"In the residential sector standard houses will be aerated and meet sanitary requirements. Around each house there will be a pond, a garden and room for breeding domestic animals which will bring extra profits to the family.

"In case of illness or maternity, the farmer's family will not have to pay expensive transportation to the hospital.

"The farmer's children will attend the local school; popular education classes and anti-illiteracy classes will help farmers rise from ignorance.

"The information hall and the reading hall will help farmers watch the course of domestic and foreign events and develop their understanding to keep pace with the common progress.

"Living together, the farmers will organize mutual assistance, share standing guard in order to safeguard their own properties and contribute to the area's security. They will be free from the rebels' plundering.

"The farmers may set up cooperatives so as to avoid heavy interest loans and middlemen to buy cheaply necessary supplies and to sell their own products at an advantageous price. They may join village farmers' associations. These are established according to a wide system covering the central to the local level and will help and guide farmers in every aspect of their professional activities (land and cultivation improvement processes, loans of money, agricultural product manufacturing, cultivation of profitable agricultural species, search of consumption markets, etc.)
"In short, the farmers' life will be organized in such a way to bring them an easy, comfortable life which is to get better and better.

CONCLUSIONS

"The dense and prosperous area is a little town provided with modern conveniences.

"To establish dense and prosperous areas is to construct additional understructure, to set up additional foundations to the National Reconstruction on social, economic and security standpoints as well as on territory change.

"Projects leading to the realization of dense and prosperous areas should use considerable financial means as well as manpower. The expenditures required for each area will not be under three or five million piasters without taking into account the construction of bridges on the main roads leading to the spot, etc., and especially the precious cooperation of the local population in works achieved in the social common progress pattern.

"However, on account of the above-mentioned advantages for rural people, the government has put forth this important project which has already made a bold start on the way to realization.

"It is because of the very useful character of the project and the satisfactory results reaped in resettlement operations due to the understanding of the rural people as well as the serving spirit of staff members at all levels that we may suppose the establishment of dense and prosperous areas will be a success."
"Later, when countryfolk realize the pilot centers' life, they will enthusiastically answer the movement and just like a fire which has been lighted, other areas will be set up in all provinces, from west to east and bring a new change to the whole look of the South Viet Nam countryside.

* * *

5. The Refugee Villages

As the following report prepared by MSUG in 1955 tangentially suggests, the administration of refugee villages in which Catholic priests have had an important role might provide some ideas about ways for improving local administrative organization in other villages—perhaps, some type of an outside leader is needed to assist the villagers in focusing effectively on their problems and defining these in terms of "projects," a convenient administrative device.

To be sure the Catholic priests had a unique advantage in their primary role as spiritual leaders. Yet, their "working relationships" with village councils and the village public might provide many valuable suggestions applicable elsewhere.

As background of the following excerpt it should be said that MSUG had the opportunity to work directly—not as advisors—with the administration of the refugee program when it was in its early stages. In recent times (1960), two members of the MSUG staff made a short survey of refugee villages near Saigon; their findings will undoubtedly be of value to further thinking about the refugee program and its impact on local administration.

* * *

* * *
RESEARCH FINDINGS

"Since the major results of the research have already been passed on to the Commissioner-General in the form of a series of recommendations, this report will include only some of the factual material uncovered through interviewing. Most of the general background information collected would be of little interest in this report because it is so/known to people involved in refugee affairs in Viet Nam. Indeed, our contributions in this regard would be small compared to the general information collected over the months by USOM and other American personnel who have dealt with refugee problems since they began. Perhaps the findings of our survey, however, might be some contribution to the general fund of knowledge. Of course, both general information and specific findings contributed to the recommendations of September 20, 1955.


One of the striking facts of the refugee situation is that out of 39 provinces in Free Viet Nam, the refugee population and problem is concentrated in relatively few. As Commission or USOM statistics readily reveal, only five provinces in the South and one in South Central Viet Nam contain more than 30,000 refugees. These six provinces—Bien Hoa (128,968), Gia Dinh (115,535), Cholon (51,546), My Tho (46,320), Tay Ninh (40,153), and Binh Thuan (37,112)—are concentrated relatively close to Saigon. The only other areas having an appreciable number of refugees are Tournao (22,410), Thu Dau Mot (18,616), Binh (14,176), Ban Tra (13,700), Quang Tri (13,060), and Khanh Hoa (12,083). All other provinces have less than 10,000 and most of them have only a few thousand or less.

"It is obvious that the political, military and transportation situation at the time of the arrival of the refugees explains this pattern. However, this difference in concentration affects the administration of refugee affairs in several ways. First of all, the dimensions of the problem in Central Viet Nam and the P.M.S. as compared to the South are considerably different. Quang Tri province in Central Viet Nam appears to be heavily populated with refugees when compared to other provinces in Central Viet Nam, yet its situation does not begin to compare to the province of Bien Hoa or Gia Dinh or the others in the South. It is easy to see that the problems facing the Commission and provincial authorities in the South have been of different dimensions than those in other regions.

A second effect of this concentration is that because of the totally different dimensions of the problem in one province as compared to another, different types of administrative organizations are called for to meet the emergency. In some provinces there are no refugees at all; in others, the problems appear to be manageable within the framework of existing authorities; while in others, the situation appears to be beyond the capacity of the present organization. Many of the provinces received several times the number of refugees they predicted they could absorb, and in at least one province, Bien Hoa, the total population of the province doubled with the immigration of refugees.

A third effect is that the crowded refugee situation in one province and an underpopulation in another will call for resettlement of refugee villages from one province to another in some cases. This
means that the Refugee Commission must continue to maintain central coordinating facilities which can manage such transfer projects. Provincial and field administrative organizations are not enough.

"2: General Lack of Project Orientation. Generally speaking we found little evidence that the existing organization in the field was thinking in terms of rehabilitation projects. It is true that in specific villages and provinces some thinking had gone into developing projects, but these were the exception rather than the rule. Furthermore, most of this thinking had not progressed beyond the first stages.

"As an example of the type of project thinking that was occasionally evidenced, in Gia Dinh, where provincial officials were faced with ten times the number of refugees they had asked for, officials described an area of the province that could be developed as an arts and crafts center for making paper, leatherwork, and clothing, and where sugar could be refined. Saigon could be the market for this mammoth project which could accommodate 100,000 refugees. Very little thinking had gone into such question as land acquisition, refugee skills and training, costs of resettlement and retraining, costs of road construction for marketing the products, possible saturation of the market, and other pertinent questions which would have to be thought through before the project could take specific shape. On the other hand, the suggested project in Gia Dinh was promising in that it demonstrated that at least some persons at the province committee level were thinking in terms of projects. This was the exception rather than the rule."
Within the villages, refugee leaders were very familiar with what they considered the needs of their followers. In fact, there was ample evidence that within individual villages enough thinking had gone into the requirements of rehabilitation of the village to be encouraging for the project approach. That is, with some guidance and assistance in formulating project plans, a large number of the villages visited could be ready with rehabilitation projects in a short time. Of course, such proposals would require careful review, but the beginnings of self-examination and appraisal of needs were clearly in evidence.

The implications of these facts to the organization and procedures of the Refugee Commission are clear. Attention must be devoted to orienting refugee officials to the project approach; and means must be found to stimulate and assist villagers in formulating their plans. Suggestions to achieve these ends are contained in our report to the Commissioner-General.

3. **Disparities in the Level of Self-Sufficiency.** In each province and village questions were asked about the level of self-sufficiency achieved by the refugees. Of course, different people have different ideas about what self-sufficiency consists of, and it was clear as some of the interviews progressed that some officials and leaders were thinking in terms of the level of living in homes in the North. In spite of this, however, it is possible to state a few generalizations which have implications for the field administration of the Refugee Commission.
Generally speaking, self-sufficiency was approached to a greater extent in Central Viet Nam than in the South. This was particularly true of fishing villages, but it was true of others as well. This is probably a result of the smaller number of refugee villages in the central provinces, but it may be caused by other factors as well. In several instances, we found villages in Central Viet Nam which had a higher level of living than was enjoyed in the North, and yet these were still classified as "refugee" villages. In a few cases, refugees were living better than people in surrounding permanent villages.

"About half of the villages reported less than one-third self-sufficiency, and 12 reported no self-sufficiency. There is some question as to how reliable a finding such as this may be, given a possible desire to distort the picture of 'self-sufficiency' and the varied meaning of this term. However, generally speaking, the lot of the refugee is still a dismal one in most villages, and much work is needed before rehabilitation and resettlement can be said to be complete. Where the problems are still most severe—in the six provinces with large refugee populations—the situation required emergency action and could not be turned over to existing provincial authorities until a higher level of self-sufficiency had been attained.

4. Provincial Organization for Refugee Affairs. In every province visited during the study, either the Province Chief or one of his deputies was chairman of a province committee for refugee affairs. Beyond this one point of similarity, the organizations within the various provinces differed considerably. These variations do not seem to run parallel to variations in the types of refugee problems.
faced in the province, but seem to depend instead on the views of the Province Chief.

"The usual pattern consists of a committee of from five to fifteen men with jurisdiction over all refugee affairs within the province. Usually one official is charged with the everyday activity concerning refugees, and he was usually present during interviews at provincial headquarters. An office staff assists this official on refugee affairs, and as many as half of the staff is paid for by the Commission in Saigon.

"Perhaps the pattern in some specific provinces (Table I) will illustrate the general organization as well as the points of diversity.

Table I

Provincial Organizations for Refugee Affairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Size of Refugee Committee</th>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gia Dinh</td>
<td>13 + chiefs of technical services</td>
<td>4 district chiefs, 4 refugees, 4 priests</td>
<td>project and policy decisions</td>
<td>no information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binh Thuan</td>
<td>6 -- plan to add 18 refugees</td>
<td>technicians at present</td>
<td>housing and relief problems</td>
<td>no information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bien Hoa</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5 priests, 5 refugees</td>
<td>all refugee problems</td>
<td>once a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quang Tri</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>mostly parish priests</td>
<td>all refugee questions</td>
<td>once a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tay Ninh</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4 refugees, technicians, 2 Cao Dai priests</td>
<td>Province Chief decides all matters, and committee never meets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da Nang (Tourane)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>technicians, some priests</td>
<td>all refugee problems</td>
<td>no regular meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Xuyen</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>refugees and one priest</td>
<td>distribution</td>
<td>necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Tho</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3 technicians, 5 priests</td>
<td>general administration</td>
<td>no information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"5. Village Organization. Several observations can be made on refugee village government. First, some very intricate systems of organization had been worked out within the village. As Table II indicates, some of the villages were divided, subdivided, and arranged in a variety of ways for governmental purposes. The usual pattern consisted of a central committee with jurisdiction over all matters in the village. Committee members were almost always elected. Frequently they had specific operations to perform and occasionally they represented specific districts within the village. In every case administration of village affairs centered in this committee.

"As for leadership within the village, the spiritual leader dominates. In most cases, the priest is not a formal member of the elected committee, however. He serves as advisor in most villages when he is not a member. It is the spiritual leader who serves as the leader in village decision making and problem solving. In almost every case he was the one who dealt with authorities in Saigon or the province on village matters.

"This clearly identified leadership pattern and the nucleus of administrative organization found in the village committee have implications for resettlement. If anything they should in most cases make it easier to develop and carry out rehabilitation projects. Furthermore, the tendency to elect leaders is a good sign for the development of democratic institutions. On the other hand, the heavy reliance on spiritual leadership may too severely restrict the planning of the village. This may be offset by the Commission's interest in developing young lay leaders and occasional evidence that this may be coming about in some small measure."
**Table II**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province in Which Village Is Located</th>
<th>Size and Composition of Village</th>
<th>Functions Performed by Committee</th>
<th>Role of Spiritual Leader</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My Tho</td>
<td>4 provisional administration members</td>
<td>requests, complaints</td>
<td>leader</td>
<td>former comm. members arrested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Tho</td>
<td>3–1 priest</td>
<td>no formal position</td>
<td>also 12-man advisory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bien Hoa</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>general admin.</td>
<td>makes position decisions</td>
<td>no comm, because no money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bien Hoa</td>
<td>3–1 priest</td>
<td>administration</td>
<td>comm. member</td>
<td>whole village meets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bien Hoa</td>
<td>5–no priests</td>
<td>execute orders from Saigon</td>
<td>no formal position</td>
<td>- - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Tre</td>
<td>3–1 priest</td>
<td>administration</td>
<td>comm. president</td>
<td>village divided in sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Tre</td>
<td>3–1 priest</td>
<td>administration</td>
<td>comm. president</td>
<td>- - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tay Minh</td>
<td>5–2 Cao Dai</td>
<td>administration</td>
<td>Cao Dai president</td>
<td>under Cao Dai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tay Minh</td>
<td>not clear</td>
<td>administration</td>
<td>Cao Dai leader of comm.</td>
<td>whole village meets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Xuyen</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>administration</td>
<td>spiritual advisor</td>
<td>- - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Xuyen</td>
<td>3–1 priest</td>
<td>health, welfare and security</td>
<td>president of comm.</td>
<td>village organized in sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gia Dinh</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>administration</td>
<td>advisor</td>
<td>whole village meets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binh Thuan</td>
<td>3–provisional</td>
<td>administration</td>
<td>&quot;supreme advisor&quot;</td>
<td>expect comm. in 2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalat (PMS)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>divide land administration</td>
<td>- - -</td>
<td>Protestant camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da Nang</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>administration</td>
<td>supreme councillor</td>
<td>- - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quang Nam</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>administration</td>
<td>advisor</td>
<td>- - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu Thien</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>administration</td>
<td>advisor</td>
<td>whole village meets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu Thien</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>administration</td>
<td>and security</td>
<td>village organized in sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quang Tri</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>administration</td>
<td>advisor and resettlement</td>
<td>- - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quang Tri</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>administration</td>
<td>informal advisor</td>
<td>- - -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One comment based on the impressions of the interviewees is probably in order here. It was generally agreed upon that, while many factors influence the progress demonstrated in individual villages, one factor of great importance was the individual leadership qualities of the spiritual leader of the village. Certainly, such factors as date of arrival, available land, water, fertilizer and animal availability and others play an important role in determining the level of self-sufficiency. But it seemed equally clear in some of the villages that the priest with a plan for his village, with a clear idea of what was wanted, with some administrative and political understanding had a distinct advantage in providing for the welfare of his followers.

