

October 19, 1957
**On the Implementation of the Party's Policy in the
Field of Construction**

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Kim Il Sung's concluding speech at a Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea.

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ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE PARTY'S POLICY IN THE FIELD
OF CONSTRUCTION

Concluding Speech at a Plenary Meeting of
the Central Committee of the Workers'
Party of Korea

October 19, 1957

This plenary meeting is of great significance for improvement in capital construction.

Many good suggestions have been made at the plenary and sectional sessions. All the comrades who took the floor unanimously agreed on the need to make changes in capital construction.

Everybody has rightly said that capital construction is an important sector. But those who failed to carry out their capital construction plans have not been so strongly warned, as was the case with those who did not reach their production targets. This can be regarded as a shortcoming resulting from our officials' failure to fully understand the importance of capital construction.

If we do not build production facilities in time, we will be unable to produce that much; and if we do not build houses and public establishments that are needed by the people, the benefits from the Party and the state will not reach them in a good way.

Worse still, a large amount of state funds are being frozen owing to inefficient capital construction. The faster we create conditions to recover funds devoted for a construction project by quickly completing and putting it into operation and starting production, the better for us to make profit from it. But many comrades are slow in carrying out the plan of capital construction working on the idea of doing it next year if they fail this year, and keeping large sums of money locked up, instead of using it in time.

Had those enterprises which did not fulfil their construction assignments given prior notice of their inability, the state would have diverted the funds to other sectors, such as increasing production or building more houses and cultural and welfare facilities for the people. If the unused materials and funds, appropriated for capital construction in the first half of this year, had been transferred to farmers for irrigation projects, they could have produced more rice. Or, if the materials and funds had been given to the people to build schools, it would have obviously been of great benefit to schoolchildren. So everyone should clearly realize how serious a crime it was to fail to fulfil the state's assignment of capital construction.

At present, however, many officials are not well aware of the significance of capital construction. So they are satisfied if capital construction is carried out smoothly and do not care a bit if it is a failure. That is why there is no strict discipline in implementing plans in this sector. We must eliminate this shortcoming as quickly as possible.

I stressed this point on more than one occasion at Cabinet meetings, too. To be sure, budget funds should not be used carelessly, and funds allotted for capital construction should be used without delay. Materials and funds earmarked by the state for capital construction must be used properly to finish planned construction quickly. Otherwise, it will hamper both production and the improvement of the people's living conditions. This has been emphasized time and again, but is not yet well understood by officials in the building sector.

Therefore, after this plenary meeting, we must fully explain to all the officials and working people the significance of capital construction in the development of the national economy and in the improvement of the people's living standard, and establish strict discipline to prevent the freezing of construction funds and delays in the completion of building projects.

At the same time, we must clearly understand that the demand for construction at present is different both in quality and quantity from what it used to be in the past. During the Three-Year Plan, the period of reconstruction, the main task was to rebuild destroyed factories and to repair and put existing machines in operation. But, now that this stage is over, we should build many new factories and produce more equipment. In the past, the people were satisfied with makeshift houses built with salvaged bricks after they had left the shelters. But today they want better houses. In keeping pace with such an economic development in our country and the growing demand from the people, we should build, for instance, a large number of better houses.

We have a great deal of work to do. We should build more power stations, new blast furnaces, big factories and also many irrigation systems. These are new building projects different from those undertaken in the past period of reconstruction. And the number of projects for capital construction is incomparably greater than in the Three-Year Plan period.

In view of such a change in demand for improved capital construction and such an increase in the number of projects to be undertaken, we will be unable to meet the increasing demand if builders neglect capital construction as they did in the past or if they make little progress in a primitive way without adopting the prefabricated building method. We feel it more seriously in this year's construction work.

The volume of capital construction has increased considerably from the first year of the Five-Year Plan. Despite the change in the requirements of the state and the people for both the quality and volume of this construction, builders are still trying to follow the old methods, and this gives rise to contradictions. Such being the case, the plan of capital construction for the first half of this year has not been carried out, though materials and money have been provided lavishly.

