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Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M.
Puzanov for 18 February 1960

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Summary:

Heo Hak-song discusses agricultural conditions in Haeju province with Ambassador Puzanov.

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"to Cdes. [[N. P. Varnov?]] and Samsonov, G. Ye.

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[...]

18 February 1960

I gave a report about the fourth session of the USSR Supreme Soviet in the conference room of the provincial people's committee in the city of Haeju. Up to 500 senior Party, government, and economic officials were present at the report. The report was heard with great attention and interest. The audience reacted very animatedly to those places in the report which talked about the firepower of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union, about the inevitable defeat of any country or countries which tried to attack the Soviet Union or other socialist countries.

Heo Hak-song, Chairman of the provincial Party committee, led the meeting.

Before and after the meeting a conversation was held with Heo Hak-song, his deputies for industry and propaganda (Kim Tae-jin) about questions of the province's agriculture, the practice of combining the [post] of chairman of the ri [village], and the chairman of an agricultural cooperative, and about Party political work.

The condition of the province's agriculture. Heo Hak-song said that 126,000 jeongbo will be devoted to rice in the current year, of which up to 100,000 will be with steady irrigation. A gross grain harvest of 850,000 tons is planned against 650,000 tons obtained in 1959. It is planned to get an average rice harvest of 42 centners per jeongbo. By decision of the KWP CC December Plenum up to 1000 tractors will be shipped to the province of South Hwanghae this year in order to mechanize the main agricultural work within a year.

It became clear from the answers to questions that tractor plowing and transporting fertilizer to fields, and the harvest from the fields is meant by mechanization of the main agricultural work. As regards the mechanization of other work to cultivate rice (planting, tending, and harvesting) the comrades from the provincial committee have no idea and, yes it is apparently, are not even thinking of this question. I tried to show from specific examples of integrated mechanization of the production of cotton, sugar beets, rice, and other crops in the Soviet Union the need to develop measures to mechanize not just the plowing under rice and other crops but also the mechanization of all work in order to use as little manual labor as possible and get agricultural production at less expense.

I asked how the experimental integrated state farm of the district of Ryongyong [sic]

was working.

Heo Hak-song replied that the results of the farm's operation in the past year have been unsatisfactory. Large losses have been incurred. Heo Hak-song said, the problem is that after shifting from agricultural cooperatives to the farm the peasants began to get a set wage and food supply like workers and reckoned that they will get guaranteed support and worked unproductively. The Party organizations did not develop the necessary explanatory work in time.

I asked about the method of increasing cows' milk yield and the use of the milk.

Heo Hak-song replied that they are still just beginning this method in the province and very many difficulties are being encountered from the very first steps: there is not yet a material interest since the sale of the milk has not been organized, there are no conditions for storage of the milk, and they are not familiar with the use of milk.

I tried to show in specific examples what issues and ought to be decided and how, how to use [them] to increase the cows' milk yield and get milk from all the cows which will be freed from field work in connection with the mechanization of the province's agriculture.

Fishing is poorly developed in the province. The existing reservoirs are being poorly used to raise and cultivate fish. The sea fishing catch is no more than 3,000 tons, predominantly choga. Speaking of sea fishing, Heo Hak-song said the following: usually schools of choga fish approach the shores of the Yellow Sea of our province at the end of April and the beginning of May and stay for no more than two weeks. South Korean fishermen also come to fish. Last year we detained more than 600 South Korean fishermen in DPRK territorial waters. As in past years we showed them Haeju, told about DPRK life, then gave them the opportunity to fish and let them go back. Several of the fishermen who are natives of our provinces requested permission to stay here for permanent residency. But we have not yet agreed. According to information we have such treatment of South Korean fishermen by our side are being taken very well. A considerable part of the South Korean population find out the truth of the situation of workers in the DPRK through these fishermen. We expect that a considerable number of South Korean fishermen will come to us this spring and we intend to act the same with them as last year.

Concerning the practice of combining the post of chairman of the ri and chairman of the agricultural cooperative. I asked what the practice of combining the two posts is showing.

Heo Jeong-suk, Chairman of the Supreme Court, who was present at the conversation replied in these ri in which the agricultural cooperatives have up to 800 households and have local industrial enterprises combining the two posts causes certain difficulties. Evidently in such ri there is a need to avoid such a combination. Then Heo Jeong-suk asked my opinion about this question.

Referring to [my] insufficient knowledge of the situation at the grass roots I only pointed to those difficulties which appear before the chairman of an agricultural cooperative in this work (in the spirit of previous conversations with Kim Il Sung, Pak Jeong-ae, and Nam Il).

A lively exchange of opinions developed around this issue. True, Heo Jeong-suk not very convincingly tried to show the advisability of combination, in the process he cited an example as proof that after agricultural cooperatives are consolidated when there is left only one agricultural cooperative in each ri there are allegedly no serious

matters remaining for the chairman of the ri. After it was shown in the course of the conversation how deputies might apply their efforts and in what sectors, Heo Hak-song repeatedly made such comments, "a very interesting conversation, very instructive".

The second day I traveled through several agricultural cooperatives of three or four districts in the direction of the city of Gaeseong. They had begun field work in all the agricultural cooperatives: they are spreading fertilizer on the fields, planting rice to cultivate seedlings, etc. All the work is being done by hand. A considerable number of the peasants are engaged in road work.

[...]

USSR AMBASSADOR IN THE DPRK

[signature]

(A. PUZANOV)

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