

**PROCEEDINGS AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED IN THE 58TH SESSION OF THE  
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HELD FROM 27TH MAY TO 4TH JUNE, 1983**

1. REGARDING BUDGET FOR 1983-84

During the current session, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Finance informed the House about the annual budget for 1983-84. In this regard, he explained that the total outlay for the current year is estimated at about Nu.700 million and out of this Nu.207.7 million has been allocated for maintenance and another Nu.493 million for development. He further explained that of the total outlay, only Nu.188.6 million has come through the revenue earnings within the country and the rest has been sought through India and UN Organizations as assistance, besides that of the loans from financial institutions, both national and international and other countries. He further added that there is still a deficit of Nu.8.3 million.

In this regard, the Deputy Minister stated that in accordance to His Majesty's command, all appropriate measures to reduce the establishment and maintenance costs of the Royal Government are being implemented. A major exercise in this respect lead to the abolishment of redundant offices and posts in a few cases and general reduction in the sizes of offices in a number of cases, as well as the reassignment of officers and staff to more suitable positions. More recently, the entitlements and benefits of civil servants are also being streamlined and rationally curtailed towards this same end. However, despite all these efforts by the Royal Government to reduce unnecessary expenditures, we still have a large budget deficit for the year.

While reminding the Assembly about the aims and objectives of the 5th Plan towards achieving economic self-reliance in the Kingdom, the Deputy Minister said that the internal revenue has been increased from Nu.132 million in the last financial year of 1981-82 to Nu.188.6 million in 1982-83.

He further informed that the Dzongkhag revenue accounted for Nu.3.05 million only and added that this is less than two percent of the total internal revenue of Nu.188.6 million. In view of this, the Deputy Minister requested all the Dzongkhags to find out ways and means of increasing the Dzongkhag revenues so that the objectives of economic self-reliance could be achieved.

2. REGARDING REVISION AND INTRODUCTION OF TAXES

The Deputy Minister, Ministry of Finance recalled that the last Annual Budget Plan meeting held in Thimphu in January 1983 during which the various Dzongkhags had proposed the introduction and revision of taxes to increase the national revenue. During the meeting, His Majesty the King had commanded that proposal be included in the agenda of the 58th session of the National Assembly for final decision. Accordingly some of the Dzongkhags submitted their proposals to the Ministry of Finance and some to National Assembly Secretariat. The Deputy Minister said that out of the total of 58 items proposed, 8 of them had been scrutinized and selected for discussion and endorsement by the Assembly. After a thorough discussion on those items the Assembly resolved to levy taxes from 1983 as mentioned below:-

- i) It was decided to raise tax on land under cash crops from Nu.1.12 ch. to Nu.12 per acre which is at par with class I dry land. It was clarified that if the land is converted to cash crop cultivation, the tax will be levied only on the area under cash crop and not on dry land. It is further decided that the land brought under cash crops cultivation should be changed in the land record accordingly.

- ii) The tax on apple trees, orange trees and cardamom have been revised as follows :-

Item	<u>Existing rate</u>	<u>Revised rate</u>	
Apple trees	Nu. 4.00	Nu. 5.00	
Orange trees	Nu. 2.00	Nu. 5.00	located near-by the motorable road.
Orange trees	Nu.1.50	Nu. 3.00	located away from the motorable road.
Cardamom	Nu.3.00	Nu. 5.00	per maund.

- iii) The taxes on cardamom and orange being exported have been raised from Nu.22.00 to Nu.25.00 per maund (cardamom) and Nu. 40.00 to Nu.100 per truck (orange and apple) respectively.

iv) Under the Rural Insurance Scheme, the Government pays an amount of Nu.1,500 per person as compensation against the premium receipt of Nu.10.00 per head. During the fiscal year 1982, the Government collected an amount of Nu.19,48,880.00 where as the total amount paid as compensation came to Nu. 36,25,500.00 which caused a loss of about Nu.16,00,000.00 to the Government. In order to cope up, it was pro-posed that the rate of premium be increased from Nu.10.00 to Nu.15.00 per person. Following a debate on the question, the Assembly resolved to raise the rate of premium to Nu.15.00. Meanwhile when some of the members suggested for retention of the previous rate, it was informed that the scheme was not compulsory for every Dzongkhag. Those failing to pay the premium at the revised rate would not be eligible for compensation. It was further resolved that since the premium for 1983 has already been accounted for, the revised rate will be enforced with effect from 1984 only.

v) The licence fees for bar have been revised as follows:-

Existing rate	Revised rate
Nu. 250	Nu. 300 (big town)
Nu. 150	Nu. 200 (small town)

vi) It was reported in the Assembly that the change of ownership of land in the land record involves expenditure. Although the practice to possess a copy of land record by the individual land owners, on payment of Nu.10.00 per copy is in effect, this has not been carried out. Considering that it not only helps to increase the revenue but it is also convenient for the public to have a copy of their land record for reference, the Assembly resolved that the practice be made compulsory for everyone. It is further decided that the supply of copies of land records to those not able to obtain one by themselves could be arranged by the respective Dzongkhags.

vii) The Municipal Corporation's rules and regulations clearly prohibits animals reared in townships from staying around. Hence, in order to minimize the rearing of animals, a proposal was put up to the Assembly to introduce a tax on animals being reared in towns. In response, some of the members suggested that strict restrictions be imposed while others felt that heavy taxes should be levied.

