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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY  
S/AE

BIOGRAPHIC BULLETIN No. APR 24 1951

To: Special Assistant, Intelligence

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April 24, 1951

From: Division of Biographic Information

*France*

FRANCIS PERRIN, FRENCH HIGH COMMISSIONER OF ATOMIC ENERGY

On April 21, 1951 Francis Perrin, professor of atomic and molecular physics at the College de France since 1946, was officially named to assume the post of French High Commissioner of Atomic Energy, previously held by Communist Frederic Joliet-Curie who was dismissed in April 1950. The long delay in confirming Perrin to his present post is generally attributable to the Government's concentrated efforts to weed out Communist membership in the Commission and possible also to the strong objection of Perrin to the proposed appointment to the Commission of an official of the National Industrial Association (corresponding to the National Association of Manufacturers in the United States). Perrin, apparently backed by the Socialist group in the Government, is said to have threatened his resignation if the appointment went through. Despite his known friendship with Joliet-Curie, Perrin is not a Communist sympathizer. Although primarily a scientist and not concerned with politics since the establishment of the Fourth Republic, he can probably best be characterized as tending toward the Socialism of the Bluz school.

Perrin was born in Paris in 1901, the son of the late Jean Perrin, prominent scientist and Nobel Prize winner. After obtaining his Doctorate in Science at the University of Paris in 1928, he became a lecturer and later full professor of theoretical physics at the Faculty of Sciences there. He served as an artillery lieutenant in 1939 and 1940 and was visiting professor at Columbia University the following year. In New York he founded the Comite Republicain and was a member of the Executive Committee of France Forever. In 1942 he joined the Free French and became their Chief Representative in the U.S. Subsequently appointed in December 1943 to the Algiers Consultative Assembly and later to the Paris Consultative Assembly, he was a warm exponent of the American point of view. An ardent Gaullist at the start, Perrin later expressed some anxiety concerning what he considered anti-democratic measures and undue clerical influence in the provisional government. After World War II, he was appointed to the French Commission for Atomic Energy for a five year period. He has served on the UN Atomic Energy Commission, attended two UNESCO Conferences, and lectured abroad.

A prolific writer on scientific subjects, Perrin is an acknowledged expert in his field. He enjoys a reputation for honesty, reliability and sound judgment among U.S. representatives in Paris. A scientist first and foremost, he is less interested in the administrative duties of his position.

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By SCIT, NARA, Date 11/24/93

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