

**PROCEEDINGS AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE 56TH SESSION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HELD FROM 25TH JUNE 1982 TO 1ST JULY, 1982**

1. MATTERS RELATING TO THE REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION OF ROYALTY ON
TIMBER USED FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT WORKS

The Chimi of Sha Bjina and Rubisa, and the Chimi of Gaylegphug proposed to the National Assembly that the 50% royalty imposed on timber used for rural development works such as construction of dispensaries, primary schools, animal husbandry and agriculture extension centers should be exempted.

In response the Director of Forests explained that neither the Government policies nor the rules and regulations of the Forest Department provided for exemption of forest royalty. Moreover, for raising the internal resources during the Vth Plan, revenues from forest royalties had been earmarked as an important source. Therefore, any reduction of forest royalty would pose severe difficulties in meeting increased revenues. It was also pointed out that the current 50% forest royalty did not affect the public as they are paid by the concerned department utilizing the timber. The Director urged the Chimis to emphasize increases in forest revenues as a source for greater revenue generation in their own Dzongkhags.

The National Assembly resolved that as forest royalties levied on timber required by the rural development works did not affect the public and as forest royalties were important sources for increasing revenues required for the Fifth Plan, the existing forests royalties rules would not be changed.

2. MATTERS REGARDING PROPOSALS FOR PROVISION OF RENUMERATIONS TO
FOREST FIRE GUARDS (MISUP).

The Chimi of Chakaling Mongar reported to the National Assembly that as forests are an important resource in the country, the Government and the people must protect the forest against the fires. He stated that the responsibilities entrusted to forest fire guards were enormous and that they were often penalized in the event of forest fires. As no remunerations were being paid to forest fire guards, it was increasingly difficult to appoint forest fire guards. He proposed that the government provide some remuneration to forest fire guards.

In response, the Director of Forests stated that the appointment of forest fire guards is now a long established system. He pointed out that forests are an important resources both to the people and to the Government. The people derive much of their daily necessities from the forest and the Government derives much revenues from forest. In earlier sessions of the National Assembly, detailed discussions have been held and decisions have been taken regarding the responsibilities and appointments of forest fire guards. He proposed that the established system be retained and not be revised.

As regards the provision of remunerations to forest fire guards, he stated that it would be difficult particularly in view of the fact that the government was trying to reduce the maintenance expenditure of the Royal Government, a policy which has approval of the National Assembly. Any expenditure that would increase the maintenance cost would be contrary to the National Policy and therefore, it would be difficult for the Department of Forests to consider providing new remunerations for the forest fire guards.

His Majesty was pleased to command that as forests are an important national resource, the people of different Dzongkhags must shoulder the full responsibility of looking after the forests. While it was difficult for the Royal Government to consider providing remunerations to the forest fire guards, if forest fire guards do their duty by reporting forest fires to their communities and successfully put out forest fires, the Department of Forest would consider appropriate rewards.

3. QUESTIONS REGARDING THE BENEFITS THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT DERIVED BY JOINING THE WORLD BANK AND THE IMF.

The Chimi of Tewang and Bjime enquired on the benefits that the Royal Government had derived by joining the IMF and the World Bank.

In response, the Finance Secretary reported the National Assembly that Bhutan had joined the World Bank, IMF and the IDA last year. He reported that Bhutan benefited by membership in these organizations in many ways, firstly only independent countries could become members of these organizations, therefore, Bhutan's membership asserted her sovereign independent status. Secondly, the financial requirements for developing power, forest and mineral based industries in the Fifth Plan were substantial. The World Bank provides assistance for developing such sectors in the developing countries and it was expected that Bhutan would get such assistance. Thirdly, the above organizations would give technical assistance to

Bhutan by providing experts and consultants. Training facilities for Bhutanese officers would also be arranged by the above organizations in the Economic Development Institute.

The loans provided by the World Bank had only small interest with 10 years grace and repayable in 50 years. Staff from the World Bank had already been to Bhutan and detailed discussions on Bhutan's need for industrial development had been held. It was expected that more people would come from the World Bank to hold further discussions with the Royal Government.

