

PROCEEDINGS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE 71ST SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF BHUTAN

I. OPENING CEREMONY

The 71st Session of the National Assembly of Bhutan began with the performance of the traditional ceremony of the Shugdrel Phuntsom Tshogpai Tendrel on the 20th day of the eighth month of the Water Monkey year corresponding to 16th October, 1992.

In his opening address, the Speaker of the Assembly, Dasho Passang Dorji, welcomed His Majesty the King and the representatives of the Central Monk Body and Rabdeys, the ministers and the officials representing the Royal Government, and the representatives of the people.

He paid tribute to the foresight and dedication of Bhutan's rulers and the past generations of the Bhutanese people for ensuring that Druk Yul never came under foreign rule throughout its history. He also recalled that the Bhutanese people had to fight many wars to protect the country and also faced frequent internal strife and hardship until Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck was elected as the first hereditary monarch of Bhutan by the Dratshang, the Chilas, Government Officials and the people in 1907. Bhutan had enjoyed peace and tranquility since then and made great progress in socio-economic development. The ngolop problem which has disturbed this peace and tranquility is the most serious problem the country has faced in the last 80 years, the Speaker said.

However, due to the protection of the Guardian Deities, the blessings of Guru Rimpoche and Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal and the wise and farsighted leadership of His Majesty the King, and also because of the prayers of the Dratshang, the dedicated services of the armed forces and the militia volunteers in protecting the security of the country, and the loyalty and support of the government officials and the business community, the Speaker said, the ngolops had not been able to harm the country. He pointed out that the ngolop problem had not yet gone out of hand and was like a small sore which could still be cured with timely medication. To this end, the government and people must think with one mind and work together hand in hand. We must remove the ngolop problem and ensure that the future generations are bequeathed the legacy of a secure and sovereign, independent Druk Yul, he said.

Concluding his address, the Speaker reminded the chimis that they were elected by the people to represent them and were therefore the bridge between the people and the government. He called upon them to keep in mind both the short and long term interest and security of the country while participating actively and constructively in the important deliberations of this most august national body.

II. REPORT ON THE SIXTH PLAN AND PRESENTATION OF THE SEVENTH PLAN BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Minister submitted a report on the achievements of the Sixth Plan and presented the Seventh Plan to the National Assembly. While the detailed documents were distributed to the Assembly members, the Planning Minister submitted a verbal summary of his report to the National Assembly.

Summarizing the achievements of the Sixth Plan, the Planning Minister said that success had been achieved in all the nine objectives of the Plan :

- i) Strengthening of the government administration
- ii) Preservation and promotion of the national identity
- iii) Enhancement of rural income
- iv) Mobilisation of internal resources
- v) Improvement of rural housing and resettlement
- vi) Consolidation and improvement of development services
- vii) Development of human resources
- viii) Promotion of people's participation
- ix) Promotion of national self-reliance

The Planning Minister reported that during the Sixth Plan (1987-92), the per capita income had risen from Nu.6,328 in 1987 to Nu.11,050 in 1991. Universal Child Immunisation had been achieved and infant mortality had been reduced from 142 per 1000 live births in 1984 to 134 in 1989. Primary school enrollment had risen from 58,116 in 1987 to 70,354 in 1991 and literacy rate had reached 54% in 1991. Access to safe drinking water had been increased from 31% in 1987 to 40% in 1991 while primary health coverage had risen from 65% in 1987 to 90% in 1991. Internal revenue

had risen from Nu.842 million in 1987/88 to Nu.1064 million in 1991/92 and exports had increased from Nu.427 million in 1986/87 to Nu.1388 million in 1990/91.

All these achievements were possible because the government and the people worked together hand in hand to achieve the objectives, said the Planning Minister. He expressed his deep appreciation for the cooperation extended by the people towards the successful implementation of the Sixth Plan.

The Planning Minister reminded the Assembly that while there was only one central plan for all the dzongkhags from the 1st to the 4th Five-Year Plan periods, from the Fifth Plan onwards, separate plans were formulated for all the dzongkhags after close consultations between the government and the people. Accordingly, starting with Punakha Dzongkhag on 21 February this year, His Majesty the King accompanied by senior officials and department heads toured all the 20 dzongkhags and finalised the Seventh Five-Year Plan. Public meetings with the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchung and Gewog Yargye Tshogchung members and the people were held in all the dzongkhags to finalise the Seventh Plan programmes. A person from every gung (household) attended the meetings. The last meeting was held with the people of Gasa Dzongkhag on 9th October, 1992 and the development programmes of the Seventh Plan had already started, the Planning Minister reported.

Stating that some of the objectives of the Sixth Plan overlapped into the Seventh Plan, the Planning Minister summarised the important objectives of the Seventh Plan as : -

- i) Self-reliance with emphasis on internal resource mobilisation
- ii) Sustainable development with emphasis on environmental protection.
- iii) Private sector development
- iv) Decentralisation and people's participation
- v) Human resource development
- vi) Promoting balanced development in all the dzongkhags
- vii) Ensuring the security of the nation.

The total Seventh Plan budget outlay is Nu.22680 million compared to Nu.9559.236 for the Sixth Plan.

The Planning Minister informed the Assembly that from the First Five-Year Plan to the recently concluded Sixth Plan, India as Bhutan's closest friend had consistently been the largest donor country. In the Seventh Plan also, India continued to be by far the largest donor with a commitment twice as large as for the Sixth Plan, he said. Many other friendly countries and UN and international organisations had also extended generous assistance. The Planning Minister expressed his deep appreciation to the Government of India and to the other friendly countries and international organisations for their generous assistance. Repeating his appreciation for the cooperation and active participation of the people during the Sixth Plan, the Planning Minister expressed his hope and confidence that the people would take keen interest and participate even more actively to ensure the successful implementation of the Seventh Plan.

His Majesty the King, on behalf of the government and people of Bhutan, moved a vote of thanks for the generous commitment extended by the Prime Minister and the government and people of India to Bhutan's Seventh Five-Year Plan. During the last 31 years since Bhutan launched its First Five-Year Plan, India our close friend and neighbour has been the most important and largest donor country, His Majesty said. Despite its own difficulties the Government of India had committed Nu.7,500 million to Bhutan's Seventh Five-Year Plan. His Majesty also expressed his appreciation to other friendly countries which had together committed Nu.4,244 million and also to UN organisations for their commitment of Nu.2,428 million.

On behalf of the people, the chimis of Lhuntshi, Khoma, Menbi, Mongar, Drametsi and Tsamang gewogs expressed their deep gratitude to His Majesty the King for personally visiting all the dzongkhags to finalise the Seventh Plan programmes and for the generous budgets and comprehensive programmes finalised for their dzongkhags. They expressed the firm determination and commitment of the people to ensure the success of the Seventh Plan.

The National Assembly recorded a vote of thanks to the Prime Minister and the Government and people of India, and to other friendly countries, and the UN and other international organisations for their generous assistance to Bhutan.

III. PRESENTATION OF THE 1992-93 BUDGET BY THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE

The Finance Minister presented the 1992-93 budget to the National Assembly.

He reported that the fiscal year 1992-93 would be the first year of the Seventh Five-Year Plan and as such the budget had been framed amid strong expectations of a renewed vigour to start the new Plan. However, as in the preceding two years, the budget had to be prepared against a backdrop of domestic resources shortage while endeavoring to maintain the momentum of growth and development. It, therefore, became necessary to keep strict control over the size of the budget specially in maintenance expenditure. In view of the inadequacy of domestic revenue, the Royal Government had no choice but to reduce expenditure, he said. As in the past, the objective of the Government was to ensure that the cost of maintenance of essential services could be met from domestic resources. Unless we balance domestic revenue with maintenance expenditure, the national goal of self-reliance will remain a distant dream, the Finance Minister said. The 1992-93 budget seeks not only to control expenditure, but gives greater importance to the generation of revenue. The emphasis on revenue is important as expenditures cannot be reduced beyond a certain level without adversely affecting the quality of essential services like health, education, agriculture, roads, etc., the Finance Minister said.

A summary of the 1992-93 budget showing estimates of receipts and payments was given by the Finance Minister :-

[Nu. in million]

I. EXPENDITURE

1. Current	1263.734
2. Capital	1525.477
3. Lending	16.275
4. Repayment	287.199
5. Reserves	200.000
	3292.685

II. RESOURCES

A. Domestic Resources

1. Internal Revenue	1281.936	
2. Recovery of loans from Corporations		52.600
3. Sale of Government shares		43.139

B. Grants

1. GOI Programme Grant	573.413	
2. Grants from other International Agencies (both cash & kind)		988.444

1561.857

III. FINANCING

1. Borrowing from inte rnational agencies	174.570	
2. Resource gap	178.583	

353.153

TOTAL :- 3292.685

The Finance Minister pointed out that with the total expenditure for 1992-93 envisaged at Nu.3292.685 million and a resource availability of Nu.3114,102 million there was a resource gap of Nu.178.583 million in the budget. The Royal Government would therefore have to either find additional resources or reduce expenditure to balance the budget. He also reported that the Royal Government was buying a new aircraft for the Druk Air at a price of US \$ 23.300 million (Nu.610.400 million). A down payment of US \$ 11.859 million (Nu.310.706 million) had been made and the delivery of the aircraft was expected by the end of December 1992, he reported.

The Finance Minister said that the internal revenue of Nu.1281.936 million for 1992-93 would come from the normal sources. The main increase in revenue was expected from improved tax administration and collection. Tax increases on account of higher rates would be negligible as the Royal Government had not increased any rural tax

that affects the common people, especially the farmers. Whatever increase there had been in tax rates were on urban property and sales tax on non-essential commodities. While the need for revenue was urgent, the Royal Government had made sure that the common people were not affected adversely, the Finance Minister said.

He reported to the Assembly that it may be worth informing the people that only 30 percent of the internal revenue comes from taxes. While in other countries most of the revenue comes from taxes, in Bhutan it comes from non-tax sources such as dividends and transfer from the Chukha Hydro Power Corporation and other corporations. This shows that the people of Bhutan pay less tax than people in most countries of the world, the Finance Minister said.

The people's representatives expressed their appreciation to the Finance Minister for presenting the 1992-93 budget. They also expressed the hope that the people would be able to contribute towards promoting the policy of increasing internal revenue generation.

The National Assembly expressed its satisfaction with the budget presented by the Finance Minister.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS

1. National Dress and Driglam Namzha

The people of Bumthang Dzongkhag and the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry expressed their appreciation to the government for promoting the National Dress and Driglam Namzha. They reported that the people at large had been keenly observing and promoting the national dress and Driglam Namzha. They, however, expressed their deep disappointment that some irresponsible citizens were not wearing the national dress in public places. As the strengthening of the national identity was very important for the promotion and strengthening of the country's status as a sovereign nation, they called for steps to be taken to ensure that the bad examples of some irresponsible citizens did not dilute the high values of the country's rich traditions and culture. The people called for the policy on the promotion of the national dress and Driglam Namzha to be further strengthened.

The Home Minister reminded the members that the policy on national dress and language and Driglam Namzha had already been discussed many times in the Assembly and many resolutions had also been passed on the matter. He therefore felt there was no need to discuss the matter again. However, he acknowledged that the matter was being repeatedly raised in the National Assembly by the people because they had understood the importance and benefit of strengthening the country's unique national identity through the promotion of the national dress and language and Driglam Namzha.

The Home Minister reminded the people's representatives that the government had not only been preserving and promoting the country's rich traditional values and customs, but in 1989, His Majesty the King had personally visited all the dzongkhags and held large public meetings with the gups, chimis and the people on the need to promote and strengthen the country's national identity. In all the public meetings in the southern districts, the Lhotshampa people had categorically stated their keenness to promote the policy on national dress and Driglam Namzha. They had also specifically selected 'gho' and 'kira' as the most suitable national dress although His Majesty had made it very clear that any other dress that could project the national identity was perfectly all right. His Majesty had also left the decision to the people of the respective dzongkhags and their Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs (District Development Committees) as to how they should implement the policy on national dress and language and Driglam Namzha. Subsequently, a kasho on the importance of promoting the national dress had also been issued. In an annexure to the kasho, it had been clearly indicated that the national dress should be worn by all citizens in Dzongs, monasteries, government offices, schools and institutions, and at official functions and public congregations. Pandits and pujaris were free to wear their own dress. The national dress regulations also did not apply to foreigners.

The Home Minister pointed out that while different customs, languages and dresses added colour and enriched the culture of large countries, for a small country with a small population like Bhutan, and which did not have the advantages of economic strength or military might, different customs and languages would only erode the national identity and undermine the unity and

security of the country. The Home Minister said that the responsibility of preserving and promoting the national dress and Driglam Namzha falls ultimately on the people. All the dzongdas, gups, chimis and the people should therefore promote the policy in their respective dzongkhags instead of passing the responsibility of implementing it solely to the government.

Many people's representatives got up to respond to the Home Minister's statement. They strongly stated that there was neither any difficulty nor any lack of support in the dzongkhags for promoting the national dress and Driglam Namzha. The vast majority of the people were very keen and happy to observe and promote the national dress and Driglam Namzha. It was mostly in the capital city, Thimphu, that the policy on Driglam Namzha and national dress was not being observed with the desired dedication and interest, the chimis said. In particular, it was the children of high ranking and influential people in Thimphu, including some of the high ranking and influential people themselves, who were flaunting inappropriate attire in public places and undermining the policy on national dress and Driglam Namzha. Seeing this, the people in the different dzongkhags were deeply disappointed and disillusioned. The chimis therefore felt it necessary to strengthen the previous resolutions of the National Assembly on Driglam Namzha and national dress and pass certain penalty clauses to deal with those who undermined the policy.

Some people's representatives proposed that since the violations of the policy were taking place mainly in Thimphu, the police should be entrusted to check violators. They suggested that it may be a good idea for frequent violators to be themselves inducted into the police. Other chimis proposed that a set of rules and regulations on national dress and Driglam Namzha should be included in the resolutions of the National Assembly. They pointed out that the main reason for the policy not being observed properly was the lack of clear cut penalties for violations of the national dress guidelines. They proposed that a specific punishment ranging from one week of detention to imprisonment upto a year should be passed and implemented by the police regardless of the influence and status of the violators.

The representative of the High Court, quoting a saying that if evil is not punished good will not flourish, proposed that the police should be authorised to punish all

those not following the national dress regulations. If this is not done, respect for the law will be undermined, he said.

A very prolonged discussion followed the above proposals. His Majesty the King finally intervened and pointed out that although it was true, as stated by all the representatives, that the policy on Driglam Namzha and national dress was not being observed properly by some people because there was no clear cut penalties laid down for violations, nevertheless passing adhoc resolutions on the matter might also pose difficulties and problems in implementing the law. His Majesty therefore suggested that it might be more useful if the Assembly nominated representatives from among the Assembly members themselves to discuss suitable measures with the judges of the High Court and then submit the proposals to the Assembly.

The suggestion was endorsed by the Assembly and the Speaker accordingly announced that the National Assembly would appoint a Special Committee comprising representatives of the Dratshang, the people and the government to discuss and draft, in consultation with the High Court, a clear cut set of rules and regulations, including penalty clauses, on the promotion of the policy on Driglam Namzha and the national dress. The Committee would be required to submit its proposals to the Assembly after 5 days.

Accordingly, a Drafting Committee, comprising the judges of the High Court, four people's representatives, one representative of the Dratshang and Rabdeys, an officer of the Royal Bhutan Police and one Dzungda to represent the 20 district administrations was appointed. The Committee had four rounds of discussions and drew up a Draft National Dress Act which was submitted to the National Assembly on 30 October, 1990.

During an intensive discussion on the draft act, the Home Minister, while acknowledging and appreciating the efforts put in by the committee in drawing up the proposed National Dress Act, expressed the view that the Act would cause great inconveniences to the people and implementing it would be very difficult. For instance, the proposed Act did not even permit half Ghos and Kiras to be worn or jackets and coats to be worn with the national dress. The Home Minister pointed out that the true importance of promoting the national dress was

to strengthen Bhutan's unique national identity. He therefore felt that it made no difference whether a person wore a half Gho and Kira or whether jackets were also worn with the national dress.

Similarly, regarding punishments, first time offenders were to be kept under detention for 24 hours while repeat offenders were to be kept under detention for one month. The detention period for offenders between the ages of 10 and 16 (for girls) and 18 (for boys) was to be half the period awarded to adults. Children below 10 years were exempted. The Home Minister pointed out that there would be practical difficulties in verifying the ages of children violating the dress rules. Also, as children above ten years were liable to be detained, there appeared to be every possibility for many people undergoing detention at some time or other for violating the many sections of the proposed National Dress Act.

In view of the many inconveniences and practical difficulties involved in implementing the proposed National Dress Act, the Home Minister requested the Assembly not to approve the Act. He said that the Kasho issued by His Majesty the King on the 24th day of the 2nd month of the Earth Snake Year on the promotion of the national dress covered the matter sufficiently, and that this Kasho should be faithfully implemented. The Kasho had been issued only after consulting the people in the dzongkhags and after the policy was firmly supported by all the chimis during the 68th session of the National Assembly.

The people's representatives pointed out that it was very important to preserve and promote the unique Bhutanese identity in order to strengthen and safeguard the security of the country. If there were no strict and comprehensive rules and regulations on its implementation it would be very difficult to promote the national dress. As the national dress was an important aspect of the unique national identity, failure to promote it would even undermine the security of the nation.

Some of the chimis pointed out that although the people of Bhutan had been wearing Gho and Kira from ancient times, in recent years, many Bhutanese had been travelling abroad and many foreigners were also coming to Bhutan regularly. As a result, many Bhutanese had been disregarding the national dress and adopting the dress of other countries. It was therefore necessary to take steps

to curb these tendencies and preserve and promote all the useful aspects of Bhutan's unique national identity.

One of the Royal Advisory Councillors observed that if the contents of the Kasho issued by His Majesty the King was adequate for implementing the policy on the promotion of the national dress, as explained by the Home Minister, then why were people making half Ghos and Kiras instead of wearing full Ghos and Kiras? If the children wished to live where their parents lived, then there should be no difficulty for them in following the traditions and culture they had inherited. An important part of this rich culture was the national dress. It should be the duty of everyone from a peon to a minister to respect and promote the policy on national dress and Driglam Namzha.

The Chief Operations Officer of the Royal Bhutan Army, while appreciating the views of the people, said that if all defaulters under the proposed National Dress Act were to be kept under detention with the police, separate infrastructure such as detention rooms, beds, blankets and ration arrangements would have to be provided. Due to logistic and practical difficulties it would not be possible to keep violators of the dress rules and regulations under police detention, he said.

The Planning Minister reminded the members that inculcating cultural values and traditions in children was the responsibility of their parents and teachers. Therefore, preserving and promoting our traditional values must be the combined effort of parents, teachers and children, he said. He also reminded the members that the policy on the promotion of the national dress and language and Driglam Namzha had been thoroughly discussed with the people by His Majesty the King before he issued his Kasho (edict) on its promotion. Therefore, if everyone abided by the Kasho, as suggested by the Home Minister, there was no need to enact a national dress act.

The representative of the High Court, the Royal Advisory Councillors and the people's representatives pointed out that while traditional values and customs were proudly handed down from parent to children, the parents and children may not observe the traditions and customs with the same attitude and interest. The issue had been raised many times in previous sessions of the National Assembly and was again raised in the current session because of the importance attached

by the people to promoting the national dress. That was why a Committee was appointed by the Assembly to draw up the proposed National Dress Act.

Many chimis pointed out that the National Assembly had unanimously agreed to appoint a Committee to draw up a Draft National Dress Act, and the Act was accordingly drafted by this Committee. From the statements of the representatives of the government it now seemed as if the whole exercise was unnecessary and pointless.

Several chimis pointed out that, as mentioned earlier, it was in the capital, Thimphu and in Phuntsholing, that people were not promoting the national dress. In the past three to four months, the number of people not wearing the national dress in these two towns had increased greatly. Soon people might not even wear the national dress while coming to the Dzong or to government offices.

Other chimis pointed out that the main violators undermining the promotion of Driglam Namzha and national dress were not the general public but the Ashis and Dashos and the children of senior officials in Thimphu and Phuntsholing.

The Minister of Communication and Social Services supported the views of the chimis that the people undermining the promotion of Driglam Namzha and the values of the Bhutanese system were mainly the influential and high ranking persons in Thimphu and Phuntsholing. He said that apart from undermining the promotion of the national dress, highly placed and influential personalities in Thimphu and Phuntsholing were also violating the ban on dish antennas which had been passed until Bhutan was in a position to launch its own television programme. While television and other audio-visual facilities were certainly very useful, the Royal Government was deeply concerned by the proliferation of television antennas and video before national television stations could be established. This would make it very difficult for the Royal Government to ensure the success of any national television programme in the future. In the meantime, without a national programme to balance the flood of foreign programmes, foreign programmes would undermine the promotion of the high values of Bhutan's rich cultural heritage. Despite the circulars sent by the Home Ministry and the subsequent dismantling of 24 dish antennas that had been installed in Thimphu and Phuntsholing, it had been noticed that at least 12

television dish antennas had again been installed by highly placed persons in Thimphu, the Minister said. The Communication Minister also pointed out that the ban on television dish antennas only affected a small number of affluent people and not the general public.

The Secretary, Ministry of Communications also said that until Bhutan started its own television programmes, it would be very counterproductive to allow the proliferation of foreign television programmes. Besides the adverse effects the proliferation of such programmes would have on our cultural values, the Secretary said, it should also be noted that the anti-nationals were using television to malign the Royal Government at a time when we did not have our own programmes to counter their malicious propaganda. The Secretary informed the Assembly that a budget of US \$ 23 million had been allotted for the first 3 years of the Seventh Plan to establish a nation wide microwave telephone linkage system with television broadcasting facilities. Once these facilities were established it would be possible to air television programmes in all the dzongkhags. He therefore requested the National Assembly to pass a resolution that the ban on television dish antennas should not be lifted until Bhutan established its own television stations.