The Assembly felt that while it is necessary to keep animals for the people staying in towns, it should be bound by the rules and regulations of the Town Planning Committee and Municipal Corporation. In this regard, the Assembly decided to initially levy a tax of Nu.20.00 per head (cows and horses) and Nu.10.00 per head (goats, pigs and sheep). Regarding imposition of heavy taxes, the Assembly stated that in case there arises any necessity for further increase in the rate, the matter would be looked into by the Royal Government.

Some of the Chimis also sought clarification as to which areas of town would fall under taxation. In reply, His Majesty the King was pleased to command that the above tax would be imposed only on those cattle owners who are residing in the main township areas. His Majesty further clarified that the villagers living in the vicinity of towns would not be required to pay the tax. However, His Majesty further commanded that Municipal Corporation should notify as to the areas marked for such a taxation.

- viii) Till date, it was informed, there is an exemption on apple trees having less than 30, belonging to an individual family. It was proposed in the Assembly that tax should be levied on each trees irrespective of their number. On this issue, His Majesty the King generously considering the welfare of the people informed the Assembly that the families or persons owning less than 30 trees of apples should be exempted from taxes and the families of persons owning more than 30 trees be charged the tax. His Majesty further commanded that similar exemption should also be given to the orange growers.

Some of the Chimis desired not to grant the above exemption of taxes for the people living in towns. While discussing this issue it was stated that the people staying in towns are also the citizens of the country and moreover, considering the Municipal policies which stress on the importance of planting trees for beautification of towns, it was resolved that the same exemption should be extended to them also.

After having discussed and resolved all the above proposals, the Deputy Minister, Ministry of Finance reported that with the new proposal decided upon for levying taxes, the Dzongkhag annual revenue would be increased by Nu.2.1 million and this would bring the Dzongkhag total internal revenue to Nu.5.1 million. He further hoped that the Dzongkhag and public representatives would in future, come forward with such constructive proposals and help towards achieving the goal of economic self-reliance within the Fifth Plan period.

Further, the Deputy Minister informed about the Dzongkhag's proposals to discontinue the existing exemption of taxes on Class III and IV houses and on lands more than two acres (eight langdos) owned by the individual farmers. On this issue, he said that the Government's revenue would increase by Nu.1.00 to Nu.1.5 million on this account. It is, however, not the policy of the Royal Government to burden its rural population with such taxation so long as they participate actively in the developmental activities designed to achieve the goal of self-reliance. Hence, out of the 58 proposals of the various Dzongkhags, only eight proposals have been identified for taxation.

Regarding the Dzongkhag proposal for inclusion of the revenues being earned by the BGTS, Automobile Workshop, Tourism, Telephone Exchange and Export Division of STCB in the accounts of respective Dzongkhag revenues, the Deputy Minister clarified that these departments being commercial organizations, it would not be possible to do so. However, if desired a copy of the annual audited revenue earnings of these commercial units, could be made available to them.

### 3. MATTER RELATING TO DAMPHU JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, CHIRANG

The Dzongkhag of Chirang reported to the Assembly that the existing Junior High School is over-crowded and it is essential to set-up a separate primary section. Some of the Assembly members remarked that this would depend on the plans and programmes of the Education Department and admission of the students should be entertained according to availability of seats.

In response, the Director of Education informed the Assembly that there was no proposal to start a separate primary section in the school.

However, it was recalled in the Assembly that a petition was submitted during His Majesty's visit to Chirang and His Majesty the King had kindly consented to their petition to set up a separate primary section. In this regard, the Education Director mentioned that for a separate school to be established, there was a need for funds to be allocated for school buildings, staff salaries, etc. He said that the total expenditure on this would come to around Nu 0.4 million. He then requested the Finance Ministry for the funds to be sanctioned.

In response, the Deputy Minister, Ministry of Finance agreed and said that although there was a deficit in the plan budget of the current year, in order to implement His Majesty's command, funds needed for the school would be arranged from other sources.

The Assembly resolved to open the separate primary section at Damphu School.

4. MATTER RELATING TO SCHOOL ADMISSION FEES AND COST OF TEXT BOOKS

During the Dzongkhag plan and budget meeting held in the month of January, 1983, it was discussed that in order to raise the revenue, the school admission fees would have to be increased from Nu.1.00 to Nu.5.00 per child. It was also discussed that the 15% of the cost of text books would have to be borne by the parents. The meeting had further decided that the matter to be reported to the 58th session of the National Assembly for final decision. During this session, the Director of Education reported that the matter would be reported to the Assembly after the finalization of the Education policy by the Royal Government. The Assembly endorsed the views of the Director of Education.