6. Availability of Technicians. When the question of technicians was raised, most provincial authorities indicated a general scarcity of technical persons for refugee affairs. Quang Tri, Ben Tre, My Tho, Bien Hoa, Da Nang, and Tay Ninh authorities said they had no technicians for refugee affairs. In no province are there enough technicians to do the job of rehabilitation. Only Gia Dinh indicated that they did not feel a shortage of technicians, because provincial leaders felt they could call on technical persons in Saigon if it became necessary. In Long Xuyen provincial authorities said that provincial services assisted in the refugee program whenever needed. However, because of technician shortages or for other reasons, this was not the pattern described in other areas. In Tay Ninh, for example, provincial authorities said that they could make no provincial technical personnel available because there was so much to do along regular lines.

This general lack of technical personnel, which was already well-
known to the Commission, may well pose one of the most serious problems in project development and implementation. Our suggestions to the Commissioner-General have taken this fact into account.

7. Village Communications. While the usual pattern of communication between village and commission flowed through district, province, and Commission Delegate where those units were designated for refugee matters, one very serious deviation was found. As can be discovered by observing visitors to the Commission in Saigon, a constant procession of spiritual leaders makes its way directly to the central office in Saigon. This was readily admitted by all concerned—the village leaders, provincial and other authorities. According to the villagers this was the most effective way to support requests. In Saigon, contacts were through religious liaison persons in the Commission or through officials in the Commission.

This direct contact with Saigon was found to be very common throughout the South, and it was the dominant communication pattern in provinces very close to the city. Since the priests were frequently successful in their direct relationships, provincial authorities were bypassed and administrative problems resulted. In the provinces, it meant ineffective planning, record keeping and controls. In the central office of the Commission, it meant much time consumed in handling individual village problems and requests and less time for important general matters. As was pointed out above, because so many refugee villages are located in the provinces near Saigon, this is a problem of considerable proportions, and it will have to be solved before more efficient administration can be instituted.
Village Needs and Problems. In each village we asked about the problems that would have to be solved before the village could be considered self-sufficient. As was mentioned above, it was encouraging to find that in some villages thinking had progressed to the point where specific plans and projects might be worked out in the near future. In every instance, however, there was at least some consideration of village needs, probably stimulated by their own situation as well as the previous visits of Commission and USOM personnel making somewhat similar inquiries. Table III presents a summary of those needs.

The subsistence-type requests were found relatively more frequently in the South than in Central Viet Nam, as can be seen in Table III. The

Table III
Refugee Village Needs for Rehabilitation, by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsistence-type requests:</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>P.M.S.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw materials (handicrafts)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money for housing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services beyond subsistence:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money for co-ops</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markets</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School supplies, etc.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing equipment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming equipment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical supplies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
request for land was one of the most persistent of all, but it was not heard as frequently outside of the South where refugees farmers have frequently had to turn to woodcutting, or other occupations for a meager sub-standard subsistence. Villages in Central Viet Nam, on the other hand, were already thinking of schools and money to pay schoolteachers. This verified our observations based on other data that the South had a longer way to go to achieve self-sufficiency.

"Requests for farming equipment in Central Viet Nam were requests for water buffaloes for the most part. Transportation requests were frequently for a means of transporting firewood or other products to market. Of course, the questionnaires themselves detail the general information contained in Table III, and they may be of some use in supplementing the excellent fund of knowledge already collected in the survey by the Resettlement Division and the Field Service (USOM). This earlier survey was more exhaustive on this particular point.

"If any general summary statement of research findings is possible, it is, perhaps, that great diversity prevails throughout the refugee situation. The diversity of problems, organizational structure and procedure, and the level of self-sufficiency attained is a striking fact as one delves into refugee affairs and administration. Much imagination, flexibility and constant reappraisal will be needed to administer successfully an emergency program containing so many variations. We hope that this report, the more detailed data contained in the questionnaires themselves, and the report to the Commissioner-General with suggestions based on this research will be of some assistance in meeting the challenge."

* * *

Assuming the existing system of village administration is to continue an important aspect of the system will be a continuing training program for both new and current members of the village councils. Plans for the establishment of a network of provincial training centers are already in the project stage.

The following article describes some of the training programs which have been held and then discusses some of the problems involved in conducting a special training program for new village councillors in the spring of 1960.

It so happened that preparations in Vinh Long province were underway for this program when the field work for the "Vinh Long Studies," described earlier in this section, were underway. One of the reports will discuss the problem of implementing this program in that province, stressing weaknesses in the administrative system, which, it should be noted, were apparently common throughout many provinces as indicated in this following article by Nguyen Trung Truong.

***
The Problem of Training Village Councils

by

Nguyen Trung Truong
Bureau Chief - Research Service
Department of the Interior

"The village is the fundamental structure of Viet Nam, and the village council is the key unit of the machinery of government. In order to maintain the stability of the foundation of the administration, it is necessary to have executive personnel at the village level who are capable and fully aware of the existing regulations. The training of village councillors has, therefore, become essential during the period of national reconstruction as well as consolidation of the regime newly-established.

"This problem was dealt with by Mr. Lam Le Trinh, Secretary of State for the Interior, in an article published in the Administrative Studies Review (Hanh-Chanh Khao-Luan - 1958 - Vol. 1). This article is concerned with the progress of the training of village councillors which has been carried out in an attempt to find a new training method for the future.

"I. Why training for the village councils.

"Shortly after the foundation of the Republic, the Secretary of State at the Presidency has, in circular no. 1704-BPTT/Vp dated November 5, 1956 addressed to the province chiefs, the following observations: The majority of the village councillors today do not have full understanding of their duties, and the rural administrative machinery is not therefore operating harmoniously.