The Secretary of the Royal Civil Service Commission pointed out that the policy on the promotion of the national dress and the ban on television dish antennas had been a source of much criticism for the Royal Government over the past three years. Now that the policy had been in force for some time it should be implemented properly. The people were not concerned about the promotion of the national dress in the dzongkhags and rural areas where it was being promoted with the full support of the people. It was in big towns like Thimphu and Phuntsholing that there were problems as it was not even clear whether the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs or the Home Ministry or the Police were to implement the policy in these places. A clarification on which departments or organisations were responsible for implementing the policy in these areas was therefore necessary.

The Home Minister informed the Assembly that the Dzongdas and Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs of the districts had been entrusted with the responsibility and authority to implement the promotion of the national dress. He felt that

problems had been arising because the guidelines laid down in His Majesty's Kasha on the promotion of the national dress had not been followed properly. He therefore requested the Assembly Secretariat to read out the Kasha. The Secretary of the National Assembly accordingly read out the Kasha to the members.

The representative of the High Court and several people's representatives pointed out that the Kasha only called for the wearing of the national dress in Dzongs, monasteries, government offices, schools and institutions and at official functions and public congregations. The Draft National Dress Act was more specific and identified 11 categories of places where the national dress should be worn.

The Chukha Dzongda informed the Assembly that the Dzongdas had all received the Kasha on the promotion of the national dress and also the Home Ministry circular on the ban of TV dish antennas. He said that in the course of implementing the circular and the guideline on the promotion of the national dress, some problems were encountered in towns like Phuntsholing. However, in his dzongkhag all TV dish antennas had been dismantled except for those owned by diplomats and the Chukha Project staff who were exempted from the ban.

Several chimis then recommended that, as already laid down in the Home Ministry circular, TV dish antennas should not be allowed until Bhutan established its own TV stations which would benefit the general public instead of only a few affluent people.

After an extended discussion, the National Assembly decided that since the Dzongdas and the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs were already entrusted with the responsibility of implementing the policy on the promotion of the national dress, there was no need for the Assembly to adopt a separate act on the national dress. The National Assembly also decided that the ban on television dish antenna should remain in force as per the earlier circulars of the Home Ministry until a national television network was established.

2. Promotion of culture through the audio-visual media

The people's representatives of Kartsho Gewog in Haa dzongkhag proposed that video and cinema should be used to promote the country's rich culture and traditions. He pointed out that while maintaining and promoting cultural values was of the utmost importance, the increasing popularity of foreign cinema and video programmes was posing a serious threat of eroding these values. The people felt that promoting indigenous audio-visual programmes would not only counter the negative influences of foreign audio-visual programmes but the revenue generated from indigenous programmes would remain inside the country.

The Home Minister expressed his appreciation for the concern and support shown by the people for promoting the country's rich cultural heritage. He clarified that during the 70th session of the National Assembly, the Home Ministry and the Special Commission for Cultural Affairs had submitted that audio visual programmes would be promoted by the government and the private sector. Video programmes on culture and tradition as well as historical, religious and topical subjects would be made. Cinema and drama would also be developed. Some programmes had already been made and had been screened and shown in different parts of the country, the Home Minister said. The Home Minister also informed the Assembly that as instructed by the government, the Gyalpoi Zimpon, Dasho Dorji Gyaltshen and the High Court Judge, Dasho Tseten Dorji, were preparing a video and a book on Driglam Namzha which was expected to be completed soon.

The Secretary of the Communication Ministry noted that the people's proposal fully supported the government's policy. As the audio-visual media had become the most important and effective means of disseminating information, it was the policy of the government to strengthen and develop the media in Bhutan. Accordingly, the DSCD had been made into an autonomous body in August this year. The Ministry of Communications would also encourage and extend all possible assistance to private companies making audio-visual programmes that will strengthen and promote the country's rich cultural heritage, the Secretary said.

The discussion concluded with the people's representatives expressing their gratitude and appreciation for the efforts being made by the government to promote the country's rich cultural heritage through the development of the audio-visual media.

3. Interpretation in the National Assembly

The people's representatives of Samar Gewog in Haa Dzongkhag proposed that the National Assembly should discontinue the interpretation of its proceedings into Nepali. He said that it was not appropriate for the language of another country, which was not even a recognised international language, to be used in such an august national body like the Tshogdu Chenpo.

Responding to the proposal, the Minister of Trade and Industries, while agreeing that the practice of interpretation should be discontinued in due course, pointed out that at a time when the country was going through a difficult period, retaining the practice of translating the proceedings of the Assembly into Nepali would enable the Lhotshampa chimis to follow the deliberations of the Assembly more clearly and without any misunderstandings. They would also be able to participate in the deliberations more constructively. Moreover, with the introduction of simultaneous translation recently, no additional time was being taken up for translation as in the past. The Minister of Trade and Industries therefore proposed that translating the proceedings into Nepali should be retained.

The Home Minister, on the other hand, pointed out that in 1970s the Speaker had issued a circular that while translation into different languages of the country would be maintained for some time, in due course only Dzongkha, the national language, would be used in the National Assembly. The 51st session of the National Assembly had also adopted a resolution to the same effect after deliberating on the matter. The Home Minister pointed out that as there were very few Assembly members who did not know Dzongkha well today, it was quite feasible now to discontinue translations in the National Assembly.

Many people's representatives, as well as the Planning Minister and the Chairman of the Royal Advisory Council spoke on the matter. They pointed out

that 39 years had passed since the National Assembly was first convened in 1953, and the time period indicated during the 51st session for discontinuing translations in the National Assembly had also been exceeded. They said that continuing with translations in the most important national body in the country was not conducive to promoting unity among the people and should therefore be discontinued.

While some chimis proposed that translations should be discontinued from the current session, others proposed that it should be discontinued from the next session. The Samchi and Dagapela chimis, while wholeheartedly agreeing that all deliberations should be conducted in the national language and strongly supporting the proposals to discontinue translations, proposed that translations should be continued for another 3 years to 6 years to enable the Lhotshampa chimis to become fully conversant in the national language.

As many chimis objected to the proposals of the Dagapela and Samchi chimis, His Majesty the King intervened and said that the proposal to discontinue translations would not be useful at a time when the country was going through a difficult period and when clear communication between all its citizens and the government was even more important than before. It was particularly important at the present juncture for all the Lhotshampa chimis to clearly understand the proceedings of the National Assembly. They must be able to correctly represent the views of the Lhotshampa people and participate actively in the deliberations of the National Assembly, and also communicate the decisions and resolutions correctly and clearly to the people. His Majesty therefore pointed out that it would be more useful and beneficial to continue with translations for the time being.

The National Assembly resolved to abide by His Majesty's suggestion and continue translating the proceedings into Nepali for some time.

4. Construction of New Road

The people's representative of Tsezang and Karnag gewogs in Dagana dzongkhag while expressing their deep gratitude to the government for constructing a motor road to Daga Dzong, requested for a new road to be

constructed from the Dzong to Kamichu directly. They pointed out that the existing road was very long and also prone to landslides due to unstable soil conditions. The proposed road would not only be much shorter as it would bypass the Sankosh river, but the soil was more stable and it would also be useful for extracting timber. The people therefore requested for a feasibility study and survey to be initiated during the Seventh Plan for a road from Daga Dzong to Kamichu with a view to constructing it during the Eighth Plan period.

In response, the Secretary of Roads informed the Assembly that a proposal for a new road passing through Drugyalgang had been discussed thoroughly during the 70th session of the National Assembly and the feasibility of the proposal had been clearly explained. He informed the Assembly that the existing road from Sankosh to Daga Dzong had been built quite recently at a cost of Nu.58.414 million. A budget of Nu.24.219 million had been kept aside for its maintenance during the Seventh Plan. The new proposal, he said, indicated a distance of 56 kilometres from the study of the maps of the area and would require three small bridges to be built. The total cost of the proposed road would come to about Nu.99.228 million. Given the large additional financial implication, the Secretary questioned the justification of the proposal, particularly as Dagona already had a motor road while some other dzongkhags did not. Also, the economic viability of the new road did not seem very sound as the existing road itself was under-utilised. Moreover, the Secretary said, it was the policy of the government during the Seventh Plan to concentrate on maintaining and improving all existing roads rather than construct new ones. No survey had therefore been done on the ground for any new roads. Even if a new road was constructed from Daga Dzong to Kamichu, the Sankosh bridge and road would still have to be maintained for the people of Drugyalgang and Dagapela. With about 3000 kilometres of road to be maintained throughout the kingdom, the national exchequer was already under a heavy burden, said the Secretary.

The people's representative of Tsezang and Karnag Gewogs explained that the existing road was under-utilised because it was in poor condition most of the time. He therefore reiterated his request for a new road for the benefit and kudu of the people.

The Planning Minister reminded the Assembly about the shortfall of Nu.178.583 million in the 1992-93 budget presented by the Finance Minister. He also reminded the members that the Seventh Plan programmes for Dagana, as for all other dzongkhags, had been formulated on the basis of the proposals sent by the District Development Committee and had only recently been finalised with the people in public meetings chaired by His Majesty the King.

The Dagana Dzongda clarified that the people's proposal was only for a feasibility study to be carried out during the Seventh Plan with the request to include it in the Eighth Plan if the study was found feasible.

The Assembly resolved that a feasibility study of the proposal for a road from Daga Dzong to Kamichu should be carried out by the Department of Roads during the Seventh Plan.

5. Appreciation of exemption of rural taxes and goongda woola and granting of amnesty by the people of Tshangkha gewog, Dagana Dzongkhag and the people of Chirang Dzongkhag.

The people's representative of Tshangkha gewog in Dagana expressed the deep gratitude of the people to His Majesty the King for exempting rural taxes and goongda woola for 1992 for all Lhotshampas as an act of faith in them and an encouragement for them to remain in the country. The Lhotshampa people do not deserve such kidug, he said. The Lhotshampas expressed their deep gratitude to the government for always treating all citizens equally and looking after their kidug without any differentiation. The people of southern Bhutan, he said, pledged their full loyalty and dedication to the Tsa-Wa-Sum and gave their firm commitment to work hand in hand with the government.

The people's representatives of Chirang also expressed the deep gratitude of the people of their dzongkhag to His Majesty the King for exempting goongda woola and rural taxes. They also thanked His Majesty for granting amnesty to the ngolops who tried to harm the peace and well-being of the country in 1990 despite the fact that these people deserved to be punished strictly as per the law of the land. They also expressed their gratitude to His Majesty for visiting the disturbed areas of the southern dzongkhags and giving many opportunities to the

people of Chirang to meet their King. They thanked His Majesty and the government for granting an even larger budget than before for the Seventh Plan. The people of Chirang expressed their determination to ensure the success of the Seventh Plan and serve the Tsa-Wa-Sum with full loyalty and dedication.

Speaking on the matter, the Finance Minister said that apart from repeated amnesties granted to ngolops by His Majesty the King, goongda woola and rural taxes had been exempted for the Lhotshampas even though the country had to borrow or seek assistance from outside to meet the increasing budgetary requirements. Moreover, far larger budgets had been finalised for the Seventh Plan than ever before. He therefore called upon the Lhotshampa chimis to uphold the sentiments of appreciation expressed by them and work hard to successfully implement the development programmes which had been finalised for their dzongkhags.

His Majesty the King informed the Assembly that rural taxes and goongda woola were exempted for the Lhotshampa people, not because they had any kidug or difficulties, but as an act of faith in them and as an encouragement for them not to leave their country and emigrate to Nepal as many Lhotshampas had been doing. It was hoped that this gesture would be appreciated by the Lhotshampa people and help to create a more conducive atmosphere to resolve the ngolop problem. His Majesty therefore asked the Lhotshampa representatives to ensure that the Lhotshampa people clearly understood the hopes and expectations His Majesty the King reposed in them.

The National Assembly accordingly resolved that the Lhotshampa representatives should ensure that the people of the southern dzongkhags clearly understood and appreciated the reasons for His Majesty exempting them rural taxes and goongda woola.

6. Pasture Tax

The people's representatives of Ngangla and Phangkha gewogs in Shemgang Dzongkhag submitted that in the past, the people were allowed to obtain Tsa-Drog Lagkher (pasture permit) by paying Nu.5 for the first year and Nu.1 per annum for renewing the permit over the next four years. Since a few years back,

the pasture fee had been increased to Nu.100/- per year for those people who did not develop their pasture even if they had only one head of cattle. The people therefore requested for the pasture fee to be reduced as a kidu or the earlier system reverted to.

The people's representatives of Tshogom, Phangyul and Dagar gewogs in Wangdiphodrang Dzongkhag requested the government to consider issuing a combined grazing permit valid for community Tshamdo as a kidu for the people in general. The grazing tax could be levied at the rate of Nu.5/- per head.

The Minister of Finance responded by stating that the issue of pasture tax as raised by the people of Ngangla and Phangkhar, had been discussed in the 70th session of the National Assembly and it had been decided that the concerned DYT's should decide on the matter. With regard to issuing grazing permits for community Tshamdos, the Minister clarified that a joint grazing permit would suffice for all the households of the community. He further clarified that taxes per head of cattle were cattle tax and should not be confused with pasture tax.

The Assembly resolved that the Ministry of Finance should circulate clear guidelines on obtaining permits to all the dzongkhags to clear the doubts of the people.

7. Appreciation for the establishment of Gewog Yargye Tshogchungs (Block Development Committees)

The people's representative of Panbang sub-district expressed the deep gratitude of the people to His Majesty the King for the establishment of Gewog Yargye Tshogchungs (GYTs) and the comprehensive Chathrim (rules and regulations) for its functions and responsibilities. Apart from ensuring the smooth implementation of development programmes for the welfare of the people in the villages, the GYT's would also play a useful role in promoting and safeguarding the security of the country. In particular, the GYT's provided the people at the village level with a more effective means of interacting with the government on issues of national concern as well as matters related to their own welfare and progress.

The Home Minister informed the Assembly that the GYT's had been established by His Majesty the King on the auspicious 4th Day of the Sixth month last year for the welfare of the people and the progress of the country. Since then, His Majesty had personally toured all the dzongkhags and met with the members of the 196 GYT's in the country. The main reason for establishing GYT's was to further increase people's participation and promote self-reliance and development at the gewog level. It would be far more useful for the people to decide the requirements of development facilities like schools, health facilities and water supply etc. at the gewog level and forward their proposals and requirements to the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchung (DYT). Once the programmes were finalised, the GYT's would enable the people to assume greater responsibility in the implementation and maintenance of the programmes for their gewogs. This would enable the people and the government to work together smoothly to achieve local as well as national objectives.

Ever since Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck became the first hereditary monarch of Bhutan, the country and the people had enjoyed peace and tranquility, the Home Minister said. The third King, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck with farsighted wisdom formed the National Assembly in 1953, and also established the Royal Advisory Council and the High Court thus enabling the people to participate actively in all affairs of national concern. His Majesty the fourth King has taken many farsighted decisions and ushered in further enlightened changes to promote economic and social progress, the Home Minister said. Placing full faith and trust in the people to shoulder the responsibility of active participation in the development of the country, His Majesty had established Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs (DYTs) in all the dzongkhags. Now with the establishment of the Gewog Yargye Tshogchungs there would be even greater responsibility and participation at the grassroots level in decision making. This in turn would go a long way towards promoting the progress, prosperity and security of the country, the Home Minister said.

The people's representatives expressed their deep appreciation for the establishment of DYTs and GYT's. Although the people were fully aware of the importance of development programmes, due to their limitations in education, they had not been able to contribute much in their implementations. They, therefore, requested for as many qualified personnel as possible to be sent to the

dzongkhags during the Seventh Plan so that the Dzongkhag Headquarters would be further strengthened. This would enable the Dzongkhag Headquarters to provide technical assistance to the DYT's and GYT's whenever necessary. The people expressed their determination to work hard to fulfil the important objective of national self-reliance during the Seventh Plan.

Summing up the discussion, the Speaker said that His Majesty the King, out of his concern for the welfare of the people and to enhance greater people's participation, had taken many measures like the establishment of DYT's and GYT's to promote progress and development at the grassroots level with full trust and faith in the people. He therefore called upon the chimis to remind the gups and the people that they must ensure successful results from all the development programmes that had been finalised for the Seventh Plan.

8. Establishment of a Dratshang in Samdrupjongkhar

The people's representative of Orong Gewog in Samdrupjongkhar requested for the establishment of a Dratshang at Samdrupjongkhar. He said that Samdrupjongkhar had no Dratshang like other dzongkhags and that the people and the Dzongkhag Administration faced much inconvenience especially in observing religious ceremonies, functions and festivals. Even if a full-fledged Dratshang was not immediately feasible, the people requested for a Dratshang with at least 25 Gelongs.

The representative of the Dratshang Lhentshog agreed that it was inconvenient for the people in Samdrupjongkhar not to have a Dratshang even now. However, establishing a Dratshang called for major expenditures. He proposed that as the country was going through a difficult period and budgetary constraints were being faced by the government, the Dratshang Lhentshog would take up the matter with the government and undertake the establishment of a Dratshang in Samdrupjongkhar whenever it would be feasible.

The Minister of Trade and Industry pointed out that the establishment of a Dratshang at Samchi had greatly benefited the people. Moreover, as resolved during the National Assembly in the 1953 session in Punakha, it would be good to promote Buddhism in the southern districts.

The Assembly resolved that the Dratshang Lhentshog and the government should carry out a study of the feasibility of establishing a Dratshang in Samdrupjongkhar.

9. Appreciation for tour by His Holiness the Je Khenpo

The people's representative of Drametsi Gewog in Mongar expressed the deep gratitude of the people to His Holiness, the Je Khenpo and the Tshenney Lopen for taking the time and trouble to visit eastern Bhutan and administering Wang and blessings to the public. If such visits could be made again they would further strengthen the values of the Dharma in the country. Moreover, as Bhutanese societal values are based on religion, the expansion of religious activities would contribute towards national security.

The representative of the Dratshang Lhentshog while fully appreciating the importance of frequent visits by His Holiness, the Je Khenpo to all parts of the country, explained that frequent tours by His Holiness was not possible due to his many important commitments at the Dratshang. Nevertheless, such visits would be undertaken by His Holiness as frequently as possible.

The peoples' representatives thanked the Dratshang Lhentshog member for his briefing.

10. Repair of Geley Lhakhang

The people's representatives of Dung, Metab and Geley gewogs in Chukha Dzongkhag submitted that in order to preserve the age-old traditions and values, various religious ceremonies were still being conducted regularly in the Lhakhang at Gelekha. This Lhakhang was in need of much repair and renovation and as the general public did not have the financial means to contribute adequately for the repair, it would greatly benefit them if permission was granted for the pasture land above the Lhakhang, registered in the Lhakhang's name, to be used for cash crop cultivation. This would greatly help the people to raise money to renovate the Lhakhang.

In response the Home Minister, while appreciating the wish of the people to renovate and maintain the Geley Lhakhang on a sustainable basis, emphasized that the conversion of pasture land to cash crop land could only be done in accordance with the Land Act, passed by the National Assembly in 1979. He further informed the Assembly that the pasture land under reference was not registered in the name of the Lhakhang. He reminded the Assembly that should the proposal be adopted, it would create precedence for many similar cases.

The Assembly resolved that the conversion of pasture land to cash crop land would only be done as prescribed by the Land Act of 1979.

11. Trade Route

The people's representatives of Mewang, Gayney and Dagala gewogs in Thimphu Dzongkhag pointed out that Bhutan's economy was based on agriculture. Cash incomes were presently generated from the sale of cash crops like apple, orange and cardamom to Bangladesh. To further enhance cash crop earnings for the people, they requested the government to open up trade routes with other countries also.

The Minister of Trade and Industry responded by pointing out that as Bhutan was a landlocked country, trade routes had to go through the territory of other countries. As per the Trade Agreement with India in 1990, a very convenient trade route with third countries had been established through Indian territory. He said that a Trade Agreement had also been signed with Bangladesh. Although Bhutan's cash crops had to compete with cash crops from other countries, as relations with Bangladesh were very friendly there was good cash crop trade with Bangladesh. Ultimately, of course, the direction and volume of trade would be determined by profitability. The Minister informed the Assembly that as per His Majesty the King's command, the Trade Ministry was exploring possibilities of exporting apples to Sri Lanka. Keeping the interests of the people at heart the government had always been trying its best to promote trade with other countries, he said.

The people's representatives expressed their appreciation for the steps taken by the Trade and Industry Ministry to promote trade. The Assembly resolved that it

was very important for the Trade Ministry to study the feasibility of trade routes that could be beneficial for the people.

12. Ban on Christianity

The people's representatives of Chirang Dzongkhag requested the National Assembly to ban Christianity in Bhutan and the people already converted to be stopped from practicing the religion. They said that Christianity was spreading in Chirang and becoming a serious problem. Bhutan being a small country should not have too many religions. Buddhism and Hinduism which were the two recognised religions of the country were brother religions. The introduction of other religions would create serious social problems. Already family strifes were taking place due to differences of religious beliefs among family members. The people's representatives said that they had heard many emigrants who had left Bhutan and gone to the camps in Jhapa, Nepal were being converted to Christianity with incentives of Rs.500/- and assurances of further rewards. Word was being spread in Chirang that potential emigrants should convert to Christianity so that it would be convenient for them when they arrived in Jhapa.

The people's representative from Kalikhola stated that as per the resolutions of earlier sessions of the National Assembly, Buddhism and Hinduism were the only two recognised religions of Bhutan. However, as the government had not taken any note of the situation, Christianity was spreading along the border areas and creating serious social problems.

The Samdrupjongkhar chimi pointed out that as Buddhism and Hinduism were the only two recognised religions in the country, allowing other religions would result in serious problems for the country. For the benefit of future generations, he requested the National Assembly to pass a resolution that no other religion would be allowed in Bhutan.

