

UNITED NATIONS TEMPORARY COMMISSION ON KOREA

SUB - COMMITTEE 2

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTH MEETING

Duk Soo Palace, Seoul, Korea.

Monday, January 26, 1948, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman : Mr. JACKSON (Australia).

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CHAIRMAN: The members of the Commission, I know, have all met Dr. Rhee. Before we start, may I outline the procedure proposed. It is proposed that Dr. Rhee shall make a very brief statement to us, and then Sub-Committee 2 will more or less take the floor. I will ask the questions that Sub-Committee wish answered, and then I will ask whether any member of that Sub-Committee wish to ask Dr. Rhee any questions. Then I will ask the questions put forward by Sub-Committee 1, and when these are completed ask any member of Sub-Committee 1 whether they would like to ask any questions. The same procedure will then be applied to the questions put forward by Sub-Committee 3.

We are glad to have Dr. Rhee with us this morning, and, without saying anything further, will ask him if he has anything to say.

Dr. RHEE, Syng Man: I have not prepared a statement; I am here to answer whatever I can and to do whatever I can to co-operate with this Commission. The only thing I wish to say is this: that before your arrival here it was reported in the American Press that I was one of the Koreans here who was opposed to the United Nations Commission coming to Korea. That is entirely untrue; as a matter of fact I am the one who, after the failure of the first U.S.A.-U.S.S.R. Joint Commission, proposed that we lay the Korean problem before the United Nations General Assembly.

Of course, we had no Government of our own, and no representative party chosen by the Korean people. We were more or less handicapped. We realised the necessity of an interim election, even if only in South Korea, to set up some kind of representative party to speak for the Korean people. The United States State Department had at that time, December 1946, agreed that this South Korean interim election was in order, and that as soon as we had adopted an election law we would have a general election. Since that time we have been trying to do it, but somehow or other we have not been able to do it.

We Koreans all welcome the United Nations Commission, as you have seen by the spontaneous demonstrations of welcome. Perhaps we have built a little too much hope in the United Nations Commission. We think the United Nations

Commission may be able to accomplish something beyond their power, and that the Commission may be able to achieve miracles. But, as a matter of fact, all the Korean people, except the Communist element, are all hoping and expecting that you will achieve your great mission to see to it that justice is done to the Korean people. In that connection, I wish to say that I will do anything I can to help you and to co-operate with you, because the failure of your mission would be unthinkable. It would be disaster to the Korean people.

Let me know in whatever way we can, in our small way, help you and co-operate with you. I am glad to meet you all, and want you to feel you are in the midst of friendly people you have come to help, and we want to help you to succeed.

CHAIRMAN: Dr. Rhee, this Sub-Committee proposes to ask you a lot of questions, and they will go through all sorts of directions and they will have all sorts of intentions, but I hope you will not hesitate to realise that you, too, are amongst friends, and tell us exactly what you think, whether it hurts us or not. It will not hurt us. Since you have been so brief in your opening talk, some of us would like you to give us a little more background on the demonstration of 1919.

Dr. RHEE: When Korea came under Japan in 1905, the Koreans looked to the United States, being the first nation to open Korean intercourse with Western nations and having, by the Treaty of 1882 gone as far as to say that if a third power interfered unjustly in Korea, <sup>it</sup> would, on being informed of the fact, exert its friendly offices to help solve the problem of the Korean people. But the Korean people, being a peace-loving people, counted a little bit too much on international treaties - which one nation described as "scraps of paper" - and, as a result, Korea was occupied forcibly by Japan, and the world powers turned away.

That was the situation. Japanese oppression and suppression went deep into the bone and flesh of the Korean people, and finally, in 1919, at the

conclusion of world war number 1, made the famous declaration on self-determination.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Woodrow Wilson was a friend of yours?

Dr. RHEE: I knew him intimately. The Korean people again took this too seriously, and they started what they called the "peaceful non-resistance revolution", and the whole nation rose up as one man, and declared the independence of Korea. Thirty-three men signed the declaration, and while the Japanese were suppressing it at the point of the bayonet, and by swords and spears, a group of people, representing perhaps thirteen provinces, gathered in Seoul and declared the so-called "National Assembly" - the names are all publicly printed - and they organised the so-called "Korean Provisional Government".

CHAIRMAN: Were they actually people who held public administrative posts?

Dr. RHEE: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: While the Japanese were there?

Dr. RHEE: Yes. They organised so thoroughly that the Japanese were taken by surprise, even though their spy system was so thorough that even two or three people could not talk together without it being reported. But the Korean people carried out their underground preparation in such a way that it was carried out almost under the noses of the Japanese spies, police, and soldiers. Almost simultaneously in three hundred centres all over the country they rose and held their meetings, read the declaration of independence, and demanded that the Japanese withdraw, saying that the Japanese were the proper owners of the country. Almost simultaneously, there were the same demonstrations in about three hundred cities, where the same declaration and read and people waved the Korean flag, though the possession of that flag was a crime. They had all prepared their flags and their demands for Korean independence and marched. Some of these stories are thrilling stories in our records. Of course, Japan finally succeeded in suppressing them, and

CHAIRMAN: Did that apply to all Korea, in the far north and the far south, or was it concentrated in Seoul?

Dr. RHEE: In the market places and public places of over three hundred cities. The atrocities and crimes committed by the <sup>Japanese</sup> gendarmes, the civilians, and the policemen is really amazing, yet they called Japan a civilization. World sentiment was high about it at the time, and there were piles of news reports and statements made by the mission posts, and it would be a long story to tell it completely. The Korean people maintained what they called their "Independent Provisional Government" in China, since they could not hold it in Korea, and the Koreans were disappointed that the democratic nations once again turned their faces away. They maintained this provisional government in China, until 1945, when they were allowed to return.

CHAIRMAN: When the leaders from Korea went away, some of them went to Shanghai and some to Chungking. Can you give us any idea as to who went in the various directions?

Dr. RHEE: Mr. Kim Koo went from here to China, and at that time I was in Washington. They chose me as their President while I was away. Some of them went to China and the rest were in Korea. Some of them were caught, and one of them lost both his legs completely.

CHAIRMAN: Who was that?

Dr. RHEE: His name is Kim. He is a very well-known man, and is a member of the Representative Democratic Council. He attends their meetings.

CHAIRMAN: If you will agree, we will now come to the questions of Sub-Committee 2. The first question is: "What are the conditions which you consider necessary in order that free and democratic elections may be held in Korea?"

