

Seminar of Province Chiefs on October 11 and 12

Notes

(Group that considered Reorganization of Administration)

By Lien

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- The Prefect expressed the wish to have the Directorate of Prefectural Police placed under his jurisdiction, which will enable him to immediately intervene and control in event there are demonstrations, riots, public gathering ... (these are likely to happen in a place like Saigon).

The Commissioner for the Interior made known that due to emergency procedure and curfew, the Prefecture Police must be under the Directorate General of National Police. As soon as the curfew period is over and public order is completely assured, the Prefecture Police will be turned over to the Prefecture.

- The Prefect stressed the importance of using the prefecture budget for improving the living standard of the people: slum clearance, construction of low-cost houses for the working mass ... He also said that the Prefecture is badly organized, there are duplication of functions and responsibilities (example: Sanitation Service of the Prefecture; Sanitation Service of the Ministry of Health ...) By this, he insisted that the Prefecture be given more authority, namely authority to reorganize the Prefecture.

The Commissioner for Interior promised to take up the above proposals with the Government.

- The Corps I Administrative Assistant raised the question to increase the authority of Government Delegates thus to enable them to efficiently carry out their responsibilities and to help the Central Government to better understand the local affairs. The Commissioner for the Interior said that this problem was discussed in the last seminar of deputy province chiefs for Administration held in July/1965, and it was approved in principle by the Government. But so far the Government has not yet promulgated any decree pertaining to the subject matter.

- Questions raised by participants:

1. Provincial councillors expressed the hope to participate in the Rural Construction Budget, and requested the Government to issue an Arrete authorizing them to discuss on the management of this budget.
2. Provincial councillors requested they be authorized to participate in the Provincial Security Council. The Commissioner for the Interior stated that this

is a delicate problem which has a political and secrecy character. In case they discover a case of arbitrary arrest or violation of law by security officials, they can raise a protest to the Province Chief or the chairman of the Security Council.

3. Provincial Chiefs, district chiefs must not be changed too frequently. There must be a definite term of office for these officials (2 years, or 3 years ...). Too many changes or transfers will be prejudicial to the good functioning of public services.

- Reorganization of provincial administration. Technical services should be placed under the direct command of the Province Chief. Province Chiefs must be empowered to control, urge, and follow-up the implementation of all technical projects in the Province. With the present organization, the Chiefs of Technical Services report directly to the Central Ministries and they deign even consult the Province Chiefs or ask them for advice.

- Decree No.203-d/NV of May 31/65 does not clearly specify that Village Citizens' Council has the authority to control the implementation of the Village Budget. Village Council members in many a cases, dare not control the expenditures of the Village Chief or ask the latter for explanation for certain expenditures. The reason is that the Village Administrative Committee members are the proteges of the Province Chief and district chief (they are appointed by the Province Chief). They then serve the interests of their bosses and neglect to defend the interests of their villages or hamlets. The Village Chiefs and other members of the Village Committee, so long as they want to stay in their posts, are inclined to gratify desire of the official who has appointed them. (the Province Chief or District Chief can use village money whenever necessary and village officials anxious to win the esteem of their superiors hasten to meet their wishes -- let alone to bribe them --)

Due to above reasons, the Village Citizens' Council and the Village Adm. Committee do not get along well. In many areas, the Village Citizens' Councils remain inactive.

- Most councillors thought it would be beneficial to have this kind of seminar held every four or five months. This will enable the provincial officials and councillors to exchange experience, knowledge; and specifically the Central Government to get an insight into local problems.

The Commissioner for Interior welcomed this proposal but stated that it is beyond the competence of the Ministry of Interior. However he will bring it to the attention of the Government.

- Recently, the National leadership Committee cautioned some provincial councils against their misuse of powers, namely in corps I area certain councillors incite the people to stand against the Province Chief and to stage a demonstration The Commissioner for the Interior reminded the Provincial Councillors

that they are authorized to do what lies in their power -- i.e. advisory capacity in administration, not in politics -- and asked them to abide by the laws of the Government.

- Competent and qualified civil-servants are stationed in the Central Government and in Provincial administration. District, Village and Hamlet officials and cadre working in rural areas were very poorly trained. The Government must pay special attention to the training of the lower-level officials who are the last to carry out the Government policies and orders, (especially in Corps I, the Administrative Assistant complained that district and village officials did not know how to manage financial affairs properly. They have never had training in this field.)

- Conflict of responsibilities between the Deputy Province Chief for Administration and Deputy Province Chief for Security.

There must be a clear delegation of authority from the Province Chief to these officials. In some provinces, the Province Chief has delegated more authority to his deputy for security than to his deputy for Administration or vice-versa. This delegation of authority depends entirely on the attitude of the Province Chief.

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