Several people's representatives stated that countries all over the world had their own different religions, customs and laws. Bhutan, too, should allow and uphold only those religions that have traditionally been recognised. If proselytising of other religions were allowed it would cause sectarian friction which would lead to serious social problems.

The Home Minister pointed out that the practice of religions other than the ones already recognised had been discussed several times in previous sessions of the National Assembly. During the 30th session of the National Assembly in 1969, it had been resolved that no religions other than the ones already recognised would be allowed in the country. Also, as per Article 16 of the 51st session of the National Assembly, while all other religions could be practiced privately no proselytising would be allowed. He, therefore, recommended that the house should direct the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs to decide on the matter as per the Thrimshung Chenpo and the resolutions of the previous sessions of the National Assembly.

The representative of the Dratshang Lhentshog pointed out that all religions were good and existed for the benefit of sentient beings. The problems in the world that have been related to religion did not arise from the religions themselves but were caused by the shortcomings of the practitioners. He, therefore, proposed that, as recommended by the Home Minister, the existing laws and Assembly resolutions should form the basis for all steps taken to ensure that no sectarian problems arose in Bhutan.

Other people's representatives pointed out that if proselytising of different religions were allowed in a small country like Bhutan, it would create social disharmony and may even harm the security and sovereignty of the country due to misunderstandings over religion with big countries. Buddhism and Hinduism were two brother religions in harmony with each other. The practice of different religions in the country would create disharmony and problems would arise as pointed out by the Lhotshampa chimis.

The Dagapela chimi pointed out that although Buddhism and Hinduism had the same origin, because there were differences in practice a few difficulties did arise at times. But Christianity being totally different from these two religions, the problems which had already started to arise in Chirang because of the spread of Christianity would disrupt social harmony throughout the country if no timely steps were taken. He therefore proposed that the resolution taken during the 51st session of the National Assembly on the practice of different religions must be strictly implemented.

The Chirang Dzongda said that the DYT had received reports that there were many Christians trying to convert people to Christianity. This had resulted in frequent problems between Christians and Hindus in the dzongkhag. The Dzongda reported that bibles printed in Nepali were being sent from Thimphu and distributed to the people. Accordingly, the DYT had decided to request the National Assembly to ban Christianity.

His Majesty the King informed the Assembly that the issue of allowing different religions in the country had been thoroughly discussed during the 30th session of the National Assembly in 1969 and also during the 51st session in 1979. The issue was also clearly covered by the Thrimshung. If these resolutions and the law were followed, the issue could be taken up by the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchung and there would be no need for the Assembly to promulgate any new law.

The Assembly resolved that copies of the resolutions of the previous sessions of the National Assembly and the clauses of the Thrimshung pertaining to religion would be distributed to the chimis. The matter should thereafter be taken up in the concerned DYT's and dealt with accordingly.

13. Representatives in Boards of Industries

The people's representatives of Chapcha, Geyley, Bongo and Bhalujhora gewogs in Chukha Dzongkhag requested that a representative either from the Home Ministry or from the Dzongkhag should be appointed on the Boards of Industries and Corporations to protect the interest of the people in the areas near these industries and projects. They felt that the interests of the general public would otherwise be overlooked, particularly while establishing new industries and projects. They pointed out that the Chukha Hydel Dam proposed for construction between Bunakha and Chena-Tshen on the Pachu-Wangchu river posed serious risk to the villages on both sides of the river. The smoke from the Bhutan Calcium and Carbide factory was affecting nearby villages and the afforestation programme of the Department of Forest at Geley was affecting the pasture land of the general public.

The Trade Minister responded by saying that board compositions for Industries and Corporations were appointed as per the Company Act of 1989 . As per the Act, the composition of boards would be determined by the shareholdings in the

companies or corporations. For instance, as the Chukha Hydro Power Corporation (CHP) was state owned, the board members were appointed by the government from the various departments as per their involvement and relevance. Accordingly, the CHP board comprised of officials of the Power Department and the Finance Ministry. Also, before any new industries or projects were established, pre-feasibility and feasibility studies had to be carried out by experts. The benefits and disadvantages of the project had to be thoroughly studied by Trade Ministry officials and concerned departments in conjunction with the concerned dzongkhag administrations and the local people. Only then were the project reports submitted for clearance by the government.

As for the Bunakha Reservoir Scheme and Chukha Phase II and III, the Trade and Industry Minister said, feasibility studies had not yet been carried out. Regarding the smoke from the BCCL factory in Pasakha, the smoke purifier of the factory had been spoilt 18 months back. The replacement machine from Germany had arrived recently and would be installed within the month.

The minister requested the concerned people's representatives to bring any problem arising from the establishment of industries and projects to the notice of the Trade and Industry Ministry through the concerned Dzongdas. Investigations would then be carried out to rectify the problems. He, however, pointed out that it would not be feasible to place any representatives from the Dzongkhags, the Home Ministry or the concerned people on the boards of industries and corporations. He further stated that there would be no problem for the people if all the concerned departments and organisations of the government fulfilled their responsibilities.

His Majesty the King intervened and pointed out that while it would not be appropriate for the government to appoint board members to private companies and corporations, it would be beneficial to appoint concerned Dzongdas to represent their districts on the board of major industries and projects to be established by the government. This would enable a better assessment of the benefits and harms that the prospective projects or industries would bring to the people of the locality.

The people's representatives expressed their gratitude to His Majesty the King for his intervention. The Assembly resolved that whenever major public sector projects were to be undertaken, the concerned Dzongdas should be appointed as members of the Boards.

V. SUBMISSION OF GENJAS

It had been resolved during the 70th session of the National Assembly that the Lhotshampa representatives would discuss with the people in their dzongkhags and submit a Genja (written and signed undertaking) to the 71st session of the Assembly on the punishment that should be awarded to people involved in ngolop activities. While most of the chimis had called upon the Lhotshampa representatives to give their views during the 70th session itself, the Assembly had finally resolved that as many of the Lhotshampa representatives were new, it would be better for them to discuss the matter thoroughly with the people and submit their recommendations in the form of Genjas to the 71st session of the National Assembly.

Accordingly, the Lhotshampa chimis submitted Genjas signed by the people of the 5 dzongkhags and one dungkhag of southern Bhutan. They first read out the Genjas signed by the people they represented and then submitted the documents to the Speaker. The main points in the Genjas were

- i) All ngolops must be punished in strict accordance to the law and anyone leaving the country must be struck off the census records and banned from returning to the country.
- ii) While some of the Genjas proposed that if the head of the family was involved in anti-national activities, then the whole family must be evicted, others proposed that if a family member other than the head of the household was involved in anti-national activities, then only the individual concerned should be evicted. Other Genjas proposed that whether the person involved was the head of the family or not, the whole family must be evicted.
- iii) Rather than help the ngolops, any ngolop the people knew about would be caught and handed over to the government. Any person helping the ngolops would also be reported immediately to the government.

- iv) The government was requested not to stop people applying to emigrate from leaving the country. Landless people from other dzongkhags should be settled on the land vacated by the emigrants and ngolop absconders.
- v) The 1985 Citizenship Act must be implemented strictly.
- vi) The people of southern Bhutan gave their solemn pledge that henceforth they would neither involve themselves in any way in ngolop activities nor think of leaving the country but would serve the Tsa-Wa-Sum with full loyalty, dedication and commitment. Any person who violated this solemn pledge must be awarded a befitting punishment by the government.
- vii) Despite the ngolop activities that had been taking place in the south, the Lhotshampas had not only been exempted rural taxes and goongda woola but the government had finalised and started the implementation of the Seventh Plan for which very large and generous budgets had been sanctioned, and for which the Lhotshampa people expressed their deep gratitude.

Following the submission of Genjas by the Lhotshampa representatives, other representatives and the Speaker expressed their appreciation for the Genjas and hoped that the points stated in the Genjas were the genuine views of the Lhotshampa people and chimis. They pointed out that if the Lhotshampa people faithfully observed the points stated in their Genjas it would greatly facilitate an amicable solution to the ngolop problem. The Assembly called upon the Lhotshampa representatives to impress upon the Lhotshampa people the importance and benefit of faithfully observing the Genjas submitted by them.

VI. EVICTION OF NGOLOPS

The people's representatives of 51 gewogs from Ha, Shemgang, Samchi, Sarbhang, Mongar, Chirang and Tashiyangtsi dzongkhags submitted 8 proposals for the eviction of ngolops from the country.

During the discussions which followed, people's representatives from the northern dzongkhags pointed out that the ngolop problem in southern Bhutan had disrupted the

peace and tranquility of the country and the rapid pace of development and progress that had been taking place. It had also posed a serious threat to the security of the country. In order to create a conducive atmosphere to resolve the problem, His Majesty the King had granted amnesty to thousands of people involved in ngolop activities. The development plans and programmes finalised for the southern dzongkhags were far larger than ever before. His Majesty the King had issued a Kasho declaring it to be a punishable offence under the law for anyone to forcefully evict any genuine citizen from the country. His Majesty had also exempted goongda woola and rural taxes for 1992 for all Lhotshampas as an act of faith in them and to encourage them to remain in the country. Despite all the efforts to discourage the people in southern Bhutan from emigrating, many Lhotshampas had continued to apply for emigration and leave the country. This could only be taken as proof that these people did not wish to remain in Bhutan and live with their fellow citizens as one people in one nation. Several chimis from the northern dzongkhags pointed out that even though the Lhotshampas in the country had submitted a Genja pledging total loyalty, dedication and support to the Tsa-Wa-Sum, it was difficult to trust them any more. Therefore, since it was evident that the Southern Bhutanese did not want to remain in the country anyway, they should all be sent out and their land and property confiscated.

The people's representatives of Samchi Dzongkhag reported to the Assembly that their District Development Committee, in accordance with the wishes of the people as submitted in the written Genja, strongly called for the eviction of all family members and relatives of ngolops. This was necessary because the ngolops who had left the country were often sneaking back into the country to meet their relatives and in the process were creating serious problems for the security and stability of the country.

Likewise, the people's representatives of Chirang Dzongkhag also called for the eviction of all ngolops. They requested that, as proposed by their dzongkhag during the 70th session of the National Assembly, if a head of a family absconded and joined the ngolops, the names of all his family members should be struck off the census records and the family evicted and their land and property confiscated. This was necessary as the head of the family would in all likelihood have influenced the rest of the household. If on the other hand, a member of a household, other than the head of the family, absconded and joined the ngolops, the names of the persons concerned only should be removed from the census and their property confiscated.

The people's representatives of Sarbhang Dzongkhag, on the other hand, proposed that regardless of whether it was the head the family or any other member of the household who had joined the ngolops, the whole household should be evicted. They pointed out that if such people were not removed from the country, there would always be a problem as these people would sneak in to visit their relatives, while the relatives would in turn always nurture close feelings for the ngolops which would be detrimental for the security of the country.

Many other people's representatives proposed that the only effective way of putting an end to the ngolop problem once and for all was to evict all ngolops and their entire family members including those in government service.

Other representatives took note of the Genjas submitted by the Lhotshampa chimis on behalf of the Lhotshampa people as per the resolution of the 70th session. They called for all ngolops and their relatives to be evicted from the country as per the proposals in the Genjas submitted by the Lhotshampa people.

The Home Minister then reminded the Assembly that, as already pointed out by the people's representatives, many initiatives had been taken by the government to resolve the ngolop problem and to encourage the Lhotshampas to remain in the country instead of emigrating. Far more extensive development programmes had been finalised than before, rural taxes and goongda woola had been exempted for all Lhotshampas and amnesty had been granted to 1571 ngolop detainees. His Majesty the King had also personally met and appealed to 388 Lhotshampa families who had applied to emigrate en masse not leave their country. Despite all these initiatives by His Majesty the King and the Royal Government, terrorist activities had increased and Lhotshampas had continued to emigrate from the country. Although the ngolops and their families deserved to be evicted as proposed by the people's representatives, the Home Minister said, we are a law abiding nation and should therefore take actions that are fully in keeping with the law of the land. With regard to the proposal to evict all ngolops and their relatives, he said that no action can be taken that will violate His Majesty's Kasho of January 13, 1992 or is not in keeping with article 6 of the 1958 Citizenship Act; Chapter IX of the 1977 Citizenship Act; Chapter VI of the 1985 Citizenship Act; and Section 5 of the resolutions of the 67th session of the National

Assembly. As for the proposals to confiscate land and property, such actions must be in full keeping with the Land Act, he said.

Responding to the Home Minister's statement, several people's representatives acknowledged that what he proposed was quite reasonable. However, the government had been taking actions that were in full keeping with the law of the land ever since the outbreak of the ngolop problem, and the only result to show for such actions was increased terrorist activities and a continued threat to the security of the country and its economic progress and development. The representatives therefore pointed out that the ngolop problem could only be removed if all the ngolops and their families were sent out of the country.

Other representatives pointed out that not only were the ngolops who had left the country keeping close contact with their relatives remaining behind but even those Lhotshampas who had left on their own accord were sneaking back and disturbing the peace and endangering the security and stability of the villages in the south. The representative of the High Court, the Chairman of the Royal Advisory Council and the concerned Dzongdas reported to the Assembly that the observations and proposals of the people's representatives were very sound and valid. If the government did not take strict action as per the law, it would soon become very difficult to distinguish between ngolops and loyal Lhotshampa citizens. They also pointed out that there were many relatives of ngolops and even people actually involved in ngolop activities who were living openly in northern towns like Thimphu. This was a fact for everyone to see. They pointed out that if necessary and timely steps were not taken, there was every possibility of ngolop activities taking place in a big way in the capital city itself.

In response, the Minister of Trade and Industry and some of the Lhotshampa chimis expressed deep regret and sadness that the ngolop problem had risen from southern Bhutan. However, the Minister of Trade and Industry said that it was wrong for the members to denounce all Lhotshampas as ngolops and call for their eviction. He said that it was the responsibility of the government and the people to work together to remove any threat to the security of the country regardless of the source of the problem. He requested the members not to bring up proposals for evicting all Lhotshampas regardless of whether they were involved in ngolop activities or not. The Lhotshampa chimis pointed out that even children of the same parents had

different characters. They said that punishment should be meted out as per the crime committed.

Chimis from the northern dzongkhags pointed out that the crux of the deliberations was that in order to remove the ngolop problem it was necessary to evict all ngolops and their relatives. At no point of the discussions had anyone said that all Lhotshampas were ngolops. Only the Lhotshampa people themselves would know best whether all Lhotshampas were ngolops or not, they said.

The Home Minister intervened and reminded the Assembly that all actions against ngolops must be governed by the law of the land. He also reminded the members of the edict issued by His Majesty the King declaring it a punishable offence to forcefully evict any citizen. On his request, the edict was read to the members by the Secretary of the National Assembly. The Home Minister requested the National Assembly to resolve that all actions against ngolops should be in strict accordance to the law of the land and His Majesty's edict and commands.

At this point, the Foreign Minister reminded the Assembly that although His Majesty's kasho clearly stated that no citizen could be forcefully evicted, the proposals of the chimis of Samchi and Sarbhang to evict all ngolops and their relatives merited further deliberation and consideration by the Assembly. The Foreign Minister informed the Assembly that the root of the problem facing Bhutan today was demographic pressure. He said that Nepalis from neighbouring Nepal which had a population of 20 million and an average annual growth rate of 500,000, were constantly looking for jobs and economic opportunities outside their country. There were another 10 million Nepalis living in India, many of them across Bhutan's immediate southern border. Many of these Nepalis look towards Bhutan as an economic haven.

The Foreign Minister said that it was the objective of the ngolops to change the system of government in Bhutan with international support and to take over the country through sheer numbers. To this end they had been making false and malicious allegations about the Royal Government persecuting Hindus in Bhutan in the hope of winning the sympathy and support of the major Hindu organisations of India. While the Royal Government had always recognised Hinduism and Buddhism as the two main religions of Bhutan, the ngolops were clearly bent on creating misunderstanding

and ill feeling between Hindus and Buddhists in Bhutan. Voicing slogans of democracy and human rights, the ngolops had spared no efforts to malign the Royal Government in order to win international support for their cause. They had even tried to turn donor countries and international organisations against the Royal Government in order to cut off foreign aid to Bhutan.

The Home Minister reminded the Assembly that as per the repeated commands of His Majesty the King, leave alone the relatives, even the ngolops themselves cannot be forcefully evicted from the country.

The Royal Advisory Councillors from southern Bhutan and the Lhotshampa chimis expressed the view that although the actions of the ngolops called for their eviction along with all their relatives, it was also important to uphold the law of the land and the commands issued by His Majesty the King. They therefore proposed that, as recommended by the Home Minister, all actions against ngolops should be taken as per the law of the land.

His Majesty the King informed the Assembly that far from evicting any Lhotshampas, not even a single hard core ngolop had been evicted since the ngolop uprising in 1990. While it goes without saying that innocent citizens cannot be harassed or victimised under any circumstances, all actions taken against ngolops must also be fully in keeping with the law. His Majesty also informed the Assembly that none of the Lhotshampas who had gone to Nepal had been forcefully evicted.

Responding to His Majesty's intervention, the people's representatives said that although there was no need to have any reservations to evict all ngolops from the country, they would abide by His Majesty's commands on the issue.

The Assembly accordingly resolved that actions taken against ngolops would be strictly governed by the law of the land and the commands and edict issued by His Majesty the King.

VII. PUNISHMENT FOR NGOLOPS

The people's representatives of Tashigang, Lhuntshi, Tashiyangtshi, Pemagatshel, Mongar and Samdrupjongkhar submitted 9 proposals for the strict punishment of all ngolops. They pointed out that His Majesty the King and the Royal Government had pardoned many ngolops apprehended by the security forces. The chimis said that they realised these actions had been taken with the hope that the ngolops and their families,

as well as the people of southern Bhutan, would appreciate the magnanimous gesture and would therefore contribute towards finding a solution to the ngolop problem. However, instead of appreciating the magnanimity shown by His Majesty the King, the ngolops only seemed to gain in confidence thinking that the government was reluctant to take strong action against them. This was evident from the increase in terrorist activities. Most of the ngolops who were pardoned had resumed anti-national activities. Instead of contributing towards resolving the ngolop problem, the repeated amnesties had actually contributed towards making it more difficult to remove the ngolop threat. The people's representatives therefore requested His Majesty and the government not to grant any more amnesties to the ngolops. They strongly proposed that all ngolops be strictly punished as per the Thrimshung without any reduction or commuting of punishments they would be liable to under the law.

The Lhotshampa chimis of Dagapela, Daifam and Bhangtar also called for all ngolops to be strictly punished as per the law of the land. They said that while many ngolops had absconded from the country to escape punishment for the crimes they had committed, strict punishment must be meted out to those who still remained in the country. The chimis requested for all ngolops to be strictly punished as per the proposals in the Genjas submitted to the National Assembly by them on behalf of the Lhotshampa people.

Speaking on the matter, the Home Minister said that Bhutan being a law abiding nation, there had never been any instances till date of any punishment being meted out to ngolops or other criminals that was not in keeping with the law of the land. As in other cases, punishment for ngolops also could only be awarded by a court of law after following the prescribed trial procedures. On the other hand, as per the Thrimshung Chenpo, His Majesty the King had the full prerogative of granting amnesty to any criminal including ngolops, said the Home Minister. Moreover, the 70th session of the National Assembly had entrusted His Majesty the King with the full responsibility of solving the ngolop problem along with all the prerogatives and powers he deemed necessary. The government and the people had pledged to give their full support and assistance to His Majesty in all his decisions and policies. He therefore felt that there was no need to discuss the matter of granting amnesty to the ngolops any further as this prerogative should continue to be exercised by His Majesty the King.

The people's representatives acknowledged that, as pointed out by the Home Minister, His Majesty the King had the full prerogative to grant amnesty to anyone including ngolops. They, however, requested His Majesty the King to kindly give some consideration to the views of the people on the ngolop problem. A people's representative from Bumthang Dzongkhag pointed out that repeated amnesties would render futile the efforts of the security forces and the militia volunteers who had volunteered for militia service even when they were short of people at home. Although many ngolops had been granted amnesty by His Majesty the King, the ngolop problem continued to threaten the security of the country and disrupt the peace, progress and prosperity of the people. The people therefore felt that the ngolop problem could not be removed by compassionate and magnanimous policies alone. They strongly believed that if the problem was to be removed within the legal framework, then the law must be strictly implemented and all ngolops subjected to the full punishment they were liable to under the Thrimshung.

Several representatives stated that the time had come to take firm action against the ngolops. If the treatment did not match the disease, the disease would overcome the patient, they pointed out.

The Speaker intervened and said that while he agreed with the chimis that no further amnesty should be granted to the ngolops, the prerogative of granting amnesty should be left upto His Majesty the King as had been resolved during the 70th session of the National Assembly.

The Assembly resolved that while the punishment for ngolops would be determined by the law of the land, granting amnesty would continue to be a prerogative to be exercised by His Majesty the King.

VIII. EXTRADITION OF NGOLOPS

The people's representative of Yangner Gewog in Tashigang Dzongkhag called for the extradition of those ngolop leaders who had absconded after embezzling huge amounts of government funds. He suggested that they should be extradited from the neighbouring countries in accordance with the spirit of cooperation among SAARC members. Such action was necessary lest the examples of these ngolops were followed by others.

The representatives of the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry also called for the extradition of ngolops from neighbouring countries. He said that the anti-national activities of the ngolops had disrupted the peace and tranquility of the country for over two years. Blatant acts of terrorism such as kidnapping, hijacking, robbery, murder and decapitations had been carried out regularly by the ngolops. They had even gone to the extent of murdering senior government officials, as in the case of the late Gaylephug Dungpa. Acts of murder and extortion continued to be carried out by the ngolops taking shelter across the border. The representative proposed that as Bhutan had always had close and excellent ties of friendship with India, the Royal Government should request India to facilitate the extradition of ngolop terrorists. The Indian Government should also be requested not to allow any ngolops to stay on their territory.