Our experience this year shows that it would be impossible to fulfil the tasks of capital construction under the Five-Year Plan, as long as builders persist with old methods. Hence the need for radical improvement and a great change in capital construction.

A major shortcoming in the building industry is that builders persist with old methods and do not adopt modern ones boldly. By nature we Koreans like to adopt new things and dislike to waste time in a conservative manner.

Why, then, are they so sluggish? This is simply because leading officials in the building industry are not giving proper guidance. Why should the building industry cling to outdated methods, even against the Party line, when all other sectors are willingly introducing new things? Building workers are certainly not lazy people. So why should they hate to adopt new methods? The reason is that functionaries of the

Construction Commission, the Ministry of Construction and Building-Materials Industry and the Department of Industry of the Party Central Committee have not inspired them adequately with the Party's policy on construction.

The introduction of the new is always opposed by the old. It is a law of existence and it is also common knowledge to us communists that no progress is possible without a struggle between the new and the old. We must not think that the old will give in without any resistance when it is being replaced by the new. The old will always resist the new and obstruct progress.

Organizational guidance, however, was very inadequate to teach this to workers in the building industry and induce them to advance further by eliminating the old methods. Already at the beginning of 1956 the Party appealed to bring about a radical change in the building sector by adopting new methods, but leading officials of the Construction Commission, the Ministry of Construction and Building-Materials Industry and other ministries failed to implement this task properly.

We have all favourable conditions that permit the introduction of new building methods. We are producing enough cement and reinforcing steel bars to meet the enormous demand on our own and have trained many engineers as well. Had we proposed such industrial methods of building in 1953 when these conditions were lacking, one might have said it was too early. But today things are totally different now that we have entered a new stage after the fulfilment of the Three-Year Plan.

In 1956 we proposed to mechanize construction, introduce the prefab method and widely use blocks. There were all favourable conditions for these, yet nothing was done. A comrade has just said that the prefab method is not being adopted because machines are not being supplied. But now we can make as many machines as we want. The reason for this failure is not the lack of tower -type cranes but negligence on the part of the officials.

The policy adopted by the Party in 1956 was entirely correct. But during the past year Kim Sung Hwa [Kim Seung-hwa] and some other wicked people in the building industry engaged in anti-Party activities and instead of implementing the Party decisions they opposed them deliberately. Despite this, the Construction Commission, which should combat such practices without compromise, did not abide by the Party principle to struggle against the anti-Party elements and outdated ideas hampering the implementation of the Party's policy. What did this commission do instead of fighting these ideas? It only called for the merger of building establishments saying that construction did not progress because they were not merged. Of course, it would be necessary to amalgamate these establishments. But the point is not the merger but the effort to mobilize the workers ideologically in order to adopt the prefab method.

We faced many obstacles when implementing the Party's policy on the prefab method to speed up construction, cut down building costs and improve its quality. Still, the Construction Commission did not overcome these obstacles. As a result, we failed to build more and better houses faster during the year, though we could have done so. This is due to the fact that leading officials of this commission and different ministries were not willing to accept the Party's policy in a serious manner and, neglected efforts to implement it.

If we had made good preparations to change over to the prefab method during the last year, there would have been nothing to stop us from implementing this year's plan. We could have, instead, achieved much better results.

Is it possible, then, to mechanize building operations and introduce the prefab

method in the building industry? Certainly, there are many possibilities. As I have already said, we are now producing adequate quantities of cement and reinforcing steel bars, as well as building machines and have also trained many technicians. But the Ministry of Machine Industry did not carry out work properly. We entrusted it with the assignment to make cranes last year but it did not do the job to our satisfaction.