"The Secretary of State at the Presidency has, in this effect, issued instructions to the provinces that intensive courses be organized
Thus the primary and main reason for training village councillors was the lack of capability on the part of certain members of the village administrative personnel.

This situation was attributed, on the one hand, to the fact that the present village council was originated from the former administrative council, the village administrative committee improperly elected or selected, and the excessive importance and complexity of the village council's duties on the other. (1)

And, in his aforementioned essay, the Secretary of the Interior said: Experiences acquired from their daily work help improve to a certain extent the competence of the village councillors, but did not constitute a reliable and sufficient guarantee.

The second reason motivating the organization of training for the village councils was the reorganization of village administrative agencies. At the instructions of the central government, the purification and rejuvenation of the village councils has been carried out by the provincial authorities. New councillors had to acquire a fundamental technical knowledge, in order to fulfill their mission.

Experience has also shown that the village councillors who had received training should, after a trial period through the performance of their duties, attend supplementary training courses with a more comprehensive program (circular 817-BPTT/VP dated April 3, 1959 of the

For the above reasons, the government's interest was focused on the training of village councillors to improve their general knowledge, raise their political standards and technical knowledge, as well as the improvement of moral standards and behavior of the members of the executive level in rural communities. Since 1957, courses have been held in the provinces and districts for training village administrative personnel, according to instructions received from the central authorities.

II. Instructions of the central government concerning the training of the village councillors.

The Secretary of State at the Presidency has, in the above circular no. 1704-BPTT/VP, laid the principles for the organization and the program for training of village councillors:

A. Organization

1. Location: at the provincial chief town or district town.

2. Duration of study: two weeks at the minimum.

3. Instructing staff: instructors were selected from among public servants working at the provincial administrative headquarters, or district offices, services which are competent and experienced in rural administration.

4. Trainees: the village councillors will, on an alternative basis, attend the courses, with at least half of the council membership remaining on duty at the village hall, in order to ensure an uninterrupted flow of village work.
5. Materials (for study): The greater part of these materials are prepared by chiefs of bureaus at the provincial headquarters and provided for the instructors. Materials selected for study should be understandable and realistic.

6. Certificates: At the close of each course, a certificate is given to each trainee.

7. Expenditures: The village budget may allow participants living far from the study center daily indemnity for food, determined by the provincial authorities.

B. Program

The training program involves, in the main, the technical and political aspects.

a. The technical aspect.

1) The functions of the village council:


2. Finance: Rural accountancy simplified (the preparation of the budget and the quarterly statement on receipts and expenditures, maintenance of the expenditures diary, the cash journal and the (perforated) receipt book). Taxes, tax collection procedures, villages revenues (public land, fields, fishing, bidder tax collection, etc.)
"3. Civil status: Birth, death, marriage. Civil status penalty. Substitute for birth certificate, marriage certificate, etc... Preparation of certificates of parenthood.

"2) A summary concept of the existing laws and regulations:
   - Economy (policy of economic self-sufficiency and increase in production).
   - Agrarian reform.
   - Agriculture (veterinary, water and forest, etc.)
   - Sanitation.
   - Education.

"3) Miscellaneous
   - Filling, receiving and sending correspondence.
   - Statistics simplified.
   - Registration of papers relating to real estate in the form of 'actes authentiques'.
   - Communication and contact with representatives of the authorities and the people.

"b. Political aspect.

"This part of the program includes:
   - The position and policies of the government of the Republic of Viet Nam.
   - Achievements gained by the government.
   - The sins committed by the communists and the Viet Cong (the Vietnamese communists).
   - The duty of standing against communism of every Vietnamese citizen.
In addition, the Secretary of the Interior had the following recommendations to make (1):

"... The training program should be realistic, largely concerned with practice, in order that it be fruitful... The police councillor should possess a general knowledge of military command in order to be able to command the village militiamen... The competent authorities should take a particular interest in the political training of the village councillors with an aim to turn them into loyal nationalist cadres, who are firmly anti-communist and attain a thorough understanding of the plans of the central government for the improvement of the people's conditions, community development, agrarian reform, capital investment, etc... which they have the duty of popularizing and executing among the people.

"In the province, a committee for training village councillors should be set up headed by the Province Chief. This committee is in charge of preparing the program and subjects for study..."

"Circular 817-BPTT/VP had contained the following instructions concerning supplementary training: 'According to the means available in each locality, a mobile training team may be organized to make visits to the villages according to a schedule set by the District Chief for the purpose of providing guidance and assistance to the village councillors in their performance of technical work: rural accountancy, the execution of the village budget, etc...'

"The major part of these instructions have been correctly carried out by the provinces and, in certain localities, the organization of training for village administrative personnel has been very satisfactory."
III. The training of village councillors in provinces

A. Organization.

The provincial administration in many provinces had issued official orders determining elaborate details concerning the organization of training courses, the designation of the board of directors, the board of supervisors, the instructing staff. In case a training center was established under the system of internships, the provincial authorities also appointed a management board and laid down the internal rules which the trainees had to observe during the period of study.

1. Location: Classes were held, according to local conditions, in the conference hall, the club premises, or in classrooms temporarily made available at schools. Almost all provinces have training courses organized in the provincial chief-town. Training courses were opened only in the district town when the availability of instructors could be ensured by the district or when the provincial authorities wished to achieve financial economy and facilitate the movement of the village councillors.

2. Duration of training - This is not uniform: Training lasted for three days in this locality and a week in the other. In certain provinces, it lasted for two, and sometimes three weeks. Very few provinces have training courses lasting for up to one month.

The timetable was prepared very carefully, so that the trainee's study covered the whole program.

3. Instructors: In conformity with instructions of the central authorities, the chiefs of bureaus at the provincial headquarters together with the service chiefs, made up the composition of the instructing staff -
the deputy chiefs of province and district (district in the provincial chief-town) also participated in the instruction. The district officials seldom took part in the training of village councillors because very few among them were capable of assuming this task.

4. Trainees: All village councillors were allowed, on an alternative basis, to attend the training courses. Some provinces took the initiatives in holding separate courses for the village chiefs, the finance councillors, police councillors and civil status councillors.

In certain provinces, training centers were established adopting the internship system in order to provide the participants with opportunities to study and live collectively. Trainees were expected to observe the internal rules and a strict discipline from their coming in and out of the meeting hall, their study, expression of opinions to their hedging, sanitation and common order.

In provinces where available means were insufficient to meet all needs, participants were expected to secure for themselves food and lodging in residences in the neighborhood of the training center.

5. Materials for study: In actuality, the instructors prepared the lectures by themselves. These lectures were, in many provinces, mimeographed and distributed to the trainees, and will be bound into pamphlets used as reference materials for the trainees when they returned to the villages.

