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Himachal Votes 2012 THE TRIBUNE, CHANDIGARH, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2012



Construction of the building that today houses the Vidhan Sabha in Shimla cost Rs 10 lakh in 1925. Photo: Amit Kanwar

August assembly, since 1925

RAKESH LOHUMI

- IMACHAL PRADESH came into being on April 15, . 1948, after merging 30 erstwhile princely states, and it was brought under a Lt Governor with a 36member Legislative Assembly. The first election was held in 1952. The strength of its Assembly was raised to 41 after merger of Bilaspur in 1954.

The state managed to retain its separate identity despite majority recommendation of the States Reorganisation Commission for its merger with Punjab in 1956, but it was made a Union Territory, sans Legislative Assembly and instead provided with a Territorial Council with limited powers. It was only after a longdrawn struggle by the political leadership of the state that the Council was converted into a Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory in 1963. It had a strength of 43, including two nominated members.

The merger

With the merger of hill areas of Punjab into Himachal Pradesh in 1966, the strength of the House rose to 56, including two nominated members, and then



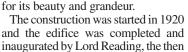
The Dharamsala complex

A second complex to house the state Assembly was built at Sidhbari in Dharamsala in December 2006, where the sittings are held during the winter move. The current Vidhan Sabha, the eleventh, completes its term in December.

further to 63 (three nominated). It was as a fine specimen of the architecture of the imperial era and is recognised made a full-fledged state on January 25, 1971, after which delimitation of Assembly seats was carried out, raising the number to 68.

The building

The structure that houses the present Vidhan Sabha was originally raised for the Council Chamber in 1925. It stands



Viceroy of India, on August 27, 1925. Having chosen Shimla as the summer capital, the British needed a comfortable accommodation for the Central

Assembly, for which this majestic structure was built. It came up close to the 'Kennedy House', which was built by the founder of Shimla, Major Kennedy, at a cost of about Rs 10 lakh, a huge amount at that time.

During Partition, the Punjab Government was shifted to Shimla, and it held the Assembly sittings in this building. The Assembly of Himachal had the pride of having its sittings in the Chamber after the Punjab Assembly was shifted to Chandigarh. Earlier, it used to hold meetings in the Vice-regal Lodge, which today housed the Indian Institute of Advanced Study.

New look

After the revival of Legislature on July 1, 1963, the first session of the Assembly was held in the Council Chamber from October 1, 1963. The entire furniture of the Chamber was replaced during the silver jubilee of the State Legislative Assembly in 1988 and the shape of the Hall has been changed from rectangular to a 'U', with seating capacity for 72.

Thus, it has the distinction of housing the Central Legislative Assembly, the Punjab Legislative Assembly the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly.

	SPEAKERS	Kultar Chand Rana	May 8, 1979, to Sept 14, 1984	T.S. Negi	March 30, 1998, to March 7, 2003
	Leiwant Dam First Speaker	March 28,1972 to June 29,1977	Vidya Stokes	August 20, 1990, to Dec 14,1993	Gangu Ram Musafir
1	Jaiwant Ram First Speaker	Sarwan Kumar	March 11,1985, to March 19, 1990	Kaul Singh Thakur	March 12, 2003, to Jan 10, 2008
	Des Raj Mahajan	March 30, 1977, to April 18,1979	Radha Raman Shastri	Dec 15, 1993, to March 12, 1998	I Tulsi Ram
	Oct 4, 1963, to March 18, 1967	T.S. Negi	March 21,1990, to Aug 17, 1990	Gulab Singh Thakur	January 11, 2008 to date

