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Food Rationing and Commodity Prices

- The prices of some commodities in Ch'ongjin (129-49, 41-47) (DB 6826) in November 1951 were the following:

Rice, per small mal <sup>1</sup>	600 won <sup>2</sup>
Wheat, per small mal	250 won
White cotton cloth, per yard	700 won
Silk, per roll	8,000 won
Manchurian rubber shoes	1,200 won
Pigs, each	3,000 won
Cows, each	15,000 won
Lunch, per person	60 won

The price of rice in the Wonsan-Hankung area in November was the same as that in Ch'ongjin, but other commodities were slightly higher. White cotton cloth, for example, was 900 won per yard, silk was 500 to 800 won per yard, and rubber shoes 1,500 won per pair. The reason for the high price of rubber shoes and other similar commodities in these cities was that they are imported from Manchuria. Some kerosene imported from the Soviet Union was available. Gold was about 1600 North Korean won per gram, and one needle cost 100 won.

- Employees of administrative offices such as the South Hamgyong Provincial People's Committee in Wonsan were receiving an adequate food ration in early November 1951. Heavy laborers were being issued five hops of rice

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dolly, light laborers four, clerks three, and dependents of employees two bags each per day. A grain ration consisting of half rice and half other cereals was being distributed to holders of ration cards about twice a month; each ration was slightly less than ten pounds of grain. The cost per card was 500 won, regardless of the number of members in the family. There was little food or merchandise either in the consumer union shops or on the open market in Wonsan in November. To avoid bombing and shelling, four market stalls were dug in shelters about eight by three meters at the foot of the mountain one kilometer west of the Wonsan railroad station. In early November, rice was about 2,600 won per small mal, barley 1,700 won, and lunch for one person cost 100 won. Prices in general were seven to eight times pre-war prices. Wonsan had about five consumer union shops which sold leaf tobacco, soap, salted fish, and some rayon. The generating station at Gumdo-ri, Tongch'ŏn-gu (127-46, 39-03) (OV 323), was supplying Wonsan and other areas with electricity for government offices. The station had three generators, which provided a total of 66,000 kilowatts.

3. In mid-1951 employees of the Heju Branch Office of the Yohyang Railroad Bureau were being issued a food ration twice monthly of half rice and half other grains. The ration and the category of employee were as follows:

Grade 1: locomotive engineers	900 grams
Grade 2: laborers, experienced	700 "
Grade 3: laborers	500 "
Grade 4: other workers	400 "
Grade 7: dependents	300 "

Railroad transportation facilities and employees were incorporated into the North Korean army by Ordinance No. 109, issued by the Military Committee on 24 January 1951, in order more effectively to restore the damaged facilities. The chief of the Heju office was Lieutenant Colonel MIN Pyŏng-ch'ŏn (MIN 111), aged 43, who began work at the Heju station under the Japanese. MIN fled to Manchuria when United Nations forces occupied the area but returned to head the bureau. The following wages and salaries were being paid to employees of the Heju Branch Office in mid-1951, payment being made monthly:

Station master	1,300 won
Section or unit heads	1,200 won (sic)
Laborers	1,300 - 720 won
Other workers	720 - 550 won

Taxes and Collections for Military Use

4. The North Korean government fixed a quota of 2,000,000  $\text{km}^2$  of cotton to be collected in North Korea in preparation for the winter campaign of 1951 - 1952. The cotton was required for the manufacture of 700,000 winter uniforms for the North Korean armed forces. They were to be made in factories in Communist China.
5. By November 1951 there had been collected as taxes in kind for 1951 in Sŏng'ŏ (123-12, 40-02) (OV 3231) the following quantities of grain and vegetables:

Commodity	Number of bags <sup>4</sup>	Weight in tons
Rice	10,620	637
Billet	8,540	511

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Soybeans	1,520	21
Beans	1,940	10
Red beans	117	10
Buckwheat	40	3
Cabbage		1.4
Radishes		3.9

Total 1,837

6. In addition to the tax in kind for 1951, a tax on the 1952 crop was levied in advance on those farm households in Sinp'o-myŏn which appeared to have sufficient grain on hand. The grain so acquired was to be used to supply the North Korean army. In Sinp'o-myŏn about 221 bags, or about 13 tons, of rice were thus collected. Other items supplied by this district for military use in 1951 included 12 tons of hay, 11,770 pounds of meat, 4,400 straw bags for packing grain, and a contribution of "patriotic grain" amounting to 840 bags, or 50 tons, of rice and millet. A small local tax, payable every quarter to the village government in cash, was assessed against all but the poorest families. The charges per quarter varied according to the wealth of the household as follows:

Class 1	450 won
Class 2	300 won
Class 3	180 won
Class 4	120 won
Class 5	75 won
Class 6	45 won

There were also taxes applicable to commercial companies and a fire income tax, applied only to unorganized laborers. House and vehicle taxes and taxes on buildings were abolished in 1951.

1.  Comment. A small mal is about one-quarter bushel, equal to about 15 pounds of rice. Other Korean units of measure used in this report include the kŏn, which is about 1.32 pounds.
2.  Comment. The prices in this table seem low, and are probably the government, or fixed, prices established for the area. See paragraph 2, where the market price of one small mal of rice is given as 2,600 won; other reports have placed the market price of this quantity of rice at 2,200 to 4,000 won, depending on the season and local conditions.
3.  Comment. Presumably these ration cards were for families other than those of government employees.
4.  Comment. One bag contains about 130 pounds of grain.

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