas 16 boys obtaining second division or below would be recruited for the Army by the Cabinet Ministers and Royal Advisory Council. In the event of necessary amendments in the above, the Assembly would again take up the matter after three years.

24. MATTER RELATING TO RECRUITMENT OF ARMY PERSONNEL

As per resolution No.18 of the 33rd session of the Assembly held in the 11 month of the Iron Dog Year, even Thencha would be recruited in the Army if found medically fit and physically able.

25. MATTER RELATING TO PROVISIONS OF SCHOLARSHIPS TO STUDENTS

The boys and girls of the country received free education at government expenses. Unfortunately, however many of the girls got married while still in school. As such it was felt that the expenditure on their education had gone to waste. The Assembly accordingly decided that the cabinet Ministers and the Royal Advisory Councillors should frame appropriate rules to ensure that henceforth all students would prove useful to the government.

26. MATTER RELATING TO GRANT OF CONTRACT FOR GOVERNMENT WORKS

As nationals were unable to undertake the contract works for the construction of government buildings, it was felt necessary to employ non-national contractors for major works such as

the construction of the Assembly Hall and hotels, industrial units. The Ministers and Royal Advisory Councillors were to select the possible construction sites and report back to His Majesty the King. All major contract works of the government departments were to be given to the PWD, which was to begin work on them immediately. Smaller construction works not finished by the PWD were to be given to the national contractors after calling for tenders. The Royal Government of Bhutan was to call for tenders for the building construction works of the Army. Those offering tenders were to possess landed properties or building to be eligible for selection. The Assembly resolved that the bidder would not be permitted to transfer or sell the contract to other persons.

27. MATTER RELATING TO PRESERVATION OF PRECIOUS ARTICLES

Owing to the danger of theft of precious articles from Government owned monasteries/temples, it was decided that henceforth all such articles would be preserved and safeguarded by the government. They would be collected and be kept in the Dzong of the concerned districts. Relevant rules for the collection and preservation of such precious articles should be made by the cabinet Ministers in consultation with a Monk Representative from the Royal Advisory Council.

28. MATTER RELATING TO CUSTOM ACT

Exclusive of Indian goods, no customs duty had hitherto been levied on foreign goods. However, as per Resolution No.7 of 33rd session of the National Assembly, the Ministers and the Royal Advisory Councillors framed a rule in this connection in keeping with the practices of other countries. After certain amendments, the Assembly passed it for enforcement.

29. MATTER RELATING TO BHUTAN CIVIL SERVANT RULES

As per His Majesty's command, the Ministers and Royal Advisory Councillors framed the Bhutan Civil Service Rules containing chapters 6 for the civil servants. After considerable discussion, the house amended the original document to article 4 and accordingly approved it for enforcement.

30. MATTER RELATING TO THE SERVICE RULES OF MINISTERS

The rules consisting 15 articles pertaining to the service rules of the Ministers were approved by the Assembly after necessary amendments.

31. MATTER RELATING TO THE INTRODUCTION OF FAMILY PLANNING IN BHUTAN

In view of the increase in the country's population, it was decided that a family planning programme would be introduced in Bhutan shortly by the Ministry of Development. This was being done in the context of the possible insufficiency of land and property should the number of children increase, especially in a poor family. The Ministry would provide contraceptives and doctors for the programme at all existing hospitals and dispensaries. Birth control facilities would be made available from the hospitals/dispensaries to parents wishing to limit their families.

32. MATTER RELATING TO IMPORT OF FOREIGN LABOUR

Owing to the increase in developmental projects, foreign labourers were being brought in for various construction works. This was considered risky for the country's future. Therefore, besides the PWD and DANTAK, no private parties would be permitted to bring in foreign labourers. As those already brought in were being sent back, no one would henceforth be permitted to import foreign labour. The labour engaged with the appropriate departments were to be registered under strict managements.