DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 1/11/72
By IMB NARA Date 4/3/76

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Feb 35

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

May 6, 1935.

~~EHD:~~
~~CHS~~ (page 11):
MMH:

Bangkok's political report for February (No. 200, April 11, 1935) contains little news of interest.

In connection with Siamese-Japanese relations the following items are of interest: The Japanese cruisers ASAMA and YAKUMO were expected to visit Bangkok during the latter part of March. Twelve Siamese naval officers have been sent to Japan for training aboard Japanese commercial vessels. Mr. Hajime Matsushima, former Japanese Ambassador to Italy, is reported to be leaving Tokyo in April to visit Siam and other countries. Mr. Matsushima has a commission as "Ambassador at large". The Government has provided funds for travel abroad by government officials. It is believed that many of these officials will spend the major portion of their time abroad in Japan.

In connection with these evidences of a rapprochement between Siam and Japan, the Embassy at Tokyo has reported that it has under preparation a report covering this subject.

A

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

1/. I have the honor to transmit herewith the Political Report of the Legation for the month of February 1935.

Respectfully,

James M. Baker,
American Minister

Enclosure:
1. As stated.

Legation File No. 800-SIAM

Pages

THE
AMERICA 9,10,11,
1 11, 1935
7,8,9,10
ebruary 1935 2, 8

AFFAIRS
1935
State

(P.11) sent
May 7, 535

Yes | No

MAY 10 1935

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC ADVISER
MAY 14 1935
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
A.C/S
MAY 7 1935
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

JUN 8 1935

892.00 P.R./71

Authority State Letter 1/11/72
By WM3D NARA Date 4/30/76
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS



A member of the Assembly introduced a bill authorizing the organization of political parties, now severely repressed. The Government's Draft Budget estimates revenue at 84,861,000 ticals; expenditure amounts to 94,585,000 ticals. Expenditure in last years budget was placed at 74,453,000 ticals.

The gradual exodus of European business men and employees which has been taking place for more than two years is still going on. This is believed to be due to a less favorable outlook for foreign commercial firms in Siam in the future and to increased Siamese taxation affecting mainly the high-income brackets into which most of the Europeans fall.

Seizures of smuggled narcotics, principally opium, occur with great frequency, usually from passengers or in goods arriving from the north. It has even been hinted that officials of the Siamese Government are interested privately in this traffic.

WTT/DLY

892.00 P.R./71

Pages

THE
AMERICA
11 11, 1935

9,10,11,

7,8,9,10

2,8

February 1935

AFFAIRS
1935

(P.M.) sent FE
May 7, 1935

892.00 P.R./71

| Yes | No |
|---|---|
| ✓ | ✓ |

MAY 10 1935

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC ADVISER
MAY 14 1935
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

1/. I have the honor to transmit herewith the Political Report of the Legation for the month of February 1935.

Respectfully,

James M. Baker,
American Minister

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
A.C/C.
MAY 7 1935
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

FILED
JUN 8 - 1935

Enclosure:
1. As stated.

Legation File No. 800-SIAM

AFT/rmh

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 1/11/72
By LM311 NARA Date 4/3/76
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Pages

9, 10, 11, 7, 8, 9, 10, 2, 8

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Bangkok, April 11, 1935

No. 200

Subject: Political Report for February 1935

BY AIR MAIL

892.00 P.R.

LEGAL ADVISER
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Division of
FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
MAY 2 - 1935
Department of State

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUN 7 - 1935
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
1935 MAY 1 AM 11 33

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

DIVISION OF CURRENT INFORMATION
JUN 6 - 1935
Department of State

Foto Distribution Check
Grade For JANUARY 1935
To Field | Yes | No
In U.S.A. | ✓ |
MID WFA ONI

MAY 10 1935
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC ADVISER
MAY 14 1935
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Extract (P.R.) sent to Treasury May 7, 1935 - Emt

892.00 P.R./71

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

1/. I have the honor to transmit herewith the Political Report of the Legation for the month of February 1935.