5. MATTER RELATING TO THE FUND FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF IRRIGATION CHANNELS

The Director of Agriculture while informing the House about the decision of the 46th session of the National Assembly, proposed to charge a sum of Nu.5.00 per acre towards meeting the cost of maintenance and renovation of irrigation channels. Later, however, the fund collected was found to be insufficient to meet the expenditure for the purpose and during the 53rd session of the National Assembly it was proposed to raise the charge from Nu.5.00 to Nu.60.00 per acre. During the session it was decided that all the maintenance of irrigation channels would be undertaken by the beneficiaries and no collection would be made from the public.

The Assembly members were informed of the policy of the Royal Government to undertake construction of irrigation channels only on receiving assurance that the public would maintain the channels on their own. However, in the case of major irrigation projects which involve huge sums of money like that of the Gaylegphug lift irrigation project, it is felt necessary to undertake the renovation/maintenance by the Royal Government itself. It is feared that the public will not be able to maintain them. The Director of Agriculture, therefore, proposed to the Assembly that such major irrigation channels should be maintained by the Royal Government charging a sum of Nu. 100 per acre from the beneficiaries.

The National Assembly resolved that the beneficiaries of major irrigation project would be charged a sum of Nu.100/- per acre for maintenance and renovation to be undertaken by the Royal Government and in the event of the funds collected being short of the actual expenditure caused by several factors like payment of electricity charges for lift irrigation, it would be borne by the Royal Government itself. It was further resolved that in the case of maintenance/ renovation of smaller channels the beneficiaries would be required to pay only the actual expenditure.

6. MATTER RELATING TO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

The Chimi of Chirang requested that the Damphu Hospital be well equipped and a doctor be appointed at Dagapela, since it is far away from the Headquarters of Chirang Dzongkhag.

In response, the Director of Health Services informed that the provision for improvement of Chirang Hospital is in the 5th Plan and the Department is making arrangement to undertake the work at the earliest. In case of appointment of doctor at Dagapela, the Director informed that such a programme has not been included in the 5th Plan, and additionally there being only a BHU, doctor cannot be posted. However, the Director assured that the proposal would be considered for inclusion in the 6th Plan.

The National Assembly endorsed the Director's statement.

7. REGARDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF MOTORABLE ROAD BETWEEN MATHANGURI AND SONAMTHANG

The Chimis of Khen Ngangla, Dogkar and Phangkhar (Shemgang) proposed to the Assembly about the need to construct a road from Mathanguri to Sonamthang. In response, the Director of PWD stated that as per the 5th Plan, about 500 kms of road is planned to be constructed, and about 300 kms of existing road renovated and expanded.

The Director further said that the work on the plan has already been undertaken and it is running in the third year of the 5th Plan. Moreover most of the works included in the plan have not been able to be undertaken due to various unavoidable reasons like shortage of manpower, funds, etc and, therefore, such a new proposal cannot be accepted.

The National Assembly endorsed the Director's statement.

8. MATTER RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER

The Chimi of Bhangtar Drungkhag reported to the Assembly that due to unfavourable situation in Assam, there has been a frequent disruption in the power supplies. He suggested that the proposal for construction of a hydro electricity project on the Bhangtar river to be undertaken by the Royal Government be expedited so that such difficulties can be overcome while on the other hand growth of various industries and factories can be made possible.

In response, the Director of Power reported to the Assembly that it is very important to commission hydro electricity project on the Bhangtar river so as to meet the demand of power requirement as and when industries come up. The Department of Power with the financial assistance from the World Bank is investigating the possibilities of establishing the project. It is learnt that the project would have an installed capacity of 5 MW. As soon as the proper investigation report is completed, the Royal Government will decide whether the project can be taken up or not.

The Assembly endorsed the statement of the Director, Department of Power.

#### 9. REGARDING EXCHANGE OF TRADE DELEGATIONS

With a view to promoting trade in Bhutan, suggestion for exchange of trade delegation with friendly countries was made to the Assembly by the Chirang Dzongkhag. In response, on behalf of Trade & Commerce, the Director of Forests stated that it was one of the most important trade policies of the Royal Government to develop and promote trade. The Royal Government has already established consulates in Hong Kong and Singapore and an additional consulate is decided to be opened shortly in Kuwait. Further, he informed that the negotiation on the new Indo-Bhutan trade agreement are underway and expected to be finalized within this year. Meanwhile, a considerable progress is being made towards promoting trade with Bangladesh.

The Director of Forests also said that the development of this sector could contribute a great deal to make up for the present budget deficit, besides being able to earn foreign exchange needed by the Royal Government.

Regarding exchange of trade delegation, the Director of Forests said that it is in line with the trade policy of the Royal Government, and as such Government has been considering such cases over the last few years. He further informed the House that all those interested, to be included in such delegations should report to the Ministry of Trade, Industry & Forests through the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce.



10. REGARDING FIXATION OF MEAT PRICE

According to resolution No.28 of the 57th session of the National Assembly of Bhutan in regard to the fixation of meat price, the Director of Forests, on behalf of the Department of Trade & Commerce brought to the notice of the House that due to certain restrictions imposed on the sale of meat, the Department is finding it difficult to fix the price.

