

However, it asked the teams to observe the referendum and make a report on the basis of a questionnaire sent to them for their guidance. A copy of the questionnaire to the teams and a copy of the memorandum on the team reports are appended as Appendix "F" and "G" respectively. The memorandum shows that the referendum was an open ballot. It must be stated that the Government never claimed that the referendum would be secret. However, the result, as announced, was an overwhelming endorsement of the Royal Mission.

REFORM PROJECT:

47. Certain political developments took place after the referendum which upset the time-table for the parliamentary elections as laid down in the Royal Message of January 24. After the referendum, people from the interior of the country started coming into Phnom Penh by boats, lorries and buses to demonstrate against the holding of elections. These crowds were received by the King in the Palace grounds. It was announced officially that the petitions presented by the demonstrators were to the effect that Deputies, once elected, completely neglected their constituencies and that the people had no confidence in them. It was learnt from the press that the demonstrators urged the King to retain all power in his hands and not to hold any elections. The King advised caution and pointed out that he had given a pledge to hold elections. He told the people, however, that he would see to it that elections were held on a reformed basis which would allow for direct participation of the people in Government without "intermediaries"

48. On February 19, the King summoned the members of the International Commission and the Diplomatic Corps to the Palace "to explain to them the political situation of the country and more especially the proposal to reform the representative regime in Cambodia." At the meeting the King told the diplomats that people had been coming to the Palace in thousands from all over the country to submit petitions demanding cancellation or postponement of the General Elections and retention of power in Royal hands. He had told the demonstrators that absolute monarchy was out of the question since he had solemnly promised to lead the people to democracy. The people's complaints against incompetence and corruption inherent in "government by party" must, however, be met and he was, therefore, proposing major changes in the electoral system, in the character of the legislature and in the powers of the Executive.

49. The Cambodian Constitution of 1947 which provided for direct election of party candidates to the National Assembly, from single-member constituencies, without residential qualifications must, said the King, be changed to provide for Assemblies in two tiers to be formed by people's representatives who would stand as individuals and not as party candidates and who would have to possess the qualification of three years' residence in the constituency. The scheme of reform proposed was as follows: