



DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.
CANBERRA.

In reply quote No.

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QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE - HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, 1st September, 1965

AID TO THAILAND AND VIETNAM

Sir Wilfrid Kent Hughes

I ask the Minister for External Affairs whether the two broadcasting and communication centres at Khon Kaen in Thailand and Ban Me Thuot in South Vietnam are being provided by Australia under Colombo Plan aid. If so, can the Minister inform the House why the former is 15 months behind schedule and the latter is also held up by delays in the provision of equipment? Does the fault lie with the contractor or the Department?

Mr Hasluck

The station in Thailand is being provided under our scheme for S.E.A.T.O. aid and the one in Vietnam is being provided under the Colombo Plan. I have no close and recent knowledge about the one in Vietnam. My Department held the view that the one in Thailand did not seem to be coming along as quickly as we would like and, with the co-operation of my colleague the Minister for Supply, I sent an officer up there from Australia last June to examine the conditions which may have caused or contributed to the delay. As a result of that visit, I have received a report which is being examined at the moment in my Department. We hope that as a result of that report further delays with the Thailand station will be avoided. At this stage, I certainly would not like to make any comment by way of apportionment of responsibility for any delays that may have occurred, but I can assure the honourable member that the matter is being examined very closely.

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600

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South Vietnam - Relations with Australia - Aid