Respectfully,

James M. Baker,
American Minister

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
A-C/G
MAY 7 1935
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

FILED
JUN 8 1935

Enclosure:
1. As stated.

Legation File No. 800-SIAM

AFT/rmh

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 1/1/72
By LMB NARA Date 4/3/72
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

# I N D E X

Political Report for February 1935

Number Forty-six.


| | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| I. | POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES | 1 |
| | Departure of Mr. Stevens | 1 |
| II. | POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES | |
| | Japan | 1 |
| III. | INTERNAL POLITICAL ACTIVITIES | |
| | Revision of Penal Code Referred to Committee | 2 |
| | Case of Phya Devahastin Appealed | 4 |
| | Political Parties | 4 |
| | Crime | 5 |
| | To Study Legislative and Administrative Conditions Abroad | 6 |
| IV. | COURSE OF LEGISLATION | |
| | Budget | 7 |
| | Codes | 8 |
| V. | GOVERNMENT FINANCE | |
| | General | 3 |
| VI. | GENERAL ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SITUATION | |
| | Rice | 9 |
| | General | 10 |
| VII. | ACTIVITIES OF AMERICAN COMMERCIAL INTERESTS | NIL |
| VIII. | ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN COMMERCIAL INTERESTS | |
| | Cars Given to Ministry of Defense | 12 |
| | Old Iron and Scrap | 13 |
| | Air-France Service Extended | 13 |
| IX. | EMIGRATION AND LABOR MATTERS | NIL |
| X. | MISCELLANEOUS | |
| | Narcotics | 11 |
| | Dredging River Mouth of Meklong | 11 |


POLITICAL REPORT

FEBRUARY 1935

AMERICAN LEGATION, BANGKOK, SIAM

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 1/11/72
By WM3D NARA Date 4/30/76
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

# I N D E X

## Political Report for February 1935

Departures of Mr. Stevens


| | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| I. | POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES | |
| | Departure of Mr. Stevens | 1 |
| II. | POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES | |
| | Japan | 1 |
| III. | INTERNAL POLITICAL ACTIVITIES | |
| | Revision of Penal Code Referred to Committee | 2 |
| | Case of Phya Devahastin Appealed | 4 |
| | Political Parties | 4 |
| | Crime | 5 |
| | To Study Legislative and Administrative Conditions Abroad | 6 |
| IV. | COURSE OF LEGISLATION | |
| | Budget | 7 |
| | Codes | 8 |
| V. | GOVERNMENT FINANCE | |
| | General | 8 |
| VI. | GENERAL ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SITUATION | |
| | Rice | 9 |
| | General | 10 |
| VII. | ACTIVITIES OF AMERICAN COMMERCIAL INTERESTS | NIL |
| VIII. | ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN COMMERCIAL INTERESTS | |
| | Cars Given to Ministry of Defense | 10 |
| | Old Iron and Scrap | 11 |
| | Air-France Service Extended | 11 |
| IX. | EMIGRATION AND LABOR MATTERS | 11 |
| X. | MISCELLANEOUS | NIL |
| | Narcotics | 11 |
| | Dredging River Mouth of Menam | 11 |


A recent dispatch dated Tokyo, February 21st, states that Mr. Hajima Mushakoji, Japanese Ambassador to Italy, will be made another Ambassador at large and is reported by the press to be leaving Tokyo in April for Annam, Siam, Persia, Afghanistan and Iraq to bring into closer touch the Japanese diplomatic establishments in those places and the Foreign Office.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 1/11/72
By LMB NARA Date 4/3/76
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



Three elected members of the assembly, two of them

II. POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

February 21st by a Japanese ship. A score of other

Departure of Mr. Stevens

members are expected to visit Japan and other neighbor-

With my despatch No. 189 of February 20th, I trans-

ing countries after the close of the present session.

mitted local comment on the departure of Mr. Raymond B.

