

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
(23.10.89 - 31.10.1989)

1. OPENING CEREMONY AND THE APPOINTMENT OF THE DEPUTY SPEAKER :

The 68th session of the National Assembly of Bhutan was opened with the performance of the traditional shugdrel ceremony on 23rd October, 1989.

On this auspicious day, His Majesty the King conferred “Dar” upon Mr. Passang Dorji, the Representative of the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He was thus appointed as Deputy Speaker for one year, following his unanimous election to the post by the National Assembly.

Before the Assembly commenced its deliberations on the agenda, the Speaker of the National Assembly welcomed His Majesty, the King, Representatives of the Monk Body, Chimis and Government officials to the 68th session. He also wished ‘TASHI DELEK’ to the new Deputy Speaker, and to all new Members of the National Assembly.

Expressing his gratitude to His Majesty the King and the Members of the National Assembly for having reposed their trust and confidence in him, the new Deputy Speaker said that he would endeavour to serve the King, Country and the People (TSAWA-SUM) with full devotion and loyalty.

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW DUNGKHAG :

The Public Representative of Haa reported that Sangbikha is in the extreme corner of Haa dzongkhag and that it takes almost four days to reach the dzongkhag headquarters on foot. He, therefore, made a request that the 163 households under Sangbi gewog, be merged with the 30 households under Samar gewog, 250 households under the nearby Lahareni gewog of Sibsoo Dungkhag and the 150 households under the Duntoe gewog of Dorokha Dungkhag and establish a new dungkhag for the benefit of these 693 households.

In response, the Deputy Home Minister said that Samar gewog was already connected to Haa Dzongkhag by a motorable road, which shortened the journey to Dzongkhag headquarters to only about an hour. Similarly, Laherini and Yaba Gewogs of Samchi dzongkhag being close to a motorable road were nearer to the Sibsoo dungkhag as compared to Sangbikha.

The Deputy Home Minister stated that if distance from the dzongkhag headquarters was to be the sole factor to determine the establishment of a new dungkhag, there were many gewogs located far away from dzongkhag or dungkhag headquarters such as Lajab gewog in Dagana, Gongdu and Silambi in Mongar and Khomshar in Shemgang. He informed that the people of these gewogs have to trek six to seven days to reach their respective dzongkhag headquarters. Furthermore, he said that according to the census of the Home Ministry, there were only 140 households in Sangbi gewog based on which it was not feasible to establish a new dungkhag there. In view of these factors, he felt that further deliberation on the subject was not necessary. Instead, the Home Ministry should examine the proposal from the point of view of convenience and benefits to the people and the government, and take a decision accordingly.

The Royal Advisory Councillors and other Members expressed the view that careful consideration should be given to various aspects such as availability of funds, manpower, infrastructure and other factors like distance from the gewog centre to remote villages and convenience and benefits to the public before establishing a dungkhag or merging gewogs.

The National Assembly resolved that the reduction, increase or merging of dzongkhags, dungkhags and gewogs should be done mainly keeping in view the convenience and benefits to the government and people according to the submission of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

3. ESTABLISHMENT OF A POLICE OUTPOST AT DAIFAM :

The Public Representative of Daifam reported that due to the unstable situation in the neighbouring Indian state of Assam, many Bodo and Kachari people from that state have infiltrated across our borders and are taking shelter inside Bhutan. Therefore, to ensure the safety of life and property of our people along the border areas, he submitted the request of the public of Daifam to establish a police outpost.

In response, the Deputy Home Minister said that the unstable situation in Assam has indeed posed considerable risk to the life and property of our people in southern Bhutan. In view of this, His Majesty the King had paid a visit to the Royal Bhutan Police Training Centre at Jigmeling in Gaylegphug, where His Majesty had given clear directives to the officials of the Royal Bhutan Police and the departments of Forests and Customs to provide adequate protection to our people living in the border areas. Accordingly a number of measures such as establishment of 12 new police/forest checkposts and posting of one special unit of the Royal Bhutan Army at Jigmeling Police Training Centre has been undertaken. At present, a total of 34 combined Police, Forest and Customs checkposts were established along the border areas with the support of adequate communication facilities (wireless sets). Hence appropriate security measures for the protection of life and property of the people was being taken in accordance with the commands of His Majesty the King.

The Deputy Minister also informed the Assembly that due to the warm and cordial relations existing between Bhutan and India, police escorts to facilitate the movement of our people and vehicles through the disturbed areas in Indian territory were being provided by the Indian police. He also expressed the Royal Government's deep appreciation for the assistance and cooperation extended by the Indian Police.

For the security of Daifam, the Deputy Minister said that a combined checkpost of the Royal Bhutan Police, Forest and Customs has been established. In addition, new outposts were also set up at Daisam and Khaurang. The Deputy Minister added that should there be a genuine need to establish an additional outpost, the Government was prepared to consider the request.

During the deliberation, the Dzongdag of Samdrup Jongkhar reported that, at one time, more than 1000 people had infiltrated into Bhutan while some 300-400 people infiltrate from time to time into the country in search of shelter. He also informed that Meche people had infiltrated even upto Dewothang. The Dzongdag said that these developments have created a difficult and sensitive problem in his dzongkhag.

In this regard, His Majesty the King pointed out the need to resolve this situation with great care and tact. Forced expulsion of these people may result in unpleasant consequences for people living along our border areas. On the other hand, if they are

allowed to stay, the Government of India may feel that we are deliberately sheltering terrorists in our territory. At the same time continued influx of such people will eventually endanger the security of our nation. Therefore, there is an urgent need to further improve and strengthen the security measures along the borders. On this issue, His Majesty expressed the desire that the National Assembly should attach the greatest importance towards resolving this problem.

His Majesty also stated that a plan of action on security measures was approved by the Lhengyel Shungtshog. This had been distributed to the Dzongdags, Chimis and Gups of southern Bhutan and may also be distributed to the Members of the National Assembly for their information and understanding.

In the interest of security and wellbeing of the country and with the view to avoid any misunderstanding between Bhutan and the Government of India, the National Assembly resolved that security measures along the trouble-prone border areas be strengthened. Further, it was resolved that the Ministry of Home Affairs study the necessity of setting up a new outpost at Daifam and take suitable action in the matter.

4. MATTERS PERTAINING TO DRIGLAM NAMZHA, NATIONAL DRESS AND LANGUAGE :

The Public of Sarbhang, Gaylegphug and Kalikhola Dungkhags reported that in keeping with one of the most important objectives of the Sixth Plan, the implementation of Driglam Namzha and the promotion of National Dress and Language had progressed satisfactorily. This symbolizes an important step towards enhancing our distinct national identity. If more emphasis is given to this policy, it would prove beneficial to the country as it would further promote and foster national unity and harmony among our people.

The Deputy Home Minister expressed his happiness that the people had now understood the importance of promoting our national identity, and were supporting this national goal by actively contributing towards its achievement. He said that this reflects a unity of thought between the people and the Government.

He informed the Assembly that His Majesty had visited all dzongkhags and several schools in the beginning of 1989 during which His Majesty had explained the great

importance and need for promoting a unique national identity and that a KASHO explaining the policy and objectives and urging the people to extend their support had also been issued. The Deputy Minister said that although the people had already understood the contents of the KASHO, he wanted to stress the importance of promoting and preserving our unique national identity in view of our country's small size and population, so that the prevailing peace and prosperity will be safeguarded and enhanced.

