

~~Official Use Only~~

MEMORANDUM FOR FILES

July 27, 1957

Subject: Field trip to visit agricultural settlements in Phuoc Long Province near Cambodian border.

From: Alan L. Campbell

With Alan Navre, USCM field representative, and his Vietnamese field assistant, I made an all day trip to Phuoc Long Province on July 25 to visit the sites of three agricultural settlements near the Cambodian border which are being financed by USCM.

We left Saigon by jeep station wagon at 6 a.m. and arrived in Lee Ninh about 10:00. We drove to the border and talked to the guards there. About a dozen brand new Mercedes Benz 190 sedans which were being driven in convoy to Vientiane were stopped there. The army officer in charge of the post told us that the Cambodians are becoming increasingly difficult about the papers required by the drivers of these cars and about traffic back and forth in general.

From Lee Ninh we drove to Dudo in Phuoc Long Province over a road which has until recently been considered insecure, but which is apparently secure enough now. No special security precautions were noted.

In Dudo we visited a retired Vietnamese rubber plantation official who has an experimental farm on which he grows oranges, lemons, grapefruit, pepper, coffee and a few other less important crops. His farm, unique in the area, is proof that the land there will support certain industrial crops. The government has ordered several thousand pepper plants from this man for the Phuoc Long settlements.

There are three settlements of about 300 to 600 people each about half a mile apart. The settlers are mainly volunteers from Central Viet Nam, around Tourane, and partly refugees who are being resettled for the second or third time. The settlers are now housed in long shed-like bamboo and thatch buildings waiting for the land to be cleared and for their houses to be built. The location is very isolated and surrounded by dense forest. There are several hundred army troops temporarily stationed there for security.

One of the three villages is appreciably nicer than the other two. This is said to be because the people in the village are from near Hue and the President is taking special care of them. The houses in this one village are of wooden construction with corrugated tin roofs. These houses cost about 10,000 piastres each, and, although it was originally intended that all the houses would be the same, it has been decided that the wooden ones are too expensive. The rest of the houses in this and the other two villages will be bamboo construction.

The alleged favoritism described above is said to be the source of bad feeling in the settlements. Also, according to Navre who was up there two weeks ago, the progress since his last visit is imperceptible. It looks to the casual observer as though some of the settlers could get off their duff and build their own houses if they had any initiative.

The country is beautiful and the people who get settled there should consider themselves lucky.

ALCampbell/ol

Official Use Only
OFFICIAL USE ONLY