However, he added that measures for control of price of meat and other food commodities were being studied by the Department.

On this issue, His Majesty was pleased to command that the reduction in meat prices has to be dealt with care, to ensure that the action did not result in the shortage of the commodity. Therefore, a joint study should be carried out by the Ministry of Finance, the Department of Trade & Commerce and the Ministry of Home Affairs to arrive at an appropriate rate.

11. REGARDING DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIES/FACTORIES

The Chimi of Bhangtar reported in the Assembly that it quite important to set up factories/industries for manufacturing all goods and materials required by the country with the financial assistance from World Bank and other financial institution extending loans at low interest rates if the national goal of self-reliance is to be achieved.

In response, the Director of Industries and Mines appreciated the proposal and said that it was the policy of the Royal Government to set up industries based on locally available raw materials. He further said that, it was also necessary to consider the financial implications and the outside markets prior to establishing such industries. However, during the fifth plan the Royal Government has plans to establish some factories with the financial assistance from some friendly countries. Among them is the Nanglam Cement Factory which shall be established with the financial assistance from the Government of India.

The Forest Director while outlining the Royal Government's efforts to promote trade and industries during the 5th Plan mentioned about the opening of Penden Cement Project, and the undertaking of the Gedu Wood Industries complex project and the Gedu Wood Manufacturing Corporation, the work on which is underway with the financial assistance from Kuwait Fund. He further said that the study on the commercial exploitation of charcoal,

calcium carbonate and tungsten had also been undertaken in the country. To help the process of achieving economic self-reliance, the Director also said that 3-4 big industrial projects are planned to be established within the 5th five year plan.

## 12. MATTER RELATING TO GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF BHUTAN

The Chimi of Choekhor, Bumthang reported that our country has been endowed with many valuable mineral deposits. But till the inception of planned economic development in the country these were lying unexploited. With the launching of the five year plans the exploitation of these minerals are being undertaken to the benefit of one and all. The member desired that the country should take care of the reserves and report on the samples being taken out for analysis in every session.

In response, the Director of Industries & Mines agreed that minerals were great assets of the country and while stating that the exploitation of minerals involves large sums of money, reported that only some of the minerals could be exploited. He further informed the House that the minerals are gradually being exploited. Regarding the samples, the Director clarified that out of 100% samples being taken out from the country for analysis, it is able to give only 2% of pure minerals.

It was also reported that with the establishment of Geological Survey of Bhutan, a Geological Laboratory has been opened in Phuntsholing for undertaking the analysis of samples of minerals. While informing the House that the Geological Survey of Bhutan is being managed by Bhutanese nationals the Director agreed that if reports on such findings are required, it could be submitted to the Assembly.

On this point, His Majesty was pleased to command that it would be useful on the part of the Department of Industry and Mines to report about the activities of the Geological Survey of Bhutan to the Assembly once a year.

## 13. MATTERS RELATING TO LAND

The Representative of Tashigang and Paro Dzongkhags suggested that the registered land falling within the clearly demarcated boundary and not exceeding 25 acres owned by an individual family, if found excess after resurvey be exempted from the payment of cost and tax. For land without boundaries, if found to be in excess, but recorded in the land record, the landowners be allowed to pay the cost of the land as well as the tax and the land be registered

in his/her name if it does not exceed the land ceiling. All the lands not registered but being cultivated indisputably by individual families are requested to be registered in their respective names on payment of cost of the land, tax and fine according to the Government rules.

The Chimi of Sibsoo pointed out that as per the land Act, an individual family can possess only 25 acres and requested that the provision be kept pending for the time being.

The Chief of Survey in supporting the suggestions put forth by the Chimis of Tashigang and Paro, said that the land act needs to be amended, in view of the suggestions by the Chimis. In this regard, His Majesty the King was pleased to command that the matter relating to land should be implemented according to the Land Act. His Majesty also pointed out that earlier land survey was not carried out properly, but now with the resurvey being undertaken in all the Dzongkhags, excess land could be ascertained. Any land holding below the Land Act ceiling, whether reflected in the Thram or as revealed by the resurvey would be considered as the Government land. The House resolved as per His Majesty's command given below :

- i) Where a plot of land had defined boundaries and is so recorded in Thram, but during resurvey is found to be in excess it will be allotted to the owner of the land without having to pay the price of land and taxes. The taxes on the excess land shall be paid to Government after it is recorded in the Thram.
- ii) Where a plot of registered land having no defined boundaries and during the resurvey if found in excess, although the land owner is entitled only 12 decimals to every acreage of wet and dry lands and 25 decimals to every acreage of shifting cultivation as per the Land Act, however, it was decided in the Assembly that all the excess land would be allotted to the land owner on payment of cost of the land and taxes, provided it does not exceed the ceiling of 25 acres.
- iii) Where a plot of land owned by a person is not recorded in the Thram it will be seized and fines shall be imposed on the owners according to the Land Act. However, the Assembly decided that during the resurvey if a person is found to be illegally possessing the land, he will be dealt with in accordance with the Land Act. If such lands are found to be in possession of the owners for generations but have been omitted in Thram by mistake, will be allotted to the owner on payment of full cost of the land and taxes, provided it is not in dispute and is within the land ceiling.