He explained that this subject assumed particular significance since some of our ways and practices were identical to the customs and traditions prevailing in other countries and some of our people tend to identify more closely with the people of other countries. In a large country, such diversity would have added colour and character to its national heritage without affecting national security. However, in a small country like ours it would adversely affect the growth of social harmony and unity among the people. The Government has, for these reasons, promulgated a policy to promote Driglam Namzha, National Dress and Language among our people. He emphasised that the successful implementation of this policy is vital for the promotion of our national identity.

The Deputy Minister said that His Majesty's KASHO clearly states that the dress or the customs of the people living in the north need not necessarily comprise the basis for promoting our national identity. What is imperative he said, was that a small country such as Bhutan should have a distinct national identity that would always stand as a proud and common symbol of strength to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of the people and sovereignty of the nation. Therefore, it was necessary for all Bhutanese to contribute towards the promotion of our Driglam Namzha and LAMDRO-LUGSOEL in accordance with the Royal Command. He said that it is only through shared values, customs and traditions that the feeling of being one people under one King and Country can be generated, which in turn would strengthen social harmony and unity among our people and thus ensure the continued independence and sovereignty of our country.

Endorsing the views of the Public Representatives for more emphasis on the implementation of Driglam Chhosum, National Dress and Language, he pointed out that the Government already had a policy for further strengthening and promoting of this national goal. Speaking on the subject, the Royal Advisory Councillors, Secretary of the Special Commission and Dratshang Lhentshog, and other Public Representatives expressed their support for the policy and urged that it be further strengthened.

His Majesty the King was pleased to observe that even though our people faced great inconvenience in learning Dzongkha and Driglam Namzha their response, level of understanding and support for fulfilling this important national objective was most touching and encouraging. His Majesty further said that unlike larger countries that have economic and military advantages, Bhutan is a small developing country with a small population. Therefore, the need to promote a distinct national identity which will foster and enhance social harmony and unity among our people is of the utmost importance for ensuring the future well being and security of our country.

His Majesty further explained that there is a tendency among our people to identify themselves more closely with nationalities of other countries than with our own Bhutanese people. Such a tendency will obviously have long term adverse effects on the unity and security of the country. His Majesty pointed out that if such problems did not exist there would be no need to promote a national dress and language or Driglam Namzha. His Majesty then expressed his deep appreciation and happiness to our people of Southern Bhutan who, inspite of all the difficulties and inconveniences they faced, have wholeheartedly endeavoured to fulfil this important national policy of promoting a unique national identity for ensuring the well being of our beloved country.

In this regard, the National Assembly resolved that the Government and public in all dzongkhags should support this policy and contribute towards its successful implementation so that the objectives of this important national goal can be fully attained.

5. BHUTAN-INDIA BORDER PERTAINING TO SAKTENGTAWANG SECTOR :

The Public Representative of Sakteng reported that five pasturelands measuring 270 langdos (about 90 acres), which had traditionally belonged to Bhutan had fallen into Indian territory when demarcating the Bhutan-India boundary on the Sakteng-Tawang sector. The above pastures were presently being utilised jointly for cattle grazing by peoples living on both sides of the border. In this regard, the public requested the Government to kindly brief the people on the subject.

In response, the Surveyor General stated that during the boundary demarcation between Sakteng in Bhutan and Tawang in India in 1972, some grazing lands belonging to Bhutan had fallen on the Indian side, while some grazing lands belonging to Gongkharpa, Gyendungpa and Khetpas of the Indian villages had fallen into Bhutanese territory. In this connection, several meetings had been held between the late Sonam Rabgye, the former Chief of Survey, and the Deputy Commissioner of Kameng and Additional Deputy Commissioner of Tawang alongwith concerned graziers of Bhutan and India.

During such meetings, the Saktengpas had always expressed their desire to retain their traditional grazing lands that had fallen into Indian territory because of the difficult terrain and long distance that they had to travel to utilize the grazing lands which had fallen into Bhutanese territory after demarcation.

During the tour of the Surveyor General to the border areas of Sakteng in October, 1988, along with the people of Sakteng, it was revealed that the grazing lands which were said to belong to three Indian villages and had fallen into Bhutanese territory after demarcation were not only contiguous to their grazing lands but were actually situated near their villages. Therefore, they requested the Royal Government to help them obtain possession of the grazing lands that actually belong to Bhutan by rectifying whatever mistakes may have been taken place during previous demarcations. Consequently, the Royal Government had taken up the matter with the Government of India and it was expected that the matter would be settled soon in view of the warm and friendly relations existing between the two countries.

In this regard, the National Assembly endorsed the measures taken by the Royal Government.

6. BHUTAN'S BOUNDARY WITH INDIA AND CHINA

The Public Representative of Chemong and Yurung reported that for Bhutan which lay between two big countries, i.e. China on the north and India in the south, it had become important to finalize an early demarcation of our international borders with both these neighbours. He requested that the Government to kindly brief the people on the subject.

In response, the Surveyor General said that the boundary between Bhutan and India had been demarcated except at a few sectors. These remained incomplete because for the past six years priority had been given to our border talks with China. However, due to our close relations with India, this could be settled at any time.

The boundary talks with the People's Republic of China is in full progress. The fifth round of talks with China had been completed and the sixth round of talks was due to commence soon.

In this regard, the Surveyor General said that the matter would be explained clearly when the National Assembly members visited Lungtenphug to observe the sand model and maps of Bhutan's boundaries.

7. MATTERS PERTAINING TO TIBETANS WANTING TO LEAVE BHUTAN :

The Deputy Home Minister reported to the National Assembly that earlier this year, there was a directive from His Holiness Dalai Lama in Dharamsala to the Tibetans in Bhutan to leave Bhutan and come to India. His Holiness had also approached the government of India on this matter. According to Dharamsala, if the Tibetans residing in Bhutan on a continued basis were gradually assimilated with the Bhutanese, this would hurt the struggle for independence of Tibet.

In view of this, the Ministry of Home Affairs deputed two officers to find out how many Tibetans wished to leave Bhutan. The Tibetans wishing to leave were given adequate time to consider their decisions before forwarding their petition requesting for permission to leave the country. So far, 1544 Tibetans had opted to leave Bhutan.

His Majesty the King was pleased to observe that at a time when the nation was enjoying peace, stability and economic prosperity any Tibetans or Bhutanese wishing to leave the country were free to do so. His Majesty also commanded that such people, who wish to leave Bhutan be allowed to sell their properties including their registered lands.

The Deputy Home Minister further informed that as we all were aware, the land currently occupied by the Tibetans belonged to our people in the vicinity either as Tsamdo or Kamshing. These, lands had been taken by the government and granted free

of cost to the Tibetans for their rehabilitation. Despite this, they would still be allowed to sell their registered landed properties and also be exempted from paying any sales tax.

Endorsing the statement of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the National Assembly resolved that the people who wish to leave Bhutan, be allowed to do so.

8. ANTI-NATIONAL LETTERS AND BOOKLETS :

The Deputy Home Minister reported to the National Assembly that several anti-national and seditious letters and booklets had been distributed lately to our Government officers and the public. The Ministry of Home Affairs, having read the contents of these publications, found that these allegations were baseless, malicious and anti-national, and against the fundamental principles of 'TSAWA-SUM'. Some of the contents, it was reported, were not even worthy of mentioning in the August Assembly.