On February 4th a Siamese naval vessel engaged in

Stevens, American Adviser in Foreign Affairs.

a Japanese motor trawler fishing in Siamese waters and

the captain and eighteen members of the crew were taken

II. POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

into custody. On February 13th a Siamese corvette boat

Japan

ought another Japanese motor fishing boat in tow to

~~On February 6th it was announced that a Japanese~~

~~training squadron, consisting of the ASAMA and the~~

~~YAKUMO, would visit Bangkok from March 20th to 24th,~~

~~leaving thereafter for Singapore and Australia. The~~

~~ASAMA and YAKUMO are armored cruisers of considerable~~

~~age rated as coast defense vessels and have displace-~~

~~ments of 9,240 and 9,010 tons, respectively.~~

In pursuance of arrangements previously made, two

Siamese naval officers left Yokohama on February 13th

aboard the Japanese steamer BUENOS AIRES MARU for

South America as students to receive a practical train-

Revision of Penal Code Referred to Committee

ing in navigation. A few days later ten more Siamese

The numerous and severe sentences imposed by the

naval officers arrived in Japan for training aboard the

special court trying persons charged with insurrectionary

steamers of the Nippon Yusen Kaisha and the Osaka Shosen

activities, and the fact that the President called

Kaisha.

attention particularly to his desire that freedom of

A Rengo dispatch dated Toyko, February 21st, states

speech and the freedom of the press be restored here

that Mr. Hajima Matsushima, the former Ambassador to

brought about a discussion in the Assembly of section

Italy, will be made another Ambassador at large and is

104 of the Penal Code, upon which the convictions

reported by the press to be leaving Tokyo in April for

have been based.

Annam, Siam, Persia, Afghanistan and Iraq to bring into

At the

closer touch the Japanese diplomatic establishments in

those places and the Foreign Office.

Three

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 1/11/72
By IMBJ NARA Date 4/30/76
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



Three elected members of the Assembly, two of them State Councillors without portfolio, left for Japan on February 21st by a Japanese ship. A score of other members are expected to visit Japan and other neighboring countries after the close of the present session.

On February 4th a Siamese naval vessel encountered a Japanese motor trawler fishing in Siamese waters and the captain and eighteen members of the crew were taken into custody. On February 13th a Siamese torpedo boat brought another Japanese motor fishing boat in tow to Bangkok, where her crew of thirteen were placed under arrest. The craft was found fishing off Koh Chang. Four days later the boat and crew were released for lack of evidence.

On February 22nd the BANGKOK TIMES printed an editorial entitled "Sensational!", playing down rumors of increased Japanese activity and influence in Siam. 1/. The text of this editorial is enclosed.

III. INTERNAL POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

Revision of Penal Code Referred to Committee

The numerous and severe sentences imposed by the special court trying persons accused of insurrectionary activities, and the fact that King Prajadhipok called attention particularly to his desire that freedom of speech and the freedom of the press be restored, have brought about a discussion in the Assembly of Section 104 of the Penal Code, upon which certain convictions have been based.

At the

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 1/11/72
By IM3U NARA Date 4/3/74
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



From the Bangkok Times of February 14th:

At the session which took place on February 5th a member speaking on a draft amendment to Section 104 pointed out that nowadays everything seemed to be covered by that Section, which he stated to be incompatible with Section 14 of the Constitution. After pointing out that a recent decision of the Appeal Court had declared certain parts of Section 104 of the Penal Code to be in conflict with the Constitution, he urged liberalization of the Section to bring it into conformity with the principles stated in the Constitution.

Section 104 of the Penal Code reads:

"Whoever publicly commits any act expressly intended:

(1) to bring into hatred or contempt the Sovereign, the Government or the administration of the State, or

(2) to raise discontent and disaffection amongst the people, in a manner likely to cause disturbance, or

(3) to instigate people to transgress the laws of the country,

shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding three years and fine not exceeding one thousand ticals."

Section 14 of the Constitution reads:

"Subject to the provisions of the law, every person enjoys full liberty of the person, abode, property, speech, writing, publication, education, public meeting, association or vocation."

