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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY INFORMATION FROM

REPORT

FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

CD NO.

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COUNTRY

China

DATE OF

INFORMATION

SUBJECT

Economic - Railroads

HOW

PUBLISHED

Daily newspaper

DATE DIST March 1949

1949

WHERE

PUPLISHED

Shang-hai

NO. OF PAGES

DATE

PUBLISHED

6 January 1949

SUPPLEMENT TO

LANGUAGE

Chinese

REPORT NO.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE

Jung-yang Jih-pao (Cantral Daily Nevs), No 2343. (Information

CHANGES IN SOUTHWEST CHINA RAILROAD SYSTEM

Aware of the importance of the development of communications in the southwest, the Ministry of Communications has decided to carry out the following two large projects: (1) merging of the Eucan, Kwangui-Kweichow, and Tunman Railroads, and (2) regaining of the Szechwan-Tunman Railroad. Lin Weng-chih, chief of the Regional Relivered Enters, has been summoned to the capital for a disexecution on the matter.

Regarding the first undertaking, the Kwangsi-Kweichow Railroad Bureau will assume the responsibilities for two sections, Tu-yan...Kwei-yang and Kwei-yang... An-shum. Work is in progress on the first section and by the end of January 1949 should get as far as Evei-yang. The K'un-ming Regional Railroad Bureau will take charge of the section from K'un-ming to An-snur. The Ministry has granted 1,600,000 gold yuan for surveying the Hsuan-wei-Sa-shun section.

Within a short time, the Ministry hopes to resume work on the Szechwan-Tunnen Railroad. The Chan-i (Tunnan) -- Lung-ch'ang (Szechwan) section of this line joins with the Ch'ang-tu--Ch'ung-ch'ing section, forming a total length of more than 500 kilometers. Most of the foundation for the entire line was completed before the war. Tracks and scaffoldings, murchased in large quantities from the US, and originally intended for the repair of the Pei-p'ing-Liadwing Railroad, have seen diverted to this project.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT

INFORMATION FROM

FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

CD NO.

COUNTRY Indochina DATE OF

SUBJECT

Political

INFORMATION 1948

DATE DIST. B3 March 1949

HOW

PUBLISHED

Daily mewspaper

NO. OF PAGES

WHERE PUBLISHED

Saigon

DATE

PUBLISHED

22 October 1948

SUPPLEMENT TO

LANGUAGE French REPORT NO.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE

L'Echo du Viet Nem. (Information requested.)

PLAN FOR CHEATING VIETNAMESE PROVISIONAL ASSEMBLIES

Mguyen Phan Long

The Provincional Central Greenment of Vist Nam has prepared a bill establishing the organization, prerogatives, and functions of the provisional assemblies of viet Nam. This bill has been transmitted to the members of the Council of Cochinchina. General Zuan revealed its major features to the French and Vietnamese Councillors during the private meeting of 2 October 1948, held in the palace of the President of the Government of South Viet Wam. In newspaper articles, certain of its provisions have been used as a pretext for accusing the President of the Previsional Central Government of dictatorial aims. We believe it is permissible to express our opinion on this subject.

The Provisional Central Government is assisted by: (1) the High Privy Council created by decree No 5 of 25 June 1948; (2) the Provisional Central Vistomese Assembly; and (3) the Provisional Joint Central Council of Economic

The members of the Provisional Central Vietnamese Assembly are to be elected by universal suffrage, 15 per district for the regular members and five per district for the alternate members, under conditions to be fixed by decree of the President of the Provisional Central Government.

To prevent the recurrence of such charges by reactionaries, General Xuan believed it necessary to give a democratic basis to the future assembly by adopting universal suffrage for the election of its members. Now, universal suffrage is not freely enjoyed except during absolute peace, which is far from being the case at present. The present political situation is too confused and uncertain, and the popular state of mind too bevildered and vacillating to permit the electors to make a free and discerning choice. The policy of understanding [with France] is still too negative, supported as it is by provises un stiffed by France to permit the nationalist cambidates -- who will upbold this policy -- to prevail against the opposition. This opposition will be able to rap the nationalist candidates for the incoherence and contradictions of the French policy, as well as for the ravages of the current war.

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Nor will be electoral campaign unfold without complications. Cutside the cities, and in orions under French control, the campaign will be practically impossible. In the rest of the country, on the other hand, the opposition candidates will be the ones to benefit by propagands and pressure which, though not open, will be nonetheless effective and will assure their victory over their opponents. The net result will be that the Provisional Covernment will find itself confuncted by a hostile assembly which will thwart its action by systematic obstruction instead of facilitating its task.

The members of the Central Assembly will be able to interpellate the government either on general policy or on a specific point.

The interpellation can end in a vote of "no confidence," the text of which will be transmitted to the President of the Provisional Central Government. The latter will decide, in cabinet meeting, what action to take on the motion voted by the Assembly. The government, acting both as jud, and party to the case, will issue a decision from which there is no appeal. But, in recognizing the Assembly's right to pass a vote of "no confidence," while reserving to itself the right to ignore such vote, if it so decides, the government will be playing a "no contest" game, wherein it runs no risk. Would it not be more logical to accept the consequences of a principle which one has set or recognized himself?

As to the Provisional Joint Central Council of Economic Interests, the presence of French members will be the object of bitter criticism on the part of the Vietnamese. Their presence would be admissible under the present state of affairs, in which Cochinchina is still under colonial rule, if the jurisdiction and the legal authority of the future council wave limited to this country, but this council will embrace all Viet Nam. In addition, it will be called to deliberate on a number of specific questions. Now, the French membership in a deliberative assembly of the Associated State of Viet Nam is incompatible with the sovereignty of the latter. The fact that the French members are simply appointed, instead of being elected, in no way detracts from the objection on constitutional grounds to their presence in a deliberative assembly of Viet Nam.

Furthermore, the French of Indochina will never agree to their representatives in any assembly being appointed. They clearly expressed this opinion on the occasion of the appointment of the delegates to the Assembly of the French Union ari of the one Councillor of the Republic allotted to them. They have demanded that the principle of election be re-established, but appointments continue, not, as they obstinately maintain, from trickery or abuse, but through the mero application of the provisions of the French constitution. These provisions must be modified, if one wishes to replace the appointment system with that of election. The election system is also contrary to the principles of constitutional and international public law.

decourse to universal suffrage seems to us no more advisable in electing the Vietnamese members of the founcil than in electing Vietnamese members of the Central Assembly.

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