These publications were aimed at disrupting the economic prosperity and happiness of the people, the trust and faith that exists between the Government and the people, and the peace and security of the country.

As the National Assembly Members were aware, such anti-national activities were against our fundamental principles of 'TSAWA-SUM' and constituted an act of treason. Therefore, any one convicted of such activities shall be punishable under Chapter 17, Tsa-1 (2) of the Thrimshung. Though every effort was being made to trace the culprits responsible for such publications, it was not easy to stop these miscreants since the seditious letters and booklets were posted from outside Bhutan.

As it was a matter of great national concern, which would affect the existing trust and faith between the Government and the people, it was very important for the National Assembly Members to bring this to the immediate attention of our public so that the innocent people would not be misguided by anti-national elements. In future, Government employees and the general public, whosoever receives such publications, should immediately inform the Ministry of Home Affairs or the concerned dzongkhag.

Realizing the harm such publications cause to the ‘TSAWA-SUM’ and bearing in mind the wellbeing and stability of the country, the National Assembly directed the Ministry of Home Affairs to investigate and identify such culprits immediately.

9. MATTERS RELATING TO INTER-MARRIAGES :

The Deputy Home Minister reported to the National Assembly that His Majesty the King had been pleased to approve in the 101 session of the Lhengyel Shungtshog a simple scheme to promote social harmony and unity among the people by instituting a Royal Grant of Nu.10,000 for marriages between Lhotshampas and other citizens of the kingdom. He reported that, under the scheme, a couple having a valid marriage certificate from a Thrimkhang and National Identity cards were eligible for the Royal Grant, which could be claimed from the Ministry of Home Affairs or the concerned dzongkhag. However, should the marriage be false the sum of Nu. 10,000 would have to be refunded to the Government, while the beneficiaries would be liable for punishment according to the related rules. The amount of Nu. 10,000 would also have to be refunded to the government in the event the marriage is terminated within a period of five years. This notification shall be effective from January, 1990.

The Deputy Home Minister informed the Assembly that it was His Majesty’s aspiration that this would help realize the cherished goal of strengthening national integration and unity among all sections of our people.

The Deputy Home Minister also pointed out that such a scheme had become necessary more than ever before to prevent many landless and jobless persons from outside the country to find spouses in Bhutan due to availability of free facilities for health, education and employment in the country.

The National Assembly fully endorsed the government’s policy and programmes to encourage integration through inter-marriages.

10. SUPPLIES OF FOOD AND OTHER ESSENTIAL ITEMS DURING NATURAL CALAMITIES :

The Public Representative of Mewang, Gyene and Dagala requested that they be informed of the measures being taken by the Royal Government to meet shortages of

food and essential commodities that may arise due to disruption of road communications caused by natural calamities.

The Deputy Minister of the Planning Commission reported that in accordance with the policy of self-sufficiency in food, it was found essential to work towards establishing a food reserve to last at least three months to meet shortages due to natural calamities and other unavoidable circumstances. The Lhengyel Shungtshog in its 99th session had also decided to set up storage facilities. Though the Government had directed the Food Corporation of Bhutan to maintain a food stock for at least three months, for the time being, the FCB was working towards establishing food reserves to last for one and a half months only, due to lack of storage facilities and other resources.

In addition to the existing storage facilities, where food reserves lasting for one and a half months could be stocked, plans were also underway to establish 10 new such facilities in different parts of the country. The initial cost of establishing a three months' food security reserve, which would include rice, edible oil and salt, would be approximately Nu. 246.00 lakhs whereas for one and a half months, it would cost Nu. 130.00 lakhs.

Therefore, in accordance with the policy of self-sufficiency in food, efforts were being made by the FCB to facilitate procurement of food produced within the country by arranging storage facilities capable of storing 5600MT. Moreover, the Government had plans to seek assistance for maintaining food reserves with a view to prevent difficulties to people at times of shortfalls in food supplies.

It was pointed out that the people should not depend on the Government alone. Our people, a majority of whom were engaged in agriculture, should also make efforts to increase food production every year so that the surplus food commodities could be sold to the Government to help establish the national food security reserves.

Similarly, the Government had directed the Tashi Commercial Corporation to store petroleum products to last for a period of three to four weeks during disruptions in road communications due to heavy rainfall and other natural causes. Besides, on the direction of Lhengyel Shungtshog to the Ministry of Trade and Industry to expand storage facilities for petroleum products, the Ministry was already studying the

availability of funds, manpower, land and machinery/ equipment, etc, for the implementation of the programme.

Expressing their gratitude to the Royal Government for the measures taken on the matter for the benefit of the people and the Government, the National Assembly Members endorsed the report of the Deputy Minister of the Planning Commission.

11. SELECTION OF THRIMPONS FOR THE DZONGKHAGS :

The public of Punakha stated that Dzongkhag Thrimpons play a vital role in the maintenance of Drigthrim in the Dzongkhags. Therefore, to avoid people from approaching the High Court due to dissatisfaction with judgements passed by local courts on cases, the public requested the High Court to thoroughly screen candidates for Dzongkhag Thrimpons before their appointment.

In response, the Representative of the High Court stated that candidates for Thrimpons to be posted in dzongkhags were selected by the Royal Civil Service Commission and the Chief Justice of the High Court. The appointments of Thrimpons was not effective without the approval of His Majesty the King. Therefore, every possible care was taken to select best possible candidates for Dzongkhag Thrimpons.

Even though all court cases are settled in accordance with the prevailing law of the land, appeals were made by some litigants due to their ignorance of the law or a genuine need for redressal or deliberately without substantive grounds because of access for appeal to the High Court and even to His Majesty the King. This did not reflect on the inefficiency of the dzongkhag Thrimpons to dispense justice. The High Court also calls for quarterly reports regularly from all the dzongkhag Thrimpons on the proceedings of the cases in accordance with directives of the Government, and has been scrutinizing the cases regularly. Therefore, the government has given due importance to the strengthening of our legal system by improving the procedures of law.

Endorsing the views of the Representative of the High Court, the National Assembly resolved that in view of the important role of the Thrimpons, the government should select suitable persons for such posts.

12. ELECTION OF PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HIGH COURT :

On behalf of the Royal Advisory Council it was stated that earlier the laws were not properly codified as a result of which the public had to face various difficulties due to their inability to understand the Thrimshung clearly. Similarly, to ensure better understanding of the Thrimshung by the Lhotsampas and Sarchhogpas, who at that time could not speak Zhungkha, the government had established the practice of appointing two People's Representatives in the High Court in 1968.

Due to the blessings of the Lord Buddha and the system of hereditary monarchy coupled with the good fortune of the people, the country has benefited from modern and traditional education for the last 30 years and the people have enjoyed the benefits of socio-economic development, and sound administration including fair and equitable justice which have been further strengthened over the years. Earlier, law books were available only in the courts, but today the laws, having been codified and simplified, are printed in book form and distributed in all the dzongkhags. As such, interested government servants and the public can easily avail access to the law books. Thus, the people involved in court cases can now understand the procedures pertaining to court cases and the contents of the Thrimshung.

