

May 10, 1960

**Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the
Hungarian Foreign Ministry**

Citation:

"Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry", May 10, 1960, Wilson Center Digital Archive, MOL, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 5. doboz, 5/ca, 004238/1960. Translated for NKIDP by Balazs Szalontai.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/113405>

Summary:

Károly Práth assesses the poor conditions facing repatriated Koreans from Japan.

Original Language:

Hungarian

Contents:

Translation - English

The large-scale return of Korean citizens from Japan goes on. [...]Of the repatriates, those fit for work found jobs without exception. A large number of young people enrolled at colleges and universities. [...] The technical experts who have returned from Japan are held in high esteem. Their wage-level substantially exceeds that of the other skilled workers and engineers, and in several plants they earn wages that are higher than those of the factory manager. It is beyond doubt that in many cases, the standard of their craftsmanship is higher than that of the skilled workers trained in Korea [...]. It is questionable, however, whether this difference is proportionate to the difference between the wages. Those who have returned from Japan usually enjoy great privileges over other Koreans. Almost every repatriate was given a comfortable flat in a new building. They do not pay for the flat or the electricity. In the first months they get food and heating for free. In order to improve their food-supply, the competent authorities adopted a resolution about the establishment of special goods departments, where only repatriates can shop, in several stores in Pyongyang [...]. These departments are better supplied with goods than the other departments of the stores. To the knowledge of the Czech and Romanian comrades, prices are also lower in these departments. The privileges described above also include the fact that in the cities, the repatriates do not pay fares on public transportation. When we discussed the aforementioned with the Soviet, Czech, Romanian, and Mongolian comrades, they unanimously declared that they refused to believe that the privileged status [of the repatriates] made a good impression on the Korean workers. Sooner or later, they will raise the question whether it is justified to favor the repatriates in terms of supply and wages to such a large extent. [...] such voices are already heard. The Korean workers particularly often say that if so many people return home, they also include a number of people who are not motivated by patriotism and the wish to work but by "other aims." [...] The Workers' Party stated over and over that it was possible that some subversive elements sneaked in, but "one must not look askance at every repatriate" because of a few people. [...]Károly PráthAmbassador