Dr. RHEE: In the first place, the elections should be free from foreign influence. If our friends in the North are holding an election it should be free from Soviet military influence. In the South, in a similar way, the American military authorities should keep their hands off.

At the present time the situation is very precarious because of the fact that General Hodge has so far failed to set up any Korean government by holding a general election of any kind in South Korea. Yet practically all the occupied nations and territories have held their elections and

elected their own governments. The Koreans in South Korea are the only people who have had no chance to hold a general election, therefore we have no government of our own. The reason is this, as I told the State Department officials when I went there in the winter of 1946: General Hodge felt that under the Moscow Agreement we should secure the co-operation of the Soviet Union before we were able to set up any government or hold an interim election of any kind, and in order to get this co-operation of the Soviet Union he felt that we should secure the co-operation of the communist leaders.

General Hodge, since October 1945, has started practically five programmes, one after another. Each one was called the forerunner of independent government. This Representative Democratic Council is one of them. Then there was the Coalition Committee, and so on. They all failed, one after another because, as I told General Hodge at the time, he would never succeed in his efforts because, in the first place, the Soviet Union would never allow the communists in the South to co-operate with any plans set up either by the United States or the Koreans, or both. In the second place, Korean communists will not co-operate with any government or organisation unless they are in a position to control it, and the Koreans in the South will not willingly agree to communist control of their government.

So one thing after another failed, and, of course, General Hodge believed that the Moscow Decision was an immutable law, and that trusteeship is the only channel through which Koreans can gain their independence, and insisted that we co-operate with them. But the Koreans refused to support either the Moscow Decision or the trusteeship plan. General Hodge succeeded in getting the two Joint Commission meetings held in the South. All failed, of course.

Since then General Hodge organised with me what is known as the Coalition Committee. In Summer of 1946 I was touring the South, telling the Korean people that the Communists should be persuaded to change their ideas and to co-operate with the whole nation in working for the independence of Korea. It was an educational process. While I was doing that General Hodge telephoned and told me he had something important to talk to me about. He wanted me to come back. That was the time I was giving General Hodge

complete co-operation and support. I believe that at that time General Hodge was under General MacArthur's command. I believe that he was sincerely working for the speedy achievement of Korean independence. But later on, as most of you will remember, General MacArthur was by-passed, and no longer has anything to do with the Korean question. I was giving General Hodge complete co-operation, however, with my opinion expressed to him that none of these plans based on securing the co-operation of the communist leaders would ever be successful. He was still working on that. General Hodge told me we had to invite the Soviet Union to come down for the resumption of the Joint Commission; that was the only way to achieve our objective, and in order to do so we must set up a Coalition Committee. He asked that Kim Ki-unic and Lyuh Woon Hung be alternate chairmen, but Dr. Kim would not agree to do it unless I gave him my support.

It was necessary that we should try this thing, so I told General Hodge, in the first place, I did not believe the Coalition Committee would get anywhere. In the second place, I was touring the country at that time, talking to the Korean people - an educational process in a way - to persuade them to turn away from the communist terrorism. If I turned round and told the Korean people to support the Coalition Committee, which was part communist and part nationalist, I would be just contradicting myself, and would be in a very difficult position. General Hodge said that we had to do it for the sake of the Koreans, and finally I was persuaded to announce to the people "Let us try the Coalition Committee; whether it is successful or not". Dr. Kim Ki-unic, with the support of the nationalist leaders, was trying all he could to get communist support of Lyuh Woon Hung, and his followers, but they never supported finally the Coalition Committee, so it was a rightist effort.

Time and again the Korean people expressed the desire, and made the request, officially, in writing and orally, to General Hodge to dissolve the Coalition Committee because the Korean people were fighting the communist agitators who came from the North. If you remember, we have no communist population in Korea. Due to the fact that the Japanese would not allow

any communist to have any foothold either in Japan or in Korea, we have practically no communist problem, so our communist problem is much more simple than the communist problem in other countries. When the Japanese were moving out they turned millions of yen, and all the public utilities and the Government departments, over to the communist leaders, and they told them they must do all they could to protect the safety, the security, and the lives of the Japanese residents until they could leave. The communists started what they called the "People's Republic", and when I returned from Washington in October 1945 I was quite surprised to know that my name was mentioned as President of the "People's Republic". According to this official title, I am head of the communist organisation.

CHAIRMAN: The "People's Republic" was originally a communist organisation, at a time when there were few communists in Korea.

Dr. RHEE: The Russians occupied the Northern half by that time, and started communist organisations, and sent a lot of these trained communists from Siberia and Manchuria. They came South, and Lyuh Woon Hung, Pak Heun Young and Huh Hun set up what they called the "People's Republic", with my name appearing as president. So I declared I did not know anything about the "People's Republic". I had no desire to associate myself with any group of people who called any other nation their fatherland. They finally declared that the affiliation of Korea would be the salvation of the Korean people, and so on.

Of course, the general mass of the Korean people did not know what it all meant, and thought it was an independent Korean government. I declared that I had no connection with them, and the whole nation, as a matter of fact, turned away almost overnight. That was the time General Hodge called me back from my tour of the South, and asked me to support the Coalition Committee to bring the communists and nationalists together. It was an impossible thing, and the people demanded that this Coalition Committee be dissolved by General Hodge, because it was General Hodge who created this Coalition Committee. General Hodge refused to do so, and later on, some



time ago, that Coalition Committee dissolved. But, by the assistance and encouragement given by the military government, the Coalition of the Middle Roaders was started. That is what caused great apprehension in the country, and the fear on the part of the Korean people, because of the fact that since 1946 we have had three major terroristic activities in the South of Korea. One time at Taegu there were fifty policeman and their families murdered. These Koreans have been fighting, and there have been many lives lost and houses burned. Therefore, the Korean people are in a very bad situation, because in recent days, since the failure of the second Joint Commission Conference, the communists have changed their names and name plates, and they are flocking into this Coalition Committee now.

CHAIRMAN: Getting back to this question. You have given us a second consideration there, that you consider foreign influence should be removed.

Dr. RHEE: Removed from political party politics, which is strictly an internal affair.

CHAIRMAN: What would you say was principle number three?

