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Interview Guide
Province Interviews
Interior Study
November, 1955

Interview with: Mr. Nguyễn-phước-Hải Position: Prefect p.i. of
Place : Saigon Saigon-Cholon
Interviewer : Rolland Date : November 15, 1955
Interpreter: Quân

I. What are the major functions performed by this prefectural government. What services does it maintain? What are most of the prefectural personnel engaged in doing?

II. How is the prefecture organized to carry out this work?
(Organization-chart type of material)

See attached chart.

The Prefect directs all the prefectural services. He prepares the budget and executes it. Also, he should ask the advice of the Prefectural Council on the following matters: budget formulation and budget execution if the proposed expenditure exceeds 100,000\$. In actuality, the prefect is charged with the general administration of the prefecture.

The Prefectural Council consists of 35 members elected by universal suffrage from the 7 districts of Saigon-Cholon. Their term of office is for 3 years; as the present council was elected in January, 1953, new elections should take place in January, 1956. The president of the council is elected from the Council by its members; he is the only member who may receive pay for his job.

In addition to the council, each of the 7 districts has a mayor. 5 council members are elected from each district. These five men choose one of their number to be the mayor for that district and the other four serve as the district council.

There is a total of 6,000 people employed by the prefecture. Of this number, 4,500 are police personnel.

III. What portions of the prefectural budget are allocated to these various functions? How is this budget compiled--i.e., what procedure is followed? (Who controls the budget and makes final decisions?)

IV. What are the major sources of funds for the prefecture?

The budget is prepared each year by the prefect, assisted by the technical services. Following the setting up of the various projects to be included in the budget, the budget and the prefect's report on why he considers these projects and/or expenditures necessary are submitted to the council for deliberation. Once both the prefect and the council have agreed on the final budget, it is submitted to the Délégué for his opinions; then the budget plus the report of the Délégué are submitted to the Minister of Finance. After the Minister of Finance has approved the budget, it is then submitted to the President for his final approval.

The main sources of funds for the prefecture are the special prefectural taxes: market, slaughterhouse, "centième from all direct taxes". The prefecture also receives a subsidy from the national budget (140 million piasters in 1955). This subsidy is due to the fact that Saigon is the capital of Viet-Nam and as such expenditures must be made by the prefecture for the safety and security of the various ministries; most of the subsidy is applied to the payment of the police in the city.

The budget for 1955 totals 599 million piasters, including the 140 million piasters subsidy from the national government. Of this amount, 55 percent is spent on salaries of the prefecture's 6,000 personnel. 35 percent of the budget is spent for the police, or a total of 195 million piasters; 30 percent is spent for police salaries and 5 percent for equipment. The reason for the smallness of the expenditure on equipment is that the Ministry of National Defense has given a good deal of equipment to the police.

The prefect is the "ordonnateur" of the budget. It is he who must pass on all expenditures in the course of each year. All expenditures under 60,000\$ can be approved directly by the prefect. Expenditures between 60,000 and 100,000\$ must be submitted for adjudication bids; it is then the prefect who makes the final decision. All expenditures above 100,000\$ must be submitted to the Prefectural Council, then to the Délégué, for approval.

- V. In carrying out these various activities and in operating this prefectural organization, what contacts and relationships do the prefectural officials have with other levels of administration?

All matters must pass through the Délégué before reaching the interested Ministry. In emergency cases, however, the Prefect may correspond directly with the interested Ministry but must send a copy of such correspondence to the Délégué.

The prefecture may contact directly the regional services.

When asked about informal contacts with various ministers, the prefect replied that this is not done as he is in Saigon, the Délégué is in Saigon, and the ministers are in Saigon. Therefore, even when a minister phones him for information, he always notifies the Délégué of the request and sends him a copy of the information given to that minister.

VI, VII, VIII. Questions on the police operating in the locality.

