various excerpts from that report are included. Most of the materials pertain to only two states -- Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan -- since there were not only the pioneers but also the two states visited by the writer in April and May, 1960. Some material from that trip -- largely interviews with village as well as higher officials -- enrich this discussion.

Adoption in Andhra Pradesh. This is one of the most populous states with about 30 million residents. It contains 14,000 village administrative units. Eventually it will have about 390 of the newly established governing bodies and development units -- the Panchayat Samithi. Local publications fully support the criticisms of the community development programs found in the Mehta report. This is illustrated by the final paragraph of a special pamphlet prepared for the inauguration of a Samithi (probably the first) in October, 1959:

"It is our hope that with this institutional framework and with the necessary education, training and guidance of leadership from the humblest levels would be able to succeed in what was the basic and original purpose of the Community Development program, viz., that of creating in the community itself both the desire for its own

The following documents provide the basis of this discussion.
upliftment as well as the energy and the organization for achieving it; to generate within our various village communities social self-propulsion so that they may all become dynamos of social energy that would develop the motive force necessary for the progress of our country.

Several excerpts from a more complete publication underscore the view that the Samithi or block unit will help strengthen democratic processes as well as stimulate economic development and illustrate various features of the scheme that has been officially adopted for the state:

"The block is a compact unit offering an area large enough for functions which the village Panchayat by itself cannot perform and yet small enough to attract the interest and service of the residents." (p.3)

Since every village president will be a member of the Samithi, every village will be represented and in turn:

"The Samithi has, therefore, the advantage of knowing everything about each village through the president and implementing its schemes by the Panchayats (village councils)." (p.3)

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*Community Development in Andhra*, p. 16.

**Panchayat Raj in Andhra Pradesh**.
Stressing the transfer of public power from higher governmental administrators to the newly established local governing bodies the report reads:

"The scheme of democratic decentralization... seeks to transfer to the people the powers of administration now vested in government officers, and to help their representatives to assess the needs of the area, work out schemes to meet them, and execute the schemes." (p.6)

Thus, the members of the local governing body will be expected to carry out duties currently administered by higher authorities but in addition they will be expected to stimulate interest in community works:

"The presidents and members of the Panchayat Samithis have to endeavor to instill among the people within their jurisdiction a spirit of self-help and initiative and harness their enthusiasm for raising the standard of living. They have to enlist the whole-hearted support of the people for the implementation of the development programs, not only those which relate to the community for which government assistance is forthcoming, but much more so to that which relate to individuals and which are mainly based on self-help." (p.6)

As one example of a power and its related duties granted the Samithis:

"The government of Andhra Pradesh has decided to give to the Panchayat Samithis the funds provided under the heading 'Loans for irrigation and rural housing' in the Community Development program. These funds will be recovered from the Panchayat Samithis in installments. The Panchayat Samithis will have to sanction and
disburse loans to individuals and will have to recover them from the loanees. The loan funds available with some of the normal development departments such as Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Industries, etc., will also be made over to the Panchayat Samithis to be similarly spent and recovered... All of these loans will have to be recovered from the loanees by the Panchayat Samithis themselves."

(p.7)

An illustration of how existing functions and activities are to be reassigned is offered by the following policy for determining whether a seed farm should be assigned to a Samithi or to the higher unit, the district.

"Seed farms are at present established in blocks by the Department of Agriculture. Wherever a seed farm is intended to serve exclusively the needs of a block and nothing more, that seed farm must be handed over to the Panchayat Samithi for management with the assistance of the extension officer (Agriculture) under the guidance of the district agricultural officer. Where, however, a farm is intended to serve the needs of more than one block, it will continue to be directly under the control of the district agricultural officer. It shall, however, be available for demonstration purposes within the block where it exists."

(p.8)

Because the Samithi is a relatively large body, provisions have been made for dividing authority and responsibility between sub-committees, the president, and the entire body. Considerable importance is attached to the work of the committees:

"The essence of the administration... is to be found in the
committee system... Large assemblages are not appropriate for the discussion and settlement of matters of detail... In the present pattern large powers of sanction are given to standing committees themselves with a view to speed up sanction and execution of schemes and works. In this system the power is vested in the hands of the elected representatives (without delegating an undue amount of it to administrators)... The great merit of the system lies in the intimate contact with the realities of administration which it gives to every member... The administrative value of such contact is a civic experience of high value. The keynote of the system is the subordination of the paid official to the wishes of the Samithi... and its committees... The standing committees are thus the workshops... where technical knowledge of the officials and the members interpretation of public requirements are brought together, blended and applied." (p.37)

Every Samithi is to establish five standing committees having the following division of duties:

1. Standing committee for agriculture, animal husbandry, minor irrigation, power reclamation, including soil conservation and contour bunding and fisheries;

2. Standing committee for cooperation, thrift and small savings, cottage industries, rural housing, statistics, prohibition of, or temperance in, the consumption of intoxicating drinks and drugs which are injurious to health.