Dr. RHEE: Principle number three would be, since the United Nations Commission is here, to give the Korean people a free hand. There is some kind of election law adopted by the Interim Legislature. The Koreans have said that they will use this interim election law because something is better than nothing. So let us use this and go ahead with the general election. Sometimes it has been announced that the election law has been signed and promulgated officially, and sometimes they say that it has not been signed and approved. Recently it was declared that the election law was at fault, and that certain points should not be in, so we really do not know whether we have an election law adopted by the military or not. That is a complicated question in the minds of the Korean people.

CHAIRMAN: May we leave that now, because it is contained in another question?

Dr. RHEE: One other consideration is that the Korean people, as a whole, want to see an election carried out immediately, and they are hoping it will

be carried out before March 1. March 1 is a very significant date for the Korean people, because of the Revolution on March 1, 1919. Many people consider it was the July 4 of Korea, and if they could have elections before March 1 it would be of tremendous advantage to the Korean people, and they would be very happy.

CHAIRMAN: Is there any other condition you could mention?

Dr. RHEE: Yes, but I should have to have a chance to think it over a little while.

CHAIRMAN: That is fair. Then we will come back to it later.

The next question is: Do you consider that there are any conditions existing in Korea to-day which would interfere with the holding of free elections? Apart from these conditions, this is a question of free elections. Do you think that free elections could be held to-morrow, or are there any conditions obtaining at the present time which would militate against this?

Dr. RHEE: I am constantly in touch with the local leaders. Some three or four months ago we had elections; partly secret because the military government ordered that there should be no elections of any kind unless approved by the military government. So we managed to hold a general election, and later on it was openly held. In about two weeks time we had about 230 representatives carried here. If General Hodge had recognised this as an elected representative body, it would be functioning. But, of course, he did not. We had this group gathered together, and formed what we called an Election Committee, and the Committee has been established since that time in every province, district, myun, and hamlet. They are all waiting for the general election, and if General Hodge had permitted us to hold this interim South Korean election -- that was almost a year ago -- we would complete the election and have the report within four weeks.

CHAIRMAN: We are thinking of an election rather for the whole of Korea, of course, and that is an election which this Sub-Committee would have to consider for the United Nations Commission. If an election for the whole of Korea, in any form on the basis of adult suffrage as suggested, were to be held on March 1, are there any conditions which would stop the holding of

such a free election for the whole of Korea?

Dr. RHEE: There is one big thing that the Korean people are worrying about at the present time, and not only the Korean people but the Korean police. At the inauguration of the Middle Roaders Party General Hodge sent very encouraging messages, and the other Generals were there and made, according to the press reports, encouraging addresses. Since then these communists, in different districts and country places, went underground, and the district government officials in some places are working in co-operation with the Middle Roaders.

CHAIRMAN: Do you really consider that the presence of the Middle Roaders would stop a free election?

Dr. RHEE: This is a point. According to the report, the Russians in the North issued new "Red" money, and ordered the people to exchange their old bills for this, and they are sending millions of yen down to the South for the election campaign.

CHAIRMAN: That is, the yen which is being replaced by "red" yen in the North is being sent to communists here for the campaign.

Dr. RHEE: That is the report, and this we know is true, and they are campaigning in that way, and the local officials and military government are co-operating and aiding these communists in some places.

CHAIRMAN: It is not the Middle of the Road people who are getting the advantage, it is the communist people?

Dr. RHEE: That is what it is, and the communists have certain methods.

CHAIRMAN: You actually say that this flood of money, which has come from the North to the communists in the South due to the release of "Red" money, is a menace to free elections?

Dr. RHEE: That will be a menace to free elections.

CHAIRMAN: You say, in the first case, Middle of the Roaders are with their co-operation with outside forces. That is one?

Dr. RHEE: With this money they make too much for the people; there is another danger there. Within that, I think we are in a position to carry out really democratic elections.

CHAIRMAN: If we hold democratic elections, do you consider that all parties and organisations, without discrimination, should have equal freedom of speech, of meeting, and of publishing their views now and during the elections?

Dr. RHEE: Yes. There I want to suggest one point. Under democratic form of government, free speech and free assembly and all that under certain circumstances have to be guided and controlled. When the majority of the people elect certain institutions, the minority should follow the majority rule. That is the democratic principle, is it not? In South Korea the Koreans have solidly stood against unpatriotic and undemocratic groups, because they believe that in Korea, as in every other country, unless the communists are kept under control, they may damage and destroy almost any institution in existence. That is their belief, therefore they want to safeguard their institutions, their societies, and their organizations and parties, on the principle that unless the communists change their destructive methods and their anti-Korean and anti-independent ideas, then the Koreans would wish to see that they are kept under control.

This is the general feeling, and the real Korean people are very sensitive in that connection, and that idea should be kept in mind. General Hodge, under the Moscow Decision, has been advocating a completely neutral attitude. That means they treat both communists and nationalists alike, but the communists in the South are a very destructive party. Being treated on a completely neutral basis give the communists encouragement and an opportunity to get themselves into the political parties, and so on. So, as I say, this party political problem should be left with the Korean people themselves. No other foreign power can come in and solve the internal party political problem. Neither General Hodge, nor anyone else, can solve Korea's political party question. Let that be in the hands of the Korean people.

It was reported once or twice in the American press that the rightists were terrorising the communists or leftists. That is not true. We propose to hold a general election that is completely democratic. Any party and

and every party has an equal right to vote according to his wish. But so long as the rightists conduct the general election on strictly democratic basis, let them carry it out according to the majority will of the people. That is our plea.

CHAIRMAN: Whom would you say should be prevented from having freedom to meet and freedom of speech?

Dr. RHEE: No-one will prevent anyone from speaking.

CHAIRMAN: Even one of the communists, one of these people who has got this money and trying to break this country? You consider they should be allowed to speak and to hold their meetings?

Dr. RHEE: Yes, surely, but if the Koreans gather and try to say Korean communists have no right to speak, communists have no right to say anything, no right to cast votes or to be elected, then the United Nations Commission can step in and say "You are violating a democratic principle".

CHAIRMAN: That will apply only when you have an elected body to say it. It cannot be said now because you have no elected body. Therefore, it is your view that at the present time there should be no discrimination against the communists or anybody else?