Cranes are essential for mechanized work. The technological advances in any country show that machines have been introduced first for the carrying, lifting and lowering of loads because these operations need much manpower and are comparatively easy to mechanize. Loading timber onto a train without cranes, for example, needs many people. But with cranes more timber can be loaded faster and with less manpower. The same can be said for the transport of bricks and for loading and unloading operations by farmers in the countryside. For this reason we gave the Ministry of Machine Industry the task of mass production of cranes.

But this ministry did not consider this an important matter and left it aside, with no one pushing the matter through since then. So the task which was quite within its power was not performed satisfactorily. At present, even small repairshops under the Ministry of Light Industry are making small cranes, and the like, so why aren't they being built at such big factories as the Ragwon [Nagwon] and Pukjung [Bukjeong] Machine Factories? This is because Pak Chang Ok [Pak Chang-ok] who was in charge of the Ministry of Machine Industry neglected his duty and instead engaged in anti-Party activities. Even after that, nobody tried to investigate this matter or push forward the work. The result was that work for the implementation of the Party policy was hindered.

We must first mechanize all the work that we could right now--the lifting and lowering of weights. I have spoken several times about this matter at Cabinet meetings. It costs us more than 30,000 roubles to import a mobile crane. We can save tens of millions of roubles if we import only trucks that cannot be produced locally and build the cranes that are to be installed on them ourselves. We are fully capable of making cranes and, in fact, we are already making them. Nevertheless, leadership officials of the Ministry of Machine Industry did not abide by the policy as regards this matter.

In my view, the technicians engaged in this industry never idled about on the job when making machinery nor was there anything wrong about the work of designers. They are not to blame. They all have grown up in the embrace of the Party and must follow its instructions. Why should they oppose Party line? The fact is that they blindly followed the undesirable elements in the leadership, unaware that they were making a mess of their job. They also regarded Kim Sung Hwa [Kim Seung-hwa], Pak Chang Ok [Pak Chang-ok] and other such persons as influential and believed that things would be all right if they heeded their advice.

Everyone must always be loyal to the organization, and not obey individuals blindly because our Party organization will continue functioning even if leading people are replaced, or anyone occupying an important post steps down. Kim Sung Hwa [Kim Seung-hwa] was fired because, as a minister, he indulged in anti-Party plots. But our Party organization remains as strong as ever. That is why we should always comply with Party decisions and rely on the Party organization, and not on individuals under any circumstances.

What is the use of depending on Kim Sung Hwa [Kim Seung-hwa] who plotted against the Party, with the idea of running away in case of failure? Our Party members should never follow anyone blindly. The mistakes in work in the building industry are due to some officials' blind obedience. You must, therefore, realize this clearly and make great changes in your work.

A comrade has just said that conservatives firmly stand in our way. I suggest that we

dump them into garbage bins. If anyone is reluctant to work with us despite continued persuasion and education, we should not force him to stay but allow him to go his own way. If a man like Comrade Li Byong Je [Ri Byeong-je], Vice-Minister of Construction and Building-Materials Industry, does not heed our advice and cling on to conservative ideas, we have no alternative but to send him away. Why shouldn't we find better people? Why should we cling to the sleeves of such a conservative when new people are turning up one after another?

We are now carrying out a revolution. When the Party decision is adopted this time, we must organize a big campaign to disseminate information about the decision and bring about a great change in capital construction. It is advisable to dismiss from the building industry those who do not follow us and persist in their obstruction for all our efforts to educate them.

Today the people are actively participating in construction and want us to carry out much more construction work at a faster rate. It would be impossible to meet their demand without implementing the Party's policy of introducing new methods in construction. Therefore, I advise anyone who is not willing to implement the Party policy to leave office so as not to hamper our work any longer, whether he is Chairman, member of the Construction Commission, or Minister of Construction and Building Materials Industry. There are many other competent persons.

I once again emphasize that it is most important to fully explain Party decisions to the building workers and make them understand the Party line correctly and mobilize them to advance in this direction. To this end, comrades who are entrusted with the leadership of the Construction Commission or the building establishments under each ministry should give correct guidance to the workers. Otherwise they might again fail in their mission as was the case last year.