The Premier stated that the Government had appointed a committee to examine the old laws to see which of them conflicted with the Constitutional regime and recommended that the amendment under discussion be submitted to that committee. After further discussion by several members urging speedy action, the draft was referred to the committee already appointed.

From the

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 1/11/72
By IM3U NARA Date 4/3/74
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



From the Bangkok Times of February 14th:

"At the meeting of the committee in charge of revising all the old laws which conflict with the democratic form of government, held on the 9th inst., it was decided to consider the Penal Code first, together with the various Acts to which are attached criminal punishment."

Case of Phya Devahastin Appealed

The Appeal Court decision referred to above was taken in the case of Phya Devahastin, who was freed from custody as a result of it. On February 19th, however, the Government Attorney entered dika (appeal) from that decision, since it affects the status of many persons already convicted and now serving sentences under the section upon which doubt of its constitutionality was cast.

Political Parties

A member of the Assembly introduced a bill authorizing the organization of political parties, now severely repressed. Considerable discussion ensued during two sessions, in the course of which it was revealed that the matter had also been discussed at length during previous secret sessions. It is evident from the remarks that the conditions submitted by the King found favor with some, at least, of the members of the Assembly but attempts to bring the discussion out into the open failed.

One member alluded to the question of freedom of speech, whereupon he was reminded that the proposal was one of ten articles of a motion which they agreed to be finished with at a secret meeting of the past. To allude to it again was considered to be against their regulations.

Crime

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 1/11/72
By LM311 NARA Date 4/5/74
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



recommendations for better law enforcement and threat-
regulations. If such was allowed then the other nine
articles could be brought up as well. The Chairman
pointed out that the former meeting did not reject the
bill altogether.

A member contended that the Government had not
yet put up its objection in the matter. That being
so, he wished to hear its opinion or the opinion of
members of the second category. What he had already
heard was from members of the first category only. He
wished to know who elected members of the second cate-
gory, and the manner of their election together with
the obligations binding on them as well. As to the
members of the second category, could it be taken that
the Government already had a party of its own? The
Premier contended that a discussion had already been
held on this matter at a secret meeting and hence he
preferred not to make another reply.

Another member submitted that the King was a con-
stitutionalist also, and he forthwith commenced to read
a letter from His Majesty, but was prevented from doing
so by an interruption by the Chairman.

The Premier stated, after some further discussion,
that he was afraid if they did not come to amicable
terms by threshing out the question properly there
might be trouble. Therefore, he invited the members
to meet together to speak further on the point in a
private and dispassionate manner. The subject was then
dropped.

Crime
The Ministry of Interior sent a circular to the
law enforcement officers of the districts making certain

recommendations

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 1/11/72
By IM3U NARA Date 4/5/76
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



recommendations for better law enforcement and threatening replacement if they proved to be unable to cope with the matter.

To Study Legislative and Administrative Conditions Abroad

The Government announced that Ticals 100,000 which had been saved from the funds appropriated for sending post graduate students abroad would be made available for forty persons, half of them administrative officers of the government and half members of the Assembly, to travel abroad for the purpose of studying legislative and administrative conditions in the nearby countries. In speaking in support of this plan, the Premier said that it was his sincere wish to see the Constitution flourish the more, considering the great efforts of the past in securing it. This could only be carried out properly and efficiently when as many of them as possible were able to proceed abroad to study the constitutional conditions obtaining in Japan, with a view to adopting them in their own country.

The proposal is to provide a maximum of Ticals 2,500 per person, transportation to be in tourist class and per diem to be accounted for. Some of the members objected that the sum allowed was too small but the Premier remarked that the Yen was not too dear. While some of the administrative officials intend to visit the Philippine Islands, it is believed that most of the Assembly members will spend the major portion of their time abroad in Japan, as is indicated by the Premier's mention of that country only in his remarks.

IV. COURSE

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 11/12
By IM311 NARA Date 4/30/76
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



The Budget for the coming year is some Ticals 20,IVO,COURSE OF LEGISLATION exceeding year, or about 27%.

