

CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT COMMUNIQUE DATED  
MARCH 15, 1955.

Certain leaders of the political parties are impatient to know the new date of the legislative elections which the present ministerial cabinet is entrusted to organise; that of 17th April, 1955, announced by the King in his message of 23rd January last cannot any longer be adhered to, due to the progress of events.

These events are known to all. The Royal Government believes it is its duty to recall them in a few words; immediately after the referendum of 7th February, hundreds of thousands of citizens have presented to His Majesty the King motions demanding either the suppression or the adjournment sine die of the legislative elections and praying His Majesty the King to exercise directly all the powers to save the country from anarchy.

In refusing to exercise all the powers in accordance with the wishes of the population, the King proposed to the people an equitable compromise. He suggested in the form of reform, some amendments to the present Constitution of the Kingdom in order to permit the people to enjoy a true democracy.

To that end a second referendum has been envisaged by the sovereign to know exactly whether the majority of the citizens desire to proceed with the constitutional reform or to respect the status quo before organising the legislative elections. The thousands of people who came to the Palace during the last few days of the month of February last to renew their confidence in His Majesty the King, went away satisfied with the Royal project of reform.

But certain leaders of political parties have criticised the proposed reform as contrary to the Constitution according to which only the National Assembly is qualified to effect modifications of that Constitution, while eminent jurists were of the opinion that in a democracy the referendum constitutes the sovereign decision and that it is supra-constitutional--"the voice of the people is the voice of God."

In order to avoid all misunderstanding in the future, His Majesty the King has decided to abandon the project of popular consultation through a new referendum. These are in short the principal events which have taken place from 7th February to 2nd March, 1955.

Nevertheless the representations of the population of the towns and countryside continued to flood the Royal Cabinet after as before the abdication of His Majesty Norodom Sihanouk.

The Royal Government thus found itself on the morrow of that abdication in a delicate situation in the face of this rising tide of hundreds of thousands of popular voices hostile to the return of deputies like those of the preceding legislatures. To proclaim deliberately the opening of the electoral campaign in the difficult