4. MATTER REGARDING OPENING NEW BRANCHES OF BANK OF BHUTAN

The Chimi of Bhangtar reported to the National Assembly that it was difficult to change the Ngultrums into Rupees in many of the border areas as there was no branch of the Bank of Bhutan.

During the discussions in the Assembly, several chimis felt that arrangements should be made with Bank in the Indian border towns to facilitate the exchange of Ngultrums. Several chimis also expressed the view that the Ngultrums should be made the only legal currency within Bhutan.

In response, the Finance Secretary reported to the National Assembly that taking into account the difficulties of the people, 4 new branches of the Bank of Bhutan were opened last year. Opening of 4 more branches were also planned for this year.

The National Assembly resolved that the proposal of the Ministry of Finance to open more branches of the Bank of Bhutan was acceptable.

5. MATTERS REGARDING EXEMPTION OF LAND AND LIVESTOCK TAXES

The Chimi of Sha Kashe and Nisho reported to the National Assembly that in accordance with existing Government policies upto 10 numbers of cattle were exempted from taxes. However, beyond 10 numbers of cattle, taxes were levied on all cattle without any exemption. He proposed that irrespective of the number of cattle, 10 numbers should be exempted of taxes. With regard to land taxes, he reported that although upto two acres were granted exemptions, families with one member in Government service were not given any exemption. Moreover, such families were also not entitled to any welfare assistance such as construction

of houses and new land. He proposed that families of lower categories of Government servants who are unable to provide substantial assistance to their families should also be entitled for the exemption of two acres.

In response the Finance Secretary referred to the 52nd session of the National Assembly, wherein discussions to make the country more financially self-reliant were held. During that session, the public representatives had stated that while the tax exemption benefits introduced by HRH Ashi S.C.Wangchuk were beneficial to the people, in order to increase resources for the Government, the public were willing to force the exemptions. However in the same session, His Majesty in sympathetic consideration of the poor people, had commanded that the earlier exemptions be retained. The Finance Secretary further reported that in the 54th session of the National Assembly in accordance with new Government policies, tax exemption on sheep was introduced and the earlier exemption ceiling of 5 numbers of cattle was raised to 10 numbers. Areas yielding only one crop were also exempted of taxes.

The Finance Secretary reported that today Bhutan was probably the least taxed country in the World. He explained that while formulating the Fifth Plan, revenue forecast figures taking into account the present revenue exemptions and the additional financial assistance necessary to be sought from outside had been presented to the National Assembly and approved. He stated that further amendments and changes would make it difficult to implement the Fifth Plan. Moreover, it was his view that people with more than 10 cattle would have sufficient income and could not be considered among the poor. With regard to Government servants, he explained that in accordance with His Majesty's command, salaries of the government servants, had been increased, at the lowest levels by as much as 75%. Therefore, there could be no one who could not afford to pay tax on 2 acres in one year. He urged the National Assembly that in order to successfully implement the Fifth Plan, earlier decisions should not be changed.

His Majesty was pleased to command that families having one member in Government service were being given assistance by the Royal Government. In fact, whenever a person petitioned His Majesty for Kidu, irrespective of whether they are civil servants or not are being given assistance after examining their general welfare. No families of civil servants have been denied assistance.

The National Assembly resolved that the decisions of the 52nd and the 54th sessions adequately covered matters relating to tax exemptions. As the Fifth Plan was formulated

taking into account existing taxation policies there would be no changes in the earlier resolutions.

6. MATTERS REGARDING DISBURSEMENT OF SALARIES OF GOVERNMENT SERVANTS DURING THEIR OUT OF STATION SERVICE

The Chimi of Gaylegphug reported that Government servants during their out of station duty should not be made to come to their Headquarters for their salaries. He proposed that their salaries be sent by money order.

In response, the Finance Secretary reported in the National Assembly that prior to decentralization there was often the need of field staff to come to their Headquarters for their salaries and there were problems with regard to sending of salaries to staff in the field. However, with the introduction of decentralization, such problem no longer existed as most of the payments were made in the field by the Dzongkhags.

The Gaylegphug Dzongkhag reported to the National Assembly that matter regarding disbursements of salaries by money order had recently been discussed with and agreed by the Department of Posts & Telegraphs.