The Budget itself is not available to the public as yet

Budget but discussion of numerous items has been reported in

The Government's Draft Budget was submitted to the the press. Criticism of Mr. James Carter, the Finan-

Assembly on February 19th. The Revenue is estimated at cial Adviser, has been freely expressed in the Assembly,

Ticals 84,861,462; but the Expenditures total more than but the Premier made it clear that the Budget was the

this figure, so it has been considered necessary to Government's, not the Financial Adviser's. This

transfer the interest derived from the Currency Reserve matter will be reported in greater detail when the

for the year, which after deducting the expenses of the amendments and adjustments under consideration have

Currency Department, would amount to about Ticals been made.

1,100,000, to be utilized in the construction schemes

of the Railways and Irrigation. It is further proposed

to take from the Treasury Reserve, accumulated from on-

the revenue in excess of expenditures of previous years,

an additional amount of Ticals 8,636,377, thus bringing

the total of receipts to Ticals 94,597,839. In the ele,

As Expenditure is divided into two headings, namely:

Permanent Expenditure, Ticals 85,948,938; and Special

Expenditure, Ticals 8,636,377, bringing the total to

Ticals 94,585,315. Figured in this way, the Budget

shows a surplus of income over expenditure of Ticals

12,524.

General

The Budget for the preceding year was divided into At the end of January currency notes to the value

two main headings: Ordinary Budget and Capital Expendi- of Ticals 185,802,498 were in circulation being Ticals

ture Budget. The Ordinary Budget was estimated to pro- 1,100,000 more than at the end of December and Ticals

duce Ticals 74,467,088 and expenditures were placed 18,700,000 more than at the end of January 1934. The

at Ticals 74,453,225. The Capital Expenditure Budget value of the Currency Reserve was Ticals 145,211,193,

of Ticals 5,183,305 was debited to the unexpended bal- an increase of Ticals 1,100,000 due to coin at the

ance of the Tical 10,000,000 Internal Loan of April 1933, end of December 1934 and Ticals 11,491,305 more than

which amounted to Ticals 2,500,000, and the rest was the end

drawn from Treasury balances.

The

DECLASSIFIED Authority State Letter 1/11/72 By IMBJ NARA Date 4/3/72 REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



The Budget for the coming year is some Ticals 20,000,000 greater than the preceding year, or about 27%. The Budget itself is not available to the public as yet but discussion of numerous items has been reported in the press. Criticism of Mr. James Baxter, the Financial Adviser, has been freely expressed in the Assembly, but the Premier made it clear that the Budget was the Government's, not the Financial Adviser's. This matter will be reported in greater detail when the amendments and adjustments under consideration have been made.

Codes

Extra effort is being brought to bear in the endeavor to bring to completion Books V and VI of the Civil and Commercial Code and the Penal Code by holding special night sessions of the Assembly, with the aim, as stated by the Minister of Justice, of securing the complete independence of the Siamese Law Courts as quickly as possible.

## V. GOVERNMENT FINANCE

General

At the end of January currency notes to the value of Ticals 125,832,498 were in circulation, being Ticals 1,100,000 more than at the end of December and Ticals 18,700,000 more than at the end of January 1934. The value of the Currency Reserve was Ticals 145,711,498, an increase of Ticals 1,100,000 over the total at the end of December 1934 and Ticals 18,958,818 more than at the end

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 1/11/72
By WMH NARA Date 4/30/76
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



the end of January 1934. The reserve was composed as follows:

| | Sterling Securities | Ticals |
|---|---|---|
| (a) Of more than one year's maturity | | 13,992,448 |
| (b) Others | | 27,500,000 |
| Cash at call or at not more than seven days' notice - in Sterling | | 60,846,986 |
| | | 102,339,434 |
| Baht Coins | | 43,372,064 |
| | | 145,711,498 |

The Treasury Balances on January 1st were: In Siam Ticals 36,421,430, a decrease of Ticals 2,567,766 over the preceding month; Abroad, £ 3,041,000, an increase of £ 360,000 as compared with the preceding month. Converting the Sterling into ticals at 11 to the £ gives a total balance of Ticals 69,872,430, or Ticals 1,392,234 greater than on December 1st and Ticals 18,511,777 greater than on January 1, 1934.