The direction we indicated to the building sector last year was correct. We also imbued the active building workers with the Party policy. What other specific direction did they need? But they did not implement the Party policy. Why? Because nothing was organized. It is essential, therefore, to properly organize activities.

What has enabled us to achieve such an amazing success in the development of the national economy since the December Plenary Meeting of the Party Central Committee? That was the result of efficient organization. It is true that decisions are important, but a decision alone does not settle everything. Even if a good decision is adopted today, it would be useless by itself. The Construction Commission and each ministry, management bureau and enterprise must organize work efficiently.

The next thing I must emphasize is that we must overcome the mystification of the prefab method, particularly the production of building blocks. Many people consider a block as something mysterious. But what can be mysterious to us communists? Anything may seem so when one knows nothing about it. But, once one comes to know more about something, it will not be mysterious any longer. A block, for example, is a very simple thing and one need not be clever to make it.

When we proposed to grow rice seedlings in cold beds this spring, some people considered it to be quite impossible. Some specialists regarded this method as strange and argued that it could never be done. At the national conference of active farmers, many comrades were also doubtful about it, saying that it required unusual digging and airconditioning. So I explained it to them, telling them not to continue considering this a mystery.

Our Party entrusted the South Pyongan [Pyeong-an] provincial Party organization with the task of boldly growing rice seedlings in cold beds in an operation involving all the

people. Since then the Party organizations in the province continued to develop this work with the result that the farmers succeeded in growing cold-bed rice seedlings. What is there mysterious about this?

Blocks also do not require special skills. You have only to mix cement with sand and gravel and knead and harden them according to standards, in order to produce them. The question is how long you should take to harden them. Mortar hardens into blocks anywhere. Since it easily hardens even if it is left alone, there is nothing mysterious about hardening it quickly. Making blocks even manually is better than doing nothing at all. It is necessary to apply this method boldly everywhere. It is much better to set up simple factories and produce blocks. But in case this is found to be difficult, large quantities of blocks must be produced even manually.

Block production must be developed determinedly by rejecting mystic and conservative ideas that it is still too early or impossible to make such things in our country. Next year we should thus introduce prefab methods everywhere.

In order to ensure this, the Ministry of Machine Industry should give priority to the mass production of large, medium and small cranes. This must be done not only by that ministry but also in every factory where this is possible.

We should thus introduce the prefabricated building method through a mass campaign. This is the only way we can carry out construction work more cheaply on a larger scale. If only 50,000 won are spent on a house which formerly cost us 100,000 won, we will be able to build two houses with the same funds. In this way we will be saving money and building more houses.

Another thing I must strongly emphasize is that factories, too, should be built with the prefabricated method.

Why cannot we make and use standardized concrete blocks when we can do similar things with steel? Why cannot we make concrete pillars up to a certain standard? Why cannot we use concrete panels and standardized doors when building a factory? These things are quite possible. Blocks can also be used for roads. The trouble is that this is not being done. I saw students from the Songdo Institute of Political Science and Economics paving the Moran bong promenade. At that time I told them: "Even drinking water is scarce in the Moran Hill, so do not take the trouble to carry water to make concrete. What about making concrete blocks near the Taedong [Daedong] River and then transport them by truck? This will save you the trouble of carrying water and you will greatly economize on moulds and other materials. It will also speed up the work considerably and make it easier." Nothing will be impossible if we give consideration to problems such as how to make our work a success, and carry out a deep study to solve the problem.

In fact, we have done nothing more than calling for the application of the prefab method. Now, we must get down to it. This is the urgent demand of the Party and the people.

In this connection I should like to make a few remarks on remoulding the ideology of designers. They are mostly learned people who went to school in the past.