7. MATTERS REGARDING THE PROPOSAL FOR WEAPON TRAINING FOR THE MALE POPULATION

The Chimi of Bjina and Rubesa stated that as the country developed, the security of the country should also be strengthened. In order to do so he proposed that the Royal Bhutan Army Headquarters send weapon instructors to train all males between the age of 15 and above.

In response, the Goongleon stated that in his view the proposal was in the interest of the country. However, this being a policy matter, the National Assembly would have to decide. He further stated that should the National Assembly resolved that the trainings were required within the country, the Royal Bhutan Army would do their best to carry it out. However, he felt that at the present time there was a heavy commitment to development works, the people may have difficulties in keeping with them. In fact the Royal Bhutan Army had been called into carry out some of the works which were beyond the scope of the public.

During the discussions many Chimis stated that while the subject of the security of the country was important, with the blessing of His Majesty, Bhutan had good relations with her neighbouring countries and had no enemies. As there were many important works that would have to be done within the Fifth Plan, they proposed that at the present time concentration should be given to complete the development works in hand and postpone the matter of weapon training.

In keeping with the above views the National Assembly resolved that the matter of weapon training be postponed for the future.

8. MATTERS RELATED TO THE INDO-BHUTAN TRADE AGREEMENT

The Chimi of Gaylegphug enquired whether the 1972 Trade Agreement between India and Bhutan had been re-negotiated and a new agreement signed. He requested to be informed of the details.

In response, the Director of Trade & Commerce reported to the National Assembly that the 1972 Trade Agreement had been made for 10 years. Although there was a provision for changes if either of the parties felt it necessary, the 10 years of the agreement has already lapsed. He reported that the agreement had mainly concentrated on trade, which has developed substantially during the last few years. Such fast developments in trade had not been envisaged at the time of signing of the agreement, subsequently several problems had emerged. The Royal Government has already informed the Government of India of its desires to re-negotiate the trade agreement and accordingly two meetings have already been held.

The Director further reported that the new agreement envisages 11 main points and except for one or two issues both the Government of India and Bhutan had broadly agreed on the others. It was necessary for the representatives of two governments to meet again before being able to conclude the talks. It was expected that the talks would be held soon and the agreements signed, in which case it would be reported to the National Assembly in the next session. The Director explained that the primary objective of the trade agreement was for the development of the country. The Government of India were already providing assistance in the development of trade and talks were expected to conclude well.

Some Chimis stated that once agreements are signed it was difficult to change them. They stated that while 1949 treaty provided for free movement of goods across the border, they

observed that movement of some goods including food items were being restricted. They stated that such matters should be discussed in the trade talks.

The National Assembly resolved that the issue of restriction of movement of some goods across the border must be taken up when the representatives of the two Governments meet to re-negotiate the trade agreement.

9. MATTERS REGARDING TRADE WITH BANGLADESH

The Chimi of Gaylegphug stated that Bhutan and Bangladesh had established diplomatic relations with a view of improving relations and promoting trade. He requested to be informed whether any progress had been made.

In response the Director of Trade & Commerce stated that since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the friendship between the two countries have developed well. With regard to trade in particular, a trade agreement had been signed between Bhutan and Bangladesh in 1980. Accordingly, reports on what could be exported from Bhutan to Bangladesh had also been made. Currently the department was exploring the possibilities of whether the Bhutanese products could compete favourably in the market in Bangladesh. As for the trade route, the Government of India had given Calcutta for Bhutan exports to Dhaka and other Bangladesh ports. However, as most of Bhutanese exports are agricultural goods, it was found inconvenient to route them through Calcutta. Therefore, the Department was surveying for more convenient motorable, railroads and a waterway through Dubri. These matters had already been taken up with the Government of India. While India had broadly agreed, they have stated that there were several issues with regard to establishing customs offices and other matters to be taken care of first. The Director reported that after the above proposed routes were made available to Bhutan, trade with Bangladesh could start on a significant scale.

10. MATTERS REGARDING THE PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF RABDEY IN HAA

The Chimi of Haa reported that although Bhutan was a religious country, Haa did not have a Rabdey. They requested the Royal Government to establish a Rabdey in Haa.