- iv) It was clarified that the land ceiling of 25 acres is meant for a household and not for an individual member of the family. It is, therefore, decided while the resurvey is being carried out, the land owners possessing more than the ceiling of the land, will not be allowed to distribute the land among their individual family members. It is further decided that if the land owners are found to have been possessing more than 25 acres, the facilities mentioned above will not be extended.
- v) The Assembly, keeping in view the welfare of the public has decided to extend the benefits of excess land for families whose land holdings have been less than 25 acres. In future, once the resurvey is completed, such cases will be dealt with in strict accordance to the Land Act.

#### 14. MATTER RELATING TO LAND TRANSACTIONS

The Chirang Dzongkhag proposed to the Assembly that as per the land act, no one is allowed to sell the entire landed property without keeping a minimum of five acres. In case a person has less than five acres and intends to purchase equal or more than the size of his present holding elsewhere, the old land should be permitted to be sold upon the registration of the purchased land.

In response, the representative from High Court clarified that though under the Land Act, sale of land is not permitted by the land owners possessing less than five acres the Royal Government considering the inconvenience of the public has been entertaining such cases after the new purchased land has been registered. Therefore there have not been any inconvenience to the public in this matter.

#### 15. TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP OF LAND

The Chimis of Bhangtar and Sibsoo reported in the Assembly that the registration of land is carried out at the Land Record office, Thimphu where as the transaction on sale and purchase of land are executed at the respective Dzongkhag Courts. It is proposed that the registration of land be allowed to be done at the Dzongkhag Courts and not at two offices for the convenience of the public.

The Chief of Survey explained that previously the execution and registration of land inherited from the families were being dealt with and recorded at the level of Dzongkhag/Dungkhag.

However, these offices failed to exercise strictness in maintaining both the prescribed procedures and the legal records. Besides, as per the Land Act, it is necessary to first record in the main land record and then in Dzongkhag records. Hence, the registration of land is now being done in Land Record Office, Thimphu.

The National Assembly resolved that this being in line with the provisions of land Act, it should be continued and it would not be necessary to amend the Land Act at the moment.

#### 16. REGARDING SHIFTING CULTIVATION

Tashigang Dzongkhag reported in the Assembly that as per the policy of the Royal Government, shifting cultivated lands have to be converted into wet land (Chusing) and dryland(Kamshing). It was proposed that in case of the shifting cultivated land not being convertible to the above categories but if located nearby the house be permitted to convert into cash crop and fodder lands. Similarly, it was also proposed that land under shifting cultivation, located at a great distance from the home, be taken over by the Royal Government and a reimbursement effected to the owner.

In response, the Director of Forests suggested that although it is the policy of the Government to convert shifting cultivated lands to ‘Chushing’ and ‘Kamshing’ such land's not fit for ‘Chushing” and ‘Kamshing’ and cash crops may be dealt with in accordance with the Land Act. On this issue, His Majesty the King was pleased to command that in case of shifting cultivated lands already recorded in the land record and that which is within the ceiling of 25 acres may be given for growing cash crops and fodder trees. If it exceeds the ceiling of 25 acres, there is a provision in the land Act and this be dealt with accordingly.

His Majesty further stated if it is within the land ceiling, the land owners wanting to sell tseri land, may do so. The Royal Government after determining the requirement of such lands will buy from the public.

#### 17. CLARIFICATION ON SOGSHINGS

Tashigang Dzongkhag reported to the Assembly that there are two kinds of Sogshings, one for the purpose of manure and the other for firewood. It was proposed to register such sogshings in the Thram and be taxed accordingly.

The Director of Forests reported to the Assembly that as per the Land Act No. Ka 3-5 the sogshing owners are allowed to use only those 'sogshings' that can be used only for manure. As per the terms of Land Act No. Ka 6-10, the sogshings not fit for purpose of manure must be confiscated by the Royal Government even if it is registered in the Thram.

The Assembly was informed that all those sogshings that cannot be used, belong to the Government as per the Land Act, even if it is recorded in the Thram. Meanwhile, it was decided that the matter relating to 'sogshing' should be dealt with as per the provisions of the Land Act.

#### 18. REGARDING SOCIAL FORESTRY

In accordance with the policy of the Government, the Director of Forests explained the rules for planting trees under Social Forestry Scheme. He said that under the Social Forestry if the trees are planted within the registered land, such as wet land, dryland and in lands nearby the house, the number of trees should be limited to 10 to 300. Since the grazing land and 'sogshing' land belong to the Government as per Forest Act, the planting of trees on these lands are not permitted. He further stated that trees planted under this scheme are exempted from all taxes as per the command of His Majesty. It was reported that the records containing the name of land, No. of Thram, No. of trees and type of trees would be maintained by the Dzongkhags separately.