The People's Representatives in the High Court, being elected by the people, have been unable to fully understand the procedures and contents of the Thrimshung. As a result, it gives the wrong impression that they have been appointed as witnesses due to lack of confidence of the people in the High Court. Such a practice which does not exist in other countries is becoming increasingly inappropriate. In view of these facts, the posts of Public Representatives in the High Court were found un-necessary.

During the deliberations, some members pointed out that the posts of People's Representatives in High Court should be maintained to ensure proper settlement of court cases in the interest of the public. While some members, expressing the view that these Peoples' Representatives were not entrusted with any responsibilities by the High Court, requested to be informed about the problems faced by the government in either retaining or abolishing the posts.

Some Royal Advisory Councillors and Assembly members stated that although Peoples' Representatives have been appointed to the High Court, people still appeal to

His Majesty for justice. Such appeals are forwarded to the Royal Advisory Council for investigation. As a result, the Royal Advisory Councillors had to take up the settlement of litigation cases in addition to their own normal duties. This being the case the posts of People's Representatives has become redundant.

On this subject, His Majesty the King was pleased to state that the post of Peoples' Representatives in the High Court did not serve any useful purpose. In fact when people appeal to His Majesty they were forwarded to the People's Representatives in the High Court but most petitioners appealed to His Majesty not to refer their cases back to the High Court. Thus, such cases had to be referred to the Royal Advisory Council. However, the government did not really have strong view on the matter and therefore the issue of retaining or abolishing the posts should be decided by the National Assembly.

In the deliberations following His Majesty's statement, some members expressed the view that the post be retained as before, while others felt that they were not essential.

Intervening in the deliberations, His Majesty suggested that it would be more beneficial if the National Assembly elected two of the most qualified and competent candidates from the 18 dzongkhags for a specified period of time rather than continue with the present system of electing People's Representatives who do not have any clear cut role or function in the High Court.

His Majesty further suggested that a separate set of rules and regulations governing the appointment of such Thrimpons from the public and their terms of office be formulated. The Public Representatives endorsed the suggestion of His Majesty. The National Assembly also resolved that the government should formulate rules and regulations pertaining to the election of Public Thrimpons which may be put up to the 69th session of the National Assembly for approval.

13. MATTERS PERTAINING TO BHUTAN'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Public Representative of Lamgong Gewog, Paro stated that the Government has been briefing the National Assembly in the past on our foreign policy. Therefore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was requested to provide booklets giving up-to-date information on Bhutan's relations with other countries.

In this regard, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs distributed booklets pertaining to Bhutan's foreign relations and foreign assistance received by the country during the last two years. The Assembly members, having clearly understood Bhutan's foreign relations from the booklets, expressed their thanks to the Ministry and no further deliberation took place on the subject.

14. BHUTAN'S BOUNDARY WITH CHINA :

In accordance with the programme, the members of the National Assembly visited the Royal Bhutan Army auditorium at Lungtenphug to view the sand model and maps relating to Bhutan's boundary with China. His Majesty the King was pleased to state that the sixth round of talks on borders between Bhutan and China was to commence soon. His Majesty also stated that a seven-member Bhutanese delegation which will include Bhutan's Ambassadors to India and Bangladesh and the Surveyor General, would be led by the Foreign Minister at the talks in Beijing, scheduled to begin from 30th October, 1989 for a duration of one week.

His Majesty informed the National Assembly members that the boundary talks between the two countries were going on smoothly on the basis of sovereign equality. However, His Majesty said that it was important for the National Assembly members to know that there were about four areas where there were differences in perception regarding the boundary lines between our two countries. The members were urged to express their views freely on the government's position on these areas. They were also asked to decide whether the boundary points identified by the Royal Government which were fully in keeping with the historical and traditional boundary lines between Bhutan and Tibet should form the basis for the forthcoming border negotiation.

His Majesty the King, Goongloen and the Surveyor General explained in detail the points for discussion with China as follows :

1. On the South-Western sector, our proposal was to demarcate Bhutan's boundary with China from Batangla to Merukla/Merugla upto Sinchela along the ridge. In this sector within an area of approximately 30sq km., Tibetan herders graze their yaks during summer and Chinese soldiers were also known to patrol the area.

2. From Sinchela to Amochhu, the boundary line follows the ridges while from Amochhu to its confluence with Langmarpochhu, it was our intention to demarcate the boundary along the Amochhu.
3. On the Western sector, we propose to demarcate the Bhutan-China boundary line from the confluence of Lang-marpo and Amochhu upto the confluence of Docherimchang along the Langmarpochhu, and from Docherimchang-chhu confluence to Gomla, it should follow the Rongchhu (stream). From Gomla to Pankala, the boundary will follow the ridges while from Pankala to Dramana ridge, it will follow the Pankala ridge. From the Dramana ridge to Tromo-chhu and Zhiuchhu confluence, the ridges should be the demarcating line and from Tromochhu-Zhiuchhu confluence to Lungkala, the boundary should follow the Zhiuchhu. In this sector within an approximate area of 180sq km, Tibetans bring their yak herds across the border for grazing during summer and the Chinese army also conduct patrols.
4. In the North-Western and Northern part, the boundary line was proposed to follow the mountain peaks from Lungkala across Tremola, Jhomolhari, Wagyla, Gankar Punsum, Monla Karchung to Dompala. Along this line there were no differences of views.
5. The Paksamlung boundary line was proposed from Dompala to Chhoigongla, Yanjula and Neula upto Tshozam along mountain peaks. In this sector there were differences of views regarding an area of approximately 495 sq km.
6. The Menchhuma boundary runs from Tshozam upto Bodla. In this sector also there were differences in perception regarding an area of approximately 52sq km.
7. The boundary towards the east from Menchhuma follows the mountain peaks and there were no disputed areas in this sector.

The historical and traditional factors and the difficulties and problems related to the above boundary lines were clearly explained with the aid of the sand model and maps.

His Majesty thus explained all the stages leading to the final demarcation of our northern border which will be based on our traditional boundary lines with the Tibetan region of China. He also informed the Assembly members that the Royal Government hoped to complete the demarcation of our border with China by 1991 in keeping with the above proposals.

The Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Representatives of the Monk Body, Government Representatives, Royal Advisory Councillors and Public Representatives expressed their gratitude to the Royal Government for the efforts being made to demarcate the boundary between Bhutan and China without further delay to ensure the present and future well being and security of the country. They, therefore, requested the government to make every effort to ensure the successful demarcation of our northern border.

The National Assembly approved the government's proposal on the boundary negotiation, in acceptance of which the Speaker, Lyonpo Sangye Penjor and the Deputy Speaker, Passang Dorji subscribed their signatures on the maps on behalf of the National Assembly members, thereby concluding the deliberation on the subject.

15. DUNGSAM CEMENT PLANT

The Public Representative of Nganglam said that the establishment of a cement plant at Nganglam will contribute to the enhancement of revenues of the Government, while at the same time, the people of the area would also be provided with a source of livelihood and income. However, the public were unhappy to learn that the cement plant was being handed over to private entrepreneurs. Therefore, it was felt that if the work towards establishing the plant is expedited by the government itself, it would bring greater benefits to the country and the people at large.

The Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry said that all equipment/machinery for the establishment have to be transported through Assam. He explained that due to the Bodo problems in Assam, there were not only unexpected road blocks but also risk to life. Therefore owing to these reasons, if the equipment and machinery and other materials are not delivered at the project site in time, there was every possibility that the cost of the project will escalate considerably thus making the project economically unviable.