6. Graduation examinations and certificates:

At the close of a training course, a certificate is given to each trainee if he was graded as successful in the graduation exam. In order to save time, and due to the relatively low level (of knowledge)
"In separate courses arranged by the provincial authorities for village chiefs, finance councillors, police and civil status councillors, the technical part of the program would be set according to the functions of the trainees.

The timetable usually was 7:30 - 11:30; 14:30 - 17:30 (7 hours daily).

In certain localities, trainees engaged themselves in physical exercises from 5:30 to 6:00 a.m.

In provinces where trainees lived collectively during the training period, the time from 19:00 to 21:00 hours was set for homework (if any), discussion or artistic performances.

IV. Special training courses.

In addition to the regular training courses for village councillors sponsored by the provinces and districts, special courses have also been organized at the initiative and with the cooperation of central agencies. Among these special courses were: a training course for village chiefs and deputy chiefs sponsored by the Highland Social Action Service, a training course for police councillors at the Rach Dua (Cap St. Jacques) Police and Sûrûte Training Center, a training course for rural cadres recently opened in the province, and training conducted in the villages with the guidance of Civic Action cadres.

a. Training course for the chiefs and deputy chiefs of villages of Highlanders.

"In addition to the administrative training classes held in every province in the central Highland, training courses have been organized, since the beginning of 1958, by the Highland Social Action Service for
the purpose of training the chiefs and deputy chiefs of Highlanders' villages in methods of improving living conditions in the hamlets, and in practical work at 15 model villages. A special amount of VN$858,000 was granted by the Highland Social Action Service to finance the program.

b. Training courses for police councillors at the Rach Dua Center.

At the proposal of the commanding staffs of the First and Fifth Military Districts, and with the approval of the Interior Department, the Rach Dua Police - Surete Training Center organized two training courses for police councillors from provinces of South Viet Nam:

"From December 10 to December 20, 1959, for the police councillors from provinces of South Viet Nam East.

"From June 17 to June 26, 1959 for police councillors from South Viet Nam West.

"The program included three parts:

"1. The duties of the police councillor:
   - Judiciary duties.
   - Security duties.

"2. Intelligence.

"3. Psychological warfare.

"In addition to the daytime program, film showings or lecture on political, social affairs, current events, etc... were also organized at the Center.

"The trainees followed the system of internship. Each trainee, prior to entrance, had to pay VN$360 for food and VN$25 for necessary papers to the Center. These expenditures were financed by the villages
concerned.

c. Training courses for rural cadres.

"Since April, 1960, at the instructions of the Superior and with the (study) materials published by the Interior Department, training courses were held in the provinces for rural cadres.

"This training was held at two levels: one for the village council's employees and the other for the hamlet chiefs.

"These courses were held in the provincial chief-towns.

"The provinces were to finance all expenditures on food for the trainees and the printing of study materials, identification cards, certificates granted to trainees at the close of each training course.

"The training period was fixed at 10 days for village councillors and 6 days for hamlet chiefs.

"The program covered three main areas: political administrative, military and intelligence.

"During the training period, trainees stayed at the center and received VN$20 each a day for food.

"At the close of a training course, trainees had to undertake an examination in the form of test. Subjects for the examination were prepared by the Interior Department and sent to the provinces.

d. Training conducted by the Civic Action cadres.

"At the beginning of 1959, the special commissariat for Civic Action had, with the cooperation of the various departments, trained and assigned to the villages a number of cadres who were charged with organizing on-the-spot training classes for village councillors. This work was undertaken simultaneously with community development, improvement
of the people's living conditions, and rural reconstruction by the Civic Action cadres.

V. Results from the training of village councillors.

According to reports from the provinces, the participants had demonstrated their devoted efforts and a spirit of self-improvement. They engaged in hot discussion during class sessions and exchanged experiences of mutual interest.

The results of the graduation examinations had proved that the trainees' receptive ability was remarkable. The number of councillors who failed in the exam was inconsiderable.

It was also learned from the provinces that after receiving training, the village councillors had showed a steady reorientation in their thinking as well as in their actions. The work performed by these village councillors have been in greater conformity with the laws, enthusiastic and more efficient.

It was reported by the general directorate of Police and Surete that results of the training courses at the Rach Dua Training Center for village police councillors were very satisfactory, technically as well as spiritually.

In many localities, the trainees had, at the graduation ceremonies sworn allegiance or submitted petitions expressing their loyalty to the Republic, their firm determination to serve the people and eradicate the communist rebels, the ominous enemies of the country.

VI. Difficulties and obstacles encountered in the training of village councillors.

1. Location: In many places, especially in newly-established
provinces, the major obstacle encountered was the unavailability of premises for the training classes which sometimes were put off until schoolrooms were vacated during summer holidays. This problem can be met in each province—as in Long An province—with the assistance from the National Institute of administration and the foreign aid funds.

2. Duration of study. Anxious to maintain village work uninterrupted, the province often shortened the training period, sometimes to three days. Such limited time was not sufficient for the trainees to fully grasp all subjects studied. The duration of the training, according to the Secretary of the Interior, should be from one to two months. Supplementary courses were, as a matter of fact, held in addition to the intensive courses, but in order that the village councillors fully understand the regulations related to the performance of their complicated duties, attending two or three courses which lasted for two weeks respectively would not suffice.

3. The program: It was noted that, by reading lectures given during the training period, the village councillors had studied almost the entire curriculum prescribed for the 'administrative clerks' competitive examination. This, in the limited time allowed, was too strenuous.

4. The educational background of the trainees.

Most of the provinces were concerned with the lack of homogeneity in educational background of the trainees, or their background was too low (the majority having not acquired the primary certificate). Most of the Highland village councillors will not know how to read Vietnamese.
5. Materials (for study). In some provinces, study materials were not mimeographed for distribution to the trainees since the authorities were concerned with saving public funds. These materials were, in essence, too lengthy and heavily theoretical. Even in provinces where mimeographed materials were available, it was admitted that they will be used by the trainees for later study. It was also argued that if, on the contrary, the study materials were prepared in a summary form, it would be questionable if the trainees could obtain a comprehensive understanding of the subjects which would enable them to perform their work in better conformity with the laws.

6. Instructors. Most of the instructors fully grasped the subjects related to the field in which they were assigned to teach. But since very few of them had received training in pedagogy, their explanations were lacking in vividness.

The trainees, especially those who had a low educational level, were unable to memorize to a considerable extent the arid principles after the instructor read through his lecture.