In this regard, some of the members reported that some people have planted more than 300 trees within their registered land and proposed that permission be granted for possession of the excess trees already planted by the owners. On this issue, His Majesty the King was pleased to command that, under the Social Forestry Scheme trees planted on lands which are not recorded in one's Thram, grazing land, sogshing and orchards is strictly prohibited. The planting of trees on other lands such as wet land, dry land, shifting cultivated lands, and pangshing which are recorded in one's Thram would be allowed without any ceiling.

#### 19. SEASONING OF CARDAMOM

The Chimis of Sibsoo while stating the importance of cardamom as a major cash crops requested the Royal Government to provide technical assistance in seasoning it. In response, the Director of Agriculture reported that many trees were being felled for use as firewood for drying the cardamom and he added that the Department of Agriculture had also been finding out the means to overcome this problem.

The Director also informed of the availability of a machine for the purpose and said that with the help of this machine, the seasoning could be carried out with a comparatively lesser quantity of firewood. He further stated that all those interested could contact the personnel from Agriculture Farms, Paro and Phuntsholing and find out its utility. If the machine is found to be suitable for the purpose, the Department would arrange to procure as many of them as needed by the farmers. This, if found workable and adopted, much forest resources could be saved.

## 20. PROTECTION OF FOREST FIRE

During the deliberation on the subject, the Forests Director reported that quite a number of resolutions had been passed by the National Assembly regarding the protection of forest fire. Ever-since the adoption of resolutions No.3 of the 50th session of the National Assembly, relaxing the penalty provision of the forest fire protection regulations, it has been observed that the incidence of forest fires have increased considerably and the co-operation from the local people has continued to be poor. The Director of Forests, therefore stressed the need to work out some effective means for the protection of forest from fire by the villagers. Some of the chimis suggested that the exemption of penalty provisions of the forest fire protection regulations may be discontinued while others suggested that forest fire guards appointed from within the villages be provided with some incentives. The Assembly reminded that this issue was discussed in the previous session and decided to implement it according to the previous resolutions.

On this issue, His Majesty the King was pleased to command that forest being one of the important resources of the Nation, it is very important to protect the forest fires. His Majesty also commanded that, after the end of the session, the Director of Forests and all Dzongdas should jointly work out some ways for the prevention of forest fires and submit their report in the next session of the National Assembly.

## 21. EXTRACTION OF PIPLA, CENAMON ETC

The Chimi of Chengmari reported in the Assembly that the collection of forest produce such as pipla, cenamon had been banned since 1982. She proposed that the Department of Forests should permit the extraction of these forest produce and levy the taxes which will benefit both the Government and the public. The matter was discussed in the Dzongkhag Budget Plan meeting also and was decided to be put up to the 58th session of the National Assembly

In response, the Director of Forests explained that although the execution of the proposal may fetch some revenue to the Royal Government, past experience has shown that a permit granted for the extraction of pipla, broom and cenamon has led to the illegal felling of trees. Therefore, in order to prevent this the Director of Forests proposed to impose a restriction on the extraction of such forest produce for the time being.

After a series of discussion on the issue, the Assembly decided to impose restriction on the extraction of pipla, broom (Tsakusha) and cenamon from the forests.

22. REGARDING MERGING OF FOREST DEMARCATION SURVEY AND LAND REVENUE SURVEY INTO ONE UNIT

In pursuance of the Resolution No.3 of the 57th session of the National Assembly, the Forest Director was required to report about the merging of forest demarcation survey and land revenue survey into one unit.

The Director of Forests reported in the Assembly that in accordance with the policy of the Vth plan to minimize the Government expenditure on establishments, the two survey divisions have been decided to be merged into one unit. The working procedures of the two divisions are being worked out jointly considering their administrative problems and convenience.

23. RESTRICTION ON REARING OF GOATS/PIGS

Owing to the destruction caused to forest trees, crops and flowers by the Goats/Pigs, it was pointed out in the Assembly that a resolution to this effect was adopted under resolution No.10 and 3 of the 35th and 53rd sessions of the National Assembly respectively, wherein it was resolved that rearing of goats/pigs by imported labourers should be prohibited.

During the above sessions, it was also resolved that the nationals would be allowed to rear a limited number of goats/pigs on condition that these would be confined within the periphery of their own lands and not be allowed to destroy crops, vegetation or trees belonging to others.

On this issue, the Director of Forests asserted that while some of the regions are still abiding by the above resolutions, others are found to be not paying any heed to the resolutions



adopted by the Assembly. He urged the Assembly members to re-enforce the resolutions in their respective regions strictly.

24. BGTS BUS SERVICE BETWEEN JAKAR AND MONGAR

The Chimi of Chheokhor, Bumthang reported to the Assembly as in the previous session about the necessity of introducing passenger bus services between Jakar and Mongar for the benefit of the people.