As all members were aware, in order to establish such a huge project, the Government had to seek assistance from other countries and loans from international financial institutions. Hence, if the activities related to the project are not implemented on a timely basis, the Government and the people would be confronted with serious difficulties.

When the plan was initially formulated, the production capacity of the project was estimated at 1500 MT per day. When we compare this with the present output of the Penden Cement Factory, the output of the Nganglam Project would exceed by 1000 MT. We were now given to believe that there are plans to set up two new cement projects in Assam, whose individual capacities were twice that of the Nganglam project. Therefore, even if the Nganglam project was completed, the market for our cement may be limited after a couple of years.

Detailed investigations had thus become necessary to be conducted to study how much the project can contribute towards the present and future economic wellbeing of the country. Therefore, the project had been postponed for the time being. However, construction of houses, roads, etc had been completed in the Nganglam Project area. Furthermore, even if the cement plant is not established, plans are underway to set up other industries in the area. Moreover, the Government has initiated the policy to privatise business and industries as much as possible. In response to this policy, if private entrepreneurs establish industries, it would prove to be equally beneficial to both the government and the public.

In this regard, the Royal Advisory Councillor of Samdrup Jongkhar and the Chimi of Nganglam said that though they have clearly understood the difficulties of the Royal Government in establishing the cement plant, they would still request that the project be set up in view of the far reaching effects it will have on the welfare of the people. His Majesty the King said that the people were of the opinion that development of the country would be obstructed if big projects such as the Nganglam Project are not established. His Majesty said that the Nganglam Project alone would cost the government about Nu. 150 crores which had to be borrowed from external sources. Even if the project was started, 18000 KW of electricity would be required to produce 1500 MT of cement per day. To supply this requirement of the project, transmission lines would have to be set up from the Indian side at a considerable cost. Yet, if the supply of electricity and road transportation are not reliable due to situations such as

the Bodo and Kachari problems in Assam, there is every risk that the government and the country will be burdened with heavy losses.

Therefore, His Majesty suggested that in accordance with the earlier decision of the Lhengyel Shungtshog, the project may be postponed for the time being. Meanwhile, consideration may be given for the establishment of as many small scale industries as possible especially in the event the situation in Assam does not improve in the near future.

Due to the present unavoidable circumstances, there was no alternative but to postpone the establishment of cement plant. The National Assembly therefore resolved to act in accordance with the decision of the Lhengyel Shungtshog.

16. PROVISION OF ELECTRICITY :

The Public Representative of Gaylegphug Dungkhag stated that the lack of adequate electricity supply due to the unstable situation in the neighbouring Indian state of Assam had caused much suffering to the general public and economic loss to the industries and factories in Gaylegphug. Therefore, it was requested that measures to supply electricity directly from within our country be kindly taken while provisions for electrification of different gewogs may also be made.

In response, the Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry said that as requested by the Public Representative of Gaylegphug, the government has a plan to supply electricity from within our country, which however, could not be undertaken immediately. He said that at present, electricity is being supplied to Gaylegphug from India through a 49 km 66 KV transmission line. He informed the Assembly members that the government was also taking steps to install a 132 KV transmission line for increased supply of electricity to Gaylegphug and that this issue which had been discussed with the government of India has already been finalized and the materials to undertake the connection had also been procured. However the connection was delayed due to the Bodo problem in Assam.

The Deputy Minister stated that even though there were disruptions in the supply of electricity for about four months due to problems in the Indian state of Assam, the government was pleased to note that the situation had improved and Gaylegphug was

now receiving constant supply of power since September, this year. Regarding the supply of electricity to Gaylegphug via Wangdiphodrang and Chirang, the Deputy Minister said that feasibility studies were being carried out. Investigations were also underway to set up a power plant at Basochubisa in Wangdiphodrang to achieve the objective of supplying electricity from within the country.

The National Assembly was informed that an estimated sum of Nu. 13 crores would be incurred on the installation of the transmission lines alone from Wangdiphodrang to Gaylegphug via Chirang. Plans on the supply of electricity to Gaylegphug from within our country were already being formulated between the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Planning Commission. Expressing appreciation for the measures being taken to ensure reliable supply of electricity, the Public Representative of Gaylegphug thanked the Royal Government for the explanation given in the Assembly. The National Assembly also endorsed the statement of the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry.

17. PROVISION OF ELECTRICITY :

The Public of Kalikhola submitted a request that provision of supply of electricity may kindly be made for Kalikhola dungkhag.

The Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry said that it was not economically viable to supply electricity to Kalikhola from within our country. Talks with the government of India had been held since 1974 for the supply of electricity to Kalikhola. However, due to various difficulties, electricity could not be supplied from India. Therefore, the Royal Government is studying various alternative ways to make electricity available for Kalikhola.

His Majesty informed the National Assembly that during his visit to Kalikhola in April, the public had reported to His Majesty the difficulties faced by them due to lack of electricity. Realizing the difficulties of the public, His Majesty the King had instructed that a diesel generator unit be set up, for which the public expressed their gratitude.

18. ESTABLISHMENT OF COTTAGE INDUSTRIES :

The Public of Talo under Punakha requested that in view of the abundant supply of vegetables, mustard seeds and fruits, small agro-industries may be established by the

Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry so that such agricultural products can be processed and preserved.

The Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, the Deputy Minister of Planning Commission and the Representative of the BCCI emphasized that the government had a policy to privatise industries and business as far as possible. Therefore, parties interested in setting up small, medium or large scale industries could submit project proposals to the Ministry of Trade and Industry for scrutiny and study. If the proposals were found viable, the Ministry of Trade and Industry would accord the necessary clearance. In this regard, the BCCI would be able to assist entrepreneurs in preparing project proposals.

Since the government had a policy of providing financial assistance to interested entrepreneurs, it was stated that concerned parties could directly approach the Ministry of Trade & Industry and the BCCI with viable project proposals.

While expressing their gratitude to the Royal Government, the Member agreed to inform the public accordingly.

19. GOVERNMENT ORDER SUPPLIES FROM LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY :

The Representative of the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry reported that according to Resolution No.16 of the 52nd session of National Assembly held in 1980, all government departments were to procure their requirements from business firms/concerns operating in the country. However, many procurements were being made by calling quotations directly from outside the country. Therefore, he requested that the National Assembly ensure the strict implementation of the above resolution.

In response, the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry said that products such as CGI sheets, steel and explosives etc had to be imported from India on quotas obtained from the Indian government through the State Trading Corporation of Bhutan. Two years ago, medicines and equipment needed in our hospitals were procured through a private agency as a result of which many problems occurred. Therefore, as per government directives, the State Trading Corporation of Bhutan had been ordered to make all such

procurements while the requirements of various Ministries/ Departments were procured in accordance with the 1988 Financial Manual.

The Finance Minister said that in accordance with the 1988 Financial Manual, at least three quotations were required for procurement of equipment/items costing huge sums of money. However, there were very few national businessmen or firms who could handle such large procurements. Therefore, outside business men/firms were also allowed to submit quotations.

Nevertheless, as indicated in the Financial Manual, the procedures for calling quotations could be amended, according to the decision of the National Assembly.

