

The Joint Frontier Area Development of State and Enterprise: The Land Reclamation and Clearing Operations of Eastern Taiwan by the Taiwan Development Company in Wartime

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ABSTRACT

Taiwan Development Company (TDC), a national policy company, was founded in 1936, around this same time that eastern Taiwan's development was being discussed and a plan for the mountainous region's development was unfolding. For this reason, the Government-general urged TDC to take the lead in opening up eastern Taiwan. By 1937, TDC had set up some offices and undertook land so as to manage the business of eastern Taiwan.

Eastern Taiwan's terrain was in the beginning suited to plant cotton to supply the needs of Japan's textile industry, with the rest mostly being official wastelands. The Government-general and TDC decided to target tropical cultivation in eastern Taiwan, and under this background TDC began a process of land reclamation, immigration, and land clearing in that area. Eastern Taiwan became basically a laboratory for TDC's tropical cultivation, which was then popularized and brought over to western Taiwan. Growing mostly plants during the primary stage, TDC installed the largest and most comprehensive undertaking of land in eastern Taiwan.

The priority of land reclamation in eastern Taiwan was to develop wastelands and make them more cultivatable. The clearing of land had to match with the policy of the Government-general to grow tropical plants and was of highly strategic importance. During the primary stage, TDC tried to plant new crops that came from the Malay Peninsula and Indonesia for military purposes. However, during the last phase of war, because the planting of new crops failed and all natural resources were exhausted in a decisive engagement, TDC turned to planting native crops of Taiwan.

The company's land reclamation and clearing operations enterprise in eastern Taiwan did not meet with expectation. The effect from land clearing was the worst, as the undertaking of land in eastern Taiwan was located within river wastelands and

hills. Hence, in the mid-1930s, due to national defense and economic system priorities, the colony's government carried out a development policy of the frontier area through the national policy company, whereby the Government-general proceeded to investigate, experiment, and draw up the guiding principle first. The national policy company then concentrated its capital, technology, and labor power to develop eastern Taiwan. After TDC's lead, Japanese investment enterprises entered eastern Taiwan in droves, united with the state in great efforts to develop eastern Taiwan's frontier area in wartime.

Keywords: Taiwan Development Company, Eastern Taiwan Development Committee, the plan of mountainous region development, national policy company, colonization government, tropical cultivation, land reclamation, land clearing, frontier area development