During discussions it was pointed out that there would be many practical difficulties in establishing a Rabdey in Haa. It was instead proposed whether it would not be better if an existing Gompa be improved and strengthened.

His Majesty the King commanded that the decision of whether a Rabdey could be established in Haa would be taken by the National Religious Committee in consultation with the Dzongda and the Chimis of Haa.

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

11. MATTERS REGARDING APPOINTMENT OF NEW LAMAS IN CHIRANG AND LAMIDARA

The Chimis of Chirang Dzongkhag requested that in order to carry out Buddhist practices and rites, new lamas be appointed in Lamidara and Chirang.

In response, the Chairman of the National Religious Committee reported to the National Assembly that several requests had already been received from the public of Lamidara and Chirang for the appointment of new Lamas there. However, as it was not possible to find Lamas who were well versed in Nepali, the appointments had been delayed.

The Chirang chimi stated that it was not necessary to find a Lama well versed in Nepali as long as they were well trained in Buddhist practices in rites as there are many Dzongkha speaking and Sherpa people in Chirang. He requested that the Lama be appointed as soon as possible.

The National Assembly resolved that the National Religious Committee appoint appropriate Lamas for Lamidara and Chirang.

12. MATTERS REGARDING THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented its annual report to the session and the National Assembly was happy to note the spectacular progress and achievements the Ministry had made for the benefit of the country. Moreover at this time when Bhutan was short of funds to implement the 5th Plan, her membership of various UN agencies and other international development finance institutions from which funds are available was noted with great

satisfaction. The Assembly expressed the hope that the country would be benefitted greatly if the Ministry continued its efforts in this manner.

13. MATTERS REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

The Chimis of Tewang and Bjimey said that suggestions had been made several times to establish diplomatic relations with neighbouring countries and inquired as to the progress made so far in this regard.

In response, the Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that our country had established Honorary Consulates at Singapore and Hong Kong in keeping with the aspirations of the people. The purpose of setting up these Consulates was to maintain friendly relations with these countries and to improve the country's external trade as these two countries are among the world's major trading countries.

The Foreign Minister further stated that there was no need to rush and establish diplomatic relations with other countries immediately. People were being trained and preparations are being made to establish relations at the appropriate time. As present, Bhutan does not have enough revenue to meet Government expenditure and establishment of embassies would entail huge amounts of expenditure. Thus, it was to consider the matter carefully before any steps were taken in this direction.

14. MATTERS REGARDING SEA ROUTE FOR LANDLOCKED COUNTRIES

The Chimi of Tewang and Bjimey requested to know the benefits to be derived from the UN Law of the Sea to Bhutan.

The Chimi of Gaylegphug suggested that the Royal Government negotiate with India for a sea route.

The Foreign Minister in reply stated that the first United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea was held in 1958, and the 11th session of the Third Law of the Sea Conference was held early this year, and it was decided that the Final Act would be signed in Venezuela later this year, although the United States of America had indicated that it would not sign the Convention. In the Draft Convention on the Law of the Sea, an article had been incorporated according to which land-locked states would have the right of access to and from the sea and

freedom of transit through the territory of transit states by all means of transport. He, however, mentioned that the terms and modalities for exercising freedom of transit shall have to be agreed between the land-locked states and the transit states concerned through bilateral agreements, and that transit states, in the exercise of their sovereignty over their territory, shall have the right to take all measures necessary to ensure that the rights and facilities provided to land-locked states shall in no way infringe their legitimate interests.

The Foreign Minister said that both India and Bangladesh had agreed to provide adequate transit facilities to the sea for Bhutan's third country trade. Further, both these countries have also agreed to accord merchant ships sailing under the flag of Bhutan, treatment no less favourable than that accorded to ships of any other foreign country.

15. MATTERS REGARDING DRUK AIR

The Chimi of Gaylegphug enquired whether the Government was facing any difficulties in establishing Druk-Air service between India and Bhutan.