3. Standing committee for education including social, education, medical relief, health and sanitation including rural water
supply and drainage, social welfare, welfare of women and children and relief of distress in grave emergencies.

4. Standing committee for communications and works.
5. Standing committee for taxation and finance.

Every standing committee will have nine members. To coordinate their activities the president of the Samithi will serve as chairman for every committee and the chief administrative officer will attend all meetings, along with the appropriate technician.

Adoption in Rajasthan. In contrast with Andhra Pradesh, the state of Rajasthan is one of the least populous, yet its population is still impressive, about 14 million. It contains about 3,5000 Panchayats (village councils) whose councils range from six to 16 members; the average population of these villages is 3,700. There are 123 Samithis and 26 Zila Parishads (the district level coordinating body). Although the basic design resembles that found in Andhra Pradesh, variations do exist. Among these are, for example:

1. The provision to establish the Samithis throughout all of the area rather than limit them to the areas already involved in block development programs,
2. A few number of standing committees, three all told, although other committees could be added. The three are: 1. Production programs in agriculture, animal husbandry, irrigation, cooperation, cottage industries, etc.; 2. Social services, including rural water supply, health and sanitation, education, and communications; and 3. Finance, including taxation and budgeting. The normal membership consists of seven persons.
The president of the Samithi may join; if he does, he becomes the chairman.

Also in Rajasthan it appears that more attention has been given to the problem of coordinating urban with rural development. One step toward this is to have the mayor of any municipality under 10,000 population become a member of the next higher body, the Zila Parishad on which will be found the President of the rural Samithis. It is also proposed that all programs for development of the areas around municipalities must be in conformance with urban needs -- crop patterns, for example, must meet the fruit and vegetable requirements of the municipality.

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Lacking from this discussion is a fair view of the anticipated organization and administration of the two other tiers in this scheme, that is, the village and the district. Each is to be involved; each is to have its own sphere of activity, not in the spirit of subordinations but of equals with variations in degrees of responsibility. In general it is anticipated that the village councils will become more representative in their composition and will execute many of the programs adopted by the Samithis since their presidents serve in both units.

The district governing body -- the Zila Parishad -- is to serve largely as a coordinating unit as proposed by the Mehta report. Where Samithis have not been established, the Zila Parishad assumes executive responsibilities for development.
A key feature of the three is the interlocking system of representation -- a village president may in fact be the president of both of the other two. At the village level, in addition to the village councils, there are also trained development workers -- generalists so to speak -- who will continue their tasks of facilitating development activities including aiding the residents to identify their needs and communicating these to the higher units. These workers are now, however, viewed as employees of the Samithis or of the villages rather than of any higher government. At least in Rajasthan to make a more cohesive unit, some villages are to be reduced in population. Also judicial responsibilities in Rajasthan -- and the writer believes in other states as a rule -- will be performed by separate village agencies to encourage the participants in the Democratic decentralization scheme to concentrate on developmental programs.

Reactions to the Impact of the Plan

Not enough time has elapsed since the first adoptions of the plan for any crystallization of reactions whether favorable or unfavorable; however, early in 1960 a conference in which the progress of the plan was discussed provides some appreciation of the views Indian officials were developing.* In addition, the writer obtained some additional views a few months later, May, 1960, during his observation tour in India.

Among the various impressions one can offer as to the present thinking about the success of this change in local administration in

*Study Camp for Pramukhs and Pradhans.
India, the following are the most pertinent for this limited review:

1. Indian administrators, although having considerable skepticism about the outcome of this change, have by and large accepted it as a matter of faith in India's desire to develop a more democratic system of administration. They present the contention -- with sincerity, the writer believes -- that for the system of government in India to be truly democratic more authority must be located closer than the national Parliament and the state legislatures to the people.