Dr. RHEE: No discrimination. Only let the Korean people carry out their will by giving the whole people a universal right of suffrage and letting them carry out their election on strictly democratic lines. That is our position, and I want to correct the report that the rightists .... There is such a thing as an extreme rightist. I am supposed to be an extreme rightist, but I should like to know who are the mild rightists, who are the conciliatory rightists. There is no such thing as being extremely rightist. When we start work for the independence of Korea, and these Koreans are working for the independence of their country, they are all extreme rightists. There is a report that the extreme rightists are terrorising the leftists and Middle Roaders. There is no such thing as a terrorist rightist. The only terrorising element is the destructive anti-American communist element. That is the only element that is terroristic.

CHAIRMAN: There are no members amongst the communist group whom you would say would set Korea ahead of their allegiance to Russia? In other words, there are no leftists who might possibly be termed communists, but who would not follow Russia? Would there be such a thing here?

Dr. RHEE: The Koreans have come to know that there are no communists who do not follow Russia, who do not uphold the view that Korean affiliation with the Soviet Union Republic is the freedom and independence of Korea. There is no communist who does not believe that. So long as they believe that, it is not a political party question, it is a question of life or death for the Korean nation. Therefore, in other countries communists are under government control, and there are laws and regulations. We have no laws of our own, therefore the Korean people, in their own self-protection and defence of the lives and homes and property, are trying to keep the communists under control.

CHAIRMAN: You feel there are no people whom we might call weak communists or leftists who, in the event of a free election, would support the rightist programme?

Dr. RHEE: We have declared time and time again, as a matter of fact, most of these parties and group leaders to-day are those who, in 1945, were loyal supporters of the "People's Republic". We have told the Korean people in writing all over the country that if they have any communists in their home, their neighbourhood, or in their institutions, "Convince them that they are wrong, and turn them away from that." That is what we have been trying to do all along, to say that any communist who can get up and say that from now on he will work for the independence of Korean, and not for affiliation with any foreign country, we will accept him. We have accepted hundreds of thousands.

CHAIRMAN: The next question you have already practically answered. Do you consider that elections should be held before 31 March, 1948?

Dr. RHEE: If not sooner.

CHAIRMAN: You think they could be held before 31 March?

Dr. RHEE: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: If, for instance, we decided in a fortnight's time to go ahead with it, would it be possible to get the elections through by 31 March?

Dr. RHEE: If General Hodge orders, or if the United Nations Commission declares, the election should be held on a certain date, under certain simple rules for universal suffrage. The United Nations has two points to insist upon, the age limit ...

CHAIRMAN: Is it feasible to have the elections carried out in that period of time, or would it require eighty days to do it?

Dr. RHEE: I have stated before, I believe it is possible, highly possible, to complete an election within four weeks. We have done all the preliminary work, so if the United Nations Commission declares that the election shall be held on such and such a date, we will get it through.

CHAIRMAN: Have you any knowledge as to the number of persons imprisoned for political reasons in South and North Korea?

Dr. RHEE: I have no definite information regarding the number of political prisoners, but, as a matter of fact, there is nothing of the kind called political prisoners,

CHAIRMAN: You are speaking now of South Korea?

Dr. RHEE: There is no way to ascertain these things. Of course we have private reports and information from time to time, but we do not know at the present time how many there are. Some time ago General Hodge ordered an amnesty, and 669 prisoners were released.

CHAIRMAN: From the South?

Dr. RHEE: Yes, from the South.

CHAIRMAN: Have you even a rough estimate of how many there might be in the North?

Dr. RHEE: Dr. Pyun, can you give me any idea of how many so-called political prisoners there are in the North?

Dr. Y.T.PYUN (who was sitting behind Dr. Rhee): I have no set idea of that.

CHAIRMAN: They would not run to many thousands?

Dr. PYUN: I should say yes in the North. The number may run into thousands. For instance, Choo Man Sik the well-known nationalist leader, is under house detention there.

CHAIRMAN: You would say, probably ten thousand?

Dr. PYUN: I can say nothing definitely.

CHAIRMAN: Do you think that persons who are imprisoned for political reasons should be entitled to take part in elections or be entitled to vote?

Dr. RHEE: That will be too much a detail matter, and it will create a lot of confusion and a lot of difficult questions if we go into the political prisoners in prison to give them equal opportunity. I do not think that this is an established precedent in other countries. I do not think that would be any serious question.

CHAIRMAN: I think we can drop that question now, because it is brought up later in one of the questions of another Subcommittee.

Dr. RHEE: That will create quite a commotion among the Korean people. It is really putting the whole Korean Commission on a difficult situation.

CHAIRMAN: What changes would you propose, if any, in the present franchise laws of South Korea (Public Act No.5 of the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly? And of North Korea.

Dr. RHEE: As a matter of fact, I was one of the leaders who insist on making use of this franchise law, good or bad. There



are some people who are opposed to using that, because of the fact the Interim Legislature is not a representative body. They believe that the interim election law should be set up by the Korean people themselves, and so on. But, as I have said before, my position was, and is still, that we utilize anything we have. I have not studied the election law carefully enough, but there was something about the pro-Japanese element. It was proposed and included in the election law.

CHAIRMAN: I think we will leave that now, because I have a more detailed question put down by one of the Sub-Committees which may help us to get to the point. After you have had a few minutes breathing space, perhaps some of the other members of the Sub-Committee would like to fill in.

Dr. RHET: You are through with me?

CHAIRMAN: No, we have two Sub-Committees' questions yet, if you do not mind.

Dr. RHET: My time is at your disposal. This is our Korean problem, and you people are here to help us to solve it. We must do anything we can. I hope Dr. Hoo will stay here and see it through, but Lake Success needs him, and we need him here.

Dr. Hoo (Assistant Secretary General): I cannot stay until the end of the mission, but perhaps until the first stage, the question of elections, is ended.

Dr. RHET: If necessary, we will wire for you to stay here a little longer, and they will grant our request or not.

Dr. Hoo (Assistant Secretary General): I hope to be able to stay until the end of the first stage, the question of the elections.

CHAIRMAN: The next question has been submitted by Sub-Committee 1, and they have put the question very carefully. It is the opinion of the Sub-Committee dealing with the question of ensuring a free atmosphere for elections (Sub-Committee 1) that there must be the following minimum requirements: freedom

of expression, freedom of press and information, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of movements, protection against arbitrary arrest and detention, and protection against threats of violence or violence. Their question is: Are there any laws, regulations and ordinances now in force or any conditions now prevailing in Korea which, in your opinion, are incompatible with this free atmosphere and, if so, what are they, and what provisions, legal or practical, are required, in your opinion, to improve this situation?