The Foreign Minister recalled that during the 70th session of the National Assembly, many people's representatives had called for the extradition of those ngolops who had embezzled large amounts of government funds and absconded to Nepal. He informed the Assembly that Bhutan had an extradition treaty with India and could therefore extradite criminals from India. Accordingly, extradition procedures had been initiated against Bhim Subba and R.B. Basnet in India with a view to their extradition if they set foot in India.

Bhutan did not have an extradition treaty with Nepal but according to recent international trend serious criminal offenders could be extradited even without extradition treaties. An expert on Nepalese law had been consulted. The Foreign Minister also informed the Assembly that he had told the Nepalese Foreign Secretary, Narendra Bikram Shah, when they met recently in Jakarta, that one of the points he would like to discuss during his forthcoming visit to Nepal would be the extradition of Bhim Subba and R.B. Basnet on criminal charges.

The Foreign Minister informed the Assembly that the traditionally close ties of friendship, cooperation and understanding between India and Bhutan had been growing in strength over the years. The two countries had always supported each other in times of crises. As such the Government of India had extended full support and understanding to Bhutan over the ngolop problem. There was full support both from Mr. Jyoti Basu and his government in West Bengal and from all the officials of

the government in India. The Government of India had made it very clear that it would not allow any harmful activities to be carried out against Bhutan from Indian soil.

The Foreign Minister also informed the Assembly that the ngolops from southern Bhutan were able to take shelter in India because they could mingle with the large Nepalese population along the Indo-Bhutan border. As many of the 10 million Nepalese in India live immediately across Bhutan's southern border, it was very difficult to distinguish the Lhotshampa ngolops from the local Nepali population. That was why, the ngolops were still able to carry out acts of terrorism from Indian territory although India was extending full support and cooperation to Bhutan on the ngolop problem.

The people's representatives expressed their appreciation for the efforts of the Foreign Ministry in interacting closely with the Government of India to ensure that the ngolops could not carry out harmful activities against Bhutan from Indian soil. They called upon the Foreign Ministry to continue with these commendable efforts. The representatives also expressed their deep appreciation for the firm support and unfailing assistance and friendship extended to Bhutan by India.

The chimis said that one of the great regrets of the people was that the two ngolop leaders, Bhim Subba and R.B. Basnet had managed to abscond with such large amounts of government funds. They requested the government to take all possible steps to negotiate with the concerned neighbouring governments in order to extradite these two criminals.

The Speaker noted that India had always been a close friend and neighbour of Bhutan. On behalf of the National Assembly, he expressed deep appreciation for the unfailing support and friendship extended to Bhutan by the government and people of India. He expressed his confidence that the excellent ties of friendship and understanding between the two friends and neighbours would grow from strength to strength. He called upon the Foreign Ministry to further promote the close ties between India and Bhutan.

The Assembly directed the Foreign Ministry to conduct intensive dialogues with India and Nepal to extradite Bhim Subba and R.B. Basnet, and to work closely with the Government of India to ensure that the ngolops did not take shelter in India.

IX. EMPLOYMENT IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE AND HOLDING OF IMPORTANT AND SENSITIVE POSTS BY LHOTSHAMPAS

The people's representatives of 13 gewogs from Lhuntshi, Samdrupjongkhar, Tashiyangtshi, Punakha, Pemagatshel and Mongar submitted 7 points on the employment of Lhotshampas in government service and the holding of important and sensitive posts by them.

The chimis pointed out that during the 70th session of the National Assembly, the majority of the representatives had called for all Lhotshampas to be removed from government service. However, even the Lhotshampas having family connections with ngolops were still kept in government service. This was clearly one of the reasons for the continuation of the ngolop problem. As the people could no longer trust the Lhotshampas in government service, they requested that no Lhotshampas be employed in important or sensitive posts. Only loyal and trustworthy citizens should be employed in such posts. Nor should Lhotshampa government employees be posted in the southern dzongkhags.

Several chimis pointed out that His Majesty the King, who always treated his subjects equally regardless of caste or creed, had given important posts to many Lhotshampas. However, many of these people had turned against the Tsa-Wa-Sum and absconded after embezzling huge amounts of government funds. As the Lhotshampas could no longer be trusted in government service, the chimis requested the government not to give any important or sensitive responsibilities to any of them.

The Secretary of the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) said that the views expressed by the people's representatives on the employment of Lhotshampas in government service were not unfounded. He reported that since the ngolop uprising in southern Bhutan in 1990, 475 Lhotshampa government employees had absconded from the country and taken up anti-national activities. Today, all the leaders of the ngolop groups in Nepal were former civil servants, many of whom had absconded from the country after stealing large amounts of government funds and property. Such

actions by former civil servants had been a source of considerable embarrassment to the Royal Government both at home and abroad. It was therefore natural for some of the people's representatives to urge the government to remove all Lhotshampas from government service, and for others to urge that Lhotshampas were not employed in important and sensitive posts. It was also understandable for the people's representatives to call for the dismissal of all Lhotshampa government employees who were related to ngolops.

The Secretary said that while the RCSC fully shared the concerns of the people, the Royal Government had always followed one policy for all its citizens and provided equal opportunities to them in appointments, trainings and promotions in the civil service. Despite the ngolop uprising and the frequent embarrassments caused by Lhotshampa civil servants absconding, the RCSC had not adopted any discriminatory measures against Lhotshampas in government service. The Secretary informed the Assembly that out of 12,732 civil servants, 3,155 were Lhotshampas and 6,914 were from northern Bhutan while the rest were expatriates. Since the ngolop uprising, 691 Lhotshampas had been appointed into the civil service and 68 had been promoted. On the other hand, 475 Lhotshampa civil servants and government employees had absconded and another 520 had resigned and left the country to join the ngolop groups.

The Royal Government had educated and trained these people at great cost with the hope and expectation that they would contribute to the development and progress of their country as all true citizens would. Instead, they had turned against the Tsa-Wa-Sum and not only harmed the noble efforts of His Majesty the King to bring the people of southern Bhutan into the national mainstream but also inflicted big losses in terms of the investment made by the government in developing their skills and experience, the Secretary said.

The Secretary also informed the Assembly that although the RCSC had not adopted any discriminatory policy towards the Lhotshampas, it had proposed to dismiss all relatives of ngolops from service in view of the risks involved in their continued employment. However, His Majesty the King had over-ruled the Commission's decision and commanded that civil servants could not be dismissed unless they had seriously violated the rules and regulations of the Civil Service Act. The Secretary also informed the Assembly that there was no discrimination for fresh inductions into

the civil service. Even after the ngolop uprising, 691 Lhotshampas had been inducted into the civil service. There was also no discrimination regarding trainings and promotion. Even before the RCSC was established in 1982, all candidates for employment, regardless of ethnicity, had always been required to produce information about their background and certificates that they were not involved in any illegal or criminal activities. He also reminded the member that the No Objection Certificate introduced as an interim measure after the ngolop uprising in 1990 for entry into schools and colleges had been discontinued on the command of His Majesty the King.

The Secretary said that the non-discriminatory and tolerant policy on the employment, training and promotion of Lhotshampas in the civil service had been followed in keeping with His Majesty's aspiration and efforts to bring all Lhotshampas into the national mainstream. Despite the largescale abscondings of Lhotshampas, many of them after stealing government funds, it was hoped that the Lhotshampas in government service today would remain loyal citizens and work towards resolving the ngolop problem and restore the peace and tranquility of the country in order to fulfil the aspirations of His Majesty the King to build a strong, united and prosperous Bhutan.

Several people's representatives said that if the removal of Lhotshampas from government service was not possible because of the civil service rules and regulations, they must not be given any important and sensitive responsibilities. In particular, they must not be employed in sensitive posts like financial institutions, communication centres and defense armouries and stores.

The Minister of Social Services informed the Assembly that in order to promote the well-being and progress of the people, the Royal Government had been providing free health and education facilities to all citizens at great cost. For nine months of the year, the government, rather than the parents, took the responsibility of educating the children. The government also took the responsibility of providing higher studies either within Bhutan itself or in other countries. After completing their studies and trainings the government also provided employment for the students. Despite such beneficial policies which were implemented without discrimination by the Royal Government to benefit all citizens, the ngolops in southern Bhutan had rebelled against the Tsa-Wa-Sum and created serious problems for the country. Therefore the misgivings expressed by the people's representatives were understandable. However,

it had always been the policy of His Majesty the King to treat all his subjects equally regardless of caste or creed and the Royal Government must therefore continue to implement its policies in accordance with His Majesty's commands. In view of this, the Minister requested the people's representatives to also think accordingly.

Several representatives then proposed that while Lhotshampas need not be removed from government service, at the same time they must not be given any important and sensitive posts until the ngolop problem in southern Bhutan was removed. For the time being they should only be given general posts where they could not do anything to harm the security of the country. Once the ngolop problem was removed, their employment in government service could once again be governed fully by the civil service regulations and the policies of the Royal Government

Other chimis requested the government not to employ any non-nationals of Nepali origin in the ministries, departments, institutions and public corporations, and in the armed forces. They pointed out that it was the habit of the Nepalese people to come in search of employment and then establish permanent residence and create serious problems for the country. One of the ways they tried to establish permanent residence in Bhutan was to marry Bhutanese nationals. As it was the policy of the government to promote self-reliance, the chimis proposed that instead of employing outsiders of Nepalese origin, the maximum possible employment must be given to genuine Bhutanese citizens.

The Home Minister reported that the main reason for the problem in Bhutan today was the influx of landless and jobless ethnic Nepalis looking for land, higher wages and permanent employment in Bhutan. However, he requested the chimis not to make any racial differentiations in the employment of non-Bhutanese citizens by the government. The criteria for employment in government service were clearly laid down in the rules and regulations of the Civil Service Act and there should be no problem as long as these were followed.

Several chimis pointed out that once they had entered Bhutan and found jobs which enabled them to stay in the country, the Nepalis from outside invariably sought to marry Bhutanese nationals and apply for permanent residence permits. This trend had serious implications for the future security of the country. The chimis therefore requested the government not to employ Nepalis from outside in government service.

His Majesty the King informed the Assembly that the government had allotted a budget of Nu.1,300 million for human resource development during the Seventh Plan. With a total budget of Nu.22,680 million for the Seventh Plan, there would be many economic and employment opportunities for the educated Bhutanese as well as school drop-outs and people from rural areas who had come to the towns and remained without any jobs. Giving the utmost importance to provide gainful employment for our citizens would contribute greatly to the manpower development policy of the government and the economic progress of the country, His Majesty said. It would therefore be useful to keep in mind the suggestions made by the people, out of concern for the national interest, regarding various aspects of employment in Bhutan. The Assembly resolved that the employment of Lhotshampas in government service and sensitive posts would be carried out as per the civil service rules and regulations and the existing policies of the government. It was also resolved that every effort would be made by the government to provide the maximum possible employment to Bhutanese nationals.

X. EMIGRATION AND BAN ON RETURN OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE DESERTED AND LEFT THE COUNTRY.

The people's representatives of 23 gewogs from Sarbhang, Samdrupjongkhar, Tashigang, Tongsa, Mongar and Pemagatshel submitted 8 points proposing the passing of a special ordinance to ban the return of people who had emigrated and deserted the country. The chimis pointed out that instead of being grateful to the government for the preferential treatment given to the southern dzongkhags over all the other dzongkhags, many Lhotshampas took part in the ngolop uprising in 1990. When this failed, many of them left the country without anyone forcing them to do so. Such people who had deserted their country must not be allowed to return even if neighbouring countries like Nepal and the rest of the world were to ask for their return. The chimis said that some of the ngolops and other Lhotshampas who had left on their own accord had been coming back to the country. Security along the southern border must be tightened to prevent the return of such people. They said that people who applied to emigrate and leave the country were not much different from the ngolops as they obviously did not have any loyalty or love for the country. None of these people or their offsprings should ever be allowed to return to the country.

The Home Minister expressed his appreciation for the points raised by the people's representatives which clearly reflected their concern for the security and well-being of the country. He informed the Assembly that the issue of unauthorised people entering into the country was already covered under various immigration rules and regulations such as article 7 of the 1958 Citizenship Act; Section Ta-2 of the 1977 Citizenship Act; Article 6 of the 1985 Citizenship Act; and Section 5 of the resolutions of the 67th session of the National Assembly held in 1988. He said that the Department of Immigration and Census and the Royal Bhutan Police were monitoring and checking the entry of people at the various check posts in accordance with these rules and regulations. However, he requested the people's representatives to ask the people in the districts to immediately inform the police if they saw any unauthorised persons that the police and immigration officials may have failed to detect. Such assistance and cooperation from the people would enable the government to implement its policies and uphold the laws more effectively, he said.

Speaking on the matter, His Majesty the King said that far from forcefully evicting people from southern Bhutan as alleged by the ngolops, the government had been doing everything possible to change the minds of Lhotshampas who applied to emigrate. Leave alone evicting other Lhotshampas, not even a single ngolop had been forced to leave the country. As the people's representatives were aware, a Kasho had been issued in the beginning of this year declaring it to be a punishable offence under the law to forcefully evict any citizen. Any person subjected to such treatment could immediately bring the matter to the local court or to the Home Ministry or to the High Court or to the King. Following this, the Lhotshampa people were exempted goongda woola and rural taxes for 1992, and the Seventh Plan programmes were finalised for all the southern dzongkhags with a total budget that was 181 percent higher than the Sixth Plan budget. With the hope that applicants might change their minds, the procedures for emigration had also been deliberately prolonged to the extent possible with all members of the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs required to endorse the applications for emigration. Despite these efforts many Lhotshampas had been continuing to apply for emigration with some people putting in applications more than two or three times.

With many government representatives, the Royal Advisory Councillors and people's representatives from all the dzongkhags expressing their views, there was an extended discussion on the proposal to ban all ngolops and emigrants from returning to the

country. The Assembly finally resolved that the matter of banning the return of people who had left the country was adequately covered by the 1958, 1977 and 1985 Citizenship Acts, and the resolutions of the 67th session of the National Assembly.

XI. ALLOTMENT OF LAND AND RESETTLEMENT IN SOUTHERN BHUTAN

The people's representatives of 51 gewogs from Shemgang, Sarbhang, Samdrupjongkhar, Tashigang, Punakha, Paro, Pemagatshel, Thimphu, Chirang, Mongar, Tongsa and Lhuntshi and the representatives of the Dratshang and the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented 16 points for allotment of land and resettlement in southern Bhutan. The representatives proposed that the land left behind by the ngolops who had absconded after the 1990 anti-national uprising and the land vacated by the Lhotshampas who had sold them and legally emigrated to Nepal should be allotted to landless people from all the dzongkhags. There were over 400 households with very little or no land in Samdrupjongkhar alone and over 1000 such families in Mongar. In Tashigang, there were 178 landless families and 556 households with less than one acre of land. There were also many families in the eastern dzongkhags that subsisted entirely on Tseri cultivation. The chimis from the eastern dzongkhags proposed that all these families from their dzongkhags should be resettled as soon as possible in the south. The chimis from all the other dzongkhags also called for the landless people in their dzongkhags to be resettled on the vacated and excess land in southern Bhutan.

The people's representatives from Sarbhang explained that if landless people from other dzongkhags were re-settled on the vacated land in the south, it would generate a greater sense of security among the local people and neutralise any plan by the emigrants to return and claim the land they had sold and abandoned.

The BCCI representative and the chimis from Thimphu said that not only were the Lhotshampas facing great hardship from constant raids by ngolop terrorists but their presence in the border areas would continue to be a source of serious problems for the security of the country. They therefore proposed that the landless people from the northern dzongkhags should be resettled in the south while the Lhotshampas should be resettled in the north.

The Home Minister reminded the Assembly that proposals for resettling landless people from northern dzongkhags in the south had been discussed during the 70th session of the National Assembly and the proceedings duly recorded under section 5 of Chapter IV of the resolutions. A proposal for resettling Lhotshampas in the northern dzongkhags had been discussed earlier during the 67th session of the National Assembly in 1988 and the proceedings recorded in its resolutions. As per Chapter 10 of the resolutions of the 69th session in March 1990, in order to facilitate the resettlement of landless people from the south in northern dzongkhags, a survey and feasibility study for resettlement had been carried out at Barpong, Pangling, Bumpa Thang and Bozam under Shemgang Dzongkhag; at Kamichu and Hebisa under Wangdiphodrang Dzongkha; and at Dargayling and Kalizingkha in Dagana Dzongkhag. However, nothing had materialised from this proposal. Far from any Lhotshampa coming forward for resettlement in the north, they were now emigrating from the country.

The Home Minister also informed the Assembly that His Majesty the King had granted over 15000 acres of land from various parts of Bhutan to over 5000 landless families.

His Majesty the King reminded the Assembly that while discussing the proposal for resettlement of Lhotshampas in northern dzongkhags during the 69th session of the National Assembly, many northern chimis had requested for similar resettlement kidugs to be granted to the Northern Bhutanese. His Majesty had however told them that resettlement kidus for the landless people in the northern dzongkhags would be taken up only after the Lhotshampa resettlement programme was completed. Incentives for Lhotshampas to resettle in the north included free agricultural tools and seed and 2 bulls per family. Exemption of rural tax and goongda woola for 3 years, a grant of Nu.5000 for house construction and free transport to the resettlement sites had been offered. The resettlement areas had also been selected in sub-tropical areas with warm climates. A total of 481 acres in southern Shemgang, 808 in Wangdiphodrang and Chirang and 700 acres in Dagana had been surveyed and detailed project reports had been made at great cost. Travel expenses and allowances had also been sanctioned for Lhotshampas wanting to see and select the areas they would like for resettlement. However, no Lhotshampas showed any interest in the kidus offered by the government to facilitate resettlement of Lhotshampas in northern dzongkhags.

The Sibsoo chimi expressed deep regret that instead of resettling in the north as per the aspirations of the government, many Lhotshampas had instead been leaving for Nepal on hearing that there was free food, clothes and other benefits available in the camps there. He said that the land vacated by such people should be resettled with landless people from other dzongkhags. This would be a great kidu for the landless people as well as a big help for the security of the loyal Lhotshampa citizens. It would also ensure proper utilisation of arable land and contribute to the successful implementation of the Seventh Plan programmes.

Many chimis then proposed that rather than resettle Lhotshampas in the north, the resettlement of landless people from northern dzongkhags to the south should be done on a priority basis. This would be of great benefit to the landless people and also help the security situation for the loyal Lhotshampa citizens.

Several chimis proposed that resettlement should be carried out by sending the landless people from the eastern dzongkhags to Samdrupjongkhar and Daifam, while the landless people from the central dzongkhags should be given land in Surey, Gaylegphug and Sarbhang, and the landless people from the western dzongkhags should be given land in Phuntsholing and Samchi. This would be very useful for the kidu of the people.

Other chimis said that as far as allotment of land was concerned it should be done as per the resolutions of the 70th session of the National Assembly. First preference should be given to the retired service personnel and to militia volunteers. The balance land should then be given to the landless people from the various dzongkhags. While it had been decided that resettlements would be carried out during the Seventh Plan period, there had been no decisions taken as to the time frame, actual distribution of land and overall implementation of the programme. The people therefore felt that it was important for the National Assembly to discuss and finalise how the resettlement would be carried out.

His Majesty the King said that, as proposed by the people, all Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs should submit lists of people who did not have any land or had very little landholding and those who were entirely dependent on Tseri cultivation. These lists should be submitted to the Home Ministry. At the same time, it was necessary for

the Department of Survey and Land Records to prepare a list of land, including acreage and quality of the land, left behind by emigrants who had received Kidu Soilras. The RBA had to make an assessment of security implications for any resettlement and the Finance Ministry had to assess the financial implications for a resettlement programme. Before drawing up any programme it was necessary to first complete these studies and reports.

His Majesty also informed the Assembly that during the Seventh Plan meetings in all the 20 dzongkhags, the DYT members, GYT members and the people had all requested for land kidu from the south. The Planning Commission had taken due note of these requests.

The Royal Advisory Councillors and people's representatives observed that, as pointed out by His Majesty the King, a resettlement programme could only be drawn up after the relevant informations were submitted by the dzongkhags and the concerned departments and organisations. Therefore, all the concerned departments and organisations must submit their informations and reports as soon as possible.

The Assembly resolved that a proper resettlement programme should be drawn up after all the concerned departments and organisations had submitted their reports.

XII. BHUTAN-CHINA BOUNDARY TALKS

The people's representative of Bey and Kartshog gewogs in Haa expressed their deep gratitude to the government for initiating boundary talks with China and requested for a briefing on the progress of the talks. Accordingly, on 23 October, 1992, at the auditorium of the Yangchenphu High School, the Foreign Minister and the Chief of Survey gave an upto date briefing to the National Assembly members on the progress of the boundary talks with China.

The members were informed that the first round of the boundary talks had been held in Beijing in 1984. Eight rounds of talks had since been completed, three rounds in Thimphu and five rounds in Beijing. The two maps which had been approved by the 68th session of the National Assembly as the basis for negotiations and on which the Speaker and Deputy Speaker had attested their signatures were shown to the members of the National Assembly. The positions adopted by the Chinese government on the demarcation of the border were also explained to the members. After eight rounds of

talks, the points of contention between the two sides had been narrowed down to two areas in the western sector and two areas in the eastern sector.

After the people's representatives of Haa and Kurtey explained their perceptions of the boundary in their dzongkhags, the representatives of the Dratshang, government officials, the Royal Advisory Councillors and the people's representatives also expressed their views on the boundary talks. Some of them pointed out that as the talks had already gone on for nine years, it was important to conclude it as soon as possible. Other members said that as the boundary talks were very important, the negotiations should not be rushed but carried out very carefully and at a deliberate pace.

His Majesty the King explained to the Assembly members that although the boundary talks had been going on for nine years, as there was steady progress in the discussions held so far it should do no harm even if the talks had to go on for a few more years.