In reply, the Hon'ble Foreign Minister said that there were no problems as such in starting the Druk Air service except for the delivery of aircraft. The price of one aircraft was about Ngultrums two crores, including spares and accessories, and delivery of aircraft normally took 14 months after an order was placed. It was expected that the first aircraft would be delivered in November 1982 and by January 1983 air service would commence between Paro and Calcutta. He added that although a minimum of two aircrafts are required for starting an air service, funds to purchase the second aircraft had not been found. However, the Government was making arrangements to find the necessary funds. He also informed the Assembly that a Board of Directors has been formed for operating the Druk Air Corporation with HRH Ashi Sonam Choden Wangchuk as the Chairman, and Mr. Tshering Wangdi as the Managing Director with the responsibility for establishing the air services, including carrying out negotiations with the Indian Airlines.

16. MATTERS REGARDING THE BOUNDARY OF SHEMGANG DZONGKHAG

The Chimis of Shemgang reported to the National Assembly that there were many disputes regarding the Dzongkhag boundary with their neighbouring Dzongkhags. They requested the Government for an early settlement of the disputes.

In response, the Chief of Survey reported that there were some minor problems regarding boundaries of Shemgang with Bumthang, Gaylegphug and Samdrupjongkhar Dzongkhags. He proposed that the problems could be discussed with Minister of Home Affairs, concerned Dzongda and Chimi after the conclusion of the National Assembly.

The National Assembly resolved that as proposed by the Chief of Survey, the Dzongdas and Chimis of Shemgang, Bumthang, Gaylegphug and Samdrupjongkhar must discuss and solve the existing boundary problem with the Home Minister and the Chief of Survey.

17. MATTER REGARDING THE CIRCULATION OF INHERITANCE ACT

The Chimi of Gasey Tsowom and Umdaga requested that the Inheritance Act passed in the 52nd session of the National Assembly be circulated during the current session.

In response it was stated that as passed in the 52nd session of the National Assembly, the Inheritance Act in Dzongkha would be circulated during the current session.

18. MATTER REGARDING THE VALIDITY OF THE OLD OR NEW THRAM

The Chimi of Gasey Tshowom and Umdaga sought clarification on which of the two Thrams, old Thram or the new Thram was more valid.

In response, the representatives of the Judiciary reported to the National Assembly that the new thram would be mainly used. The old thram would still be referred to, to ensure that there are no fraudulent entries in the new thram. He further clarified that if entries in the new thram are not contested or disputed within 15 years after entry, the entry in the new thram would prevail. This provision had been made in the new Land Act and so far the Judiciary had not encountered any problems.

The National Assembly resolved that the provisions of the new Land Act should be followed.

19. MATTERS REGARDING PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY IN THE BORDER AREAS

The Chimis of Gaylegphug stated that Gaylegphug being on the Bhutan-India border, there were many risks to public safety. They requested the Government to take measures to lessen the risks to public safety and security.

Several Chimis stated that the problems reported by the Gaylegphug Chimis were common to all border Dzongkhags and therefore necessary to review the problems carefully. They suggested that if the local police force were not adequate to tackle the problems, co-operation of the nearby Indian Police Station should be sought. Some Chimis also suggested forming of community groups to deal with the problems.

His Majesty was pleased to command that there was risk to life and property along the border and that the Royal Bhutan Police would take the appropriate measures. As there were significant strength of forest guards along the border, they would help the Police in the matter. His Majesty commanded that after the current session, a meeting comprising of the Home Minister, all border Dzongkhag Dzongdags and Chimis and the Director of Forests be held to discuss solutions to the public safety problem along the border.

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

20. MATTERS RELATED TO THE PROPOSAL FOR RE-APPEARANCE OF ICSE EXAMINATION BY STUDENTS WHO FAILED.

The Chimi of Chirang proposed to the National Assembly that students who fail in ICSE examination should be given chance to re-appear even if it is at their own expense.

In response, the Director of Education explained that the existing policies did not permit failed students to re-appear the ICSE examinations. Moreover, it would be inconvenient as the question papers for the ICSE examinations had to come from the board in Delhi. However, he stated that in his view students who fail their ICSE should be allowed to re-appear as the investment of the Royal Government is about one lakh Ngultrums for each student to bring them upto the ICSE level, which would be wasted and the careers of the children spoiled even if they failed by a few points. The Director further stated that His Majesty had commanded that the education and Manpower policies be revised. During the revision, this point will be kept in mind. When the new policies were framed, they would be submitted to His Majesty the King, the Lhengyel Shungtshog and finally the National Assembly.