Dr. RHETT: Well, the laws and ordinances are under the military government, and the Korean people regard this as a temporary measure and have not studied it very much. Of course, certain things might be considered as arbitrary, but the two departments, police and judiciary, have been doing pretty well. Of course they are handicapped. For instance, the Provost Court was dissolved when General Lurch was Governor General. He proposed to turn the government over to the Koreans themselves and the American personnel moved to a separate building, and at that time it was announced that the American military Provost Court was dissolved and withdrawn. Recently it was announced that it was revived, and the Korean judiciary and the Provost Court have been kind of duplicating the enforcement of the law.

Then again, this freedom of speech and freedom of the press. I think we are carrying that out in the South. In certain cases some people have complained that certain newspapers were suppressed and all that, but I have not gone into it thoroughly. I have no personal conviction in that connection, but I think we are tolerant; at least in comparison with the laws in the North we are enjoying a large measure of freedom in the South.

CH. IRWIN: Is the position, then, that the military Provost Court and your Korean Supreme Court are carrying out the same duties?

Dr. RHEE: I fail to see the need of duplicating the judiciary practice. If it were war-time it would be different, but it is not. We are in peace-time. There has been nearly three years of peace, and it is not very helpful, to say the least.

CHAIRMAN: Is the Provost Court trying political offenders, or is that a matter for the Korean Court?

Dr. RHEE: There was a report in the press some time ago that the judges of the Supreme Court were talking about tendering their resignations wholesale, and, if I am not mistaken, two or three of them did resign. But how that was settled, I do not know. But there is constantly the report that some cases tried and settled by the Korean Supreme Court are retried by the Provost Court.

CHAIRMAN: Are there any military laws produced by that Provost Court which, in your opinion, would interfere with free elections?

Dr. RHEE: I do not know how many local Provost Courts are established in the country, but certainly these things have some influence in the minds of the Korean people.

CHAIRMAN: Do you know of any of their laws which restrict gatherings, and so on?

Dr. RHEE: Well, we believe the Korean people have the right to demonstrate in a peaceful orderly manner.

CHAIRMAN: Is there a military law which says they shall not do that?

Dr. RHEE: I do not think there is any law, but I think that from time to time the military government has ordered certain times in which meetings can be held, and not larger than a certain number.

CHAIRMAN: Do you know what that number is?

Dr. RHEE: That number varies. Sometimes it is one hundred, and it is rather arbitrary.

CHAIRMAN: Arbitrary in that the Commander may order that it is so, or the Provost Court?

Dr. RHEE: We are strictly under a dictatorial government.

CHAIRMAN: The military court would be guarding against civil commotion or riot, and it would be normal to have laws guarding against this?

Dr. RHEE: Well, riots, strikes, and things of that sort are well taken care of by the Korean police.

CHAIRMAN: You think these courts are unnecessary?

Dr. RHEE: I do not see they are necessary. In 1946 terroristic activities were widespread, but since then, with the exception of Taegu where the military government declared martial law, the Korean police have taken care of them without the aid of the military police.

CHAIRMAN: There are no laws, regulations or ordinances which would not be over-ruled, if necessary, by the military provost Courts?

Dr. RHEE: I hear, once in a while, some complaints that in some provinces the provincial and military government give aid to certain groups and encourage certain meetings, and so on.

CHAIRMAN: Do your Korean police or law courts, or both, place any restrictions on the freedom of assembly, association, movements of your people or groups of your people that would militate against a free election?

Dr. RHEE: Yes. I think that attention should be paid to that point. Some time ago the Koreans held a demonstration in connection with the elections. The people thought that since the Assistant Secretary of the State Department promised, General Hodge declared, and General MacArthur publicly advocated, and since they had been preparing for it for over a year, the Korean people must have an election. General Hodge said he would not allow any election, and meetings and demonstrations were held in the streets. The police came into clash with them, and a large number of them were placed under arrest, although they were released in the next

day or two.

The people questioned the police officers, and they were told it was done under orders they had to carry out.

CHAIRMAN: You have the feeling that if the military Provost Courts were not here, that your Interim Legislative Assembly or Supreme Court would produce laws and regulations which could make the carrying out of elections a simple matter?

Dr. RHEE: I think so.

CHAIRMAN: Are there any of the regulations already put forward by your Interim Assembly that you would object to, or that in themselves would interfere with free elections?

Dr. RHEE: In that connection, that reminds me of the fact that the Interim Legislature should be dissolved. You have the fact that the general election will replace them, and they should be dissolved and the government officials should keep their hands off the coalitionists, communists, and the rightist groups and parties, and leave them alone and let the people handle that question themselves. There will be no party riots or anything of that kind, and the police will strictly enforce the law, so that there will be nothing unlawful taking place.

CHAIRMAN: Would any member of Sub-Committee 1 care to ask any further questions? I take it that Dr. Rhee would be available if Sub-Committee 1 had any technical questions to ask at a later time.

Dr. RHEE: Any time at all. Just call me and I will be at your service. We have been hoping and waiting for this opportunity.

CHAIRMAN: I will now go on with the questions of Sub-Committee 3. There are four or five of them. Sub-Committee 3 requests that the opinion of Korean personalities be sought on the voting age and the age of candidature best suitable for all of Korea in

the light of the General Assembly's recommendation for elections to be held "on the basis of adult suffrage". In the North at the present time the age is 20 years, and in the South it is 23. What is your opinion?

Dr. RHEE: I have already expressed the view that it would be immaterial so far as age limit is concerned. Some people think that the younger age limit will give a lot of those hot-headed young people with communist "red" ideas a chance to get votes, and some people think otherwise. But I think that is a kind of small matter; either 23 years or 20 years, I would not insist on either.

CHAIRMAN: What would be your selection in the case of candidature?

Dr. RHEE: I understand that originally it was suggested the age should be 25, then it came down to 23, but the Korean calendar is almost one year behind in certain cases, so whether it is 21, 22, or 23, I think that will not become a serious problem. Of course, the communists who raised the problem would make a problem at any time any way, either 23 or 18, for that matter. But we are not here just to satisfy the destructive element who wants to obstruct and let everybody fail except the communists themselves. Knowing this, as the world does, we just go right ahead with what we have that is the best and most suitable for the circumstances and for the situation.