7. Expenditures. If the village councillors attending training courses were expected to help themselves in finding food and lodging, the indemnities received (for food) were not sufficient to meet all expenditures during their stay in the provincial chief-town; but an increase in this allowance is hardly feasible in the present financial situation of the villages. Many villages did not even have cash on hand to make advance payment to the village councillors attending training courses. The provinces and district in which this situation had to authorize the transfer of funds—in the form of loans—from the
rich to the poor villages, in view of the fact that the use of the mutual assistance fund had encountered much difficulty in formality (procedures), or that the fund was reserved to finance construction and reconstruction projects in the villages.

8. Results of the training. Little was, in fact, acquired by the village councillors in technical knowledge for the above reasons.

In addition, as the competent authorities are carrying on the purification of the village councils and under the present rural security situation, a number of councillors who had received training no longer remain in service while the new councillors have not yet received technical training.

VII. Let's try to find a new orientation for training village councillors.

As mentioned earlier, valuable experiences have been obtained after three years of implementation of the training program.

Now that the achievements and pitfalls are identified let's try to find a new procedure for the training of village councillors.

The new procedure should, if it is to be effective, bring a solution to the difficulties and obstacles encountered by the provinces in organizing training courses for village administrative personnel.

In other words, with the new procedure, the training center should be convenient to the trainees, the duration of training be adequate to enable them to grasp the necessary subjects, the program be adjusted to the general level of understanding of the village councillors, lessons should include both theories and practice, study materials mimeographed and distributed to each trainee, explanations should be clear and...
understandable, expenditures be minimized for public funds as well as for the trainees, the results of the training should be concrete and far-reaching.

"In order to achieve this, it is suggested that the training of village councillors be carried out in two periods: study in the village through the first period; workshops and observation in the provinces or districts, the second.

"In the first period, the villages will receive study materials prepared by the central authorities, covering the technical subjects--principles of administration, the judiciary, civil status, financial, economic, social affairs, etc. Included in the lessons will be a guide for study that includes in part practical work and questions to be answered by the trainees in order to make a self-evaluation of the progress of their work. The village councillors will, with the materials available, conduct continuous study in the villages with the stimulation and supervision of the district chiefs and canton chiefs and deputy chief. The civication cadres working in the villages may guide such study meetings, if they had received training in the field concerned. The central authorities will prepare the timetable and determine the maximum duration of the period of study in the village.

"This period will be followed by 'study groups' (Hoc Ho) and observation. The latter period will not last beyond one week. Participants may, on an alternative basis, attend meetings in the province at which the instructors (who had received training) will check on the progress of their study and give replies to their questions.

"A followup test will be given to the trainees throughout the
province or district immediately after all lessons had been revised.

"Study materials and minutes of the study meetings will be retained in the village offices to serve as basic reference data for new councillors in case replacements are made.

"The factors of success in the training of village councillors with the new procedure would be:

1. Study materials will be carefully prepared, accurate, detailed but understandable.
2. The high learning spirit of the village councillors.
3. The continuous stimulation of the cantonal and district leaders.

Conclusion

"The training of village councillors, although it has been conducted for almost four years, should be carried on since the need for improvement of knowledge remains imperative for any level.

"However, the finding and the effective adoption of the new in the training of village councillors only brings a partial solution to the problem of consolidating the village councils for, as the Secretary of the Interior said(1):

"The consolidation of the village councils tends to involve the following problems: the selection and training of village councillors, the means and methods of performing their work. These four problems

should be simultaneously solved before a profound consolidation of the foundation of the national administration can be achieved."


7. The Re-establishment of Provincial Councils

This appears as one of the first steps in local administrative reform to be taken in the near future by the Republic. Anticipating this step, Rector Vu Quoc Thong, National Institute of Administration, prepared the following review of experiences with the provincial councils during earlier periods. The following is an extract from a more extensive article that also included a discussion of the provincial councils in Tonkin, modeled after those in Cochinchina.
CONCERNING DECENTRALIZATION OF POWER IN PROVINCES

Creation of Provincial Councils under
French Domination

by

Prof. Vu Quoc Thong


"The turnout at the recent election for the second term of the National Assembly of August 30, 1959, has proved the interest of Free South Viet Nam's inhabitants, in urban and rural areas, in national affairs and their firm willingness to use their rights in the government.

"A certain number of people concerned with political events in this country and having recent contacts with this writer have put to themselves such questions as follows:

\"It is now high time for us to think about the creation of provincial councils elected by the people to represent them before the Province Chiefs appointed by the central government. These councils might help the heads of the provincial government to learn the aspirations of the inhabitants living in their province, under their leadership. Moreover, these provincial councils might give provincial councillors a good opportunity to learn and to get experience about problems essential to the life of the country and its inhabitants. By initiatives submitted by provincial councils, the representatives may be more able to play, eventually, at the National Assembly their role as elected assemblymen, if they succeed in gaining later the complete confidence of the people.\"
"The above problem is very important and requires an appropriate solution, as we all know that the Viet Cong always takes advantage of these councils, at whatever level they may be, to militate openly and make propaganda for their godless and unethical communist doctrine.

"It would be preferable to go back to former times and have a look at what proceedings the French had tried while they were ruling our country, and this is an opportunity to find out the importance of the problem. It goes without saying that in the present administrative, social and economic situation of independent Viet Nam, the proceedings no longer have any value or reason of being. However, the understanding of these methods may at least help us to get some insights to clarify the problem, especially to determine clearly the importance of representatives of people at the province level and the need of an opportune action.

"In retracing what had been done in former times the only intention of the writer is to try to get a clearer understanding of the present state of things. 'To go over the past again is to learn about the present,' and that is the purpose of this study."
During the period of their rule over our country, the French had not only retained the decentralization of power in local government, in rural units, the then-called 'autonomous village,' but also had the intention to use this proceeding in administrative units higher than villages, such as provinces, towns, and regions (Ky). The application of this policy was displayed by 'bodies of people' representatives of the provincial level (Provincial Councils), town level (Municipal Councils), and regional level (Colonial Council of Cochinchina and the Council of Representatives in North and Central Viet Nam). We are studying here the organization of People's Representatives Councils at the provincial level only.

As the organization of these bodies was not based on a statute common to three regions, let us describe them, one by one:

Section I: Provincial Councils in Cochinchina
II: Provincial Councils in Tonkin
III: Provincial Councils in Annam (Central V.N.)

We should study the regime applied in Cochinchina first because Cochinchina was the first region in which the inhabitants of a province had the right to elect their representatives to seats in the Provincial Councils. Provincial Councils in Cochinchina were not considered as a model for the organization and operation of Provincial Councils in Tonkin and Annam (Central Viet Nam). The Provincial Councils in
Cochinchina, created in 1882, were therefore, in comparison with those of North and Central Viet Nam, characteristic of a people's representative body. Moreover, immediately after the defeat of France in 1940, the policy of decentralization of power in provinces was still in force in Cochinchina.