His Majesty the King also assured the members that they would continue to be apprised fully of the progress of the boundary talks and no decision would be taken without first informing the National Assembly. The Royal Government would make every effort to conclude the talks in full accordance with the aspirations of the people.

The National Assembly resolved that even though there were two areas of dispute in the western sector and two in the eastern sector, as the boundary talks were progressing steadily, the Royal Government should continue to conduct the talks with patience and tact so that the border could finally be demarcated successfully as per the traditional claims and the positions shown on the two maps which had been approved by the National Assembly in 1988.

XIII. MOBILISATION OF PAZZAPS (MILITIA) AND MILITIA TRAINING

The people's representatives of 41 gewogs of Bumthang, Lhuntshi, Samdrupjongkhar, Tashigang, Paro, Punakha, Tongsa, Thimphu and Mongar submitted 15 points on the mobilisation of Pazzaps and militia training.

The chimis said that it had always been the Bhutanese tradition to mobilise Pazzaps whenever it was necessary to protect the security and sovereignty of the country.

Today, when the security of the country was being threatened by the ngolops in the south, the people were ready to come forward and defend the country. They requested for militia training to be imparted to the people once again.

Some chimis suggested that the expenditure for militia training could be reduced by permitting ex-servicemen in the villages and gewogs to impart training to the local volunteers. All that the people requested from the government was arms and ammunition.

Other chimis said that there were reports of the ngolops receiving military training in Nepal. They therefore requested the government to impart training to as many militia volunteers as possible so that a large militia force would be available to back the regular armed forces in protecting the security of the country. As far as the people were concerned, nothing was more important than ensuring the security of the country, both for the present and future generations. That was why even women were keen to undergo militia training. The people were prepared to bring their own rations during the training period. They strongly requested the Royal Bhutan Army to conduct militia training on a regular basis.

Some chimis proposed that in order to reduce the expenditure involved, militia training should be carried out dzongkhag wise in the respective dzongkhags with the volunteers providing their own rations. Other chimis asked for militia training to be imparted to all students above class 6 during the winter vacations as had already been requested by the students during the Seventh Plan meetings. Some chimis also proposed that the age limit of the militia volunteers should be increased and volunteers between the age of 15 to 60 accepted for training.

The people's representative of Kanglung and Uzorong gewogs in Tashigang reported that out of the 4900 militia volunteers who had received training at Yongphula, 700 were presently posted in the disturbed areas in the south. He said that the people requested for militia training to be imparted to all volunteers who had not yet received training.

The people's representative of Merak and Sakteng in Tashigang asked for training to be imparted to the 150 able-bodied militia volunteers from their gewogs. He said that they could not come in time for training when volunteers from the other gewogs were

undergoing training as most of the men were away looking after their yak herds during that time.

Other chimis said that it was important to not only train the volunteers who had not yet received any training but to give refresher courses every two to three years to all trained volunteers.

The Chief Operations Officer of the Royal Bhutan Army expressed the deep appreciation of the armed forces for the various proposals from the people to strengthen and support the RBA through the mobilisation of militia volunteers. With even women volunteering to serve in the militia and proposals by the people to arrange their own rations while undergoing training, it was clear that the people were totally dedicated and committed to serving and protecting their country.

The Chief Operations Officer informed the people's representatives that 48 young civil servants who had volunteered for militia service had completed an intensive officers training course and were currently serving with the RBA. Out of 9895 militia volunteers who had received training, 2943 volunteers had seen service in the disturbed southern dzongkhags. Many of the militia had also requested to be inducted into the regular army although the RBA had only enrolled 506 so far. As there were still 6426 trained militia volunteers who had not yet seen service in the disturbed areas, it was not necessary to mobilise and train any more militia volunteers at the moment as militia training could always be resumed whenever it was necessary.

All the people's representatives, while acknowledging and appreciating that the armed forces were shouldering the responsibility of protecting the security of the country with full dedication and commitment, pointed out that in the event the ngolop problem escalated it would also be the responsibility of the people to support the armed forces in defending the security of the country. As the other chimis had already proposed, they said that it would be enough for the government to provide arms and ammunition for training. The volunteers would make their own arrangements for uniforms and rations. If feasible, training could be carried out in the gewogs. If that was not possible then it could be carried out in the respective dzongkhags with ex-servicemen serving as instructors. Such a step would contribute greatly to the security of the country.

The Chief Operations Officer expressed his appreciation for the people's commitment towards protecting the security of the country. He gave his assurance that the armed forces too were fully committed to safeguarding the security of the country at any cost. However, with regard to conducting militia training, he said that it was better to impart training in the existing training centres and that it was not possible to make any commitment on conducting training in the gewogs without carrying out a feasibility study.

His Majesty the King also expressed his appreciation for the commitment of the people to protect the security of the country. However, as there were 196 gewogs in the 20 dzongkhags of the kingdom, conducting militia training as requested by the people would first require a careful feasibility study. Suitable training areas would have to be selected, logistic requirements would have to be worked out, financial implications would have to be estimated and availability of suitable instructors would have to be assessed. Duration and suitable timings of the trainings would also have to be worked out. His Majesty therefore recommended that it would be better if the Royal Bhutan Army carried out a proper study to see whether training could be imparted to all militia volunteers and inform the volunteers accordingly.

The Assembly decided that the Royal Bhutan Army should carry out a study to see whether training could be imparted to all militia volunteers.

XIV. PRIORITY FOR THE NATION'S SECURITY OVER DEVELOPMENT

The people's representative of 37 gewogs from Lhuntshi, Samchi, Samdrupjongkhar, Tashigang, Pemagatshel, Paro, Punakha, Mongar and Tongsa presented 10 points stating that ensuring the security of the nation was more important than implementing development programmes.

The chimis pointed out that the ngolops had destroyed many service facilities built at great cost for the benefit of the people in southern Bhutan. They had also been inflicting great suffering to the people in the southern dzongkhags through their constant acts of violence and terrorism. Although the vast majority of the National Assembly members during the 70th session last year had called for the suspension of development works in the south until the ngolop problem was resolved, and the budgetary allotments diverted for security expenditure, His Majesty the King had insisted on resuming development works and the Seventh Plan programmes for the

southern Dzongkhags had accordingly been finalised as in all the other dzongkhags. The chimis said that although it was very important for the progress and prosperity of the people to implement development programmes successfully, at a time when national security was threatened, there was nothing more important than safeguarding and ensuring the security of the country.

As requested by the people during the Seventh Plan meetings, some chimis proposed that development works should be suspended and the budgets diverted for meeting security expenditures. They pointed out that development works could always be implemented later when the security of the country improved. Other chimis proposed that while budget allocations for the health and education sectors could be retained, all other budgets should be diverted for meeting security expenditures. On the other hand, many chimis pointed out that the ngolops would try to disrupt the implementation of the Seventh Plan programmes and again inflict very heavy losses on the government and the people. Development works should therefore be suspended until the ngolop problem was removed. Priority should first be given to strengthening and ensuring the security of the country.

Other chimis said that while it was necessary, as pointed out by their colleagues, to strengthen the security of the country, it was also important to distinguish between the internal resources which could be diverted for security expenditure and the assistance from friendly donor countries, the UN organisations and other international organisations which should be spent on the development programmes for which it had been given. They pointed out that if such assistance was used for security purposes it would be difficult to mobilise similar assistance in the future. They suggested that additional security expenditure should continue to be met from internal resources.

With all the people's representatives emphasising that nothing was more important than safeguarding and ensuring the security of the nation, there was a very extended discussion on the matter.

Speaking on the issue, His Majesty the King said that while he deeply appreciated the concern of the people to strengthen and ensure the security of the country, it was also important to successfully implement the programmes of the Seventh Five-Year Plan in all the dzongkhags. He reminded the members that the Seventh Plan programmes had been prepared according to the needs and aspirations of the people as reflected in

their proposals sent through the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs, and finalised with the people during the Seventh Plan meetings. Moreover, the government did not have any precedent for diverting development budgets for security purposes and therefore there was no reason to do so now, even under the present circumstances. His Majesty informed the Assembly that out of the total development budget of Nu.15590 million for the Seventh Plan, Nu.4919 million or 32% of the total was allotted to the 5 dzongkhags and 1 dungkhag of southern Bhutan. The successful implementation of the Seventh Plan would depend greatly on the commitment of the Lhotshampa people and the seriousness of the ngolop problem

The people's representatives of Samchi and Kalikhola expressed the deep gratitude of the Lhotshampa people to His Majesty the King. They said that despite the continued ngolop problem, the Seventh Plan had been finalised and was being implemented in the south solely because of His Majesty the King's benevolence. His Majesty had not only resumed development works in the southern dzongkhags despite the strong objections of the majority of the National Assembly members during its 70th session last year, but he had also kindly sanctioned far larger budgets for the Seventh Plan than for the Sixth Plan. They said it was the deep aspirations of the people to successfully implement the Seventh Plan programmes.

The Chief Operations Officer of the Royal Bhutan Army, noting the concern of the representatives for the security of the country and their proposals to divert developmental budgets for meeting security expenditures, said that it was important for the National Assembly to be informed on the expenditures incurred by the armed forces on account of the ngolop problem. Since the ngolop uprising in 1990, a total of Nu. 182.979 million had been spent on the training of 48 militia officers and 9895 militia volunteers and the deployment of security forces in the disturbed areas. Training infrastructures ranging from accommodations to drinking water supply had to be established, and logistic requirements ranging from uniforms and rations to arms and ammunition had to be arranged for the training of the militia volunteers. At the same time, the deployment of security forces in the disturbed areas had also called for heavy logistic and administrative requirements. Accommodations and duty houses at various security posts had to be built, and vehicles and various other administrative requirements had to be procured to enable the security forces to discharge their responsibilities.

The Chief Operations Officer also informed the Assembly that in the course of the past two years, the ngolops had launched 59 attacks and ambushes against the security forces. They had also damaged or destroyed many service facilities and development centres, roads, bridges, checkpoints and electricity pylons, and made many attempts at sabotaging factories in the south. While carrying out such destructive activities on the one hand, they had been spreading malicious propaganda on the other that development funds were being utilised by the Royal Bhutan Army. Far from the government lavishing development funds on the armed forces, all expenditures which the army had to incur on emergency basis with the concurrence of the Finance Ministry had been carefully audited as per the financial rules and regulations of the government.

Speaking on the matter, the Finance Minister said that as the Chief Operations Officer had reported, no developmental funds had been utilised for security purposes. In this regard, all the Dzongdas and the people in the dzongkhags would know best whether development programmes in the health, education, road and other sectors in their areas had been implemented as finalised during the Sixth Plan meetings. Although development works in the south had been disrupted since October, 1990, in all other dzongkhags development funds allocated for the Sixth Plan had been fully utilised for implementing the programmes they were allotted for. In any case foreign assistance for development programmes was all project tied and was not in the form of cash grants. The Finance Minister also confirmed that detailed audits of the emergency expenditure incurred on account of the ngolop problem were carried out by the Royal Audit Authority.

Also speaking on the matter, the Planning Minister expressed his appreciation for the importance attached by the people's representatives towards strengthening and ensuring the security of the country. He pointed out that strengthening and ensuring the security of the country was one of the important objectives of the Seventh Plan. The people and the government must therefore attach the highest priority to the fulfillment of this objective. Many development and service facilities established at great cost by the government had already been destroyed by the ngolops. From now onwards, he said, the responsibility of ensuring the security of development programmes and projects must be taken fully by the people of the respective gewogs and dzongkhags.

Summing up the discussion, the Speaker noted that although the proposals of the people to divert developmental funds to meet security expenditures was most appreciable as they had been made out of genuine concern for the security of the country, The Royal Government had never established a precedent for utilizing development funds for security purposes. Nor was there any need to do so in the future as per the clear reports and statements by the government.

The National Assembly accordingly resolved that the budget allocations for the Seventh Plan programmes from donor countries and multilateral organisations should continue to be utilised solely for implementing development programmes.

XV. POINTS RELATED TO THE CITIZENSHIP ACT AND CITIZENSHIP IDENTITY CARD.

The people's representatives of 43 gewogs from Dagana, Samchi, Sarbhang, Tashiyangtse, Punakha, Thimphu and Bumthang and the representative of the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry submitted 8 points related to the Citizenship Act and the Citizenship Identity Card.

The representatives pointed out that the existing Citizenship Identity Cards were in the hands of many ngolops. Lhotshampas who were emigrating were also taking Citizenship ID Cards with them. Due to the shortcomings and oversight of the past census system, many of these Cards had also been issued to non-nationals. Citizenship ID Cards were also being forged. All this enabled the ngolops to enter and leave the country freely and was one of the reasons why the anti-national and terrorist activities were continuing unabated in southern Bhutan. The chimis therefore proposed that the existing Citizenship ID Cards should be cancelled and new Citizenship ID Cards issued.

Other chimis proposed that lists containing the Citizenship ID Card numbers of all emigrants and ngolop absconders should be made available to the dzongkhag administrations in the south and the various checkposts so that these persons could be detected when they tried to re-enter the country.

The chimis from Samchi reported that anti-national and terrorist activities were mostly carried out by illegal immigrants or through their instigation. The people of Samchi therefore proposed that such persons should not be allowed to settle in the

country either through marriage or through other illegal means. As submitted in their Genja, the people of Samchi called upon the National Assembly and the Dzongkhag administrations to ensure that the Citizenship Act was implemented strictly. This would go a long way in bringing about a permanent solution to the present problem in southern Bhutan. The people were convinced that if the rules and regulations of the Citizenship Act were adhered to, they would once again be able to live in peace and harmony and enjoy continued progress and lasting security.

The Sarbhang chimi reported that those persons who had applied to emigrate refused to cooperate with the gups and were always creating problems because they had already decided to leave the country. Many families still insisted on emigrating despite the personal appeal made by His Majesty the King when he visited the southern dzongkhags. The DYT members were all convinced that they could consolidate and strengthen their dzongkhag only when they were sure of the loyalty of the people in their dzongkhag to their King and country. This would not be possible unless the people who applied to emigrate were allowed to leave. He said that the people of Sarbhang had therefore requested that all those families that had applied to emigrate should be allowed to do so without any delay.

Other chimis pointed out the ngolops in southern Bhutan had disrupted the tremendous progress Bhutan was achieving in balanced development in all the dzongkhags and in realising the national goal of self-reliance under the dynamic and farsighted leadership of His Majesty the King. They therefore proposed that the citizenship of all ngolops and their relatives should be revoked. Also, instead of trying to persuade them to remain in the country, all those applying to emigrate should be allowed to do so without delay.

Speaking on the issue, the Home Minister said that the crux of the 8 points raised by the chimis could be summed up as proposals to ensure that census was carried out strictly as per the Citizenship Act; to allow emigrants to leave without delay; to revoke the existing Citizenship ID Cards and issue new ones; restrict marriages of non-nationals to Bhutanese citizens; and to issue the Citizenship ID Card numbers of ngolops and emigrants who had left the country to the various checkposts.

Firstly, he said that the Home Ministry had been carrying out the census in strict accordance to the Citizenship Act and the resolutions of the

National Assembly. The Ministry would continue to do its best to ensure that these rules and regulations were implemented properly.

Secondly, regarding the proposal to allow people applying to emigrate to leave without delay, it would be adequate to act according to the resolution that had already been adopted on this point during the current session of the National Assembly.

Thirdly, it was true that the existing Citizenship ID Cards were being forged by the ngolops. Forgery was easy because the Cards had been made at a very low cost of Nu. 2.00 each in a small printing press in Calcutta in 1982. Also, one of the main objectives of the terrorist raids that had been carried out till date on 361 houses in the south was to steal Citizenship ID Cards. As the ngolop leaders had been telling all Lhotshampas coming to the camps in Nepal to bring their Citizenship ID Cards with them, the people emigrating legally had also been taking their ID Cards. Although they should be returning their Citizenship Cards, they were coming up with all sorts of stories and excuses to explain how their ID Cards had been lost or stolen.

The Home Minister requested the chimis to ask the people to inform their gups and chimis, or the police or the dzongkhag administration if any ngolop absconders or emigrants who had managed to slip past the checkpoints were seen in the districts. This would help to strengthen security in the rural areas.

As for issuing new Citizenship ID Cards, the Home Minister said that it was necessary to first complete the nationwide census. He assured the house that the Home Ministry would take steps to make new Citizenship ID Cards that could not be forged so easily. Once a suitable Citizenship ID Card was made, the Home Ministry would submit it to the Lhengyel Shuntshog before submitting it to the National Assembly for final approval.

Fourthly, as for the proposal by the Samchi chimis not to allow non-nationals and economic migrants to marry Bhutanese nationals, the matter had to be dealt with in accordance to the Marriage Act, 1980. He felt that the most effective means of preventing such marriages was for parents to counsel and advise their sons and daughters against marrying non-nationals. The best way to ensure the security and well-being of the country was for the people and the government to work together closely, he said.

Fifthly, regarding the proposal by the Bumthang chimi to prepare a list containing the numbers of the Citizenship ID Cards of ngolop absconders and emigrants, the Home Ministry already had a list of all the ID Card numbers. However, it would not be easy or practical for the personnel in the various checkpoints to use the list. As the list contained many ID Card numbers, all vehicles would be held up and delayed at the checkpoints while verifying the list, thereby causing great inconvenience to the general public.

Several people's representatives proposed that although it may not be feasible to immediately issue new Citizenship ID Cards, a new ID Card could be issued to the Lhotshampas in the country to distinguish them from the ngolop absconders and emigrants.

His Majesty the King recommended that, as proposed by the chimis, the National Assembly could resolve that after a suitable Citizenship ID Card that could not be easily forged had been made, it should be distributed throughout the country.

The National Assembly resolved that, as recommended by His Majesty the King and as reported by the Home Minister, the Ministry of Home Affairs should take steps to make and distribute as soon as possible a suitable Citizenship ID Card that could not be easily forged.

XVI. MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS RELATED TO THE NGOLOP PROBLEM

1. Removal of threat from ngolop terrorists across the border

The people's representative of Drugyalgang in Dagana Dzongkhag pointed out that the ngolops who were staying across the Indo-Bhutan border were repeatedly carrying out violent and criminal acts such as extortion, robbery and murder against the people on the Bhutan side of the border. The people therefore requested the government to improve security in the border areas by removing these ngolops through discussions with the Indian government.

His Majesty the King told the people's representatives that it was very difficult for the Indian authorities to distinguish the ngolops launching terrorist raids against Bhutan from the local ethnic Nepali population in India. As the Foreign

Minister had said earlier, there were about 10 million ethnic Nepalis in India and many of them were living across Bhutan's southern border. His Majesty informed the people's representatives that the civil authorities and police in West Bengal and Assam had been extending their full support and cooperation to the Royal Government over the ngolop problem ever since the outbreak of large-scale anti-national activities in southern Bhutan in 1990. The West Bengal and Assam police also regularly provided security to Bhutanese officials travelling through their territory. As the Indian authorities were already extending their full support and cooperation to the Royal Government there was no need to raise the matter separately with the Indian government.

The people's representatives thanked His Majesty the King for his briefing. As the National Assembly had already directed the Foreign Ministry, during the discussions on extradition of ngolops, to work closely with the Indian government to ensure that the ngolops did not take shelter in Indian territory, no separate resolution was adopted.

2. Raising the ngolop problem in SAARC Summit

The people's representative of Khilpa and Lajab gewogs in Dagana noted that despite the serious problems created by the ngolops, the people at large had been able to live happily due to the wise and farsighted leadership of His Majesty the King. He reported that the people had suggested that His Majesty may wish to consider raising the ngolop problem during the SAARC Summit as a possible means of finding a solution for it.

His Majesty the King informed the Assembly that the SAARC Charter did not allow bilateral and contentious issues to be raised. However, the Foreign Minister would be going to Kathmandu in November for talks with senior officials of the Nepalese government. Later in December, His Majesty would be meeting the Prime Minister of Nepal during the SAARC Summit in Dhaka to discuss the southern Bhutan problem. His Majesty informed the National Assembly that the Royal Government had never allowed the ngolop problem to affect its traditionally warm and friendly relations with the Nepalese government.

The National Assembly thanked His Majesty the King for his briefing and expressed satisfaction with the above steps to find a solution to the ngolop problem.

3. Clarification sought on outside assistance to ngolops and emigrants.

The people's representative of Nubi gewog in Tongsa Dzongkhag sought clarification on outside assistance to ngolops and emigrants. He recalled that recently in July, His Majesty the King had gone to Gaylegphug Dungkhag to personally appeal to the Lhotshampa families who had applied to emigrate not to leave the country. During the meeting with His Majesty, one of the emigrants had declared that they would not stay back even if the Maukhola stream flowed backwards. Another emigrant, Tikaram Adhikari of Dhanabari had said that it was difficult to return boulders that had fallen off the cliff to their original site. When this was the attitude of the Lhotshampa emigrants, the government should not try to stop them from leaving the country. The people had also heard that the ngolops were being encouraged to come to the camps in Nepal and that they were receiving rations from some of the United Nations agencies. The people therefore requested the Foreign Ministry to let them know what discussions had been held so far on this issue with the United Nations and its various agencies.

The Foreign Minister informed the Assembly that recently when he was in Geneva, he had met Mrs. Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and had briefed her on the situation in southern Bhutan and the people in the camps in Nepal. He had explained that many of the people in the camps in Nepal were not from Bhutan but were ethnic Nepalis from neighbouring areas, including landless and unemployed people from Nepal itself. It was the objective of the ngolop groups to bring as many ethnic Nepalis as possible to the camps and to register them as Bhutanese refugees in order to win international sympathy and support for their cause of taking over Bhutan through demographic change. A few non-governmental organisations and missionaries were giving assistance to the people in the Nepal camps and providing them with free rations, education and medical facilities. These organisations were spending about US \$ 3/- (about Nu.90/-) per day on each person in the camps. Because of the availability of free rations and other facilities, many poor and unemployed ethnic Nepalis from neighbouring areas

and from Nepal itself were going to the camps and posing as Bhutanese refugees.