CHAIRMAN: There is another question bearing on that. Section 2, paragraph (a) of Public Act No 5 for South Korea reads: "Persons to whom any of the following categories are applicable are not eligible to vote or to be elected:

(1) Incompetents, quasi-incompetents, mentally deranged persons, and drug addicts.

(2) Persons who are sentenced and serving prison sentences,

or who are under suspended sentence, or are fugitives from justice.

(3) Persons who have received a sentence of one or more years penal servitude or imprisonment; provided, however, that if three or more years have elapsed since the completion of sentence, or since the time when final decision was made not to execute the sentence, or if the sentence was imposed for a political offence, the person concerned will not be included in this category.

(4) Persons who have been forbidden to vote by law and persons who have been classified by law as 'traitors', 'collaborators' or 'profiteers'."

Section 1, paragraph (1) of the Election Regulations of North Korea reads:

" 1. Exclusive of mental patients and men who have been stripped of their franchise by the verdict of the Court of Justice, all twenty-year old citizens of North Korea shall have the franchise and be qualified for election regardless of their financial status, education, residential zone and their religion."

The question is: Do you consider these provisions as adequate?

Dr. RHEE: These provisions are made of small detailed matters more or less artificially created as a barrier against certain groups of people, and will, in the main, restrict the freedom of the people. Now, political prisoners and all that, it is just a temporary measure to suit the circumstances, and hardly anything is sufficiently important to make any specific mention in this law.

CHAIRMAN: For instance, paragraph 4 in the South Korea Public Act No 5, section 1 - persons who have been forbidden to vote by law and persons who have been classified by law as "traitors", "collaborators" or "profiteers". This is contentious matter and very difficult to handle. "Collaborators" cannot be collaborators in the legal sense until your law says they are collaborators.

Dr. RHEE: I made a public statement when this was adopted. With regard to pro-Japanese traitors and collaborators, and profiteers, who is to decide where the line is to be drawn? I told them that these are questions to be settled when the Government is set up, and that the Government will adopt a special court and draw up general principles and laws, and then judge accordingly. In the meantime, this whole question will create a lot of dispute, and it will give the communists a lot of questions to raise.

CHAIRMAN: Sub-Committee 2 has gone into this a little further. They ask, in their next question, should persons who have held official positions during the period of Japanese domination be deprived of their right to vote and/or be elected. If so, to what official positions should this apply and by what authority is this decision to be taken in individual cases?

Dr. RHEE: I do not think any authority can go very far in trying to discriminate against these people. It is a very difficult question, because even among the people who held official positions under the Japanese regime there are certain Koreans who enjoyed the confidence of the people. They did everything they could to help their fellow men, and so on. I know quite a few of such people.

CHAIRMAN: If it is a question of vote, there will not be so very many of them, and if harm be done in a few cases, realizing it is only a vote, this might even be offset by those cases that are talked about as possible traitors and persons who have received sentences. These numbers, as I say, are very small. Should regulations be brought in to say that people who held positions under the Japanese, for the purpose of voting in this connection alone, should be excluded? Would there be very much harm in that?

Dr. RHEE: My answer to that is this: Even if we do not



mention anything about those traitors, the people who are going to vote know the prominent leaders in their district. They are the ones who know who really are the traitors and who were really pro-Japanese, and when they vote they will not vote for any of their public enemies. So that is all settled; let the voters decide.

CHAIRMAN: Do you consider that the votes of the collaborators who ultimately will be proved to be collaborators, if they are allowed absolute freedom with these votes, will not have any real effect?

Dr. RHEE: That is the way I feel about it. If there are any real collaborators the Korean people will hate them as traitors and even if there are a number of people like that they will have no influence over the general public and will not cut much of a figure in the balloting.

CHAIRMAN: Provided that the general public have ample opportunity to vote?

Dr. RHEE. Yes.

CHAIRMAN: That is going to be a great difficulty, to enable them to vote freely and not as a bloc?

Dr. RHEE: Let everyone cast his or her vote according to his or her wish, without any restriction or any interference. In other words, these are small matters which will be settled by the ballot of the people. Let them speak.

CHAIRMAN: The point is, of course, that Sub-Committee 3 has in mind that if some action is not taken against these people who can reasonably be considered to be collaborators, the influence they have, not in their vote alone but in persuading other people how to vote, may alter the position in some sections of the country. Is that likely?

Dr. RHEE: Dr. Pyun, have you any idea. Do you think the collaborators and those who were regarded as traitors will exert their influence over the voting public and persuade them, one way

or the other?

Dr. YUN: As I understand it, as Dr. Rhee has said, these questions can only be settled satisfactorily by the Government, and in these pre-Government days there is no authority that can do it, even if we agree in principle. So we had better leave it as it is. Anyway, suppose there be some collaborators or traitors, they will not have very much effect on the elections.

CHAIRMAN: There are two other minor questions. In your opinion should persons who cannot read and/or write be given the right to vote?

Dr. RHEE: Unless I am mis-informed, the United Nations decision is to let them all have a vote, whether they are able to read or write or not.

CHAIRMAN: Do you agree that this is a good point? You are free to express your opinion.

Dr. RHEE: I think so. You say freedom without any sort of restriction is all the better, so let the illiteracy restrictions be removed, and people will have complete freedom and no complaint to make.

CHAIRMAN: Of approximately how many members should, in your opinion, the National Assembly of Korea be composed? For the whole of Korea.

Dr. RHEE: One in 100,000 will mean about 250 representatives. If the population of the North is represented here, that will mean about 230 to 250 members.

CHAIRMAN: I think at this point we may ease up a little. Does any member of Sub-Committee 3 wish to ask any questions.

Mr. LUNA (Philippine Republic): In connection with the phrase "adult suffrage" may we be informed as to the legal age at which a Korean reaches majority?

Dr. YUN: A full twenty years.

CHAIRMAN: That means practically 21 in many cases.

Dr. RHEE: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: If the birthday comes at the beginning of the year, they will be 21 by our standards.

Mr. MINTE (France): When Dr. Rhee said they had all the machinery for holding the election, and that they were ready to hold that election, what did he mean exactly? Did he mean that the electoral law passed by the Interim Legislative Assembly was, in his opinion, sufficiently free from foreign interference to be applied for a general election right away?