20. OUTLET FOR SALE OF ORANGES :

The Public Representatives of Nganglam said that oranges from Nganglam were sold in the towns of Assam and nearby places which do not provide remunerative prices. Therefore, the public requested that arrangements be made through the State Trading Corporation of Bhutan to provide an outlet for exports to Bangladesh, which would be very beneficial to the public.

In response, the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry said that since Bhutan lies between two countries and is land-locked, all our goods had to transit via routes through another country. The government of India had generously allowed us the use of Changrabandh and Mugalhat trade routes to Bangladesh which had proved very beneficial. Moreover, talks were going on between Bhutan and India regarding a new route through Dhubri. In this connection, an Indian delegation was scheduled to visit Bhutan during November, 1989 at which time, talks on the transit route are expected to be finalised.

Last year, 672 boxes of oranges were exported to Bangladesh on a trial basis. This year too, two businessmen from Nganglam agreed to export around 250 MT of oranges to Bangladesh through the State Trading Corporation of Bhutan. Compared to last year, business between Bhutan and Bangladesh had increased three-fold.

On this subject, the National Assembly expressed satisfaction with the explanation given by the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry.

21. RURAL IRRIGATION :

The Public Representative of Gaylegphug stated that irrigation water for Gaylegphug is lifted from Maokhola. However due to problems in Assam, the supply of electricity has become erratic which hinders the operation of the pumphouse. As such, cultivation is greatly hampered without regular water supply. Therefore, the government is requested to take measures to supply irrigation water directly from the river without having to depend on the lift irrigation system.

In response, the Director General of Agriculture said that the Department of Agriculture has been giving due importance to the improvement of irrigation facilities for agricultural development in Gaylegphug. At present, the Department has earmarked Nu. 62 lakhs for the construction of new irrigation channels and repairs of the existing channels.

With regard to supply of water directly from the river source without a lift system, the Director General explained that when conducting the feasibility study in the IVth plan, it was found that the supply of water directly from the river source by gravity was not possible because of the hilly terrain and the porous nature of the soil. Again, the construction of a new irrigation channel would involve huge expenditure. Secondly, repairs of the channel would have to be done continuously and consequently the yearly budget would be very high. Therefore he said that it was not feasible to supply water by using gravity direct from the source as requested. Moreover, the southern parts of the country received heavy rainfall which damaged the channels resulting in regular repairs. He however added that irrigation facilities would be developed in the high-yielding areas of Gaylegphug. In this connection, the Government was also studying the possibility of developing agriculture with the aid of underground water and rainfall. A team of experts from Japan to study the availability of underground water was scheduled to visit between November and December of this year. In light of this, he stated that the government had no plans to establish new channels for the Gaylegphug area.

The Public Representative of Gaylegphug expressed his gratitude to the Royal Government for the detailed information on the matter.

22. CONSTRUCTION OF IRRIGATION CHANNEL NO. 2 :

The Public Representative of Gaylegphug stated that the construction of irrigation channel no.2, which was started in 1981 was abandoned by the Project in 1983 without it being completed. Therefore, the Government is requested to kindly complete the construction of the channel as it would greatly benefit the public of Gaylegphug Naya Busti and Bhur area.

In response, the Director General of Agriculture said that during the Fourth Five Year Plan an area development project was started in Gaylegphug. Under the project, construction of two irrigation channels were planned. The construction of irrigation channel no.1 which was started in 1978 was completed in 1983 at a cost of Nu. 1.85 crores with a capacity to supply 40 cusecs of water. The construction of irrigation channel no.2 was taken up in 1982 but was abandoned in 1985 without being completed. If the channel was completed it was expected to supply 80 cusecs of water. When irrigation channel no.1 was commissioned, it was found that adequate water could not be supplied through it because of the porous nature of the soil. Besides, the intake tanks at the source were often filled with sand and silt which had to be regularly dredged.

He said that in order to establish a new pumphouse for a two and half kilometers long channel, it would cost Nu. 477 lakhs according to the estimate of 1985, which is equivalent to 900 lakhs at the present value. If irrigation channel no.2 is to be commissioned, it is calculated that a tax of over Nu. 1000 per acre per year will have to be levied to meet the cost of electricity for operating the pumphouse. Since irrigation channel no.2 was perceived to be more of a liability than benefit, the construction work had to be discontinued.

In the absence of any other alternative, the National Assembly endorsed the statement of the Director General of Agriculture.

23. MARKET FOR CASH CROPS :

The Public Representative of Pemagatshel requested that due to limited marketing prospects in Samdrup Jongkhar for cash crops such as green vegetables, potatoes and oranges, a regular marketing outlet be organized for the sale of such produce.

The Director General of Agriculture said that the development of cash crops to increase the income of the public is an important policy. Thus the Food Corporation of Bhutan (FCB) had established auction yards in Gaylegphug and Samdrup Jongkhar in 1986 and 1987 respectively in addition to the existing ones in Samchi and Phuntsholing for the convenience of the public.

The Director General informed the Assembly that among the agricultural produce, the Food Corporation of Bhutan auctioned 10,262 metric tons of green vegetables in 1986 which earned more than Nu. 266 lakhs. Similarly, in 1987, 12,648 metric tons of vegetables worth more than Nu. 310 lakhs were auctioned while in 1988, 16,747 metric tons were auctioned earning more than Nu.449 lakhs.

Realizing the importance of auction facilities to boost business activities, establishment of new storage facilities under UN assistance was planned in Phuntsholing, Gaylegphug and Samdrup Jongkhar and construction of such facilities had already started in two places. The Department would spare no effort towards the growth and expansion of business activities through the establishment of auction yards and the provision of improved marketing.

Regarding export facilities to Bangladesh, the Director General said that at present apples and oranges were being exported, and plans were being discussed with the Ministry of Trade and Industry to export green vegetables, potatoes and other food items.

The National Assembly endorsed the statement of the Director General of Agriculture.

24. SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN RICE AND SEED :

The Department of Agriculture submitted a proposal for the achievement of self-sufficiency in rice and edible oil seeds for the endorsement and approval of the National Assembly.

The National Assembly, commending the proposal of the department of Agriculture which was geared towards achieving self sufficiency of essential cereals and edible oils endorsed and approved the proposal as follows :

- a) The policy of intensive production of rice and oilseeds in selected project areas;
- b) Purchase of land in project areas by the department of Agri-culture as per rules and the decision of the National Assembly;
- c) Mandatory concentration on cultivation of rice and oilseeds only by farmers in the project areas.

25. TAX EXEMPTION FOR ORCHARD LANDS :

The Public Representative of Sarbhang Dungkhang said that His Majesty had graciously exempted the taxes for 1989 to enable the public to buy Ghos and Kiras. Accordingly, this was announced by the Gups, Chimis and Gewog Tshogpas to the public of their respective gewogs. However, after three or four months, there was a notification from the government asking the public to pay taxes on orchard land. In view of the earlier practice of paying taxes for wetland, dryland, house and orchard, it was presumed that all payable taxes were exempted. But with the levy of taxes on orchards, it has created a confusion among the public, who are unwilling to pay the taxes on the ground that the taxes had been exempted by His Majesty. As a result, the Gups are facing problems in collecting the taxes.

The Finance Minister said that His Majesty the King had graciously exempted taxes on land, house and cattle to enable the public of Southern Bhutan to purchase Ghos and Kiras. However, the tax on cash crops was not included in the list of exemptions. Therefore, a government notification with instructions to collect taxes on cash crops had been circulated.