Apparently many administrators have become upset due to the adjustments they are required to make in their own roles vis-a-vis the public. They have to learn to become "partners" rather than directors; they must give up some of their authoritarian ways in favor of their new local rulers. In fact one of the unanticipated problems of the implementation of the scheme has been the failure of administrators at the state and district level to make mature adjustments to this plan; instead in an irrational way they have reacted by arguing that since they are no longer for administration, they should simply sit back and await orders.

2. It is evident that meaningful authority has been transferred to and invested in the new governing bodies, especially the Panchayat Samithi (which is of most interest for this study of Viet Nam). The reaction of the administrators mentioned above is one sign of this. Various administrators in India stressed this in discussions with the writer. Furthermore interviews with members of the new governing bodies underscored this with examples such as given in item 3.
3. Already evident is at least partial fulfillment of one key hope held out for this political investment — that once the people saw they did possess political control they would proceed to act in a responsible manner. The best example of this reaction found by the writer occurred in an interview he held with several members, including the president, of one Samithi in Rajasthan:

The writer: What has been the most important decision taken by your governing body?

The president: To adopt a program to increase agricultural production.

The writer: After adoption, how was the program implemented?

The president: The village presidents went back to their villages and explained to all members of the councils who then went back to their own settlements and described the proposals in their own meetings with villagers. The people were more interested and progress has been made.

The writer: Well, didn't these ideas for improving programs exist before the Samithi was established?

The president: Yes, but at that time the people looked at them as ideas of the government, something the government wanted done. Now they are more willing to accept proposals.

These replies of the president were made in the presence of about ten other villagers, including members of the Samithi, and an administrator from the state government who served as the interpreter. They sound almost too good to be true.
Throughout the entire discussion the tenor followed this same pattern — one of optimism about the impact of this plan and its feasibility. These villagers seemed to have an exceptional grasp on how they could work closely with the technicians assigned to their Samithi. For example, to avoid local politics such as "back scratching," they contended they would depend upon technical analyses and priorities established by the technicians for determining the locations of new wells to be dug with minor irrigation funds allotted to the Samithi.

4. Concern has already been expressed over certain patterns that are developing: First, some presidents of Samithis seem almost too enthusiastic and thereby fail to distinguish between political and administrative phases of governmental processes. As a result they enter too far into details of administration, some observers reported; Second, there is a concern that the bureaucracy of the government will twist this plan to justify further expansion of its own affairs — that decentralization requires more personnel to serve in field, supervisory, and record-keeping activities; Third, there have been some examples of flagrant factionalism where weakly represented areas of a Samithi have not received fair treatment.

However, at the same time a common concern that some immediate gains in economic development would have to be sacrificed since the tempo would be reduced in this transitional period proved in error. The changeover, observers believe, did not result in any loss and in fact may have already increased the tempo.
It is also recognized that there are many aspects of the program that need further consideration. A serious problem concerns the role of the village council vis a vis the Samithi -- which is to be the "primary" unit of developmental activity?

While current literature proclaims the village, indications are that the Samithi will assume more responsibility. The unit above the Samithi also needs some additional study -- the Zila Parishad apparently cannot be viewed primarily as a coordinating body. It wants to have a more important status -- and in fact in many areas, it does. Given the complex structure of the Samithi -- its large size, division of duties between committees and the whole body, the role its president vis a vis the general administrative officer -- many aspects need to be studied in more detail.

What is important is that both the Indian official and the lay citizen are realizing a need for working more closely together in the development of this new scheme for local administration.

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H. A Proposal for Local Administration in Viet Nam

In the writer's opinion, the Indian experiment can be adapted for Viet Nam — at least serious consideration should be given to its adaptation. Although not developed beyond a "preliminary" statement, the following summarizes the views of the writer as to the way the Indian scheme can be adapted.

This paper has been used as a basis for discussions with both American and Vietnamese personnel involved in either the academic or the applied approaches to the study of local administration in Viet Nam. By no means should it be viewed as setting forth a complete plan of administrative reorganization. The writer was interested in getting reactions to the idea.

A Proposal for Local Administration in Viet Nam

The following plan is still in the idea stage. No attempt has been made to fit it entirely to the existing system nor to prescribe what additional changes would have to be made in order to compensate for its indirect effects on the overall administrative scheme of government in Viet Nam.

The essence of the proposal is to transform the district unit of administration into an organization well equipped to deal with various aspects of social and economic development and to provide the population with an effective, meaningful voice in the conduct of local affairs. In doing this the district would, in general, replace the village as a unit of community administration and the province as a key unit of field
administration. Both the village and province would still exist, but their roles would be more limited.