Dr. RHEE: I think I have explained already that the election law adopted by the Interim Legislature was in question. Some of these things already discussed were included in the election law, and some people raise questions. Finally, the military government again raised the question that some of these items were at fault, so I do not say that the election law is perfectly ready. The law, according to the statement of the military government, should be adopted and approved by the military government, so it is beyond the power of the Korean people to do anything at the present time. But we have an election committee organized and ready to function in every district and myun; and the registration and all that is now in the local governments.

CHAIRMAN: Is that with the approval of the military government?

Dr. RHEE: That is in the hands of the military government, and, therefore, in that respect we are ready.

Mr. MENON (India). The question I am going to ask is not a question we would put to everybody who will come before us, but when we have a leader of the eminence and experience of Dr. Rhee we should like to ask this question. How does he envisage the future? He has made it quite clear that any sort of co-operation from the communists or with the communists is out of the question,

but the present position means that we have not only got the communist party, but in the North we have the communist government which is backed by Russia. In those circumstances, how does Dr. Rhee expect to achieve the objective he has always said he wished to achieve, namely, a united independent country.

Dr. RHEE: I am glad Dr. Menon raised this question, because it gives me an opportunity to explain what we had in mind. From the very beginning we believed, and we still believe, that the Russians will not withdraw control voluntarily. We believe that some kind of force is necessary. We have no military forces to resort to, nor do we expect any other nation to go to war with the Soviet Union in order to save Korea. But still we believe there is a certain kind of force besides military, physical force. That is, moral force. Of course, in these days moral force has very little to do with a realistic view of things, but still I think that mankind has a certain conscience and opinion, and I think that public opinion has a good deal to do with governing relations between man and man and nation and nation. Therefore, what I proposed to do after the failure of the first Joint Commission Conference was to ask General Hodge to let the Koreans go to the United Nations General Assembly. The reply was: "What can the United Nations do, with no big armed force or police force or anything to enforce its decisions? I said this, that the United Nations General Assembly is the high tribunal in international disputes. That was the proposition when they were organising the League of Nations, but the idea was not carried out, so the League of Nations failed. Out of two world wars the men and women of the world began to realise that international justice is the basis of international peace, just as justice between men is the basis of peace in human society.

Our case was a fair case. We had not committed any crime, international or otherwise. All the crime we committed was to

fight against the Japanese, and we did not think that was too much of a crime. We knew that the United Nations verdict would be based on justice, we were quite sure of that. This will have a tremendous influence in influencing and forming world opinion, and if world opinion is sufficiently formed, I said at that time, and I still say it, even a powerful nation like Russia cannot afford always to ignore world opinion and go right ahead with an unlawful mission. As a matter of fact, we believed that <sup>unless</sup> the two world wars had done away with the idea that might makes right, the world cannot avoid another world war. In order to avoid another world war we should stick to the principle that the strong fellow and the weak fellow, the little boy and the big boy, should enjoy his own right of protection. Otherwise there will be no nation under the sun which could enjoy peace and security and avoid another world conflagration.

Knowing and believing this as we do, we feel this way. When the Soviet Union proposed in the United Nations General Assembly the simultaneous withdrawal of occupation forces in Korea, I stated that the United States could not follow this now because, in the first place, the United States is at least partly responsible for the division of Korea, and the United States is, in honour bound to see to it that the division of Korea be eliminated.

Another thing is this. While the Soviet Union was allowed to form and organise a large Red Korean army in the North, and forced the Korean boys to take weapons under the Red banner, we asked General Hodge to allow us to form a national defence force. General Hodge was in the position to say: "We have to deal with the Soviet Union in the hope of eliminating the division of Korea, and if we form a defence army here it will offend the Soviet Union!" I said that I did not see why the United States should not do in the South what the Soviet Union was doing in the North. So we are absolutely helpless and defenceless now. If the United States

occupation forces pull out now it means practically turning over the whole of South and North Korea to the mercy of the communists. Therefore, the United States should not do it.

So, what is the solution. The solution is this. If the United States maintains a small token force here in the South, it does not require a large sum of money from the taxpayers in the United States. Just a token force will be enough because we believe the Soviet Union is not ready to come into open clash with the United States at the present time. That force will remain until such time as the United States and the United Nations realise that it will make no changes to the safety and security of South Korea if we hold a general election and select a government. That government will organise the national defence. We have several groups. We have young people who have been trained. One of these groups is known as the Constabulary, and has been trained. General Hodge has been helping them, and a large number of them are in a position to take up weapons and will be ready for defence purposes. Then we have the Coast Guard, which we hope to make into the Korean Navy some day. It is quite ready for service. There are some other groups, and we will just pick them and form a national defence force.

We can complete that organisation within six weeks if we have weapons, rifles, and munitions. What we propose to do is this. We have sufficient members of these forces, then we will make the 38th degree parallel doubly guarded. At the present time an iron curtain keeps foreign correspondents in the South from going to the North, but, so far as the South is concerned, it is wide open to the people from the North. These people come down with Korean money and with orders and instructions, and weapons, and terrorise the South from time to time. They do this whenever they think fit to do so, and we want to keep them out.

Then what we are going to do is to issue an order to all the Korean boys in the armies in the North to turn round and join the forces in the South in defence of their country. They have been demanding that I should, through a radio broadcast, state a date and hour when all the Koreans in the North should rise and fight, and they have complained that I did not do it. But I asked them: How could I tell our people, without giving them weapons, or even sticks of dynamite, to go out and be butchered by this Soviet army? That being the situation, we know that at least a large number of Korean boys in the Soviet army will join with us, and as soon as the Soviet army withdraws from the North I think we can have some little civil war of some kind. There is no reason why they should fight for the communists against their own brothers and their parents. We believe in the loyal sentiment and spirit of the Korean people in the North. We are in constant touch with them. That is why we believe that this government of some kind, after an election, is the first step towards the solution.

Of course, Koreans believe that the clash between the capitalist democracy and communism is inevitable, and, for illustration, I tell this story. The Soviet authorities issued "Red" money, and told the Koreans who held the old Japanese money to go and exchange it. The Koreans rushed to change the Japanese money into Russian paper money. Someone asked: "What are you going to do with this "Red" money, it is not worth anything?" They said this: "It is not worth anything now, but when the Russians are defeated we will take this money and go to Moscow, and tell them to pay for these things." That is the sentiment of the Korean people. It may be visionary, but that is the sentiment.

Mr. M. M. (India): I hope things pan out in the way that Dr. Rhee wants it, but the Soviet Union is near and the United

States is far away. The Soviet Union has a very definite policy, while that of the United States is subject to change of opinion. And Soviet Russia is, of course, more interested in Korea than the United States.

