

Saigon Daily Says Famine, Unemployment Most Feared

From News Dispatches

Fears of famine in Saigon are uppermost in the minds of South Vietnam's new authorities, the Saigon Liberation Daily said in an editorial Friday, according to a delayed dispatch from Agence France-Presse.

Unemployment is another major headache, the newspaper said, explaining that for these reasons the new government is pressing forward with plans to send many residents of Saigon back to the land.

The newspaper complained, the AFP dispatch said, that the economic situation inherited from the former government and its American allies was very unfavorable, but added that it was convinced that the people of Saigon would overcome their difficulties after the new authorities had taken things in hand. The mention of a new administration appeared to confirm indications that a new civilian administration is taking over from the Military Management Committee.

Saigon radio Friday urged farmers to step up food production to meet the "enormous needs" of the population.

Meanwhile, the North Vietnamese army newspaper Quan Doi Nhan Dan reported yesterday that military and civilian bomb disposal crews in Hanoi had defused or blown up 12,700 unexploded bombs, mines and shells to prepare a 168-acre tract of land in Quang-tri Province for farming.

South Vietnam's radio yesterday disclosed that 14 further officers — including a major and two captians — had been arrested late last month in Longkhanh Province. The radio said that the officers had gone into hiding and were acting in a subversive manner. The radio had made a similar announcement of 40 arrests July 1.

A dispatch by UPI correspondent Alan Dawson, filed on July 3 and received yesterday, reported that railways and roads now link Ha-

noi and Saigon for the first time in 20 years.

The Saigon Liberation Daily said Thursday, according to Dawson, that the first trip by rail and bus between the two capitals was made July 1. It takes 40 hours to take the 710-mile journey.

Cambodia

About 200 shops and houses were destroyed in a spectacular blaze in the Cambodian border town of Poipet, Thai border police said yesterday.

The cause of the fire, which blazed uncontrollably for seven hours last night, was not known. Police said they believed that the Khmer Rouge forces, who occupy the town, lacked fire-fighting equipment.

Most residents of Poipet, 210 miles southeast of Bangkok, were forced by Khmer Rouge troops to leave the town after Phnom Penh sur-

rendered to the Communist forces in mid-April. The town was formerly a major smuggling center.

Thailand

The Thai government announced over Radio Thailand in Bangkok that 21 Communist guerrillas had been killed by government troops in northern Thailand last week.

In another development, a Bangkok civil court rejected a complaint filed by exiled former strongman Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn and his wife for the return of nearly \$5 million worth of assets seized by the civilian government after Thai students toppled Thanom in 1973. The court agreed to consider Thanom's plea for severance pay for his 40 years' service in the Thai armed forces.

Thanom now lives in Singapore.