The Director informed the National Assembly that it was planned to constitute National Board of Education in Bhutan in the near future. Once such a Board was established, it would

be possible to consider whether students should be allowed to repeat their examination based on their previous performance.

21. MATTERS REGARDING THE CASH CROPS PRICING POLICY OF THE FOOD CORPORATION OF BHUTAN

The Chimi of Mongar stated that the cash crop prices offered by the Food Corporation of Bhutan should not be fixed annually. He proposed that the prices should fluctuate according to the prevailing market rates in India.

In response, on behalf of the Food Corporation of Bhutan, the Director of Agriculture stated that the primary task of the Food Corporation of Bhutan was to ensure adequate support prices and markets when prices fall and markets are low. The public were free to sell their cash crops in the open market wherever they could obtain higher rates than that of the Food Corporation of Bhutan.

During discussions, several chimis pointed out that the Indian market rates for cash crops were most unstable. They stated that with the public free to sell their crops to whoever pays higher prices and Food Corporation of Bhutan offering support prices, the arrangement could not be more convenient for the people. They proposed that the existing system be retained.

The National Assembly resolved that the Food Corporation of Bhutan pricing policies need not be revised.

22. MATTER REGARDING THE PRICES AND TAXES OF AGRICULTURAL SEEDS, IMPLEMENTS AND FERTILIZERS

The Chimi of Dechenling, Samdrupjongkhar proposed that as in the past plans, agricultural seeds, implements and fertilizers be sold at subsidized rates without the Bhutan Sales tax and STCB. commission.

In response, the Director of Agriculture stated that in the previous plans, agricultural seeds, implements and fertilizers were sold to the public at subsidized rates often between 25% to 30% below the actual costs. However, in view of the policy of self-reliance of the Government as approved by the National Assembly it had been decided that agricultural seeds, implements and fertilizers would not be sold at subsidized rates during the Fifth Plan. This he explained would not cause any difficulty to the public as the Government had

introduced the rural credit scheme with assistance of the United Nations. He added that the transportation costs from India of the agricultural seeds, implements and fertilizers would still be subsidized by the Government.

With regard to the Bhutan Sales Tax, the Director explained that it was not a new addition, it had been levied in earlier plans. As for the STCB commission, it was applicable only on goods purchased through the STCB. Goods bought directly by the Dzongkhag were not charged any commission.

The National Assembly resolved that the existing system of supplying agricultural seeds, implements and fertilizers be retained.

23. MATTER REGARDING HEALTH INSPECTION OF CATTLE

The Chimi of Samchi reported that cattle brought from Haa to Samchi without health inspection were causing health problems among local cattle.

In response, the Director of Animal Husbandry stated that the by-laws on Animal Husbandry covering control of animal health had been passed in resolution 23rd of the 54th session of the National Assembly and circulated. As provided in the by-laws it was the responsibility of the respective Dzongkhag official to control the spread of cattle diseases. The department of Animal Husbandry would be prepared to respond to any reports from Dzongkhag officials with medicine and veterinary personnel.

The Dzongda of Samchi reported that the livestock of Haa were prone to disease carried by goat, sheep and other livestock brought in IMTRAT, DANTAK and RBA vehicles without inspection. He proposed that livestock transported in military vehicles should be inspected.

The Goongleon of the Royal Bhutan Army stated that when such problems arose, they should have been reported to the Army Headquarters. They would ensure that the problems are solved. He requested that whenever such inconveniences were caused to the public, the Dzongkhag officials should report the matter to the Army to carry out inspections.

The National Assembly resolved that the Dzongdags of Haa and Samchi must ensure health inspection of cattle moving between their two Dzongkhags. Health inspection of livestock carried in Army vehicles would be carried out by military personnel.

24. MATTER RELATED TO THE ALIGNMENT OF THE WANGDIPHODRANG - CHIRANG ROAD

The Chimis of Chirang Dzongkhag proposed that instead of constructing the road along the direct alignment from Wangdiphodrang to Chirang, the road would bring more benefits if it connects different villages along the way.