Dr. RHEE: That is a very realistic view. As a matter of fact we are not unmindful of that fact, and we feel this way. Affiliation with the Soviet Union means enslavement and destruction of our nation as an independent state. Well, if that is the case, what can we do in South Korea. If we voluntarily surrender and go and unite with the Soviet Union, that is the end of it so far as the independence of Korea is concerned, which we do not want. We have to put up some resistance and we have to fight. We do not say that we will succeed, but we cannot surrender our nation peacefully and accept the death of a nation without resistance.

Dr. Menon has said that the Soviet Union is nearer and the United States is far away. There must be some realistic and wise solution. I like to consider what we should do; accept and go and join one of those satellite states? Would that be better for us? What should we do? That is the question, and the Korean people decided long ago that we cannot give up our nation. We fought our hereditary enemies, the Japanese, for forty years. We kept on fighting, and now we are turned over to another master. We cannot peacefully and quietly accept it, and let our country go to pieces. We cannot do that.

The Korean people have definitely decided that if they cannot have their independence <sup>either</sup> in the South or in the North, there will be some bloodshed. I do not say that bloodshed will bring Korean independence, and it will also cause some disturbance to the peace of the Far East. That is a point, too, and whether it is wise for the United Nations and the United States to accept the theory that might is right - let the strong nation gobble up the weak and small



nation, then the United Nations would be in danger, and the United States, one of the two powerful nations, some day will have to fight for its own existence.

If a neighbour enters your house by force, and you have to give him your house and get out because you have no pistols, and he has more than one, and if other neighbours say "Well, he is a dangerous fellow, let him take what he wants", then it must naturally be expected that he will not be satisfied and he will turn his weapons one day on everyone of you. That is not a peace proposition.

Mr. PATTERSON (Canada): May I ask one question in the direction of asking Dr. Rhee to carry on the statement he has just made towards this particular point. The solution he has suggested is that there should be a token force from the United States in South Korea which will enable a government to be formed here. With the formation of a government and with the training and equipping of a force here, an appeal would be made to the Koreans in Northern Korea, and, because of the unwillingness of the Soviet Union to enter into conflict with the United States, these two forces would not be involved. The struggle would be between the Koreans of the South and the Communist controlled groups in the North. Dr. Rhee's hope rests, I take it, entirely on the possibility that that struggle would be brief, because if it were protracted the position would be almost as bad, if not equally as bad, as the position he envisaged if Korea were under the control of the Soviet Union.

Dr. RHEE: Yes. As I said before, I am quite optimistic. As soon as the Koreans in the South have a government representing the entire nation, they will be in a position to speak for themselves. The civil war question is not quite so serious as some people think. We can influence a large number of this communist army to join us. That, of course, does not mean the communist hirelings and the hot-heads. But what we Koreans could do would be a comparatively easy matter, but, so far as the Soviet Union is

concerned, we entirely count on the United States and the United Nations to see to it that the Soviet Union is not left with a free hand entirely to gobble up any territory or any land they want. It is collective security which protects the large and the small nations. That principle should be carried out by the United Nations Commission and by the United Nations General Assembly. I think that to ascertain extent the Soviet commands might be restrained and forced to accept a certain situation.

The Soviet Union is not a problem to Korea alone, it is a problem to the entire world, and people outside Nations will not leave the Koreans alone to combat the Soviet Union alone; at least a moral force will be applied, and Russia will not be left with a free hand to remain in the North indefinitely or to come down to the South and take us. Does that answer you?

Mr. PATTERSON (Canada): Not quite. I should like you to go a step further, and assume that the condition prevails which you have just outlined, and Korea would have some form of collective security. In that event you feel quite sure that the groups you represent would be able to form a government rather quickly, and that the struggle would be left entirely as an internal struggle?

Dr. RHEE: That is all we can do. We cannot raise an army big enough to fight the Russians and keep them out. As far as the communist problem is concerned, the Koreans can take care of that because of the fact that the anti-communist spirit in the North is 100 per cent stronger than here in the South. They are determined not to remain communist indefinitely.

Mr. MANET (France): Has Dr. Rhee serious ground for believing that the United States Government would be prepared to put a token force at the disposal of the government formed in South Korea in such a case?

Dr. RHEE: I want to correct that. We do not say that the United States token force will be controlled by the Korean Government.

Mr. MINET (France): Right, then, but in such a case, does Dr. Rhee not think that this would give grounds to the Soviet Union to leave a token force in North Korea. What would be the result then? Does Dr. Rhee not think it would mean the same thing as full occupation if token forces were left in North Korea and in South Korea?

Dr. RHEE: If the Soviet Union and the United States accept my proposition, we say that the Soviet Union should withdraw because the Soviet Union has no right, to start with, to occupy half of Korea, while the United States has a reason to be here. They have fought our enemy, Japan, and driven them out. They are here temporarily to see to it that the Koreans get on their own feet, until they have some government of their own and can manage their own affairs. And so, so far as the Soviet army is concerned, they have no reason to be there. As I have said, the Soviet Union should withdraw immediately. Still, there is some danger of untoward force by some strong power and there will be complications. Therefore, the United States should maintain a small force here, and let us go ahead with the election and the setting up of a government, and we will hurry and prepare our national defence. Then the United States, when it sees fit to withdraw, will withdraw and we will try to take care of ourselves regarding the communist element in the North. But if the Soviet Union comes down to occupy us by force, that is not only a Korean question, it is a question for the entire world. If the world submits and accepts that, forgetting why the democracies fought two world wars, and says "all right, let the Soviet Union take anything she pleases, because they have the power. We do not want to fight, let them go ahead and do it", then peace is only a matter of a short time.

The nations will have to take a stand or meet the same fate or have to fight for their existence. That is the way we feel about it.

CHAIRMAN: I think, Dr. Rhee, we can thank you for coming. We do appreciate the care you have taken to inform us about your views. You can imagine we feel they are extremely valuable views, and they will assist us very much. If you will agree that if any of the Sub-Committees wish to get further information from you from time to time, we shall appreciate it very much.

Dr. RHEE: As I have said before, I am at your service, and if any of the Sub-Committees need any information, I shall be glad to do anything I can. Thank you for this privilege of meeting you altogether to discuss this matter that is so much in our hearts.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.