The Finance Minister pointed out that there were only a few persons owning cash crop gardens and that these people being prosperous farmers could easily afford to pay such taxes. The question of tax on cash crops was raised only by Sarbhang Dungkhang while no other Southern Dzongkhag had any problem in this regard. He said that the people should be grateful for the exemption of taxes as mentioned above and that there was no justifiable reason to request for tax exemption on cash crops.

The Public Representative of Sarbhang said that he had not clearly understood whether the tax on cash crops had also been included under the list of exempted taxes and expressed his satisfaction with the explanation of the Finance Minister.

26. COMPENSATION FOR HOUSES DESTROYED BY NATURAL CALAMITIES

The Public of Lamgong Gewog, while thanking the government for the financial assistance granted for houses destroyed by fire, requested for similar compensation for houses destroyed by floods, earthquake and wind.

The Finance Minister stated that the government, taking into consideration the welfare of the people, had introduced the system of house insurance in 1971. At that time, the houses were classified into four categories. The houses under category one had to pay Nu. 4 per year while those under categories 2,3 and 4 had to pay Nu. 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Accordingly the compensation payable was also Nu. 8000, 6000, 4000 and 2000 respectively. Under this policy, insurance was also provided against destruction by flood, earthquake and fire. However, as per circular issued by the Home Ministry in 1977, only houses destroyed by fire were granted compensation which is in effect till date.

He added that in 1986, the Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan (RICB) was directed to operate this house insurance scheme. In 1986-87, the Finance Ministry had to pay more compensation than the insurance premium collected by the Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan. As a result, the government had been bearing losses in the interest of the people's welfare.

However, taking into consideration people's welfare, the Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan had prepared three proposals in which were included not only houses destroyed by fire but also those destroyed by flood and earthquake. The National Assembly could now select the best proposal from amongst the three.

The National Assembly accepted the proposal that (a) houses classified under category I pay Nu.30 per year and receive Nu.30,000 as compensation, and (b) houses classified under category II pay Nu.19/- per year and receive Nu.12,500 as compensation. The proposal would be effective from January, 1990.

27. ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMERCIAL BANK :

The Representative of Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry requested that to facilitate the growth of small scale businesses and to compete with other banks in terms of services, a separate commercial bank be kindly considered for establishment.

The Finance Minister reported that the Bank of Bhutan was started in 1968 and by 1989, 23 bank branches had been set up in the dzongkhags. Similarly, in 1976, RICB was established followed by the Unit Trust of Bhutan. The government also had set up the Royal Monetary Authority and Bhutan Development Finance Corporation (BDFC) to provide financial assistance to small and medium business enterprises and industries in 1988. The operating funds for the BDFC were provided by the Bank of Bhutan, RICB and the Finance Ministry. The Bhutan Chamber of Commerce & Industry were also requested to contribute towards the BDFC fund but till date there had been no response from their side.

Before establishing a bank, various aspects such as profit and loss, management of financial transactions, collaboration with foreign banks, and availability of trained manpower should be studied.

At this point, His Majesty suggested that it would be better if a detailed proposal containing the policy objectives, procedures for establishment of Bank, system of management and manpower requirements be submitted to the government for a final decision.

The National Assembly resolved that the proposal as stated by His Majesty the King be prepared and submitted to the Government.

28. DRUK AIR :

The Public of Mewang, Gyene and Dagala while expressing their happiness to see the progress made by Druk Air in the expansion of its services and routes to other countries, said that they were sad to learn about the accidents which occurred to two Dornier aircrafts of Druk Air. Therefore, the public request to be informed about the safety measures being taken to avoid any untoward incidents in future.

In response, the Minister for Communications reported that unexpected accidents occurred to two Dornier aircrafts of the Druk Air, but fortunately there was no loss of life. The Department had already conducted a thorough investigation into the causes of the accidents in accordance with His Majesty's command. The investigation, revealed that the accidents were partly due to human error as well as mechanical failure.

He reported that although the Ministry and the Department could not guarantee that such accidents would not occur in future, every measure was being taken to prevent such mishaps, as mentioned below.

Firstly, to prevent human error, steps were being taken to recruit qualified persons with good character for different posts such as pilots, engineers, cabin crew and ground staff. Similarly, better salary and entitlements would also be provided to attract better qualified people.

Secondly, regular and strict inspections and servicing of aircrafts would be conducted to prevent mechanical failure. In view of the difficult terrain and bad weather in summer, plans were underway for the installation of weather forecast stations and radar facilities. Facilities for communications between Paro and other airports were also being setup. Having taken these measures, it was hoped that in future such accidents would be prevented. The Government was also considering the purchase of a new aircraft.

No formal resolutions were adopted on the topic in the National Assembly.

29. ADOPTION OF RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE ROYAL ADVISORY COUNCIL :

The Rules and Regulations of the Royal Advisory Council, 1989, containing 11 chapters, which had been approved by the 102nd session of the Lhengyel Shungtshog was read out to the National Assembly by the National Assembly Secretary. The National Assembly expressed its deep appreciation to the government for having formulated these comprehensive Rules and Regulations to the Assembly's satisfaction.

The National Assembly approved the new Rules and Regulations of the Royal Advisory Council, 1989 without any amendments.

30. ELECTION OF THE ROYAL ADVISORY COUNCILLORS :

The five-year term of two Representatives from the Monk Body and six People's Representatives in the Royal Advisory Council having expired on October 31, 1989, elections for new People's Representatives were held during the 68th session. The election of Representatives from the Central Monk Body and Rabdey had been held earlier and monitored by the Dratshang Lhentshog. The new elected Representatives from the Central Monk Body was Lupon Tshewang Nidup from Thimphu Ludong Phakhar while Lam Jamphel from Tongsa Chhoeorling was elected as the Rabdey Representative.

The Speaker informed the National Assembly that as per His Majesty's command, the past election system having resulted in unequal representations of the dzongkhags in the Royal Advisory Council, thereby creating dissatisfaction among the people, it was decided that six candidates who secured the highest number of votes from amongst the 18 dzongkhag candidates would be elected as Royal Advisory Councillors. These councillors would act as representatives of the whole country unlike in the past when they represented their constituencies only. Despite the above approved rules, for this year's election the dzongkhags were divided into three groups of East, West and South and two candidates from each group were elected. However, these councillors would represent the people of all the 18 dzongkhags. In future, the election of the Royal Advisory Councillors would be conducted in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Royal Advisory Council, 1989 which was approved by the National Assembly.

The following six candidates were elected by the National Assembly Members from amongst the 18 dzongkhag candidates through a secret ballot in the Assembly Hall :-

1. Kunzang Wangdi - Wawel, Kurteo
2. Tshewang Dorji - Nimzong, Shemgang
3. Devan Tamang - Tshokana, Chirang
4. Bhim Bahadur Rai - Chaptar, Dorokha
5. Dorji Tshering - Rewanang, Paro
6. Namgey
Rinchen - Chang-gupchi,
Thimphu.

On His Majesty's approval of the above elected candidates, they would be appointed Royal Advisory Councillors for a period of one year in the case of representatives from Central Monk Body and Rabdey, while in the case of the People's Representatives, they would serve for a period of three years from the day they are awarded **DAR** by His Majesty the King.