In response, the Minister for Communications and Tourism stated in the Assembly that considering the request of the public, the BGTS had introduced services on experimental basis. But due to certain problems such as rough road, high altitude, and infrequent movement of passengers, the department suffered a substantial loss and the service could not be run according to schedule. The Hon'ble Minister, however, mentioned about the plan of the department to procure four wheeled drive vehicles which would be suitable for plying on such roads.

Further, the Minister of Communication and Tourism briefly described about the various activities of the BGTS. He stated that the BGTS being a commercial organization is compelled to limit its activities within the purview of its plan. Meanwhile, the Minister informed that the Department, which came under the Ministry beginning from April, 1981 could contribute a revenue of Nu.3 lakhs to the Government during the financial year 1981-82. He attributed the failure to earn revenue as per the plan estimate to the enhancement of employees' salaries and concessional fares granted to Army personnel and their wives.

With a view to strengthening and streamlining the functions of the Department, consultancy services have been acquired from India and it is hoped that the services of the BGTS could be rendered more efficiently in future.

25. REGARDING RADIO NYAB, (NATIONAL YOUTH ASSOCIATION OF BHUTAN

The Chimi of Chheokhor, Bumthang enquired whether the radio station had been equipped with a powerful transmitter as decided in the previous session. He also enquired if the radio programmes for Bumthang, Tongsa, Kurteo and Shemgang would also be started in Bumthangkha, as being presently done in English, Dzongkha, Nepali and Sharchop.

In this regard, Hon'ble Minister for Communication and Tourism stated that there is a plan for the Radio NYAB to be converted into a full fledged radio station by installing a powerful transmitter within the Vth Plan period and added that the programmes in Bumthangkha would also be arranged to be introduced in due course.

26. SALE OF JUCICIAL STAMPS

The Chimi of Sibsoo reported that the stamps are available only with the post offices. If arrangements for the sale are made through the civil offices as being done in the past it would be more convenient for the public.

In reply, Hon'ble Minister for Communications and Tourism said that although there was practice to sell the stamps through the civil office, due to certain administrative problems, the responsibility has now been entrusted to the Bank of Bhutan, and in places where there are no banks it is being done through the post offices. As requested by the public, the Minister also felt that if the sale is carried out through the civil offices, it would be more convenient for the public.

The National Assembly resolved that the sale of judicial stamps be made through the judicial offices.

27. MATTER RELATING TO DRUK AIR CORPORATION

Having launched the operation of the Druk Air, the first air service of the country, the long felt need of the country has now been fulfilled. On this historic venture, the public of Chengmari wishes to convey their best wishes and congratulation to its management and the authorities of the Government for their great achievement.

On this issue, Chimi of Choekhor, Bumthang while appreciating the new venture of the Royal Government, enquired whether Druk Air has plans to operate in other third countries. He also sought clarification about the construction of airfields in places like Bumthang within the country.

In response, Hon'ble Minister for Communications & Tourism stated that the Druk Air went into operation beginning from February 1983 and is operating thrice in a week between Paro and Calcutta. He acknowledged the best wishes expressed by public. Meanwhile, regarding

Druk Air services within third countries, the Hon'ble Minister informed the House, that once our country becomes a member of International Civil Aviation Organization there would be no problem to start services wherever found to be economically viable. He further informed that the Royal Government has formed a Board of Directors for the management of the Druk Air Corporation under the Chairmanship of HRH Ashi S.C. Wangchuck, Mr. Tshering Wangdi has been appointed as the Managing Director of the Corporation. A Department of Civil Aviation has also been formed, and the responsibility of managing it has been entrusted to the Ministry of Communications & Tourism. Though the Druk Air has already gone into operation between Bhutan and India, some of the operational problems are still to be sorted out by the Ministry of Communication & Tourism.

Regarding the introduction of domestic flights, the Minister said that the matter would be looked into after studying the economic viability.

## 28. MATTERS RELATING TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

During the 58th session of the National Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs presented the annual report of his Ministry. He said that because of the outstanding leadership provided by His Majesty the King, steady progress was being maintained in expanding Bhutan's relations with the outside world. He also paid tribute to the hard work, dedication, and team spirit with which all the officers and staff of the Foreign Ministry at Thimphu and the diplomatic missions abroad have been carrying out the responsibilities entrusted to them by His Majesty the King. He said that the Foreign Ministry could function effectively only because of this team-work.

While appreciating the achievements of the Foreign Ministry, the National Assembly members expressed their gratitude to His Majesty the King for his wise and dedicated leadership in the field of foreign affairs. They were happy that His Majesty had met many world leaders in order to promote the national interests of Bhutan. They appreciated the establishment of diplomatic relations with Nepal and a Consulate-General in Kuwait. They attributed all these achievements to the love and dedication with which His Majesty served the nation and the people. The National Assembly members also expressed their appreciation for the dynamic leadership provided by His Majesty the King in securing external financial assistance for implementing socio-economic plans and programmes aimed at attaining national self-reliance.

The National Assembly members thanked the officials of the Foreign Ministry for their sincere and dedicated service to the nation.

29. REGARDING AMALGAMATION OF SOME AREAS WITH OTHER DZONGKHAGS

The Chimi of Punakha proposed that the present revenue earnings of Punakha are being diverted to other four Dzongkhags be retained and requested for appointment of a Dzongda for Punakha separately.