The Foreign Minister said that he had explained to Mrs. Ogata that while it was true that ethnic Nepalis were leaving southern Bhutan, they were either illegal immigrants or persons who had violated the laws of the land and had absconded or people who were applying to emigrate after following all the prescribed legal procedures. Some of the emigrants were leaving because their relatives had left the country. Others were leaving because they believed in the ngolop propaganda that they could return with international support to dictate terms to the government. They had been told that all they had to do was to claim they had been forcefully evicted from Bhutan and to be physically present in the camps in Nepal where they would be provided with free food, accomodation and other benefits. Even if they sold their land and property before leaving Bhutan they could reclaim them when they returned to Bhutan in triumph. The transportation for these emigrants were also being arranged by the ngolop groups. On the other hand, those Lhotshampas who refused to be taken in by the ngolop propaganda were threatened and targeted for attacks by terrorist gangs. Contrary to the malicious allegations made by the ngolop groups, no one was being forcefully evicted from Bhutan.

The Foreign Minister informed the National Assembly that in the course of their discussion, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees had said that Bhutan should be prepared to take back genuine Bhutanese nationals who had left the country.

On hearing that the United Nations High Commissioner had raised the question of taking back people who had left Bhutan, the people's representatives objected strongly and got up one after another to express their views. They pointed out that ever since the First Five-Year Plan was launched, the Lhotshampas had been given preferential treatment by the government with the hope that they would join the national mainstream. The southern dzongkhags were allotted larger development budgets than all other dzongkhags. Whether it was in agriculture, animal husbandry, health or education, the Lhotshampas had received far greater benefits. The southern dzongkhags also had more roads, bridges and telephones than the northern dzongkhags, and the Lhotshampas had

long enjoyed higher income from cash crops like oranges, cardamom, ginger and betel nut. Most of the industries were also located in the south. All this was there for everyone to see. Instead of appreciating the unprecedented benefits they had received, they had rebelled against the Tsa-Wa-Sum and disrupted the peace and tranquility of the country. Far from joining the national mainstream and considering themselves as members of one people and one nation, they had carried out wanton acts of destruction and terrorism causing heavy loss to the government and inflicting great suffering to the people.

When the ngolop uprising in 1990 failed to achieve its objective, those who had led the uprising and violated the law absconded and indulged in anti-national activities against the Tsa-Wa-Sum from outside the country. They then instigated others to leave the country and join them in Nepal. All those who listened to the ngolops had been applying for emigration. On reaching Nepal they had been spreading malicious allegations against the Royal Government and claiming they had been forcefully evicted in order to gain refugee status. No international organisation or foreign country should even think of asking such faithless and untrustworthy people to be repatriated to Bhutan when they had left of their own accord in the first place. Nor should the Royal Government give any consideration to taking back these people. The chimis all said that they were deeply upset to hear such talks.

The Samchi chimi pointed out that it was important for the outside world to be informed of the real reasons why the people in the Nepali camps had been leaving Bhutan. He said that there would hardly be any country in the world that would allow its citizens to give up their citizenship and emigrate when they felt like it and then allow them to come back and reclaim citizenship whenever it suited them.

Other chimis pointed out that just as the people who had emigrated had the right to decide whether to leave the country, the loyal citizens in the country had the right to forbid such untrustworthy people from returning. The Bhutanese people and government, like all other peoples and governments, had the sovereign right to conduct their affairs as per the laws of their country. The National Assembly members were unanimous in declaring that all those who had left the country must never be allowed to return.

The Royal Advisory Councillors and several people's representatives pointed out that the ngolop absconders and emigrants can never be classified as refugees. Other chimis said that even if the government agreed to take back these people because of the request of the UN or other international organisations or foreign countries, the people would not agree. They therefore requested the government that on this matter it should, from the very beginning, not agree to anything the outside world may ask without first consulting the people.

His Majesty assured the chimis that no decision on the matter would be taken without first consulting the National Assembly. He reminded the Assembly that the Foreign Minister would be visiting Kathmandu in November to talk with senior officials of the Nepalese government and that later in December His Majesty would himself be meeting the Nepalese Prime Minister in Dhaka to discuss the southern Bhutan problem. His Majesty also said that, as pointed out by the people's representatives, the people and the government of Bhutan had the inherent right as well as the sacred responsibility to safeguard the security and sovereignty of the country.

After an extended discussion, the National Assembly decided that all the countries and multilateral and non-governmental organisations that had contacts with Bhutan should be suitably apprised by the Foreign Ministry of the views of the people of Bhutan on the true status of the so-called Bhutanese refugees in the camps in Nepal and on the question of their return. The organisations that were giving refugee status and assisting the people in these camps should also be fully apprised of the views of the Bhutanese people.

4. Travel documents.

The people's representative of Shongphu gewog in Tashigang proposed that in view of the ngolop problem in southern Bhutan, it would be useful if clearance for passports and travel documents for travelling outside the country were issued only after certificates from the concerned Dzongdas, Gups and Chimis were produced. For government employees such certificates could be issued by the concerned ministries and departments. These documents could be checked by

the Police and Immigration officials in the course of performing their routine duties.

The Home Minister clarified that although passports were issued by the Foreign Ministry, it was only done after proper verification in accordance with the Census Register maintained by the Home Ministry and the rules and regulations of the Citizenship Act. Noting the clarification made by the Home Minister, the Assembly decided that there was no need to change the system of issuing passports.

5. Concern for His Majesty's security

The people's representatives of Tshakaling, Drametsi, Saling, Khengkhar and Gongdu gewogs in Mongar Dzongkhag requested His Majesty the King to refrain from visiting the disturbed areas of southern Bhutan. They suggested that whenever necessary, ministers and senior officials should be sent to visit these areas of the disloyal ngolops. The people had heard that His Majesty had already visited the southern dzongkhags many times in order to ease the ngolop problem. Since His Majesty was the precious jewel around which revolves the hopes and the destiny of the people, they were deeply concerned whenever they heard of His Majesty's visits to the disturbed areas.

The Home Minister, while appreciating the concerns of the people, explained that His Majesty the King was visiting the disturbed areas because he believed that the best way to assess how to look after the security and welfare of the people and to understand the problems and difficulties faced by the security forces was to personally see the situation for himself rather than to depend on reports submitted by others. Fully realising that His Majesty the King was the precious jewel of the nation and deeply concerned for his security, the people in all the dzongkhags had appealed to His Majesty during the Seventh Plan meetings not to visit the disturbed areas. In Thimphu also, a delegation comprising the ministers, the four Lopons of the Dratshang and senior officials of the government, led by His Holiness the Je Khenpo had appealed to His Majesty the King not to visit the disturbed areas. However, His Majesty was fully committed to looking after the kidu of the Lhotshampas and to finding a solution to the ngolop problem, a responsibility which the 70th session of the

National Assembly had also entrusted to him. Despite the security risks, he had therefore visited the disturbed areas many times to study how best to restore the peace and tranquility of the country and ensure a secure legacy for future generations. Indeed, it was His Majesty's frequent visits to the disturbed areas that had contributed to the containment of the ngolop threat against the security of the country. The Home Minister expressed his fervent hope that with the blessings and protection of the Guardian Deities of the Palden Drukpa, and due to His Majesty's own Kusoe (power of good destiny), the prayers of the Dratshang and the good fortune of the people, His Majesty the King would continue to lead the nation to a bright and secure future.

The representative of the Rabdey in the Royal Advisory Council, said that it was due to His Majesty the King that the country had remained secure and peaceful despite the ngolop problem. He said that Kurims were being performed by the Dratshang and the Rabdeys for His Majesty's well-being. He appealed to His Majesty to reduce his visits to the disturbed areas, and to take full security precautions whenever it was necessary for him to do so.

The Secretary of the Royal Civil Service Commission said that just as the people were concerned over His Majesty's security, so were the government officials. While it was true that a visit by His Majesty was far more productive and useful than a visit by 10 of the seniormost officials, the government officials were very disturbed and concerned that His Majesty took very few security personnel with him and did not even allow security checks for public meetings. This was a serious security risk. As His Majesty was the main bulwark against the designs of the ngolops to take over the country, there was every possibility that the ngolops would resort to assassination attempts. If any harm came to our King, the ngolop problem would go out of hand and seriously affect the sovereignty and security of our country, the Secretary said. Therefore it was very important for all the members to give careful consideration while discussing this matter.

Many chimis pointed out that while it was fortunate that nothing had happened although His Majesty had travelled many times to the south so far, they requested him not to visit the disturbed areas anymore but to send ministers and senior officials instead. They pointed out that as far as the people were

concerned His Majesty was both the protective wall of the Bhutanese nation and the most precious treasure it had in its possession.

Other chimis said that although the ngolop threat had gone on for two years, it was due to His Majesty's wise and dynamic leadership that the people had enjoyed security and happiness. Although they did not have any doubts against the loyal Lhotshampas, the intentions of Lhotshampas who had connections with the ngolops could never be trusted. If it was at times imperative for His Majesty to personally visit the southern dzongkhags, then full security must be guaranteed for His Majesty by the government.

The National Assembly, affirming that His Majesty the King was the most precious leader of the Palden Drukpa in whom all the hope, aspirations and confidence of the people were reposed, requested His Majesty to send Kutshabs (representatives) to visit the disturbed areas as the importance of the situation may demand. If it ever became necessary for His Majesty to personally visit the south, maximum security should be provided. The Royal Body Guards, with the cooperation of the other service forces and all the concerned departments of the government, must coordinate and ensure full security for His Majesty the King.

6. No kidu grants for emigrants

The people's representatives of 5 gewogs from Tashiyangtsi, Pemagatshel and Thimphu and the representative of the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented 4 points calling for the discontinuation of kidu soilra to Lhotshampas emigrating from the country. The representatives pointed out that the Lhotshampas had not been asked to come to Bhutan in the first place but had come on their own, one after the other, seeking land and a means of livelihood. Over the years, the government had granted them more kidus and facilities than the real Bhutanese. Instead of being grateful for the preferential treatment they received, they had rebelled against the Tsa-Wa-Sum. After the ngolop uprising failed, first the ngolops who had broken the law absconded. Then the other Lhotshampas instigated and encouraged by these ngolops had been emigrating and leaving the country to join them in Nepal. Such people obviously did not have any love or loyalty for their country as they insisted on leaving and therefore should not be given any kidu soilra for the land and property they are

not able to sell. Giving them any further kidu would be like feeding milk to a poisonous snake. The people therefore strongly requested the government not to delay the departure of the Lhotshampas who had applied to emigrate and also to stop giving any kidu soilra to them.

The Home Minister clarified that all land transactions had to be carried out as per the Land Act. While the landed property of ngolop absconders would automatically be classified as Tsatong (ownerless land), the land of emigrants would be classified as Tsatong only if they had not been able to sell it and had already left the country. It was out of consideration for their welfare that kidu soilras were being given to those emigrants who could not dispose their land to private parties. The Home Minister also explained that the government was trying its best to discourage the Lhotshampas from emigrating by deliberately delaying the emigration procedures. The applications of all emigrants had to be verified by the members of the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs to confirm whether they genuinely wished to renounce their citizenship and emigrate. All documentations of the procedure had to be witnessed by the concerned gups and chimis. They were then given all the time they needed to dispose of their land and property. The Home Minister explained that the Land Act was not being violated by giving kidu soilra to the emigrants who could not sell their land.

The representative of the High Court also clarified that as per Ka 5-10 of the Thrimshung Chenpo, all people emigrating legally could sell their land. In the event that they could not sell their land to private parties, they could surrender their land to the government. The government could then consider giving them kidu soilra. With regard to ngolops and absconders, as per Ka 6-18 and Ka 6-19 of the Thrimshung Chenpo, all their property and land were liable for confiscation and no kidu soilra was to be considered. The land of emigrants which were not legally sold and transferred into the names of the buyers would fall under illegal transfer of land. Although it was very clear as per the resolutions of the 22nd session of the National Assembly held in 1965 that the properties of all ngolops should be confiscated, the government had not confiscated any property of the ngolops so far. The representative therefore called for the law to be implemented equally for the ngolops as it was for all other citizens.

Many people's representatives, while appreciating the explanation given by the Home Minister, pointed out that people who insisted on deserting their country despite all the efforts of the government to persuade them to stay were not much different from the ngolop absconders as they too were leaving because they did not have any love or loyalty for their country. Such people should not be given any kidu soilra. Other chimis pointed out that even though the emigrants were leaving after following all the legal procedures, they were doing so because they had no loyalty for the country and intended to harm the Tsa-Wa-Sum by joining the ngolops. They therefore categorically stated that it was not at all proper to give kidu soilra to such people.

His Majesty the King clarified that it was on his instructions that the Home Ministry was giving kidu soilra to the Lhotshampa emigrants who could not sell their landed property. Till date more than Nu.150 million had been spent by the government on the kidu soilra given to Lhotshampa emigrants. His Majesty assured the Assembly that whatever policy the government was adopting was always formulated in the best interest of the nation and people, and to promote the security and sovereignty of the country. There was no need for the members to have any doubts on the policy of giving kidu soilra to the Lhotshampa emigrants or to discontinue this kidu system. Although the Lhotshampa emigrants were insisting on leaving the country despite all the efforts of the government to persuade them to stay, they had nevertheless lived and worked in Bhutan for many years. As they were emigrating after following all the prescribed legal procedures, the government had been giving kidu soilra, for the last two years, to all those emigrants who could not sell their land. His Majesty said that there were still many Lhotshampas applying to emigrate, some of them putting in applications more than two or three times. As the ngolop problem was continuing unabated in the southern dzongkhags, and private parties were hesitant and not showing interest in buying property in the south, the granting of kidu soilra to emigrants who could not sell their land should be continued for the kidu of people who had been bonafide citizens although they were giving up their citizenship by applying for emigration. His Majesty pointed out that until the emigrants had left the country, the status of their lands was quite different from the lands of absconders which would automatically be classified as having become Tsa-tong as per the Land Act.

A member of the Royal Advisory Council requested that the Assembly should not change a policy which had been formulated for the benefit of the people by His Majesty the King and the Royal Government.

The National Assembly decided that granting of kidu soilra to legal emigrants as opposed to ngolops and absconders should be continued as per the command of His Majesty the King and in strict accordance with the articles of the Land Act. If any serious problems over this policy were to arise in the future it should once again be discussed by the National Assembly.

7. Retirement age of service personnel.

The people's representative of Khar gewog in Pemagatshel pointed out that the ngolops had not been able to harm the country because of the wise and farsighted leadership of His Majesty the King and the loyal and dedicated service of the armed forces who had risked their lives to protect the security of the country. While expressing the deep appreciation of the people to His Majesty the King and the armed forces, he also said it was necessary to increase the size of the security forces. He said that the people had therefore proposed that the retirement age of the armed forces personnel should be extended until the ngolop problem was resolved and that ex-servicemen should also be recalled into service.

The Chief Operations Officer of the Royal Bhutan Army thanked the people's representative for conveying the people's appreciation for the services rendered by the armed forces. He informed the Assembly that following the ngolop uprising in 1990, 541 ex-servicemen had been recalled into service until militia volunteers were trained and deployed to reinforce the regular armed forces. Although the ex-servicemen discharged their duties with great dedication and loyalty, because of their age, they were discharged once militia volunteers had been trained and deployed. Regarding the retirement age of the armed forces personnel, since the ngolop uprising, discharge from service was no longer determined by service tenure. Only the physically unfit and older soldiers were being sent on retirement. The Chief Operations Officer also pledged the complete commitment of the armed forces to serve the Tsa-Wa-Sum and protect its security with total loyalty and dedication.

The Assembly expressed its appreciation for the briefing and pledge given by the Chief Operations Officer.

8. All the people in Nepal camps are not Bhutanese

The people's representative of Chang and Kawang gewogs in Thimphu Dzongkhag called on the government to counter the false claims of the ngolops that the people in the camps in Nepal were all Bhutanese refugees. They pointed out that contrary to the ngolop propaganda, many of these people were ethnic Nepalis from neighbouring areas, including people from Nepal itself.

Speaking on the matter, the Home Minister said that while the Foreign Minister had already clarified the status of the people in the camps in Nepal during this session's earlier discussions, he would like to make some observations of his own. He informed the Assembly that there were five categories of people in the camps in Nepal. One category were Nepalis who had come to seek employment in Bhutan and had now returned to their country. The second category of people in Nepal claiming to be refugees were people who had violated the laws of the land by taking up terrorist activities or were ngolops who had stolen huge funds from the government. The third category were people who were leaving without even waiting for their emigration applications to be processed. As per the Citizenship Act, such people had forfeited their citizenship once they had left Bhutan. The fourth category were people who had never even set foot in Bhutan. They were poor, landless or unemployed Nepalis from the neighbouring areas, including Nepal itself, who had come to the camps to avail of the free food and other benefits available there by posing as refugees from Bhutan. Some international and non-governmental organisations were giving US \$ 3 (Nu.90/-) for every person in the camps. The fifth category were the Lhotshampas who were applying to emigrate after fully acknowledging the fact that according to the laws of the land once the procedures for emigration were completed they would forfeit their Bhutanese citizenship.

The Home Minister said that the Home Ministry had repeatedly sent circulars to the dzongkhags reminding these emigrants of the laws of the land and asking them not to leave. Moreover, His Majesty the King, during his numerous tours

of the southern dzongkhags, had made many personal appeals to the Lhotshampas not to leave the country at a time when it was going through a difficult period. However, these people had less regard for the appeals made by His Majesty the King and for the law of the land than for the propaganda fed to them by the ngolops. Such people who had given up their citizenship and abandoned their country cannot be considered as Bhutanese as per the Land and Citizenship Acts.

The Home Minister also informed the Assembly that, based on the malicious allegations made by the ngolop groups like the BNDP and the BPP that ethnic Nepalis were being forcefully evicted from Bhutan, there were people in Nepal, several non-governmental and international organisations and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees who were giving assistance to the so-called refugees in the camps in Jhapa and other places in Nepal. This in turn was attracting many ethnic Nepalis to the camps in Nepal.

The National Assembly decided that as the question of so-called refugees from Bhutan had already been discussed thoroughly and the discussion also recorded in resolution XVI-3 of the current session, there was no need to adopt a separate resolution. However, the Assembly noted that most of the people in the camps were not from Bhutan, while those who did go from Bhutan were persons who had renounced their citizenship and emigrated, and were therefore no longer Bhutanese citizens.

9. Outside support to ngolops

The people's representative of Drametsi Gewog in Mongar Dzongkhag reported that according to a BBC news broadcast last year, the present Prime Minister of Nepal had been involved in the ngolop uprising of the Lhotshampas in 1952. Newspapers had also indicated that the ngolops were receiving strong support from the Nepalese government. As Nepal was a much bigger country than Bhutan, such acts amounted to a bigger country trying to subvert a smaller state. The people therefore felt that Bhutan should appeal to the United Nations for protection against Nepal's actions.

The Foreign Minister, while acknowledging the point raised by the Drametsi Chimi, said that since Nepal and Bhutan had traditionally enjoyed close and friendly ties with each other known to everyone.

The Foreign Minister also informed the Assembly that international organisations and a few countries were believed to be giving assistance to the ngolops in Nepal. It was reported that with money and arms from some of these countries, the ngolops were now undergoing military training. As this development would pose a very serious threat to Bhutan's sovereignty and security, it was very important for the government and the people to work together to ensure the security and well-being of the country. The threat from within was in many ways far more serious than the threat from outside, he added.

Referring to the Drametsi chimi's proposal to register a protest against Nepal's actions with the United Nations, the Foreign Minister said that with 178 members in the United Nations, it would be very difficult for any decision to be reached on the proposal. It would be far more useful for the people and the government to work together closely and take the necessary steps to remove whatever problems threatened the country.

10. Trial of ngolops

The people's representatives of 7 gewogs in Pemagatshel, Mongar, Samdrupjongkhar and Tashigang raised 4 points on the trials of the ngolops in the High Court.

The chimis pointed out that as the 37 ngolops who were on trial in the High Court had committed major crimes against the Tsa-Wa-Sum, they should have been punished without any trial. Though five months had passed since the trials had begun, no punishments had been awarded so far to the ngolops. The people therefore requested for a clarification on why the trial was taking so long. They also pointed out that if the ngolops were not awarded the punishment they were liable to under the law, whether it was life imprisonment or capital punishment, not only would it become difficult to remove the ngolop problem but the Thrimshung Chenpo would also be undermined and the general public would

lose faith in the law of the land. They pointed out that the High Court should have no difficulty in dealing with the ngolops in strict accordance to the law.

The representative of the High Court explained that since the case of the 37 ngolops on trial were forwarded to the High Court on 12 May, 1992, a lot of time had been taken up in investigating and translating the statements of the detainees which were all in Nepali. Although taking the statements of the detainees had been completed by 8th June, 1992, detailed investigations had to be carried out as per the law. Many witnesses and victims of the terrorists had to be called from various dzongkhags to testify in the cases. The trial was being conducted by the full bench of the High Court, including the Chief Justice, with meticulous care to ensure an impartial judgement. The representative assured the members of the house that once the trial procedures were completed, the judgements would be passed in strict accordance to the law.

The discussion was concluded with the people's representatives expressing appreciation for the efforts of the High Court to conduct the trial as per the law of the land and urging them to continue their efforts to conclude the trial as soon as possible.

11. Proposal to consolidate the established system of government

The people' representatives of the four gewogs of Phuntsholing, Lokchina, Bhalujhora and Gengu under Phuntsholing Dungkha in Chukha Dzongkhag called for the further consolidation of the institution of hereditary monarchy in Bhutan. They pointed out that the ngolops were trying to malign the Royal Government through countless anti-national letters and literatures including their so-called 13 point demand which had no relevance for the people of Bhutan. The people already enjoyed the rights and privileges the ngolops were demanding for propaganda purposes in their so-called 13 point demand. Under the farsighted guidance of His Majesty the King and because of the cherished system of hereditary monarchy, the country had been enjoying peace and tranquility and making rapid progress in socio-economic development. The people had no wish whatsoever for the democracy demanded by the ngolops but wanted to further consolidate the institution of hereditary monarchy which had been so beneficial for Bhutan. The people had observed that although there was institutional

democracy in neighbouring countries, the people there faced far greater problems than the people of Bhutan who enjoyed greater peace, happiness and progress.

