

**PROCEEDINGS AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED DURING THE 43RD SESSION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF BHUTAN HELD ON 15TH DAY OF THE 9TH MONTH OF
WOOD RABBIT YEAR.**

1. MATTERS RELATING TO APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT PROPOSALS OF THE FOURTH FIVE YEAR PLAN

The draft proposals of the fourth Five Year Plan submitted by the Planning Commission of Ministry of Development were approved by the 43rd session of the National Assembly.

2. MATTER RELATING TO ASSISTANCE FOR THE RENOVATION OF MONASTERIES

Assistance for the maintenance of all existing monasteries (Lhakhang and Gyonkhang) owned either by the Government or the public would be extended as per decision No. 10 of the 38th session of the National Assembly. The expenditure for the renovation of such monasteries would be met from the budget provision of Nu. 3 lakh allocated annually by the Ministry of Finance as this assistance had not been allocated in the 4th Five Year Plan by the Indian Government.

3. MATTERS RELATING TO IMPOSITION OF TAX ON GAMBLING

The draft rules on the imposition of tax on gambling were submitted by the committee earlier appointed to frame rules in this regard, and were approved with the following amendments.

- i. Till they attained the age of 18 years and 16 years respectively, Males and Females were prohibited from gambling.
- ii. Students were prohibited from gambling.
- iii. Those gambling would be strictly prohibited from staking their landed ancestral properties (PHASHING).

4. MATTER RELATING TO AFFORESTATION

The Department of Forests would be planting trees in lands over which there are grazing rights and would fence such land in order to protect trees. If any area of such plantations

belonged to private parties, they were restricted from cultivating or grazing their cattle on such land till the trees matured.

However, the owners of such pastures would be exempted from paying the annual land taxes for the area under such plantation. The owners of the pasture lands would be permitted to exercise their rights as usual after the fencing have been removed.

5. MATTER RELATING TO PASTURES AND TREES WHOSE LEAVES ARE USED FOR MANURE (SOGSHING)

In order to develop forest resources, the Department of Forests would gradually demarcate all forests of the Government and the public. Some of the pasture and Sogshing rights to the public were likely to fall within such demarcated forests. However, the owners could collect leaves and retain the rights in their own names. If they wanted to fell trees, permits would have to be obtained from the Department of Forests as per prescribed rules. Likewise, the pastures could also be grazed as usual till rules were framed by the Ministry of Trade, Industry & Forests in this regard, which were to be submitted in next session of the National Assembly.

6. MATTER RELATING TO LAND AND PROPERTIES OF ABSCONDERS

It was understood that some of the absconders on their return to the country demanded lands and other properties which had already been nationalized. The Assembly decided that in future, even if the absconders returned, they could not claim their previous land and other properties as a matter of right. Instead, they would have to settle down as newcomers.

7. MATTER RELATING TO IDENTITY PERMITS FOR BHUTANESE NATIONALS

Uptil now, identity permits for movement within Bhutan were issued only to the public residing in Southern Bhutan. In view of certain inconveniences, it was henceforth resolved that identity permit would be issued to all Bhutanese nationals going to Phuntsholing, Gaylegphug, Samdrupjongkhar or beyond. The date of the commencement and method of issuing such identity permits alongwith necessary rules and regulations would be formulated by the Hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs in consultation with the Dzongdas and presented to the next Assembly session.

8. MATTER RELATING TO AID FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES

A proposal was made in the National Assembly that aid for development purposes should be sought not only from India as at present but also from other countries. The Hon'ble Foreign Minister responded that as the country's present requirement of development aid was adequately available from India, supplemented by aid from the Colombo Plan and United Nations agencies, he hoped that there would not be any amendment in the existing government policy at present. However, if the country's requirement of development aid could not be adequately met in future from the present sources, the present aid seeking policy could be suitably reconsidered at that time. The Hon'ble Foreign Minister further stated that as no country gave aid without some purpose, it would not be advisable in Bhutan's own interest to seek aid from many countries at present, for such aid could have disadvantageous consequences.

9. MATTER RELATING TO ENQUIRY ON PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Anonymous written complaints were being received by the Government from individuals and the general public against each other or Government officials. However, investigations launched by the government on the basis of such complaints had often proved futile owing to lack of sufficient evidence. Therefore, it was decided that when such complaints were made to the Government in future, they were to be submitted personally if they were related to personal cases. In the event that the complaints were made by the general public, a person was to be selected by the public to represent them in presenting the complaints as per decision No. 25 of the 30th session of the National Assembly. All written complaints sent by post or anonymous reports or complaints made in the name of the general public would not be accepted by the Government.

10. MATTER RELATING TO STIPENDS FOR THE STUDENTS OF DECHENPHODRANG MONASTIC SCHOOL

As per decision No. 30 of the 41st session of the National Assembly, it had been decided that the Ministry of Development would make provision in the Fourth Five Year Plan for food and clothing of the students of Dechenphodrang Monastic School on a par with the students of Simtokha Rigney School. However, as it was not possible to get external aid for religious purposes, it was decided that an annual provision of Nu.100/- per head would be made in the budget of the Finance Ministry for 200 students of Dechenphodrang Monastic School.

11. MATTER RELATING TO SHINGKCHAR AND LAUREY VILLAGES UNDER DAIFAM SUB-DIVISION.

In view of the difficulties experienced by the people of Shingkhari and Laurey by virtue of their falling under the jurisdiction of Tashigang district, the Assembly decided that these two villages would henceforth come under the jurisdiction of Daifam Sub-division.

12. MATTER RELATING TO DRIVING OFF WILD ANIMALS FROM CULTIVATED LANDS.

The public were not permitted earlier to hunt off the wild animals causing damage to crops on their fields. Owing to the loss caused to the public in this respect, the 43rd Session of the National Assembly decided that the owners of such fields could kill or drive off wild animals except tigers and Leopards within their fields. However, they were prohibited from killing the wild animals beyond the boundaries of their fields.

13. MATTER RELATING TO PUBLIC MIGRATION

The public of Shumar Dungsum traditionally migrated during the winter months to the Indian side in Tshoeki, returning to Shumar at the start of summer. As per decision No. 4 of the 41st session of the National Assembly of Bhutan, the matter was investigated by the Hon'ble Home Minister through the Dzongda of Shumar and the Public of Shumar had submitted a bond agreement to the effect that they would discontinue this practice and would travel across the border in future only for trading purposes. The decision of the public was endorsed by the National Assembly.

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