

THE ECONOMIC PRESS SINCE THE SECOND CONFERENCE (1994)

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In order to realize the decision of the Ministry of Culture and Information (MCI) on the organization of annual conference of the economic press, the 3rd Conference of Economic Press was held today in this conference hall of *Thời Báo Kinh Tế Saigon* - the press agent of the HCMC People's Committee which has succeeded in publishing the *Thời Báo Kinh Tế Saigon*, the *Saigon Times Weekly*, the *Saigon Times Daily*, the *Saigon Eco*, and the *Saigon Tiếp Thị*.

This Conference is hosted by *Thời Báo Kinh Tế Saigon* and the *Phát Triển Kinh Tế* under the direction of the MCI, the Central Committee of Culture and Ideology (CCCI), the Vietnamese Association of Journalists (VAJ) and HCMC People's Committee and HCMC Committee of Culture and Ideology.

This conference could have been held, according to the plan, at the end of 1995, but it has been postponed until the 8th Party Congress has finished, therefore the topic of this conference is "The Press

and the Task of Popularizing Economic Information and Realizing Resolutions of the 8th Party Congress".

As we know, the 8th Party Congress has affirmed great achievements of the Party policies on economic renovation in the past 10 years, and worked out the development plan for next periods (from now until 2000 and 2020) with a view to taking steps forward on the path of industrialization and modernization. Developing the economy is the central task, and the keystone of the plan is to consolidate the Party. In realizing this plan, the role of indoctrination and of the press is of

great importance. Particularly, journals supplying economic information and carrying out economic researches also play a remarkable role.

The economic press must understand its task and opportunity in the next stages of development of the country, in the assignment trusted by the Party and Government. Therefore, the attendance at the conference includes not only economic journals, but also representatives from the Vietnam News Agency, central and local newspapers, the economic sections of radio and television. In addition, the presence of many representatives from

economic management bodies, big companies and press agents has also made the conference more meaningful and made the discussion more diversified and realistic.

One meaningful fact is that the conference is organized in HCMC, a city with heroic history and economic strength. It certainly brings us a lot of emotions and thoughts. Thank the HCMC government for helps given to, and being present at, this conference.

In order to assign tasks, we should estimate our forces and workload. In recent years, the economic press has made good progress both qualitatively and quantitatively, and played an increasingly important role in information business. At present, in our country, there are 40 economic journals and a lot of weekly and daily newspapers, radios and televisions with economic sections. The number of journals in Vietnamese and foreign languages published by banking, trading, finance businesses; by universities and research institutes is on the increase and these

journals become important sources of economic information.

Topics discussed in the economic press are expanded and diversified, of good service to the task of popularizing policies of the Party and Government on the economic renovation. Economic reporters have mastered the Party's policies and gathered information about the national production as best they could. Many coverages not only reflected the situation but also suggested reasonable solutions.

Economic journals today have become companions of businesspersons and helped them find out, or choose, right decisions. Economic journals have paid proper attention to relations with readers and feedback from them with a view to improving the quality.

The army of reporters, managers and editors of economic journals has increased. Nearly 80% of them are graduates from economic schools. Many of them can use computers and have good knowledge of foreign languages needed for their studies. Some of them could write articles in foreign languages. Facilities for working have been improved and modernized considerably.

Generally, since the 2nd Conference, the economic press has basically completed the task of "improving the quality of the press to popularize resolutions of the Party Mid-term National Congress" set forth in last conference; discourses and conclusions presented in the 2nd Conference have given encouragement and orientation to economic journals. The layout was improved and the issue was on the increase. Economic sections of radios and televisions were increasingly interesting and were enjoyed so much by the public.

Besides carrying success stories in business circle, the economic press has

also made reports on economic crimes (embezzlement, smuggling, waste of resources, etc.). In certain serious cases, many journals have cooperated in investigating and denouncing crimes, provoked the public opinion into protesting and required related government bodies to handle the cases properly.

Besides these strong points, there are many defects in the economic press as a whole:

- Some journals weren't loyal to their policies, carried articles outside their fields and made repetitions of information.

- Full attention hasn't been given to the economic security and there were a lack of regulations on this matter, that is why until recently, there have been some leakages of confidential information which led to losses for economic concerns. The MCI is working in cooperation with related bodies to draft regulations on preservation of economic secrets before submitting to the Government.

- Only a few of success stories or reports on new factors and achievements in economic activity were carried in economic journals.

- There were only a small number of good report and coverage. We lack articles that discovered new economic models or predicted new tendencies. Certain reports supplied wrong data because of prejudice, subjectivity or even ulterior motives.

- Some journals didn't make complete correction of their own mistakes of fact or opinion as required by law thereby causing unrests in the public opinion and business circle.

What mentioned above is an outline of the state of affairs of the economic press after the 2nd Conference. In order to meet requirements posed by the task of popularizing economic information and realizing resolutions of the 8th Party Conference, the



MCI has put stress on the following matters:

- Keep on realizing of the Party's Order 08 and the Government's Decree 384 on consolidation of the economic press; directing the coordination of economic press and editors of economic sections of other journals, radios and televisions.

- Supplement, amend and make regulations on the press business appropriate to new conditions; supplement, amend and make regulations on treatment of journalists with a view to encouraging them to improve the quality of journalism.

- Cooperate with related bodies to supply training courses to journalists, to help them make excursions or attend seminars held in the country or in foreign ones (in 1996, MCI gave some training courses and sent journalists abroad to attend seminars).

In order to make this conference a step forward of journalists in the task of mastering and popularizing resolutions of the 8th Party Congress, we suggest concentrating our discussion on the following problems:

- 1. What should, and could, economic journals and economic sections of other journals do to popularize completely the Party economic thoughts-the core

of which is the policy on industrialization and modernization and to indoctrinate the public with Party resolutions and make these resolutions new social forces which can bring the nation to a new stage of development?

- 2. What problem should we pay attention to in order to improve quality of reports and stories, overcome defects in the task of popularizing economic information and increase the persuasiveness and fighting spirit of economic reportage? What should we do to make economic journals reliable companions for businesspersons, laborers and managers in the common struggle for national defense and development?

- 3. What measures should we take to improve ability and quality of economic press in the new stage? What experience and lessons in the task of developing and controlling the economic press should we learn and apply in the future?

These are important questions that we must answer. At this conference, we look forward to hearing opinions from the central and HCMC leadership and from all representatives at this conference. We wish we will draw a wide variety of conclusions of these problems from this important conference. ■