The scheme for district organization would provide for a governing body consisting of representatives of the villages within the district boundaries. When conditions were suitable, these representatives would be chosen on a popular basis and hold office for a limited term of two or three years. If necessary, the unit of representation might be made the hamlet or a group of hamlets. As a result, the district governing body would tend to be large, probably ranging from 10 to 40 members. Each governing body would elect its own president. With the assistance of a general administrative officer the president would function as the key executive officer of the district. Assisting the executive staff would be a staff of technicians trained in the various fields of economic and social functions.

What would be the responsibility of this new district organization? This would have to be determined on the basis of an analysis of the different activities found in all of the social and economic functions. In general, the objective would be to assign responsibility for all of those aspects for which the district would be competent, in terms of skills, area, and to some extent, finances.

How would the new district finance its operations? At present almost every district enjoys the advantages of one major market center that provides considerable tax revenues for the villages and provinces. Along with other local sources, revenues from these markets would be allocated to the new districts. In addition, a scheme of bloc grants
providing revenues from central governmental sources would be established as provincial demands were reduced by the transfer of responsibilities to these districts. The expectation -- the hope -- would be that in years ahead more local revenues would be forthcoming in cash, kind, and service.

What is known about the problem:

The argument can be effectively presented that as yet we do not know enough about the existing system to be contending that a change should be made. The writer, in fact, will not deny this. Instead, he will preface his proposals with this admission but then go on to justify thinking about change on the bases of the following facts, impressions, observations, and ideas.

1. The government recognizes the present system as temporary -- thus, it is concerned with change. Since 1956, when Ordinance 57-a came into effect, village administration has been viewed as temporary, awaiting the enactment of a Presidential decree.

2. If local administration is to assume an active role in social and economic development, some major changes in the existing system are needed. A significant proportion of the villages are inadequate for employment as effective administrative units; almost 60 per cent of the nation's 2,600 villages have under 4,500 population; 41 per cent under 3,000. Undersized villages are too small to support competent administrations but too numerous to be ignored. The general spirit that prevails in villages today is not in keeping with the demands faced by the nation -- it is probably fair to say that the spirit has not been
altered even with the rise of the newly established independent nation. This spirit continues to dominate the administrative as well as the social aspects of village life.

3. Current thinking of the government about local administrative reform reflects a narrow, legalistic view inclined toward re-establishment of earlier organizational forms rather than forms adapted to the needs of newly established nations and nations in need of maximizing all social forces for economic and social development.

4. The potential for major changes in local administration exists. Interest groups that might oppose changes reducing their advantages as yet are not effective. While the higher level of provincial administration appears to be solidifying, nevertheless, major adjustments are still possible. The political atmosphere of the government at present also is suitable for major changes in local administrative organization.

How realistic is this plan?

It is difficult to determine what is an adequate test of realism -- even assuming that such a test is the measure of acceptance for any proposal dealing with a problem of this nature. It might be argued that a visionary (not presently realistic with considerable doubt as to its ever being) scheme might be more desirable as a means for elevating as well as stimulating thought about government in Viet Nam. Accepting realism is essential to obtaining acceptance for this plan, the following observations are offered in its defense:
1. A major part of this plan has already been proposed by a Vietnamese administrator of the Department of the Interior. Mr. Do Van Ro, writing for The Administrative Studies Journal, (aperiodical of the Interior Department) in 1958 argued for granting budgetary powers to the districts and assigning them major responsibilities for rural development. He pointed out that this will "revolutionize the whole village financial pattern." His major argument for this change was the financial inadequacy of villages. He envisioned each district setting forth a three to ten year plan for rural development taking funds from "rich" villages to use in the others.

2. Limited observations of district-village administrative relationships in Viet Nam indicate that even at present district offices participate considerably in community affairs. The district chief attends local ceremonies. The district administration gets most if not all of its finances from village revenues. District chiefs serve as appeal courts for minor civil disputes -- one district chief pointed out that he was in fact the court of original jurisdiction since villagers preferred coming straight to him. District chiefs at times employ village funds for nonanticipated programs, which illustrates the extent to which districts invade village budgetary plans. District chiefs assumed major responsibilities for the construction of the new villages -- the agrovilles. District information officers deal directly with local groups rather than with village officials.

3. Current programs in the fields of public health and agricultural cooperatives mark the district as the key unit in field
administration. It is to be the operating unit for their programs. It is to contain a staff of technicians and certain institutional services. In addition, the agricultural cooperative plan calls for the establishment of an advisor or governing board at the district level consisting of representatives chosen from the localities.