I have been advising them to standardize designs in view of the small number of designers available. I have already said on more than one occasion that there is no need to design each school separately if designers are capable of sitting together and designing a school well, and, if this is found to be impossible, it is desirable to standardize at least school doors and start their mass production. I once inspected an army construction unit and told those present: "You build many barracks. It would not

be hard for you to lay bricks but it would be difficult to make doors because of a lack of carpenters. Therefore, if standardized doors are made at a mill it would not be so hard to build at least a barrack." But they are even failing to do this. As a comrade from the Pyongyang City Planning Institute said in his speech, what is the use of drawing up hundreds of designs, if they are to be labelled as substandard?

Designers must know that today they are their own masters, though they once served the Japanese. In other words, they must know that they are masters of their own state power and members of our Party which is made up of progressive elements of workers, farmers and working intellectuals. There is a difference in the awareness of servants and masters in doing a work.

At a builders' meeting, I said that designers should work as masters by all means. Today they should work as their own masters doing their own work, though they worked for others in the past. They should know that they have been entrusted with such an important task that a small mistake may mean a loss of hundreds of thousands, or even millions of won.

The Party, the Government and the people have entrusted you comrades with designing because they have faith in you. You should, therefore, clearly realize how big are your responsibilities to the Party, the state and the people and also strive to make good designs for the benefit of the Party and the state, knowing that the interests of the state are your own interests. It is important that you should work with this spirit. But our designers lack such a spirit. The point is not making many designs but proper ones, even if it means making a single design, so as to save materials and manpower as much as possible.

And it is important to make designs for the convenience of the people opposing ostentation and art just for the sake of it. In the days of Japanese imperialism only the Japanese lived in good houses, while Koreans resided in ramshackle ones. But now things are different. We should build excellent houses for our people so that they can live a modern life as socialist builders. What should we do to this end? We should design houses that are cheap, easy to build, good to live in and attractive. It is true that this is not an easy job, but designers need not worry. It will be all right only if they eliminate shortcomings revealed so far. It is good to remedy these things boldly when they are discovered.

Next, there is the need to carry out better inspection and intensify Party control over construction. It is not an exaggeration to say that there has been virtually no Party control over construction. Until several years ago our Party functionaries had paid little attention to industry. Therefore, before and after the war, the Party stressed time and again that those who knew nothing about industry were not good to become Party cadres. Our officials are now familiar with both industry and agriculture, and are gradually improving their guidance. Now it is high time our Party functionaries should get themselves acquainted with construction. Some people say they cannot know anything about building affairs since they are not graduates of a college of civil engineering and architecture or a school specialized in this trade. It is a mistake to think that only those educated in such schools or institutes could have the knowledge of construction. If one follows the Party policy on construction closely, one can easily guide it. I think our Party functionaries should delve into the matter of construction.

Of course, there are certain principles concerning building. What I have mentioned here are the principles, and the Party policy itself represents the fundamental principles.

Why cannot our Party functionaries see if the building industry is being run on these principles? What is so mysterious about building that is preventing them from coping with the task? It is just the task of building houses, and not fetching stars from the

sky. Only when they get down to it, nothing will appear impossible. They cannot see what is going well and what is not in the building work because they just fumble about the surface and fail to investigate deeper into the matter. They just ask if anything is finished, and if they get a positive reply, they just jot down the figure.

Looking round the city, I saw windows being installed when other parts of houses were not yet finished. I wondered if they were doing this to enable the people to move in earlier. But that was not the case. The reason was that they were only laying bricks in that particular month and the work results, in terms of building costs, were small. So they were trying to increase the sum by fitting windows and glass panes. If glass panes are broken while the houses are being built, the cost will rise because they will have to fit new ones. Why cannot our officials tackle this sort of thing? The practice of wasting state funds is very common.

When I went to Nampo, I discovered that the glass factory there was very large. I asked the chairman of the Nampo City Party Committee if he knew that the factory that was being built was too large. He answered that he thought it was the right size. As you see, Party functionaries are now guiding construction superficially, instead of delving into the vital things.