In response, the Director of the Public Works Department stated that the motor road from Wangdiphodrang to Chirang was a National Highway and not for the benefit of a few communities. The road would be constructed by the shortest possible alignment to facilitate speedy and economical transport in the future for trade and travel. However, following the completion of the National Highway, according to local needs, feeder roads to link village blocks enroute could be undertaken.

The National Assembly resolved that as the Wangdiphodrang to Chirang road was a National Highway, it should be constructed along the shortest possible alignment in accordance with the policy of the Royal Government.

25. MATTER RELATED TO THE PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DEOTHANG-BHANGTAR ROAD TO DAIFAM

The Chimi of Daifam reported that it was a problem to move from one point to another in Bhutan through Indian territory particularly due to the disturbances in Assam. He proposed that the road being constructed from Deothang to Bhangtar be extended upto Daifam.

In response, the Director of the Public Works Department stated that a 50 kms road was being constructed from Deothang to Bhangtar in the Fifth Plan. While it was the intention of the Government to extend this road to Daifam, it was difficult to undertake all desired road constructions within one plan as there would be severe constraints on both the Government and people. Therefore, while the road is proposed only upto Bhangtar in the Fifth Plan, the extension to Daifam would be considered in the next plan.

The National Assembly resolved that the extension of the road to Daifam would not be taken up in the Fifth Plan but considered in the next plan.

26. MATTER REGARDING TO PRESERVATION OF RELIGION, CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

The Chimi of Daifam stated that the main traditional religion in Bhutan is Buddhism except for Hinduism in the South. These religions have been well preserved and have been the basis of strong religious and cultural values which contributed to peace in the country. He proposed that in future, introduction of other religions like Christianity and Islam or adoption of any alien culture and tradition should be totally banned in order to preserve the existing religions, culture and tradition.

In response, the Director of Education stated that he fully supported and appreciated the views expressed by the public representatives. He added that the importances of preserving our own religion, culture and tradition had been discussed in the previous session of the National Assembly. The Department of Education on its part, to preserve the religion, culture and tradition, a special subject had been introduced in all the schools. With regard to discipline, the Director informed the National Assembly that wherever school teachers enforce strict discipline in the schools, complaints are made by parents and the general public with request to either dismiss or transfer such teachers. He further stated that the task of teaching religion, culture and tradition and maintaining discipline among students was the responsibility of both the teachers and the parents. He appealed for co-operation from both the parents and the public.

Most Chimis agreed that it was important to preserve our religion, culture, traditions and discipline in Bhutan. They stated that traditions and discipline were being well maintained in the outlying Dzongkhags and remote places. However, they were deteriorating in Schools and Government Departments in Towns. They proposed that the Ministry of Home Affairs, Police and the Department of Education should ensure that traditions and discipline be maintained by the public and students.

The National Assembly resolved that all Ministries and Heads of Departments should emphasize the importance of preserving religion, culture and traditions and maintain strict discipline among staff and students.

27. MATTERS RELATED TO THE PROPOSAL TO SHIFT OFFICE OF DUNGPA FROM CHIMAKOTHI TO CHAPCHA

The Chimi of Chapcha proposed that the Government orders to shift the office of the Dungpa from Chimakothi to Chapcha Dzong be reconsidered. He stated that Chimakothi was the center for developmental activities and business and as such more convenient to the public.

In response, the Hon'ble Home Minister stated that the Government had ordered the transfer because Chapcha was an important Dzong and the office of the Dungpa had been initially located there. However, if the public felt that the office of the Dungpa should remain at Chimakothi because of the developmental and business activities and would be more convenient to the public, the Government had no objection for retaining the office of the Dungpa at Chimakothi.

The National Assembly resolved that the office of the Chapcha Dungpa be retained at Chimakothi.

28. APPROVAL OF THE ROYAL MONETARY AUTHORITY

During the current session, the Finance Secretary presented to the National Assembly a draft Act for establishing the Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan for approval.

The National Assembly accorded approval of the Act for establishing the Royal Monetary Authority.

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