4. While not envisioning the major change proposed in this plan, Vietnamese officials have acknowledged the need for increasing the adequacy of local units by consolidating the small villages and establishing temporary systems allowing for the flow of funds from rich to poor villages. Recognized as a step forward in local administration, in fact, are the newly established villages in central lowland provinces, even though they were the work of the communist controlled era. Small villages (xa) were combined into lien-xa, or group villages.

5. A scheme for provincial reorganization submitted in January, 1956, by the Michigan State University Group would, with some modifications, complement this proposal. That scheme, adopted only in part that time, provided for decreasing the number of provinces to about 14 and eliminating the provincial budgets, leaving only local or village and central governmental budgets. (see II c.1)

6. The idea for this scheme came to the writer from observations of the system already in effect in parts of India as a result of a decision to establish a system of "democratic decentralization." While Indian and Vietnamese conditions differ, the differences do not preclude adapting the Indian scheme for use in Viet Nam, for both countries face certain common problems of social
and economic development. Viet Nam can, in fact, take advantage of the ideas as well as the experiences of India in local administration and rural development.

7. The plan would not have to be installed simultaneously throughout the entire nation. A key to its success would be a gradual adaptation as the availability of personnel and satisfactory systems was assured. Plans would have to be made for training administrators, local legislators, orienting the public, and providing the proper system of administration.

**Why is this plan favored?**

Some reasons for favoring this plan have already been mentioned or suggested in the preceding discussion -- namely the inadequacy of the villages and a need for looking for ways to combine popular support with modern views of economic and social development. These may stand some additional elaboration.

1. The problem of financial inadequacy is at the heart of the proposal for setting up the district as a unit of rural development set forth in the article by Mr. Do Van Ho, an administrator in the Department of Interior. But in the article there is also the implication that he would not favor solving the problem by placing additional responsibility on the provincial level. In his view, past practices have shown provincial administrators to be more inclined toward urban rather than rural development. (In part, as he explains, because urban development impresses visiting firemen more since they seldom go out to the hinterlands.) To be sure, he envisions the
continuing of village administrative machinery. For this plan, only finances would be centralized at the district level.

2. The problem of financing is also at the heart of the scheme in India. Up to 1957 the expectation was that with some outside leadership villagers in India would assume responsibility for their own development — they would identify their problems and determine how to solve them. The failure of the block development plan led to the establishment of a study commission that set forth the scheme. Added to the block development staff of technicians in socio-economic programs is the governing body of village chiefs plus some co-opted members. This governing body is given control over some funds allotted by the five year plan for rural development. It is expected that as the scheme takes hold, local contributions will be increased by the newly established governing bodies on a gradual shift from central to local financing. This need certainly exists in Viet Nam as well.

3. Also, in Viet Nam there is concern among governmental officials for decentralizing administration and increasing local participation. The intent to re-establish elected village councils and provincial advisory councils, apparently also on an elective basis, has already been announced. This, however, does not seem like a reasonable plan, especially in view of the political security problem that prevents giving any real authority to the village councils. It would soon be shown as a façade of local rule. On the other hand, at the district level more flexibility could be built into the plan for democratizing the governing body. At first all members may be hand-picked, but as
villages became cleared of domination by communist elements provisions could be made for popular election of the village representatives.

4. From the viewpoint of management, the district unit in Viet Nam seems favorable for maximizing the use of the limited supply of trained personnel, the technicians in the various substantive fields as well as the generalists in administration. At present there are 209 districts in all of Viet Nam having a mean population of 58,000 (median, 50,000). All in all, the district seems a feasible meeting place for the rural citizen and the trained technicians to meet and decide how to work together.

5. Insofar as possible the administration of police and related security programs should be removed from this new organization, at least for immediate future. The new organization should be recognized for its primary interest in social and economic affairs but it should also be recognized as the new unit of local government. This seems a reasonable way to unravel the current mixture of political and socio-economic affairs of the present system.

6. In line with the MSUG proposals concerning provincial organization, consideration should be given to reducing the number of provinces and their powers and responsibilities. Following the pattern in India, governing bodies consisting of the presidents of the new district bodies plus some special members would be established at the provincial level. The major function of this body however would be, as in India, to coordinate, guide, and stimulate work at the lower level. Similarly, provincial level personnel would assume this
role in addition to other tasks assigned by the central governmental offices for functions or activities not assignable to the new districts.

The end