

**RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE 48TH SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF
BHUTAN HELD ON THE 6TH DAY OF 5TH MONTH OF THE EARTH HORSE YEAR
CORRESPONDENCE TO 21.6.1978.**

1. MATTER RELATING TO RIGHT TO FELL TREES WITHIN REGISTERED LAND

As per the Forest Act, the owners of land had no right to fell trees within their registered land. The matter being raised and discussed in the current session of the Assembly, certain amendments were made. It was resolved that the owners of land could enjoy the rights mentioned in Clause Nos. 6 and 7, Chapter III of the Land Act, without obtaining permit or paying royalty, except for trees in grazing fields Sogshing (the trees specially preserved for collecting leaves for manure), cash crops garden, and trees under preservation, if any.

2. MATTER RELATING TO EXEMPTION OF DRY LAND TAX

In accordance with the Land Act, each householder could possess a maximum of 25 acres of land. However, this system was disadvantageous to high altitude people, as they could cultivate their dry land only once in 12 years. Hence, it was decided that they would be permitted to alternately cultivate other cultivable dry land registered in their names after obtaining a permit from the Dzongdag concerned, who would in term exempt the tax for the uncultivated land during the same period.

3. MATTER RELATING TO TRANSACTION OF LAND

According to the Land Act, a householder possessing upto 5 acres of land was prohibited from disposing it. In the current Assembly session, permission was sought for the disposal of such land if the landowner was alone in the house-hold. In this connection the Assembly decided that the party intending to sell his/her land in such cases should approach the Dzongdag concerned who would grant the necessary permit after proper investigation into the matter. However, in the event that such a person became landless, he/she would not be allotted any land by the government in future.

4. MATTER RELATING TO ALLOTMENT OF LAND FOR GROWING CASH CROPS

As per His Majesty's wish, it was necessary to allot suitable selected land to poor people for growing cash crops, so as to improve their condition at the earliest possible.

However, this opportunity could not be availed of by the poor as the suitable sites were reserved by several people of the upper class. As such, it was decided that orchard land irregularly occupied by the people which had been duly confiscated by the government would be allotted to poor people without such land on a priority basis after the Ministry of Development had carried out the necessary investigations.

5. MATTER RELATING TO EXCESS LAND

Prior to the approval of the new land act by the National Assembly, if private registered land below 25 acres in total which did not encroach upon government land was found to be in excess of its due during the re-survey of land, the owner could register the said excess in his/her own name as per Article 3-4 of the Land Act. Consequently, the excess land would remain in their Sathram and they would be exempted from paying the cost of the same. However, land tax would be levied for the excess land from the time of its occupation.

6. MATTER RELATING TO APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT OF THE LAND ACT

The draft of the Land Act submitted by the Legislative Committee to the National Assembly was discussed and approved after necessary amendments on the 8th day of the 5th month of the Earth Horse Year.

7. MATTER RELATING TO APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT RULES ON STAMPS

The draft rules and regulations on stamps submitted by the Legislative Committee to the National Assembly was discussed and approved.

8. MATTER RELATING TO ABOLITION OF RESTRICTION ON PURCHASE OF SALT AND TEA LEAVES

Uptil now, the public were permitted to purchase salt and tea leaves from the Quota only. In view of the difficulties and inconveniences expressed by the public, it was resolved that the public could purchase salt from merchants selling at lower rates. Tea leaves could also be similarly purchased until such time as indigenous production had attained a satisfactory level.

9. MATTER RELATING TO RETENTION OF 'SHAPTOLAYME'

It was observed that the Shaptolayme system failed to provide the required number of labourers for Dzong maintenance and other works. As such the Assembly discussed the question of whether it should be abolished and replaced by a new system whereby people would be summoned to work in keeping with the number of households.

However, taking note of the fact that the inadequate number of labourers in Shaptolayme was due to the practice of providing Thenchas to government officials and monks, the Assembly resolved to discontinue the said practice of providing Thencha from the next year, and retain the Shaptolayme system. However, the entitlements of Thencha, in the case of the National Assembly members other than official representatives, Gups, Chipons (Karbaries), and Gups' clerk would be as contained in resolution No. 18 of the 34th session of the National Assembly, in view of the fact that they were given inadequate facilities by the government.

10. MATTER RELATING TO CONSTRUCTION OF SUSPENSION BRIDGES AT DUR VILLAGES

Since Dur village of Chhokhor, Bumthang was situated between rivers, the point regarding the necessity of constructing 14 bridges every year by the public was raised. It was requested that at least 4 bridges be constructed over the important places during the Fifth Five Year Plan. The House decided the exact number of bridges to be constructed would be finalized by the Planning Commission after due examination of the matter.

11. MATTER RELATING TO CONSTRUCTION OF MOTORABLE ROADS

The matter of constructing a motorable road from Kurjey to Khagtang, and towards Dagapela was raised in the Assembly. Though the project was not included in the 4th Five year Plan, it was decided that the Ministry of Development would investigate into its necessity. If found to be beneficial, the road would be constructed later on a cooperative basis by the government and the people.