31. HA WANGCHUKLO DZONG

As per resolution 20 of the 67th session of the National Assembly held in November, 1988, it was noted that, as submitted in the 52nd, 61st and 65th sessions, the public of Haa dzongkhag continued to face many inconveniences and difficulties in the observing of proper decorum and cultural activities that are required by tradition as the Dzongkhag Administration and Rabdey were unsuitably located in different places with great limitations in space in both the provisional dzong and in the monastery where the Rabdey is housed. In view of these problems the people of Haa had repeatedly requested that the Wangchuklo Dzong be returned to the public.

Despite the fact that the matter was discussed during several National Assembly sessions, no appropriate decision had been taken as to whether the military school should be shifted or a new Dzong built for the public. Therefore, during the 68th session, His Majesty the King had been pleased to recommend that the Assembly members, most of whom have not seen the Dzong or the training centre, should visit Ha Wangchuklo Dzong in order to assess the necessity of the Dzong for the Royal Bhutan Army (RBA) and also to observe and understand the problems faced by the people. After such an on-site inspection the Assembly members would be in a better position to take a suitable decision on this issue. In accordance with this resolution, His Majesty the King along with the National Assembly Members, visited Haa for two days on October 28 and 29, 1989. While in Haa, the National Assembly Members visited Lhakhang Karpo where the Rabdey is housed and the Offices of the Dzongkhag Administration.

On the morning of October 29, 1989, with the aid of maps and charts, the Senior Instructor of the RBA explained to the Assembly members the complete set up of the Wangchuklo Dzong Military School and the various trainings imparted at the Training Centre. . During the deliberations following the presentation made by the Senior

Instructor, the Royal Advisory Councillors and Public Representatives expressed their opinion that retaining Haa Wangchuklo Dzong would neither be advantageous or disadvantageous for the training activities of the RBA. On the other hand, they felt that, as submitted by the public of Haa, the people not only faced great inconvenience because of the dzongkhag administration and the Rabdey being unsuitably located in different places but the public were also unable to continue the traditional and religious practices which were observed in the Wangchuklo Dzong in the past. Some Assembly Members pointed out the need to shift the Training Centre to a more suitable location since it was in the immediate vicinity of the Dzong. They also felt that military training activities carried out so close to our northern border might have inherent security threats for the country. In response, the Goongleon stated that the policy and programmes of the RBA have been strengthened and improved over the years and that in the 27 years since its establishment, substantial expenditure, planning and manpower have gone into the development of the military school. He said the school had been set up to provide important pre-course training for Officers, Instructors and staff at various levels prior to their departure for full training in India. Therefore, the Goongleon said that if this important training centre were to be shifted elsewhere, it would not only cause considerable inconvenience and difficulties to the RBA but also result in a large expenditure to the Government. He however, stated that if the Royal Government and the National Assembly decide that the training centre be shifted elsewhere, the RBA had no alternative but to abide by this decision.

The Royal Advisory Councillors, Representatives of the Monk Body and Public observed that although the Haa military training school has been established for the last 27 years, even now most of the Instructors at the school were from India. They also enquired whether our Bhutanese Officers had acquired the professional capability to impart the necessary trainings. In addition, some members also stated that they could see no real necessity for RBA Officers to undergo training twice for the same course. Others were of the view that when such elaborate training facilities had already been established in the country, there should be no need to send our officers for training to India.

The Goongleon was then requested by other members to explain the policy of the Royal Bhutan Army with regard to the security of the country. They also enquired whether our Army was capable of defending the sovereignty and security of the country. The Goongleon reported that it is both the command of His Majesty the King,

and also the policy of the RBA to ensure that the Army is fully capable of shouldering all responsibilities related to the defence and security of the country. The RBA has therefore been implementing all its plans and programmes in full accordance with this policy. The Goongleon reported further that the programmes and training activities being carried out by the RBA were in full compliance with the directives of the Government and His Majesty the King and the aspirations of the people for ensuring the security of the country. He also informed the Assembly members that in comparison to the past there has been great improvement in the RBA and that its Officers, NCOs and men have now been able to acquire a high level of professional capability comparable to the personnel of other armies. His Majesty the King instructed Goongleon to take note of the view expressed by the Assembly members to carry out training for our Army officers and instructors as far as possible in our own Army Training Centres within the country. However, since the Army Officers have to be imparted with various highly specialised training, for which no facilities are available in the country, it is to our own benefit to send our officers and instructors to the best Training Centres in India. In this regard, it was pointed out that because of the high standard of the Indian Military Training Institutions other countries also send their armed forces personnel for training to India. In this connection, the Public Representatives expressed the opinion that in view of the professional capability and expertise attained by the Officers and the Instructors of RBA, which were comparable to the Army personnel of other countries, there should be no need for us to have so many outside officers and instructors.

His Majesty the King explained that when we accept aid from the UN and other countries, it is normal practice for consultants and experts to be sent to ensure that their aid is properly utilized. Similarly, the IMTRAT is here in Bhutan to co-ordinate the logistic support and the generous assistance being provided by the government of India to the RBA because of the constraints faced by our Finance Ministry to mobilize resources for our Army, and also to help the RBA in imparting specialized training to its personnel. His Majesty also expressed his deep appreciation for the unfailing and valuable assistance extended to both the Royal Government and the RBA by the government and people of India with whom we have always had very warm and close relations. His Majesty then told the members that the RBA is not only fully confident of safeguarding the security of the country in times of grave national threats and dangers but it shall also, at all times, unfailingly serve the government and the people in any capacity or role it is called upon.

The Representatives of the Monk Body and public responded by saying that they would be grateful to the RBA if it could fulfil the high responsibilities entrusted to it as explained above. The public representatives then reiterated their request that the Wangchuklo Dzong be restored to the people of Haa to house the Dzongkhag Administration. If that were not possible, they requested that the Dzong may be handed over to the Rabdey.

His Majesty the King pointed out that both the Government and the people have already incurred substantial expenditure and effort to set up the physical infrastructure for the establishment of the Rabdey and the Dzongkhag Administration. His Majesty also noted that, Haa Wangchuklo Dzong being located in the middle of the Army Training Centre, shifting both the Dzongkhag Administration and the Rabdey to the Dzong will not only adversely affect the discipline of the army but also cause inconvenience to the Rabdey and the Dzongkhag Administration. Therefore, it would be more practical if the Dzongkhag Administration and the Rabdey were retained in their present locations and the Dzong was given to the charge of the Dratshang to ensure that the traditional and religious practices of the past were revived and maintained, thereby fulfilling the wishes and respecting the sentiments of the people of Haa and the Public Representatives in the National Assembly. The Representatives of the Monk Body led by Dorji Lupon Ngawang Tenzin and the public representatives expressed their deep gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty the King for his generous proposal which was not only acceptable but equally beneficial to all concerned the government, the RBA and the public. The National Assembly then unanimously decided to resolve the issue of the Haa Wangchuklo Dzong and the Military Training School in accordance with the proposal put forward by His Majesty the King.

After the deliberation, His Majesty and Members of the National Assembly witnessed a demonstration of mock warfare performed by three platoons of the Royal Bhutan Army. They also inspected the facilities and observed the training courses at the Military School.

The National Assembly Members left for Thimphu after lunch.

Date 1.11.1989

Sd/-
(Lyonpo Sangye Penjor)
Speaker
National Assembly of Bhutan