Agriculture and Sino-Canadian Relations: 
Hsieh Pei-chi and His Farmers Program*

Paul Sinclair and Dongyan Ru Blachford

Abstract

This article discusses the intermediary activities of Hsieh Pei-chi, a Shandong-born, Taiwan- and U.S.-educated historian active in Canada’s main agricultural province of Saskatchewan. We focus on a China Farmers Program, a project jointly implemented by China’s Ministries of Agricultural Machinery (農業機械部 Nongye jixiebu) and Land Reclamation (農墾部 Nongkenbu) and the Province of Saskatchewan during the early 1980s. The study carefully examines the intermediary, broker role played by Hsieh in the complex negotiations between Chinese ministries and a regional Canadian government. Drawing on Fei Xiaotong’s research on rural Chinese society and the historical record of Chinese intermediary activities, the article reflects on the role and significance of the Chinese zhongjianren (中介人 intermediary) in China’s modern interaction with overseas partners.

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