Section I. Provincial Councils in Cochinchina

"The French had created Provincial Councils in Cochinchina just before 1889. However during this early period, there were only indications of unbound, scattered measures, taken by local leaders, in order to find out (determine) the reaction of the people rather than to establish actually stable bodies in full compliance with the general statute of Provincial Councils for the Southern Region.

"And it was only as late as March 5, 1889, that a Decree issued by the President of the Republic of France shaped regulations for these people's representatives bodies. This was an important text because it had a half-century existence, from 1889 to 1940. During all this period, in spite of many amendments, the 1889 text remained a basic text, a groundwork for further elaboration.

"A brief examination of the evolution of the people's representative Provincial bodies in Cochinchina, would lead us to distinguish three periods:

I: Prior to 1889
II: From 1889 to 1940
III: After 1940."
A. Provincial Councils in Cochinchina, prior to 1889

"In an attempt to make an experiment of the policy of decentralization of power at the provincial level, after an occupation of South Viet Nam of almost 20 years, French authorities had signed an Arrete dated May 12, 1882, establishing in each province (then called Arrondissement or District) a District Council (Conseil d'Arrondissement). During this period, the French had adopted the assimilating policy and regarded Cochinchina as a French Department, and consequently each province of the South as an 'Arrondissement'—a borough.

"In the older time, under the Nguyen dynasty, the southern part of Viet Nam was composed of 6 provinces only, but under the French administration, the number of 'Arrondissements' amounted to 20:

1. Baclicau 11. My tho
2. Baria 12. Rachgia
5. Cantho 15. Soctrang
6. Chaudoc 16. Tenan
7. Cholon 17. Tayninh
8. Gocong 18. Thudaumot
10. Longxuyen 20. Vinhlong

"Each 'arrondissement' comprised, according to its size, a certain number of cantons:

- Arrondissement of Bentre: 21 cantons (the largest)
Arrondissement of Hoi An: 3 cantons (the smallest)
   "   Saigon: 17 "
   "   Cholon: 13 "
   "   Vinh Long: 13 "

There were, by that time, a total of 212 cantons in South Vietnam.

"In compliance with Arrête of May 12, 1882, issued by the Governor of Cochinchina, each 'arrondissement' had a 'council of arrondissement.' The number of members in the 'council of arrondissement' varied with the number of cantons, as each canton had one representative in the council. The 'arrondissement' of Saigon had 17 councillors, since it comprised 17 cantons.

"All members of the 'council of arrondissement' were elected through the system of limited suffrage, and only village notables had eligibility to vote and to be candidates. The term was three years. The council met once a year, and had only a consultative role consisting of expressing its opinions on questions submitted by its chairman, a French superintendent (inspecteur) of indigenous affairs.

"This experimentation of the policy of power distribution in arrondissements had brought about satisfactory results as inhabitants living in the provinces showed a favorable attitude and participated in large numbers to the experiment. The then-Governor of Cochinchina, Mr. Le Myre de Villers, had stated that the turnout was beyond his expectation. However, since the experiment was only a reforming measure from local authorities, an approbation by the French government in the Metropole was regarded as indispensable.

"Seven years later, as late as 1889, this situation was changed
by a decree issued by the President of the Republic of France, and dated March 3, 1889, and with the promulgation of this text we entered in the new stage of people's representative bodies at the province level.

B. Provincial Councils in Cochinchina, from 1889 to 1940

"For almost half a century, the decree of March 5, 1889, was the basic text (groundwork) fixing the statute of various representative bodies at the province level in Cochinchina.

"During this rather long period, the statute of Provincial Councils in the southern part had undergone no essential change, only such variations as in the denomination of the councils, in the extension of their composition by an increase in the number of French members, by an enlargement of the electorate... All these reforms had been in force during the years 1929, 1930 and 1931.

a) Organization of the Councils of Arrondissement in compliance with Decree March 5, 1889.

"There were four points to be examined:

1. Membership and recruitment methods. As in the former statute, each arrondissement (province) had a council composed of a certain number of members. In provinces of five cantons or less (such as Baclim, Gocong, Rachgia, which had but four cantons, Hatien, which had but three cantons) each canton was given the exceptional right to elect three members, on account of the fairly large numbers of their inhabitants.

"Besides this exceptional right, the arrondissements of more than five cantons and less than 18 cantons had right to elect two members.

"This measure was designed in order to permit each council to
include at least 10 members. 

"The term of office was changed from four years, and the reelection of one-half of the council took place every two years.

"The recruiting methods was clearly specified: Councillors was to be elected by limited vote since only notables in office were qualified to vote.

"The requirements for candidateship were clearly stated as follows:

- To be of Vietnamese nationality
- To resident in the concerned canton
- To be free from all judicial suits
- To be at least 30 years old, and to be a notable with a minimum seniority of two years.

"Only former notables and notables in office were qualified for a candidateship. Those who failed to get a majority vote at the first ballot would not be elected. The majority vote was 1/4 of the total number of voters. At the second ballot, only a relative majority was necessary, regardless of the number of voters.

"2. Functioning. The chairman of the council was the Arrondissement Chief (Province Chief). The council held two ordinary sessions every year: the first session was in early August, and the second was in February. Each session lasted eight days at the utmost. However the Governor of Cochinchina could convene the council for an extraordinary session. Meetings were valid only when they were attended by more than one-half of the total number of members. Hearings of these meetings were to be written up in two languages: in Vietnamese and in French;
there were therefore two secretaries, one Vietnamese and one French.

"The Arrondissement Chief had the assignments to execute the decisions made by the council and to fix the agenda of the council.

"3. Power. The council had power to decide questions relating to the budget, to accept or decline donations offered by private persons, to bring a legal action against other people, to be sued. As for other categories of questions, the council had only a consultative role, i.e. that of submitting their opinions, questions of those other categories might include the change in the boundaries of a province, canton or village or the establishment of the tax roll (assessment of tax?).

"The council also had the right to send motions relating to general economic and administrative problems, but not the political ones.

"As a rule, in August the council voted the budget draft for the coming year, decided on the works to be executed, and fixed the amount of subvention to be requested from the Colonial Council and elaborated the projects to be submitted to higher authorities. During the February session the council examined the report on the execution of the budget of the preceding year, and considered all necessary modifications.

"a. Measures of Administrative Guardian (Tutelle administrative). Although the people had right to participate to the council, the French authorities still retained control of this right through administrative guardian measures (mesures de tutelle administrative) as follows:

"a. All decisions made by councils could be executed only after approbation by the Governor of Cochinchina at the consultative
council (of Cochinchina). For example, the budget draft deliberated and voted by the provincial council could be definitive only after approval by the Governor of Cochinchina.