We should study construction a little more and put it under Party control and under the supervision of the people. The best method of control is the people's supervision. To Party functionaries who say they have no know-how about construction because they are not technicians, I would like to say that they will get their answer from the people alone. Had you discussed the need to build such a large factory with the rank-and-file Party members, these intelligent people would have said there was no need, or it was improper to do so, or anyway they would have given you good advice. Then we could have already realized this. If you find it impossible to supervise it yourselves, you can put it under the people's supervision. There is no better way than to put it under the supervision of the masses. Control by the Party and the masses over the building industry should be tightened. Only then can we effect a great change in construction.

Furthermore, undertaking construction in a campaign involving all the people is very important. I had already proposed this task right after the armistice. As a matter of fact we have built a great deal through such a movement. Many people have been mobilized and they have participated in construction with much revolutionary zeal. As a result, the great success we witness today was made possible.

A question which deserves serious attention at present in undertaking construction work through such a movement is to ensure that farmers are widely mobilized to build many irrigation projects. As you know, farming was seriously affected by drought this spring. Members of agricultural cooperatives managed to save maize crops by watering them even with jars. In spring and autumn two years ago crop yields also suffered greatly from drought damages. This must be our lesson and we must mobilize all the farmers in order to dig wells, build reservoirs and irrigate even dry fields in an attempt to ward off drought.

This requires much manpower and funds. The state cannot afford to fork out all the expenses. Farmers should, therefore, mobilize their efforts and funds as much as possible to push forward this work successfully. In places like South Hamgyong [Hamgyeong] Province riverbeds are now higher than paddy fields, and a little rain will cause flooding, doing damage to dikes and crops and washing off land. The most urgent task in such places is to tackle the rivers' problem. Such projects can be undertaken by agricultural cooperatives themselves as much as they want. According to the Minister of Finance who recently visited South Yonbaek, the farmers there proposed that they would build systems to irrigate inadequately watered fields by raising funds themselves. The only thing they want is that the state sends them

technicians and sells them materials. When I visited Kaepung [Gaepung] County some time ago, many farmers suggested that they would undertake construction of irrigation systems at their own expenses. They said they must do it in our time, although they had been unable to do it in the years of Japanese imperialism and had never thought of doing it under the rule of Syngman Rhee. They added that several ri would get down to it, if the state provided them with technicians and materials. Farmers everywhere are proposing the same thing. We should meet these justified demands and organize this work properly.

At present farmers' income has risen considerably. So we should guide farmers in order not to let them waste the money they earn and instead encourage them to make investments first in productive construction and then in building a cultural life. We should help them construct irrigation systems, expand orchards and build roads, bridges, schools, clubhouses, dwellings and similar things.

To help them carry out this work, the state should of course sell them much material. It will have to supply them with cement, reinforcing bars, glass and timber. So the officials in charge of these sectors must ensure that various building materials are produced in larger quantities for farmers. Then, farmers will be able to increase production and rapidly transform our countryside along modern, socialist lines.

I would like to stress again that we should boldly undertake construction everywhere in a campaign involving all the people. The same applies to towns and factories as well. Factory and office workers can save money and build their own houses by working together in small groups in such a way that they would build a house for each one of them every year. If they organize work well in this manner merchants and entrepreneurs will also be able to build many houses.

As you see, many things can be built through a campaign by all the people, using the people's efforts and funds in various ways, in addition to large-scale construction undertaken at state expense. This alone will enable us to rebuild quickly the county and provincial seats, other towns and the countryside which were destroyed. It would be improper to be satisfied with what we have built so far, instead of launching such a campaign.

We should never rest on our laurels but must mobilize all available forces and funds for productive, as well as urban and rural construction and strive together to carry out our Party's policy on construction.

Today, our Party's basic principle on construction, as I have already explained, is to see, first, that the state and cooperative organizations build by the new method and, second, that construction is extensively carried out in a campaign by all the people. To implement these tasks, I think, all Party members and the rest of the working people must struggle bravely, according to the Party policy.