Likewise, the people's representative of Nubi gewog in Tongsa Dzongkhag pointed out that it was the declared objective of the Lhotshampa ngolops to establish democracy in order to make it possible for them to ultimately take over the country. However, it was up to the true and majority Bhutanese citizens to decide what system of government they would like to have in their country. We, the true Bhutanese, are not bound to comply with the dictates and wishes of ngolops and illegal immigrants, the chimi said.

Speaking on the matter, the Home Minister, presented a brief summary of the ngolop uprising. Although everyone was quite aware of how the ngolop uprising had started and the matter had also been discussed during the 70th session of the National Assembly, he felt it was relevant to recount certain aspects of the ngolop activities. During the months of September and October in 1990, violent demonstrations instigated by the so-called Bhutan People's Party had taken place in all the southern dzongkhags from Daifam in the east to Sibsoo in the west. This ngolop group had made a so-called 13 point demand on the Royal Government and widely publicised it. These demands which were deliberately fabricated had two purposes. The first was to malign the Royal Government and gain international sympathy by making it seem that the Bhutanese did not enjoy many of the rights which they in actual fact enjoyed in larger measure than people in most so-called democratic countries. The second aim was to deviously use a few of the demands to fulfil their true objective of taking over Bhutan and turning it into a Nepali state.

The Home Minister called the attention of the members to the 13 demands point by point.

The first demand which called for the "unconditional release of political prisoners," clearly showed that the ngolops wanted to break all the laws of the country and still be exempted from punishment thereby turning Bhutan which had always been a law abiding country into a state of lawless anarchy.

The real intentions of the ngolops were, however, revealed in four of the other demands, the Home Minister said. These were; the introduction of a multi-party system and a government headed by a prime minister; changing the judiciary system; changing the 1985 Citizenship Act; and abolishing the Goongda Woola system and the mobilisation of a national workforce to implement development programmes. It was obvious that, with Bhutan's small population, if goongda woola and the mobilisation of a national work force were abolished, then as in the past Nepali labourers would have to be brought in to implement the many important development programmes. Equally obvious was the fact that if the Citizenship Act and the judiciary system were changed, large scale influx of ethnic Nepalis into Bhutan would be made possible. And, if the system of government was also changed as demanded, the ngolops would then be able to take over Bhutan politically as the Northern Bhutanese would soon be reduced to a minority in their own country. In their efforts to achieve this devious and sinister goal, the ngolops had gone to the extent of promising land and citizenship to all ethnic Nepalis in neighbouring areas who would help them to take over Bhutan and turn it into a Nepali state.

The Home Minister pointed out that the ngolops were fully aware that they would not be able to achieve their objectives so long as the laws of the land promulgated by the National Assembly remained unchanged and Bhutan continued to successfully implement its policy of national self-reliance.

Some of the other demands such as "right to culture, language and script," "freedom of religion," "freedom of press, speech and expression" and "freedom of formation of unions, associations and political parties" were, firstly, mere repetition of popular slogans to win international sympathy and support. Secondly, the real objective of these demands was to dilute and weaken the unique national identity which had always been the greatest pillar of strength for the Bhutanese nation in safeguarding and promoting its sovereignty and security over the ages. As Bhutan was a small country with a small population, it was the calculated aim of the ngolops to weaken its age-old identity and social fabric with the introduction of unions, associations and political parties, as well as multiple religions, languages and cultures.

The Home Minister pointed out that the promotion of the national dress and language and Driglam Namzha had been fully supported by the Lhotshampa people in large public meetings. He also pointed out that it was interesting to

note that despite all the fuss being made over the national dress, no Lhotshampas wore Daura Sural even though there was no dress regulations for the rural areas.

With regard to freedom of religion, the Home Minister said that Hinduism was a recognised religion in Bhutan. In order to promote the Hindu religion and culture, His Majesty the King had declared 'Dashain' a national holiday in 1980 and he had since been personally participating in the Tika ceremony with his Lhotshampa subjects. During his tours of southern Bhutan, His Majesty the King had also been regularly visiting the Hindu temples and had presented many gold plated statues of Hindu gods. His Majesty had also established Sanskrit Pathshalas and given scholarships to many Lhotshampas wishing to study Sanskrit in India. As Hinduism and Buddhism were two highly compatible religions with the same origin, there had always been complete harmony between Buddhists and Hindus in Bhutan. The ngolops were therefore deliberately trying to create misunderstandings and problems between Hindus and Buddhists in Bhutan for their own narrow political ends.

The demands for "freedom of trade and occupation," "right to equitable distribution of wealth and funds," "right to equality of opportunities in matters of public employment" and "right to education" were pure fabrications to malign the Royal Government and gain international sympathy by making it appear that the Bhutanese people did not even enjoy these basic rights, the Home Minister said. Freedom of trade and occupation was enjoyed by everyone in Bhutan as all Bhutanese were fully aware. Far from there being no equitable distribution of wealth and funds, the government had been allotting much larger funds for the southern dzongkhags than for the northern dzongkhags. If anyone were to ask for more equitable distribution of funds it should actually be the people of the northern dzongkhags, the Home Minister said. As everyone knew, the Lhotshampas had also benefitted more in terms of employment. Far from there being no right to education in Bhutan, every Bhutanese child was given free education from primary to college level and the southern dzongkhags had more educational institutions than all the other dzongkhags.

The Home Minister pointed out that while the ngolops were voicing slogans of democracy and human rights to the world, their terrorists gangs were killing, looting and terrorising the people in southern Bhutan. So far, 373 houses had

been robbed and 56 had been burned down, 261 people had been injured and 49 people had been murdered and large numbers of service and development facilities had been damaged or destroyed by the ngolops. The ngolops claimed that they were fighting for the cause of the Lhotshampas but the Home Minister wondered what they had really done for them so far. Was it the government or was it the so-called Bhutan National Democratic Party and the so-called Bhutan People's Party that had brought suffering and hardship to southern Bhutan? When the bright sun of peace and prosperity was shining over southern Bhutan, who had brought in the darkness? he asked.

Speaking on the matter, the Planning Minister pointed out that, emotionally and sentimentally, the ngolops considered Nepal their motherland. However, economic prospects were far brighter for them in Bhutan where there was no unemployment and landlessness as in Nepal. The ngolops had therefore been denouncing the Royal Government and making malicious allegations against it to mobilise international sympathy and support for their ultimate goal of turning Bhutan into a Nepali-dominated state.

The Planning Minister said that the Royal Government could be judged best by its performance and record. While other countries had taken hundreds of years to reach their present state of development, Bhutan began the process of planned development only 31 years ago and had already achieved impressive results. Within this short span of time Bhutan had achieved universal child immunisation, 90 percent primary health coverage, and 67 percent primary school enrollment, all provided free to its citizens. Its per capita income was also one of the highest in South Asia. By the end of the Sixth Plan, the Royal Government had achieved the unique status of probably being the only developing country which is able to meet its recurring expenses from internal revenue and resources. The Planning Minister pointed out that all this was possible because of good governance inspired by the dynamic and selfless leadership of His Majesty the King. Contrary to the malicious allegations of the ngolops, the Royal Government provided a model of good governance for any developing country, said the Planning Minister.

The people's representative of Samar and Sombey gewogs in Haa Dzongkhag expressed appreciation for the briefings given by the Home Minister and the

Planning Minister. He said that everyone in Bhutan was aware of the true intentions of the ngolops as pointed out by the Home Minister, and of the achievements of the Royal Government in planned development contrary to the malicious propaganda of the ngolops. He informed the Assembly that he had personally seen the destructions and terrorism carried out by the ngolops in the Mochu valley. The ngolops had destroyed schools built for the education of their children and the bridges and health centres built for their own benefit. They had robbed the houses of many people in the Mochu valley, some of whom had helped them in the past. The ngolops had also raided the Mochu Lhakhang, broken the holy images, desecrated the sanctity of the monastery and stolen all the valuable religious artifacts. They had kidnapped several Northern Bhutanese, beaten up and terrorised others and forced the women to flee into the jungles to escape being violated. The chimi wondered what kind of human rights the ngolops had been trying to promote through such terrorist activities.

The chimi also pointed out that the people of Bhutan already enjoyed the rights and privileges which the ngolops were asking for in their 13 point demand. This so-called 13 point demand was just a ploy by the ngolops to malign the Royal Government and gain international sympathy and support. Just like the people of Phuntsholing Dungkha and the people of Nubi Gewog in Tongsa, all the people in Bhutan were fully committed to preserving the established system of government in Bhutan. He, therefore called upon the National Assembly to bring out a strong resolution to strengthen and consolidate the cherished institution of hereditary monarchy in Bhutan.

The representatives of the Dratshang and the people all stated that the calls made by the ngolops for democracy and human rights were a guise to gain international sympathy and support for their cause. The ngolops were carrying out a major propaganda campaign, based on false and distorted information, to malign the Royal Government and bring international pressure on Bhutan. The representatives acknowledged that Bhutan did need advice and expertise from outside at this stage of its development. However, Bhutan did not need any demands that sought to change the unique and deeply cherished Bhutanese system that had been of such great benefit to the Bhutanese nation and people. The representatives declared categorically that the people of Bhutan would never accept any demands from outside, especially from ngolops. They expressed their

deep commitment to consolidating the institution of hereditary monarchy which was the very embodiment of peace and happiness in Bhutan.

Several people's representatives pointed out that the ngolops had formed political parties with names that would appeal to the outside world and fabricated baseless demands with the sole intention of overthrowing the established system of government and taking over the country. However, the ngolops would never succeed in carrying out their evil intentions because the government, the Dratshang and the people were fully united under the wise leadership of His Majesty the King towards promoting and strengthening the kingdom's unique national identity and ensuring the security and well-being of the Bhutanese nation.

The Minister of Trade and Industry said that it was indeed the aim of the ngolops to harm the interest of the country as pointed out by many of the chimis. He said that the 13 point demand of the ngolops should be completely ignored. So long as the people and the government were fully united under the leadership of His Majesty the King, even if the ngolops brought a 20 point demand they would not be able to do anything to harm the country. Ever since the establishment of hereditary monarchy, Bhutan had enjoyed peace, stability and tranquility and made great progress in socio-economic development. He therefore called upon the government and the people to continue working together to successfully implement the policies and programmes for promoting Bhutan's unique national identity and ensuring the progress and security of the country.

Concluding an extended discussion on the matter, the Speaker expressed his deep appreciation for the proposals made by the representatives of the Dratshang, the government officials and the people's representatives to strengthen and consolidate the cherished institution of hereditary monarchy in Bhutan. He reminded the Assembly that it was important for everyone to realise that while the ngolop problem was a source of great hardship and suffering for the people of southern Bhutan, the 13 point demand had not been made for the benefit of the people of southern Bhutan as claimed by the ngolops but had been deliberately fabricated to win international sympathy and support for their goal of overthrowing the established system of government in Bhutan and taking over

the country. As already discussed, it was crucial for the Dratshang, the ministers, all government officials and employees and the people to think with one mind and to work together as a fully united people to promote the country's unique national identity and to further strengthen and consolidate the cherished system of hereditary monarchy in Bhutan.

The Assembly directed the people's representatives to clearly apprise the people of the above deliberations.

12. Attitude of Lhotshampas

The people's representatives of Gasey Tshoghom, Nanhi, and Thetsho gewogs in Wangdiphodrang Dzongkhag, and the people of Chang and Kawang gewogs in Thimphu Dzongkhag expressed their reservations about the attitude of the Lhotshampas and called for a separate Genja from all ngolop detainees granted amnesty by His Majesty the King.

The chimis pointed out that the ngolop activities in southern Bhutan had disrupted the peace and tranquility of the country and threatened its security. They said that the restoration of peace and normalcy would depend largely upon the mentality and behaviour of the Lhotshampas. Although the Lhotshampas had pledged their support and loyalty many times before they had not been sincere in the past. They had once again come up with a Genja pledging their loyalty and support to the Tsa-Wa-Sum. It was, however, very difficult to place any trust and confidence in them and believe the sincerity of their Genja.

The Lhotshampas had revolted against the Tsa-Wa-Sum despite the fact that they had received many benefits and kidus from the government. Their actions could only be likened to that of the horse which kicks the person who feeds it. Had the government followed the law of the land, the ngolops in southern Bhutan would all have been liable to capital punishment. However, His Majesty the King, out of his magnanimity and kindness, had instead granted amnesty to many ngolop detainees. If these ngolop detainees pardoned by His Majesty the King wished to live in the country, they must submit a strong and comprehensive Genja that could not be easily violated.

The representative of the High Court pointed out that since the people of southern Bhutan had already submitted a signed Genja, through their respective chimis, pledging their loyalty and support to the Tsa-Wa-Sum, there was no need to discuss another Genja. However, the Genjas submitted to the National Assembly by the Lhotshampas should be examined to see whether ngolop detainees who had been granted amnesty by His Majesty and relatives of ngolops had also signed them. A separate Genja could then be taken from those who had not signed the ones submitted to the National Assembly.

The Home Minister informed the members that all the people in southern Bhutan, except for those who were sick at the time, had signed the Genjas submitted to the 71st session of the National Assembly. As the people of southern Bhutan had pledged their support and loyalty to the Tsa-Wa-Sum very clearly in these Genjas, there was no need to check the names and take a separate Genja from every person who had not signed the ones submitted to the National Assembly.

The National Assembly decided that all the Lhotshampa chimis should clearly apprise the people in their respective gewogs and dzongkhags about the discussions on the Genjas submitted by them. They must keep in mind that the chimis from the northern dzongkhags had expressed their reservations because the Genjas and pledges submitted by the Lhotshampas on earlier occasions had been violated by the ngolop uprising and the continued anti-national activities in southern Bhutan. The Lhotshampa chimis must therefore impress upon the people of southern Bhutan the importance of faithfully and sincerely honouring the Genjas submitted by them to the 71st session of the National Assembly.

13. Opening of new checkpost

The people's representatives of Chirang Dzongkhag requested for a manned checkpost to be established at Darachu between Chirang and Sarbhag Dzongkhag. They pointed out that without a checkpost in that area, it was easy for non-nationals and ngolops to infiltrate into their dzongkhag. Frequent dacoities, robberies and rape had been taking place in the gewogs of Beteni, Lamidara, Gaurigaon, Dunlagang and Goseling. The establishment of a

manned checkpoint at Darachu would help to safe-guard government installations and the lives and properties of the people.

In response, the Home Minister said that the Home Ministry and the concerned departments and organisations also shared the same view as the people regarding the establishment of a new checkpoint at Darachu. However, before establishing any checkpoint it was necessary for the Police, the Department of Census and Immigration and the Department of Revenue and Customs to first conduct a feasibility study and find a suitable site that would be beneficial to the people and also facilitate the efficient functioning of the Check Post.

The chimis thanked the Home Minister for his proposal. The National Assembly also endorsed the Home Minister's proposal.

XVII. PROPOSAL TO RE-INFORCE THE HISTORIC GENJA OF 1907 WHICH ESTABLISHED THE INSTITUTION OF HEREDITARY MONARCHY IN BHUTAN

The people's representatives of Tongsa Dzongkhag, while expressing the deep gratitude of the people to His Majesty the King for assuring them during the 70th session of the National Assembly that he would take full responsibility for resolving the ngolop problem, submitted that the people were greatly disturbed and dismayed by His Majesty's pledge to abdicate if he did not find a lasting solution to the ngolop problem. The chimis also pointed out that although the 56 gewogs of the five dzongkhags and one dungkhag of southern Bhutan had submitted a Genja to the 71st session of the National Assembly declaring their loyalty to the Tsa-Wa-Sum, they had pledged their loyalty and dedication many times before and had still revolted and carried out ngolop activities. The chimis recalled that in 1907, the forefathers of the true Bhutanese had submitted a Genja to Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck which elected him as Bhutan's first hereditary monarch and ushered in an era of peace, happiness and progress for the Bhutanese nation. Today, at a time when the security of the country was being threatened, all the descendants of the true Bhutanese who had pledged their loyalty to Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck in 1907 should submit a new Genja (legally binding agreement) pledging loyalty and devotion to the unique system of hereditary monarchy. Such a Genja was necessary to re-inforce the Genja which first established this cherished Bhutanese system.

The representatives of the Central Monk Body and the Rabdeys, the ministers and officials representing the Royal Government, the Royal Advisory Councillors, and the representatives of the people, all pledged their total loyalty, dedication and commitment to uphold and further strengthen the unique system of hereditary monarchy in Bhutan which had ushered in peace and tranquility for the country from the day it was first established. They fully supported the proposal to submit a new Genja to reinforce the historic Genja of 1907.

The Yangbi Lupon, the seniormost representative of the Dratshang, pointed out that the Dratshang, the State Councillors, the Chilas of all the districts, and representatives of the people had signed a Genja and elected Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck as the first hereditary monarch in 1907, thereby ending a period of internal strife and bringing peace, harmony and prosperity to the Bhutanese nation. This historic Genja in 1907 was an act of great Tendrel (auspicious omen of cause and effect) arising from the unity of thought and purpose of the entire Bhutanese nation. Today, also, was a most auspicious and important day, he said, as the Dratshang, government and the people were unanimous in thought and purpose in proposing a new Genja of loyalty and dedication to our beloved King and the cherished system of hereditary monarchy. Although, the loyalty and dedication of the Dratshang, the government and the people to their King and the Bhutanese system was undiluted and pure, such a Genja would be a most important testament of their dedication and commitment.

The ministers and officials representing the government, the Royal Advisory Councillors and the representative of the High Court, noted that ensuring the sovereignty and security of the country would ultimately depend on the strength generated by the complete unity of the people in their love and devotion to the Tsa-Wa-Sum. They pointed out that submitting a Genja of loyalty and dedication to His Majesty the King and the cherished institution of hereditary monarchy was a most important item on the agenda of the 71st session of the National Assembly. They proposed that, the National Assembly should decide that a sacred Genja pledging the total support, loyalty and dedication of the people of all the 196 gewogs in the 20 dzongkhags, the Dratshang, the ministers and all the officials of the government towards upholding the unique and cherished institution of hereditary monarchy in

Bhutan should be submitted during the next session of the National Assembly to further strengthen the 1907 Genja.

Following this proposal, the people's representatives got up one after the other to express their views. Some of the chimis recalled that proposals for such a Genja had been made last year during the 70th session of the National Assembly and therefore the Genja should be submitted during the 71st session itself. Many chimis pointed out that after the historic Genja of 1907 was submitted to Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck and he was enthroned as the first hereditary King of Bhutan, the true Bhutanese people had been able to live in unity, harmony and peace as truly one people in one nation. They proposed that as all the members were unanimous in their loyalty and devotion to the unique system of hereditary monarchy and were fully committed to ensuring that it would continue to provide enlightened and farsighted leadership and guidance to the Bhutanese nation, a new Genja to re-inforce the 1907 Genja should be submitted during the 71st session itself. As the chimis were the elected and chosen representatives of the people and as the representatives of the Dratshang and the government were also all present, it was perfectly feasible to submit the Genja this year itself rather than wait for the next session of the National Assembly.

Some of the chimis explained that when they returned to their villages after the 70th session of the National Assembly last year, they had been criticised by the people for having failed to represent and serve their interest. While the people had sent them to pledge their total loyalty and support to His Majesty the King, they had instead returned with a pledge by His Majesty to abdicate if he did not find a solution to the ngolop problem. The people had therefore requested for that pledge to be struck off the records of the National Assembly and in its place had directed them to submit and place on record a Genja pledging total loyalty and support to His Majesty the King and the institution of hereditary monarchy. Therefore, there was no need to postpone the submission of the Genja till the next session of the National Assembly.

Among many others, the Samchi chimi also proposed that the Genja should be submitted during the 71st session of the National Assembly.

The chimis then proposed that since it was the unanimous desire of all the members to submit a Genja of loyalty and devotion to His Majesty the King and the institution

of hereditary monarchy during the 71st session itself, they should appoint a special committee to draft the Genja and submit it for approval by the Assembly. It was accordingly decided that a committee comprising selected members of the Assembly and headed by the Speaker would draft a Genja and present it to the National Assembly so that it could be submitted to His Majesty the King before the conclusion of the 71st session.

On 5th November, the Speaker announced to the Assembly that as proposed by the people's representative of Tongsa Dzongkhag, the representatives of the Dratshang and Rabdey, ministers and officials of the Royal Government and the representatives of the people had decided that a new Genja pledging total support, loyalty and dedication to His Majesty the King and the cherished institution of hereditary monarchy would be submitted to His Majesty before the conclusion of the 71st session of the National Assembly to re-inforce the historic 1907 Genja. Such a Genja was particularly important at a time when the country was faced with a serious threat to its unity and security from the ngolop problem in southern Bhutan. However, His Majesty the King had been pleased to command, when the Speaker had apprised him of the decision taken by the Assembly, that while he deeply appreciated the love, loyalty and support which had moved the representatives of the Dratshang, Rabdeys, the ministers and officials of the Royal Government and the representatives of the people to decide on submitting a Genja of loyalty and support to re-inforce the historic 1907 Genja, such a Genja was not at all necessary. The bond of love, fidelity and trust between His Majesty and the Dratshang, government officials and the people was even closer than the bond between parents and children.