## VI. GENERAL ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SITUATION

### Rice

There was little change in the general economic situation in February but the rice industry appeared to be slightly worse off than before. Two Chinese rice mills closed down and shipments were lighter than usual, partly due to lower prices and a tendency on the part of middlemen to hold their stocks for a more favorable market later on.

EA A-c/c

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 1/11/72
By JM311 NARA Date 4/30/76
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Pages



General

The outstanding Siamese businessman of Bangkok, who has been in difficulties for some time, was declared to be insolvent and several of his properties were sold at auction to satisfy bank loans.

The gradual exodus of European businessmen and employees which has been taking place for more than two years is still going on. This is believed to be due to a less favorable outlook for foreign commercial firms in Siam in the future and to increased Siamese taxation affecting mainly the higher income brackets, into which most of the Europeans fall.

EA
A c/c

VIII. ACTIVITIES OF AMERICAN COMMERCIAL INTERESTS.

(Nothing to report)

VIII. ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN COMMERCIAL INTERESTS.

Cars given to Ministry of Defense

It was announced publicly on February 13th that among those who have given gifts of one kind or another to the Ministry of Defense appear the names of Mr. J.K. Hanhart, who gave three Opel sedans on behalf of Messrs. B. Grimm & Co. (a German firm long established in Bangkok), and Mr. A. A. Gentry, who gave three Morris sedans on behalf of Messrs. Barrow, Brown & Co. (a Siamese-registered company, British owned and managed). Both of these firms have received orders from the Ministry of Defense for machinery and munitions and other large orders are in prospect after April 1st when the new funds budgeted will become available.

Old Iron and Scrap

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 11/12
By LMB NARA Date 4/30/76
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



Old Iron and Scrap

A Siamese newspaper stated on February 14th that a Japanese has recently arrived in Bangkok to purchase old iron and scrap for a firm in Japan, being prepared to buy up to 200,000 tons in Siam.

Air-France Service Extended

The air mail and passenger service of Air-France has been extended to include a weekly service between Bangkok and Hanoi, French Indo-China, connecting with the planes from Paris to Saigon and vice versa.

IX. EMIGRATION AND LABOR MATTERS.

(Nothing to report.)

X. MISCELLANEOUS

Narcotics

Seizures of smuggled narcotics, principally opium, occur with great frequency, usually from passengers or in goods arriving in Bangkok from the north. It is admitted that the frontier control on the Shan States border is not sufficiently effective and that comparatively large quantities of illicit opium find their way into Siam by this route. It has even been hinted that officials of the Siamese Government are interested privately in this traffic. The large quantities occasionally found indicate a traffic on rather a large scale.

Dredging River Mouth of Menam

A committee has under consideration the report made by a representative of the League of Nations concerning the practicability of dredging the bar at the

mouth

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 1/11/72
By lm311 NARA Date 4/3/72
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



Enclosure No. 1 with Political Report of February 1935
from Legation at Bangkok, despatch No. 200

Text of Editorial in Bangkok
Times of February 22, 1935

mouth of the Menam River so as to permit entrance to Bangkok by steamers of greater draft. The report cost the Government about Ticals 30,000. While apparently no provision for this work has been made in the budget for the coming year, there is some likelihood that it may be undertaken before very long.

[illegible]

So we are told that, in the autumn of this year, an "ostensibly" civilian air transport company is to start an air service between Tokyo and Bangkok, and the terminus in Siam is to serve, if need arises, as a base for Japanese operations. Japan's army and navy care both supporting the scheme, though remaining hidden behind the scenes. We should hardly think there is yet money in the air service, suggested though of course it would cover calls at Hongkong and Moscow. But if Japan is to make the experiment, she may be assured that all nationalities and interests in this country will wish her success in the venture. That, however, is only a small part of the sensational news. Herewith further items:

"The Japanese Navy has already agreed to give a special course of training to Siamese cadets. Naval instructors are being sent to Siam, and also flying officers.