As previously mentioned, there are 4500 police operating in Saigon-Cholon. The Prefect then stated that there is a definite need for at least 6000 more police personnel immediately.

The main problem in the city is traffic. He said that when the city was laid out, it was done for a population of 450,000 and now that the population has reached over 2 million in number, the present setup cannot begin to handle the correspondingly large increase in traffic. One solution he mentioned was that of one-way streets and especially of building more bridges across the river and making all of them one-way. This latter is especially needed in the case of the road between Saigon and Gia Dinh.

IX. Economic, sociological, historical information about province. Lead questions: How do most of the people earn a living? Has there been much economic hardship in this area? When did the prefectural government take on its present organization and activities?

Although the technical services of the prefecture were organized for a city of approximately 500,000 population, the present population of Saigon-Cholon is over 2 million inhabitants. Obviously this means the present organization of the services is inadequate, especially from the point of view of personnel and funds.

For example, the water supply of the prefecture: There are 32 wells which provide from 160,000 to 180,000 cubic meters of water per day. There are 4 pumping stations and 10 water tanks. For the population alone this is insufficient and, to add to the problem, there are 280 public fountains.

For the history of the prefecture and other comments on the technical services, a supplement will be added to this report later. The additional information will be taken from a report on the history and organization of the prefecture which was prepared by the prefect himself.

unemployment

Background of the Prefect.

The present prefect, Mr. Nguyễn-Phước-Hải, is a career civil servant. He is also a mandarin. Actually, Mr. Hai is only the interim prefect; he has held this position since April, 1955. The former prefect, Mr. Tran-van-Huong was discharged by the President in April, 1955 as he was pro-BinhXuyen.

- ① unemployment?
- ② major industries
- ③ major sources of income
- ④ personnel & admin bureau

- X. We've been talking about a variety of things related to your provincial government. From your viewpoint as Province Chief, can you suggest any way of improving the over-all organization of government and administration outside of Saigon?

The present organization of the regional government is "heavy." However, it must be maintained for the present because the Ministry of Interior is too far above the prefecture. Also, no controls exist at the present time other than the regional administration in the execution of decrees, etc., issued by Interior. If the Délégué's office were abolished, it would be necessary to set up a system of inspectors to insure that Interior's policies were carried out at the lower levels.

There are too many decisions coming from the central government which appear impossible to implement because the decision is out of the Prefect's competence and also there are not enough funds available at the present time.

The city is too often utilized as the experimental area for new reforms; this interferes with the prefecture functioning smoothly.

The Prefect has no freedom to enforce the regulations governing his area of jurisdiction. For example, there is a regulation forbidding the establishment of buildings on the sidewalks. However, the owner of the building often has friends with high positions in the ministries (maybe the Minister himself) to whom he will go. Then the Minister, etc., will tell the Prefect to let this man have his building on the sidewalk. The Prefect calls this demagoguery.

The population needs training in democracy--civic education. People do not yet realize that responsibility is a major part of democracy and feel that laws need not be obeyed. There is also an appalling lack of interest in civic affairs on the part of the people.

The above holds true for political parties who, in many instances, feel that they are above the law. For example, they usually do not obey the regulation that before posters can be placed around the city, permission must be obtained from the prefectural government as well as from the Ministry of Information.

Administration of the Prefecture

The deputies for Saigon and Cholon should be suppressed so that the technical services can work directly in both areas without having to go through the interested deputy.

There should not be a political man appointed as prefect by the national government.

The present situation is an unending conflict between the prefect and the president of the prefectural council. The reason for this is that the ordinary citizen considers the prefect as a government person with the tendency to oppress the citizen while the president of the council is

considered as the people's representative (and defender) against the government. The prefect then proposed that either the prefectural council should be a purely advisory body with no power or else the president of the council should be the Prefect. Obviously, this would mean that the Prefect would be elected (indirectly) rather than an appointee of the national government.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PREFECTURE OF SAIGON - CHOLON

*Prefectoral
35 Council*

