REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 923284

ORIGIN ACTION

EA-6

RMR 1	REP	AF
ARA	EUR	FE
NEA	CU	INR 5
E	P	IO 5
L	FBO	AID 20
AGR	COM	FRB
INT	LAB	TAR
TR	XMB	AIR 5
ARMY 3	CIA 16	NAVY 5
OSD 34	USIA 10	NSA 3
		NSC 6

1970 MAY 10 PM 1 46

COPYFLO-PBR

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AIRGRAM

FOR RP USE ONLY

A-266
NO.

CONFIDENTIAL

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RECEIVED
MAY 10 1 39 PM 1970

FROM : AmEmbassy BANGKOK

DATE: May 7, 1970

SUBJECT : Roi Et By-election

REF :

The second by-election to the House of Representatives since the re-establishment of parliament, and the first by-election after House and the political parties have had an opportunity to make some kind of a record and some impression upon the electorate will be held in Roi Et Province on June 28. The vacancy was created by a Supreme Court ruling on April 7 that the election of independent MP Samer Akkrapridi was null and void because he had not completed four years of elementary education, a legal requirement for membership in the House. Samer now faces the possibility of criminal charges for falsifying information on his application for candidacy.

The previous by-election was held to elect a successor to a winner in the general election who died before taking office. It took place prior to the convening of the first major session of the House. The Roi Et election therefore offers the first possibility of a test of the extent to which party reputations and the concept of party politics have taken hold in the provincial electorate. It is unlikely that any test will be clear cut, personal popularity rather than party affiliation having usually been the decisive factor in the general election.

The SPT has named Chan Jantachoom, a former MP from Roi Et who ran unsuccessfully in the last election, as its candidate. The party has publicly rationalized Chan's previous defeat by asserting that Chan had spent too much of his time campaigning for other SPT candidates, neglecting his own candidacy. Chan

GROUP 3
Downgraded at 12-year intervals, not automatically declassified

CONFIDENTIAL

FORM DS-323 4-62

FOR DEPT. USE ONLY

Drafted by: POL:JBLee:rs 5/5/70

Contents and Classification Approved by: POL:WCHamilton

Clearances: POL:PHValdes

DECLASSIFIED
Authority

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 945044

has been acting as an adviser in parliamentary matters to General Praphat Charusathien, and Chan's selection as the party's candidate over strong opposing candidates would seem to indicate another Praphat victory in the SPT.

A former Governor of Roi Et now assigned to the Ministry of Interior told an Embassy officer that he had been asked by the SPT, his party, for advice on themes Chan might usefully emphasize in his campaign to convince the electorate the government had done well by them. He said he had suggested highlighting government measures to improve pork breeding and silk raising. (He advised ignoring coconuts, the third item in government's slogans in the province, since coconuts, he said, are not doing very well.) He commented, however, that he thought Chan was a relatively weak candidate -- a man who had had a good political reputation in the province, but who had passed his prime. He thought the race would be in effect a head-on contest between the SPT and the Democrats, and he believed the Democrats probably have the edge.

An interesting sidelight of Chan's candidacy and his affiliation with General Praphat is the report that the Liberal Party would have chosen Chan if he had been rejected by the SPT and that the Liberal Party would not send a candidate to oppose Chan in Roi Et. The head of the Liberal Party, Kosol Krairerk (Phitsanulok) has denied any collusion with Chan and the SPT and maintains that the party has not reached a decision as to whom, if anyone, to nominate.

The Democrat Party, after two false starts by the party spokesman, named Methi Kamphet as its candidate. Methi is a 39 year old former judge who only resigned his judgeship on April 30. The Democrats, who won two of the province's four seats in the general election, have adopted the strategy of playing the underdog and attacking the SPT for pouring money into the province in an attempt to buy the election.

Several of the small parties, Peoples, Nationalist, and Democratic Front have also announced candidates for the election, and it is likely there will be independent candidates also. AmConsul Udorn reports that the Roi Et Governor expects some thirty-five or more people to show interest in candidacy but that only seven or eight will actually register.

After visiting Roi Et and discussing the by-election with officials and citizens, Udorn Vice Consul Harlan Lee reports, "It would take a healthy dose of election fever in the next ninety days for Roi Et to surpass its 51 per cent turnout in the last election. A repeat of heavy spending tactics may do it, and the Democrat Party may attempt to make Roi Et a showcase of upcountry party strength...Major Democrat Party support...may help in publicizing the event, but it remains to be seen whether this first off-year election will generate any interest in the electorate or serve as a test of party strength."

DECLASSIFIED
Authority

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 949044

obviously both the Democrats and the SPT place considerable importance on the election. Both have appointed teams of high level party members and functionaries to lead the campaigning. Still, at this point, it cannot be a foregone conclusion that the winner in Roi Et will be either the Democrats or the SPT. Both could yet lose.

UNGER

DECLASSIFIED
Authority