"Siamese airmen are to visit Japan this summer, and the Japanese Navy is now contemplating a goodwill flight by a squadron of heavy bombers.

"Japanese army and navy pilots are to be included on the ground staff of the proposed new airport, and Japanese engineers hope to lay out the site.

"Minor tariff revisions are to be made,

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 1/11/72
By NARA Date 4/30/76
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



Enclosure No. 1 with Political Report of February 1935
from Legation at Bangkok, despatch No. 200

Text of Editorial in Bangkok
Times of February 22, 1935

"Agricultural experts have been loaned to Bangkok, and several Japanese Universities now announce the award of free scholarships to Siam.

C1

"SENSATIONAL"

Everybody reads nowadays. In fact that is pretty well true of Siam's democracy, even if we have not reached the stage prescribed by the Constitution when more than half of those entitled to vote shall have passed an examination in primary education. All the same that is a fact of great importance all over the world. A newspaper that can secure a good proportion of the everybody in its own country, as readers and buyers, should have struck a gold-mine. But indeed the competition is such that it is not easy to keep any newspaper on the lines of such a highly profitable business; and there is a widespread belief that sensational news provides the easiest and surest means of gaining the attention of the majority of people. For that purpose Siam does as well as anything else, and better than many things since a contradiction is unlikely. Hence we now learn from a Malayan paper than a sensational report is circulating in London to the effect that Japan is making a bid for an air base in Siam - well within striking distance of the new Singapore base. Formerly the tale was that Japan was to supply the cash for Siam to get a canal dug across the isthmus of Kra - also as a means of doing harm to Singapore. That, however, ceased to be sensational; people realized that it was a silly tale. But the great thing is sensation, and Japan manages to keep quite half the world uncertain.

So we are told that, in the autumn of this year, an "ostensibly" civilian air transport company is to start an air service between Tokyo and Bangkok, and the terminus in Siam is to serve, if need arises, as a base for Japanese operations. Japan's army and navy "are both supporting the scheme, though remaining hidden behind the scenes." We should hardlythink there is yet money in the air service, suggested, though of course it would cover calls at Hongkong and Swatow. But if Japan is to make the experiment, she may be assured that all nationalities and interests in this country will wish her success in the venture. That, however, is only a small part of the sensational news. Herewith further items:

"The Japanese Navy has already agreed to give a special course of training to Siamese cadets. Naval instructors are being sent to Siam, and also flying officers.

"Siamese airmen are to visit Japan this summer, and the Japanese Navy is now contemplating a goodwill flight by a squadron of heavy bombers.

"Japanese army and navy pilots are to be included on the ground staff of the proposed new airport, and Japanese engineers hope to lay out the site.

"Minor tariff revisions are to be made,

designed

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Letter 1/11/72
By IMB NARA Date 4/30/76
REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



designed to increase the import of Siamese rice and lumber.

"Agricultural experts have been loaned to Bangkok, and several Japanese Universities now announce the award of free scholarships to Siamese students.

"The city of Nagoya has offered to pay all expenses for a limited number of students to attend the university there."

That sort of thing does not need to be supported by facts; these announcements are merely the material for dreams. But when Japan so arranges things as to increase her import of Siamese rice and timber we shall all wake up. This country's relations with Japan are quite as friendly as its relations with its immediate neighbors, and as we all know visits are exchanged with all of them for the purpose of gaining knowledge. But the fact is, Siam thinks it wise to provide for her own defense these days, and the people who make money by sensational reports, put her action down to instructions from Japan. The drawback to sensational news of that kind is that after some experience of it the "everybody" becomes distrustful and ceases to be excited; and so the news supplied has to be more and more sensational.

---

892.00 P.R./71

FILED
MAY 16 1935
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D. C.

I have the honor to transmit herewith the Political Report of the Legation for the month of February 1935.

Respectfully,

James M. Baker,
American Minister

Enclosure:
1. As stated.

Legation File No. 800 SIAM

WWT/rmh