As for the system of government, His Majesty had always maintained that the future of the country lay in the hands of the people. Rather than a Genja of loyalty and allegiance to the King and the system of hereditary monarchy, it would be more important, His Majesty had said, for all of us in the Assembly, the representatives of the Dratshang and Rabdeys, the ministers and officials of the government and the representatives of the people to make a solemn pledge to work together, and even be prepared to sacrifice our lives if necessary, to protect the security and sovereignty of our country and to ensure the well-being and happiness of the people. As the bond of love, loyalty and trust between the King and the people was pure and strong, there was no need for any Genja to formalise it, His Majesty had maintained. Such a bond should always be pure and spontaneous and not dependent on any Genja.

The Speaker informed the members that despite his repeated appeals on behalf of all the members of the National Assembly, His Majesty had remained firm in his position that a Genja between the people and the King was not necessary. The Speaker therefore concluded the discussion by requesting the members to respect His Majesty's wishes.

XVIII. PLEDGES OF SUPPORT TO THE TSA-WA-SUM AND TOTAL COMMITMENT TO ENSURE THE SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY

The people's representatives of 48 gewogs from Bumthang, Haa, Dagana, Lhuntshi, Samchi, Thimphu, Tashiyangtshi and Punakha, the representatives of the Central Monk Body and the Tashigang Rabdey, and the representative of the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry submitted pledges of support to the Tsa-Wa-Sum and the people's total commitment to ensure the security of the country.

The representatives expressed the deep gratitude of the people to His Majesty the King for always keeping the welfare of the people at heart and being most considerate about causing any inconvenience to them even at a time when the country was faced with continued anti-national activities and disturbances in the southern dzongkhags. The people looked forward to an opportunity to serve the country in its time of need and were even ready to lay down their lives to protect its security and well-being. They requested His Majesty the King to command them to carry out any task that may be necessary to overcome the ngolop threat. The representatives said that the people had been firm and unwavering in their support for protecting the security and sovereignty of the country ever since the ngolop uprising disrupted the peace and tranquility of the country. They said that the people reiterated their pledge to serve and protect the Tsa-Wa-Sum with love, loyalty and total dedication, and once again offered to contribute manpower and material requirements to ensure the security and well-being of the country.

The people's representative of Dagapela Gewog said that everyone was fully aware that the Royal Government had always looked after the kidu of the Lhotshampas and had not only treated them equally but had even given them preferential treatment. He said that the Lhotshampa people therefore pledged their total loyalty and dedication to the Tsa-Wa-Sum and their firm commitment to work together with the government to

ensure the fulfillment of all government policies and the successful implementation of development programmes.

The people's representatives of Samchi Dzongkhag expressed the deep regret and sadness of the people over the outbreak of ngolop activities in the southern dzongkhags which had disrupted the peace, security and stability of the country. The ngolops who had instigated these anti-national activities had all left the country. The Lhotshampas who had remained in the country had pledged their loyalty and dedication to the Tsa-Wa-Sum in a Genja that had just been submitted to the National Assembly. Recognising the need to find a lasting solution to the ngolop problem, the people of the 16 gewogs of Samchi Dzongkhag pledged their total loyalty to the Tsa-Wa-Sum and their complete support for the efforts of His Majesty the King and the Royal Government to resolve the problem. The people were even ready to lay down their lives to fight and overcome the ngolops.

Several chimis pointed out that although the ngolops in the south had tried to overthrow the Tsa-Wa-Sum, they had not succeeded because of the protection of the Guardian Deities and the wise and selfless leadership of His Majesty the King. The ngolops had also been spreading malicious propaganda against Bhutan and had been trying to poison the minds of friendly donor countries. Recognising the need to remove the ngolop problem once and for all, the people pledged their total support and dedication to achieve this end and ensure the security of the country.

Many chimis pointed out that the ngolops had destroyed and damaged numerous service and development facilities established for the benefit of the Lhotshampas themselves. The chimis also expressed their disillusionment with the Lhotshampas after observing how the Lhotshampas who had been applying to emigrate had even disregarded the personal appeals made by His Majesty the King not to leave the country at a time when it was going through a very difficult period. Having lost trust in the Lhotshampas after seeing their behavior and attitude, the people pledged their total commitment to removing the ngolop problem. All the men were ready to fight the ngolops and were fully supported by the women in their commitment to protect the security of the country.

The representatives of the Central Monk Body and the Tashigang Rabdey said that although the Lhotshampa ngolops had disrupted the peace and tranquility of the

country through their acts of violence and terrorism, they had not been able to harm the country and the established system in Bhutan. This was due to the protection of the Guardian Deities and the wise leadership of His Majesty the King. It was also due to the loyalty and dedication with which the armed forces had served to protect the security of the country from the ngolop threat. The representatives therefore expressed their deep appreciation to the security forces. In keeping with the traditions handed down by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, the Dratshang and the Rabdeys would therefore continue to perform Kurims for the peace and well-being of the country. Prayers would also be said to help resolve the ngolop problem. The Dratshang and the Rabdeys pledged their full support to render any service necessary to ensure the well-being and security of the country.

The Dzongdas and people's representatives informed the Assembly that they and all the members of their respective Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchungs and Gewog Yargye Tshogchungs were discharging their responsibilities as the bridge between the government and the people with full dedication so that the government and the people could work together even more closely to strengthen and ensure the security of the country at a time when it was going through a difficult period. As Bhutan had always been steeped in Buddhist traditions and values, the commitment of the people was also being manifested in the Kurims sponsored by the business communities and the people, and which were being performed in sacred places of worship to help resolve the ngolop problem and restore the peace and tranquility of the country. The Dzongdas and Chimis pledged to continue discharging their responsibilities with total loyalty, dedication and commitment and called upon the Government, Dratshang and the people to work together, fully united in body, speech and mind, to ensure the security of the country.

All the chimis pointed out that Bhutan, which had always remained a sovereign, independent country throughout history, had been enjoying, peace and happiness until the ngolop problem disrupted its traditional tranquility and the rapid progress it had been achieving over the years. The government and people must work together to ensure that the ngolop problem was removed within one to two years. To that end, the people reiterated their offer to contribute manpower and material resources whenever it was necessary and once again pledged their total loyalty and support to the Tsa-Wa-Sum.

The Home Minister expressed his deep appreciation for the pledges of loyalty, dedication and support made by the people to the Tsa-Wa-Sum at a time when the country was going through a difficult period. Realising that the ngolop problem posed the biggest threat to the security and well-being of the Bhutanese nation and that the ngolops must never be allowed to take over the country if the Palden Drukpa was to flourish and the Bhutanese people were to enjoy peace, happiness and prosperity, the people had come forward as the central force to protect the Tsa-Wa-Sum. He also expressed his appreciation to the people for their total support to the cherished institution of hereditary monarchy in Bhutan. It was obvious that the people were fully aware of the saying “without monarchy there will be anarchy”. The Home Minister also pointed out that the responsibility of restoring the country’s traditional peace and tranquility and ensuring its security and well-being did not fall upon His Majesty the King alone but was also the sacred responsibility of the people and the government. So long as the people and the government worked together with total dedication and commitment, in keeping with the firm pledges made by all the members of the Assembly, and were prepared to sacrifice their lives for the national cause if necessary, the security and well-being of the Bhutanese nation would be ensured for all times to come.

The Chief Operations Officer of the Royal Bhutan Army expressed his deep appreciation for the pledges of support and dedication made on behalf of the people by all the members of the National Assembly to protect the Tsa-Wa-Sum. He also thanked them for their offer to provide both manpower and material resources to remove the ngolop problem. The armed forces too had been serving with total dedication and loyalty to protect the security of the nation, he said. The Chief Operations Officer pledged that the armed forces would continue to strive with complete devotion and loyalty to protect the security of the nation and live up to the faith and trust reposed in them by the government and the people.

The Chief Operations Officer also informed the Assembly that the support extended by the people towards removing the ngolop problem and protecting the country in its time of need was clearly evident from the fact that there were 9943 trained militia volunteers today to reinforce the regular armed forces. It was because of the unmitigated support of the people that there was no problem in protecting the security of the country today. He, however, informed the Assembly that the ngolops continued to pose a serious threat to the country’s security. This was particularly so because

their resources were being built up and their cadres were receiving military training in Nepal. To further augment their resources, the ngolop groups were collecting donations from the Lhotshampa emigrants who were leaving Bhutan with large sums of money. The ngolops were also receiving financial and material assistance from various other sources. He reminded the Assembly, that although His Majesty the King had taken the full responsibility of resolving the ngolop problem, it was very important for the government, people and the security forces to work together to support His Majesty's efforts and policies and together ensure the security of the country.

His Majesty the King informed the Assembly that during the Seventh Plan meetings which were attended by one person from every household in all the 196 gewogs of the 20 dzongkhags, the people had stressed the importance of removing the ngolop problem and ensuring that such a problem would never again rise to threaten the security of the country. His Majesty also reminded the members that he had given his pledge to find a lasting solution to the ngolop problem. As the government, Dratshang and the people were all unanimous in their support and commitment to remove the ngolop problem, he felt there was no need to have an extended discussion on the matter.

The National Assembly decided that to ensure the ngolop problem in southern Bhutan was removed once and for all and that such a problem would never again arise to threaten the country, there must be total commitment and dedication on the part of every Bhutanese. This commitment must transcend the level of material and manpower contribution and involve all aspects of the Luey-Nga-Yi-Sum (body, speech and mind). The Assembly therefore pledged the total commitment of the people, and their readiness to even sacrifice their lives if necessary, to remove the ngolop problem and ensure the security and well-being of the country.

While concluding the discussion, the Speaker, on behalf of the National Assembly, also expressed deep appreciation to the Royal Bhutan Army, the Royal Bhutan Police and the militia volunteers for the dedication and loyalty with which they had been serving in the disturbed areas to protect the security of Tsa-Wa-Sum.

XIX. PROPOSALS FOR STRIKING OFF RESOLUTION NO.VI FROM THE RECORDS OF THE 70TH SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The people's representatives of Haa and Paro submitted a strong request from the people to strike off Resolution No.VI from the records of the 70th session of the National Assembly.

The chimis said that the people were deeply pained and saddened by His Majesty the King's pledge "to abdicate if he did not find a lasting solution to the ngolop problem" as recorded in Item No.VI of the resolutions of the 70th session of the National Assembly. The institution of hereditary monarchy was unanimously installed by the Dratshang, the State Councillors, the Chilas of all the districts and the people when they submitted a 'Genja' in 1907 pledging their total loyalty, dedication and support to Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck and his heirs. Therefore, in accordance to this Genja of the forefathers, just like Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck all his heirs must also reign as kings from generation to generation for all time to come. The people therefore called for Item VI of the resolutions of the 70th session of the National Assembly to be struck off the records during the 71st session, and thereby remove the dismay and concern felt by the people over this pledge made by His Majesty last year. They also appealed to His Majesty the King to withdraw this pledge and not to make such statements regardless of whether the ngolop problem was resolved or not.

His Majesty the King pointed out that this matter had been discussed at great length for two full days during the 70th session of the National Assembly. As His Majesty had taken the full responsibility to find a lasting solution to the ngolop problem, there was nothing wrong in making a pledge that would reinforce the fulfillment of this responsibility. It was therefore not necessary to discuss the matter again this year.

The people's representatives expressed their gratitude to His Majesty the King for his clarification. However, the people had been deeply hurt and disturbed last year when they were apprised of the resolutions of the 70th session of the National Assembly. The people had told the chimis that they had been sent to pledge the loyalty, dedication and support of the people to His Majesty the King but had instead come back with a pledge from His Majesty to abdicate if he did not find a solution to the ngolop problem. The people had therefore strongly requested for resolution VI of the 70th session to be struck off the records by the 71st session of the National Assembly, and instead to place on record a Genja pledging their total loyalty, dedication and

support to His Majesty the King and the institution of hereditary monarchy which must be further strengthened and consolidated.

Supporting this proposal, the Planning Minister and several people's representatives called for the resolution recording the pledge made by His Majesty the King "to abdicate if he did not find a lasting solution to the ngolop problem" to be amended during the 71st session as requested by the people.

Speaking on the matter, the Minister of Trade and Industry pointed out that the pledge made by His Majesty the King would undermine the sanctity of the institution of hereditary monarchy. He therefore called upon the National Assembly to change the resolution recording this pledge.

The Chairman of the Royal Advisory Council, the Royal Advisory Councillors and the people's representatives said that the pledge made by His Majesty the King during the 70th session last year was a source of great distress to the people and a heavy burden on their minds. The resolution recording this pledge must either be deleted or at least amended suitably to ease the deep concern felt by the people.

His Majesty the King told the members that he deeply appreciated the concern felt by the people and greatly cherished their love and loyalty. He reminded them that throughout its recorded history which went back to the 7th century, Bhutan had never been subjugated by any country. However, if the ngolop problem which threatened the country today was not removed it would cause serious problems to Bhutan's continued security and well-being. At a time when every Bhutanese should be prepared to sacrifice his life to protect the security of the country, and when there was total loyalty and trust between the king and the people, it would not harm the Bhutanese system or the people for the king to pledge abdication if a lasting solution to the ngolop problem was not found. What every citizen should clearly understand, His Majesty said, was that if we allowed the unique identity of the Bhutanese people to be lost and let ourselves become a minority in our own country, there would not be a Bhutanese system any longer and the position of the king would also not matter. It was therefore not necessary to withdraw or change what had already been recorded as a National Assembly resolution last year.

The Secretary of the Royal Civil Service Commission suggested that since His Majesty remained firm in standing by his pledge which was recorded in the resolutions of the 70th session, and as the Assembly had decided that a Genja to re-inforce the historic 1907 Genja would be submitted by the people to His Majesty, it would suffice if the feelings of the people on the pledge by His Majesty was also recorded in the Genja.

The people's representatives said that although they would like to have a positive reply on this issue to take back to the people, they would have to abide by the decision of the National Assembly if it decided to respect His Majesty's wishes not to change the resolutions of the 70th session. They, however, requested for the opportunity to record the feelings of the people on this matter in the Genja to be submitted by the people to re-inforce the 1907 Genja, as suggested by the Secretary of the Royal Civil Service Commission.

The discussion ended with the Assembly endorsing the suggestion made by the Secretary of the Royal Civil Service Commission.

[The Speaker, however, informed the Assembly on 5th November, that despite his repeated appeals on behalf of the members, His Majesty the King remained firm in his position that a Genja between the people and the King was not necessary. He therefore requested the members of the Assembly to respect His Majesty's wishes].

XX. ENACTMENT OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY ACT

The High Court submitted the Draft National Security Act to the National Assembly on 16 October 1992 requesting the members to study it so that it could be discussed and approved on 30 October 1992. The Draft Act was studied thoroughly by the members of the National Assembly with each article and its sections closely scrutinised. Several members felt that the terms of punishment under the Security Act for some of the lesser offences were too lenient. They also had reservations because the duration of imprisonment was left entirely upto the discretion of the Judges of the High Court. The National Assembly therefore directed the High Court to review these points and to fix suitable terms of imprisonment for the lesser offences covered by the Act. The terms so fixed would be submitted to the Lhengyel Shungtshog (Cabinet) for

approval. With this directive, the National Assembly approved the Act as the National Security Act of Bhutan, 1992.

XXI. ENACTMENT OF THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTION ACT

The Ministry of Finance submitted the Draft Financial Institution Act to the National Assembly on 21 October, 1992 for its approval. The Draft Act was considered by the Assembly page by page. After a detailed study, it was approved and duly enacted as the Financial Institution Act of Bhutan, with effect from 1st November, 1992.

XXII. ELECTION OF ROYAL ADVISORY COUNCILLORS

The people's representatives in the Royal Advisory Council, Namgay Rinchen, Dorji Tshering, Kunzang Wangdi, Tshewang Dorji, Dewan Tamang and Bhim Bahadur Rai, having completed their terms of office, new representatives were elected by all the members of the National Assembly through secret ballot on 2 November 1992. The representative of the Dratshang, Lhakpa Tshering and the representative of the Rabdeys, Kumbu Tshewang, also having completed their terms, new representatives were appointed by the Dratshang and Rabdeys. The new Royal Advisory Councillors elected by the National Assembly were Jigme Tenzin from Pemagatshel, Karma Geyley from Bumthang, Wang Tshering Lepcha from Samchi, Nima Sherpa from Sarbhang and Dorji Gyaltshen from Paro. Lam Jamtsho was appointed as the Dratshang representative while Gyenpo Tshering was appointed as the representative of the Rabdeys.

XXIII. CONCLUDING CEREMONY

1. Before the concluding ceremony of the National Assembly on 6th November, 1992, His Majesty the King informed the National Assembly that the Royal Government of Bhutan and the Government of India would be signing an agreement for carrying out the Detailed Project Report of the Bunakha Reservoir Scheme that very day, at the Lhengyel Shungtshog Chamber in the Tashichhodzong. The Minister of Trade and Industry would sign on behalf of the Royal Government while the Ambassador of India in Bhutan would sign on behalf of the Government of India. The project involved the construction of a 140 metre dam on the Wangchu-Pachu river at

Bunakha and would have a power house that would generate upto 120 Mega Watt (MW) of electricity. The project was expected to be completed within the Seventh Plan period. His Majesty informed the members that the revenue from the 336 MW Indo-Bhutan Friendship Chukha Power Project already accounted for 30% of the Royal Government's total revenue. Once it was completed, the Bunakha Reservoir Scheme would also contribute substantial revenue to the nation, His Majesty said. The cost of the project was estimated at Nu.1,200 million but could go upto Nu.1,700 million. Despite its own difficulties, the Government of India had agreed to meet the full cost of the Bunakha project. On behalf of the National Assembly and on his own behalf, His Majesty the King expressed the deep gratitude and appreciation of the government and people of Bhutan to the government and people of India for their generous assistance.

2. His Majesty the King also expressed his deep appreciation, and that of all the National Assembly members, to the outgoing Royal Advisory Councillors, Namgay Rinchen, Dorji Tshering, Kunzang Wangdi, Tshewang Dorji, Dewan Tamang, Bhim Bahadur Rai, the Dratshang representative Lhakpa Tshering and the representative of the Rabdeys, Kumbu Tshewang. Throughout their tenure they had discharged their responsibilities with full dedication and commitment, particularly at a time when the country was going through a difficult period. As they all understood the policies of the government and the problems facing the country, His Majesty hoped that the outgoing Councillors would continue to serve the nation with loyalty and dedication.

His Majesty the King also congratulated the newly elected Royal Advisory Councillors, Karma Geyley from Bumthang, Jigme Tenzin from Pemagatshel, Dorji Gyaltsen from Paro, Nima Sherpa from Sarbhang, Wang Tshering Lepcha from Samchi, and the newly appointed Dratshang representative Lam Jamtsho and the representative of the Rabdeys, Gyenpo Tshering. He expressed his confidence that they too would discharge their responsibilities and serve the people and the country with dedication and commitment from the day they were formally awarded the Dhar (scarf of office).

On behalf of the outgoing members of the Royal Advisory Council, Councillor Namgay Rinchen expressed a vote of thanks to His Majesty the King and the National

Assembly. Although they had no special qualities, the people had elected them as Councillors and they had been deeply honoured and privileged to have been able to serve the nation under the wise guidance of His Majesty the King. For their part, they had always tried to discharge their responsibilities to the best of their abilities. Having had the honour and privilege to serve in this high national body, they would continue to try and contribute in any way possible towards promoting the peace, security and well-being of their country. They expressed their confidence that the new Councillors would also serve the people and the country with utmost loyalty, dedication and commitment. Councillor Namgay Rinchen concluded by expressing the hope and prayer of the outgoing Councillors that the country of the Palden Drukpa would always flourish as a sovereign, independent country, that the reign of His Majesty the King would be long and glorious and that the Bhutanese people would enjoy peace, happiness and prosperity.

3. In his concluding address, the Speaker thanked His Majesty the King for gracing the 71st session of the National Assembly with his presence and inspiring the members with his wisdom and clarity of thought. The Speaker also thanked the representatives of the Central Monk Body and Rabdeys, the ministers and officials representing the Royal Government and the representatives of the people for participating actively in the deliberations. The people had submitted many points of national importance. It was due to the sense of responsibility and the frankness with which all the members discussed the points of the agenda that the 71st session was brought to a successful conclusion.

The Speaker reminded the members that it was their duty to see that the decisions taken by the 71st session were properly and faithfully implemented. Every representative must clearly apprise the people of all the points discussed in the Assembly and the resolutions adopted, particularly the discussions and resolutions pertaining to the pledges of loyalty and support to the Tsa-Wa-Sum. It was also important for all the members to be very precise and accurate in recounting the discussions and resolutions of the National Assembly. All chimis must strive with dedication and sincerity to further strengthen the deep bonds of faith and trust between the people and the government so that the whole nation could together restore the peace and tranquility of the country and ensure its security and well-being.

The Speaker also expressed his appreciation to the outgoing Royal Advisory Councillors for their contributions to the success of Assembly sessions held during their tenure. He extended his best wishes, and that of the National Assembly Secretariat, to all of them, and expressed his confidence that the nation would continue to benefit from their knowledge and experience.

The Speaker reminded the Assembly that the Bhutanese nation had enjoyed peace, progress and stability over many years because of the cherished institution of hereditary monarchy and the wise leadership of His Majesty the King. He pointed out that His Majesty the King was the central pillar of the Palden Drukpa, the protective wall of the people and the precious treasure in their midst. It should therefore be the cherished aspiration as well as the sacred duty of the Dratshang and Rabdeys, the ministers and officials representing the government and the representatives of the people, to uphold the institution of hereditary monarchy in Bhutan and to serve with loyalty and dedication to ensure a long and glorious reign for His Majesty the King. Thinking as one and with unwavering commitment, the Speaker said, they must all work together to fulfil their wishes and aspirations, reflected in the Tashi Menlom prayer, for bringing peace and happiness to the people and ensuring the security and well being of the Bhutanese nation for all times to come.

The 71st session of the National Assembly was concluded with the members taking part in the Tashi Menlom ceremony.

Date: 6.11.1992

Sd/-
(Passang Dorji)
Speaker
National Assembly of Bhutan