The Dzongkhag of Pemagatshel pointed that the blocks of Wamrong, Nanong and Gomdar being close to Pemagatshel than Tashigang, proposed that the two blocks be brought under its jurisdiction.

Dagana Dzongkhag proposed to the Assembly that the following Drungkhag and villages be brought under the jurisdiction of Dagana Dzongkhag.

1. Dagapela Dungkhag
2. Bartsa, Tabgang, Namshegang, Actoshe, Jumgang Kartshithang, Phabilakha, and Didigang of Chapcha Dungkhag, Thimphu.
3. Village of Takshasili under Wangdiphodrang.

Regarding the above proposals, it was felt that without carrying out proper investigation it would be difficult to decide in this session by the Assembly. It was therefore, resolved that the investigation would be carried out by the Royal Advisory Council after the Assembly and report its findings to the Cabinet Meeting. The Cabinet will then determine the issue and report to the next session accordingly.

30. MATTER RELATING TO PORTER CHARGES

The Chimi of Choekhor, Bumthang reported to the Assembly that the present rate of porter charges being paid by Army are higher than that of the civil. He, therefore, proposed that the rate be made uniform by fixing at Nu.7/- per day which is now being paid by the Army.

In this regard, the Major General, Royal Bhutan Army while corroborating the points raised by the public, said that the Army is compelled to pay higher rate than that of the civil as the Army goods have to be carried through difficult roads and places. In view of the fact, it is found to be reasonable to retain the higher rate than that of the civil. On this issue, the Deputy Minister, Ministry of Finance explained that due to the present financial constraint, it will not

be possible to increase the porter charges in the civil sector. However, he said that the matter would be looked into as and when financial situation permits

31. REGARDING ISSUE OF ALMANAC (DATHOG)

The Chimi of Choekhor, Bumthang reported that the almanac being issued by the Central Monk Body is necessary to be consulted on several occasions in the life of a Bhutanese. Despite tremendous delay in its circulation, he suggested that the almanac be issued not later than the 11th month of the Bhutanese calendar, with its quality improved and price reduced so that it could be within the reach of all the practicing astrologers.

In response, the representative from the Central Monk Body, Tsenyi Lopen, informed that, till date, the almanac was being issued only in the 2nd month of the Bhutanese calendar. Considering the request of the public he agreed to issue the almanac well in time if desired by the members of the Assembly.

The National Assembly decided that the Central Monk Body should be able to issue the almanac within the 11th and 12th month of the Bhutanese calendar.

32. EXEMPTION OF CHUNIDOM FOR EX-SERVICE MAN

The Dagana Dzongkhag proposed that the Army and Civil service personnel retired from the service due to super-annuation from their respective services may be exempted from the Chunidom in recognition of their dedicated service to the country.

During the deliberations, it was informed that the Army personnel were being exempted from Chunidom. Similarly, it was discussed that the civil servants on attaining superannuation and retiring from services also be exempted from Chunidom. In this regard, it was decided that the army personnel and the civil servants should obtain certificates of satisfactory services on retirement from the Army welfare Committee and Royal Civil Service Commission respectively for such exemption from Chunidom.

While discussing the issue in the Assembly it was also raised that the ex-gups should then also be exempted from Chunidom.

Taking into consideration the urgency of the execution of plans and programmes and there being several such cases in various Dzongkhags, the Assembly felt that the proposal in

question should be kept pending. On this issue, His Majesty the King was pleased to command that the matter would be looked into and consideration in due course of time by the Royal Government.

33. REGARDING FUNCTIONS OF ROYAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

In accordance with the resolution No. 24 of the 57th session of the National Assembly of Bhutan, the Chairman of the Royal Advisory Council presented a report on the revised functions and responsibilities of the Royal Advisory Council. The Chairman said that the report had been prepared as per His Majesty's command because the earlier functions and responsibilities needed to be defined comprehensively. In this regard, all Dzongdas and Chimis are requested to explain about the functions of the Council to the general public accordingly to the report presented to the Assembly. Suggestions regarding any amendment to be made in the report should be reported to the next Assembly.

34. NATIONAL PLAN DOCUMENT FOR THE 5TH FIVE YEAR PLAN

During the session, the Planning Commission distributed plan documents to all the members. The Deputy Minister, Planning Commission stated that the document covers the plans and programmes to be executed during the 5th Plan and added that if any clarification is required regarding the points in the plan document, it can be explained in the next Assembly.

On this issue, the Deputy Minister, Planning Commission briefly outlined the previous plans and said that out of the total financial requirement of Nu.4338 million for execution of the 5th Plan, an amount of Nu 1330 million is still to be arranged. It was reported that the Ministry of Finance and Foreign Affairs would find out the possibilities of obtaining either loan or financial assistance from other countries. Meanwhile, all the members are urged to work hand in hand with the Royal Government so that the programmes can be executed according to the plan and the national goal of self-reliance be achieved.

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