"b. Full right of the administrative guardian to substitute itself to the council. For example: If the provincial council omitted to inscribe on the budget an expenditure item of a compulsory nature, the Governor had right to rectify the budget by putting this item in the budget himself.

"In brief, Decree of March 5, 1889, had officially given to the inhabitants of arrondissements in Cochinchina of that time the right to appoint their representatives in the council of arrondissement. However, after the suppression of arrondissements and division of Cochinchina into provinces, the statute of 1889 had to be modified to meet the new situation. This was not the only reason for change, because some imperfections were also found after its being put in effect: French residents had no right to elect their representatives in the provincial councils, there were no effective ways to prevent the people condemned by common law to participate in the council.

"The modification of the 1889 text appeared therefore as necessary, although it had to deal with details only.

"b) The post-1889 reforms.

"The statute of the councils of arrondissement in Cochinchina was modified many times, however the most important changes were those put into effect during 1929-1930 and 1931.

"1. The 1929 reform

"This reform had three purposes:
To complete the Decree of 1889.

- To rectify certain errors altering the character of the council as desired by the authorities.
- To adapt the statute of the council to the new administrative organization.

"We note that the reform had covered such points as follows:

- Denomination. The denomination of a provincial council replaced that of an arrondissement (district) council. This change was aimed at an adaptation to new administrative organizations, since the territory of Cochinchina was then divided into provinces, not into arrondissements (districts) as before.

- Eligibility to vote. No change to the electorate, only notables in office had right to vote. However, to avoid a misunderstanding, the 1929 text specified that the notables in office mentioned above were notables of village councils.

- Eligibility to candidateship. Requirements were more severe than in the previous regulations, as an additional clause required that candidates must have resided in the village for one year or more. Moreover the 1929 text had defined ineligible people as people condemned by common laws for whatever offence it may be (in the previous regulation, only for subversive activities against the protectorate government, as piracy).

- Procedures. The candidate had to deposit his application 16 days before the election date, at the office of the Province Chief; the application had to be signed by the candidate himself and certified by the council of notables of his village and accompanied by all
justificative documents required (transcript of the judicial record, two certificate attesting to being village notable for / years, certificate attesting to be on the personal tax-roll).

"However, the 1929 text had omitted to specify if French residents had the right or not to participate in the provincial council. That's why the 1930 text was issued to bring an amendment to the statute of provincial councils on this particular point.

"The 1930 reform. The 1889 text had not made provision for the election of French representatives in the provincial councils. This was easily understandable, as French residents were not in great number at that time. However, when Cochinuchina was already pacified, the number of French residents had doubled in number. For this reason, French authorities recognized that they had to make arrangements to have representatives of French residents in the councils. Since 1922, the colonial council of Cochinuchina had requested unanimously a solution to this problem on the ground of the following reasons:

"Practical consideration. French representatives were more experienced on political matters and could be helpful to Vietnamese representatives in the council debates.

"Legal consideration. All taxes levied by the provincial council were intended to be collected from French residents and these taxes could be illegal if they were not approved beforehand by the French residents.

"Although the Governor of Cochinuchina had authorized French residents to appoint their representatives in the council, the Governor General of Indochina did not concur to it since this reform was not
opportunities for many reasons:

The work of the council would become difficult in the presence of French members: the content of all debates should be translated into Vietnamese, a difficult work, even for a talented translator, if the work was to be a perfect one.

French residents were not, in fact, in need of representatives in the council, since they could lay their views and opinions directly before the Province Chiefs.

The legal reason mentioned above could not be well-founded, because according to a jurisprudent case of the council of State of France, all categories of taxes approved by the provincial council, with or without French members, had a legal character.

Finally, another realistic reason to the opposition made by the Governor General of Indochine was that the presence of French members would bring disturbance and confusion to the provincial council.

French members, in spite of all, had always more or less influence over Vietnamese ones, and the latter would feel less independent in their debate and deliberation.

Because of the opposition by the Governor General, the question was not taken into consideration, although it was mentioned. And they had to wait until 1930 to see the question mentioned again, on the occasion of a reform of the provincial council and settled by a decree of the President of Republic of France, dated August 19, 1930. According to this text, there had to be in every provincial council two French members, not elected by French residents, but appointed by the Governor General and chosen among 5 candidates proposed in a list.
The 1930 reform after all, was not as important as that of 1931 which had a somewhat democratic character by an enlargement of the electorate.

"2. The 1931 reform. According to the 1889 text, the electorate comprised only members in office of the village council of notables existing in the province. The number of voters was too small since each council of notables comprised only 11 members at that time. To face the change in the political situation of that time, the French recognised the necessity of widening the electorate. That was why the decree of June 27, 1931, was issued to give the voting right to all those who were capable, on account, either of their social status, or of their services rendered to the Protectorate government.

"According to this new statute, the electorate was largely extended and comprised four categories of voters, as follows:

"1. French subjects of more than 25 years old and having paid personal taxes to the village. five

"2. Former notables, having at least a 1/2-year seniority. two

"3. Former notables, having a 1/2-year seniority and one of these qualifications: real estate owner, merchant or industrialist paying the license tax of the exceptional class or of the 1/2 or higher category, holder of a secondary school or junior high school leaving certificate, holder of the Military Cross, or of a military medal.

"4. Civil servants of the upper or middle category, former sergeants of the infantry or navy with more than 10 years seniority, holders of a higher education diploma...
Although it underwent several changes, the decree of March 5, 1889, continued to be in force until the Second World War. During this war, all provincial provinces had to stop their activities and were replaced by consultative commissions (committees?) with a smaller number of members.

The establishment of consultative commissions (committees?) put an end to the evolution of provincial councils in Cochinchina.

c) Provincial Councils in Cochinchina after 1940.

After the proclamation of the decree dated November 8, 1940, by the government of Vichy, a text aiming at suppressing all activities of elected bodies in Indochina, the Governor General of Indochina signed an arrêté dated December 27, 1940 postponing all the sessions of provincial councils and creating the provincial mixed commission (committees?) replacing the provincial councils.

This was a period of centralization of powers, and the policy of decentralization of power was neglected to the utmost.

1. Formation of the Provincial Mixed Commission (Committee)*

The provincial mixed commission had lost the character of the former elected council which represented the people, since its members were in very small numbers and were not elected. In all provinces, the number of members was invariably (four Vietnamese, one Frenchman) plus substitute members. However, two titular and two substitute Vietnamese members should be chosen among the members of the provincial council in office at the moment of the creation of the mixed commission (committees?).

*Committee, in the Vietnamese text.
"2. Operation and powers.

This commission was presided over by the Province Chief. Its power was limited because for all questions which had to be submitted to the provincial council for deliberation and decision, the new commission had only the right to express its opinions. The budget draft was to be made by the Province Chief himself.

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(Section II not translated as it is not pertinent to this study. Author.)