

called Bui Chu and Phan Thanh Gian (see map). These lands had been leased out to refugees at a rental of 400 to 500 piasters per year for a portion of 4 x 12 meters. Because of their location, population, and fertility, both Tam Hiep and Tan Mai wanted them to be included in their respective jurisdictions.

The Tan Mai group argued that before building their village they had applied through the Tam Hiep Communal Council for a total area of 50 hectares which was to include both the Bui Chu and Phan Thanh Gian plots. Tam Hiep did not forward the request to the government, and only the 7.06 hectares belonging originally to Mrs. Tieng had been ceded. Tam Hiep's position was that "Northerners and Southerners are fellow countrymen," and those who built their houses on the 7.06 hectares were to belong to Tan Mai, while the others would automatically become a part of Tam Hiep. Tan Mai had several times asked the Chief of District to arbitrate the conflict.

The population of Bui Chu was 900 people; that of Phan Thanh Gian 1,000. These settlers stated that they desired to become a part of Tan Mai (Bui Tieng) rather than Tam Hiep for the following reasons:

1. Since these groups of refugees are not far apart, it would be administratively convenient for them to be in one village.
2. Their linguistic, cultural, economic, social, and spiritual interests united them with Tan Mai. Tan Mai had built a secondary school which refugees' children as well as native children could attend. Tan Mai had an orphanage, a first-aid station, a separate maternity hospital, and a self-sufficient economy.
3. For public order and security, Tan Mai had an efficient militia organization. The settlers feared that if they belonged to the large Village of Tam Hiep, which had many families of "elbow-bending" and "gambling-addicted" veterans; they might become victims of house breaking and robbery, and Tam Hiep would not be able to protect them.

These arguments were rejected by Tam Hiep Village for the following reasons:

1. Tam Hiep had already offered Tan Mai its communal land, which should be a sufficient concession for one village to make. To grant more would establish "a village within a village."
2. The argument presented by Tan Mai according to which "any land occupied by the refugees should be separated from the original territory" is indefensible. Why should they not follow

the general principle prevailing throughout the world by accepting the jurisdiction of the village in which they had built their homes? If they occupied all the land they wanted, they could eventually smother Tam Hiep Village itself.

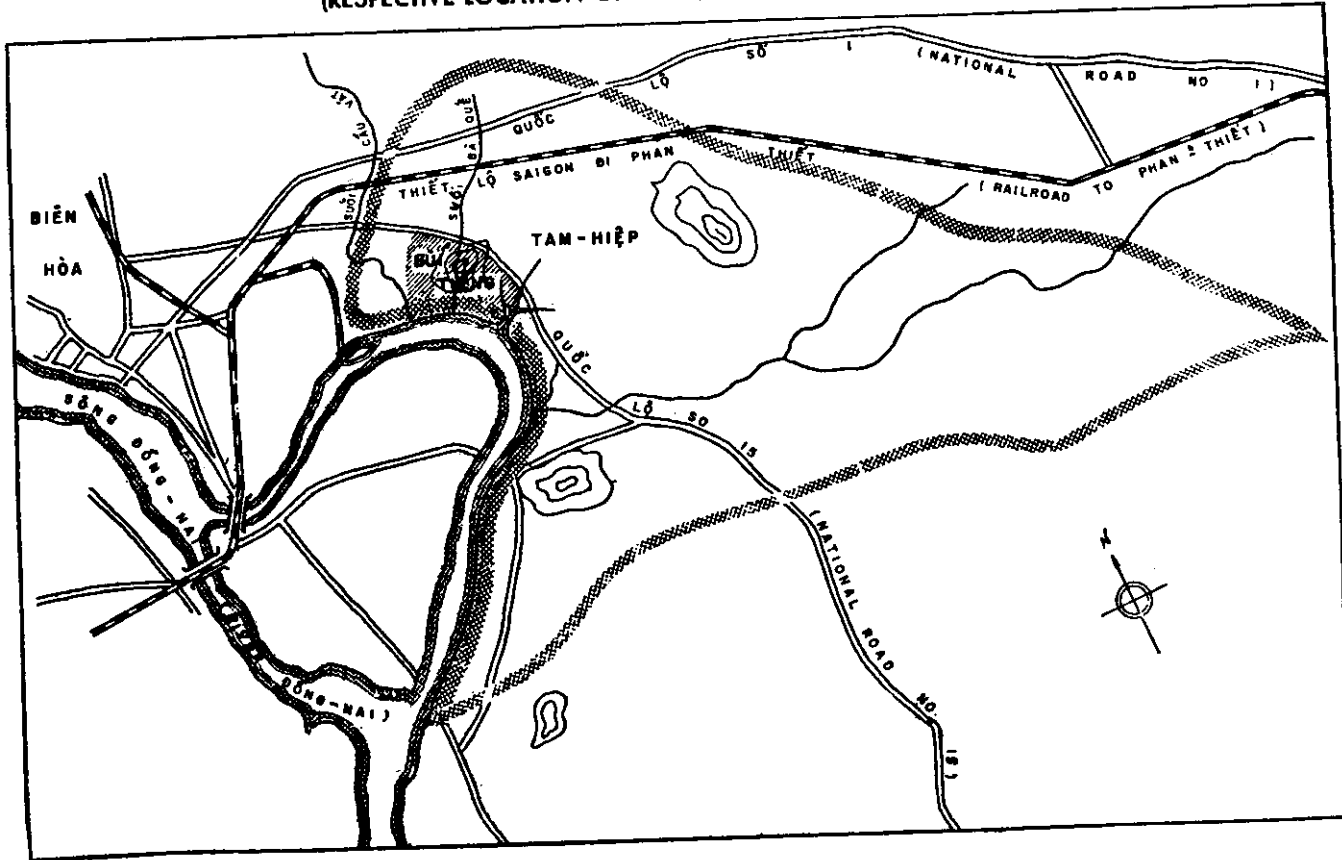
3. If the other side of the national highway was granted to Tan Mai, it would cut Tam Hiep off and thus make patrolling difficult, especially at night (see map).
4. At the time, the Tam Hiep population included 2,000 native villagers and 40,000 Northerners (former soldiers disbanded from the French army): all of whom were under the jurisdiction of Tam Hiep Village Council. If, in some future time, those soldiers were to combine with the Tan Mai residents and force Tam Hiep to merge with Tan Mai and submit to Tan Mai Village Council, the Tam Hiep element would become a minority in its own home.

The chairman of Tam Hiep Village Council sensed that the Tan Mai settlers would sign the lease on Mr. Thu's land at the price of 12,000 piasters, once they were satisfied with the boundary arrangements. But he was not willing to sacrifice communal land and "betray Tam Hiep's interest" for the sake of a settlement. Indeed, when he had proposed offering Mrs. Tieng's land to the Tan Mai resettlers, he had been criticized by his own villagers even though his proposal has been agreed upon by the council. Father Hy, on the contrary, accused the chairman of Tam Hiep Council of stubbornness. He thought that the chairman was relying upon his influence to force acceptance of his position (one of his sons was a district chief in another province and another a captain of the Civil Guards; one of his younger brothers was a school inspector, and another in the administrative service of the province; and he had relatives and influence at every level of the administrative service). Fr. Hy stated  
t if the problem was not settled, the refugees would appeal to the President.

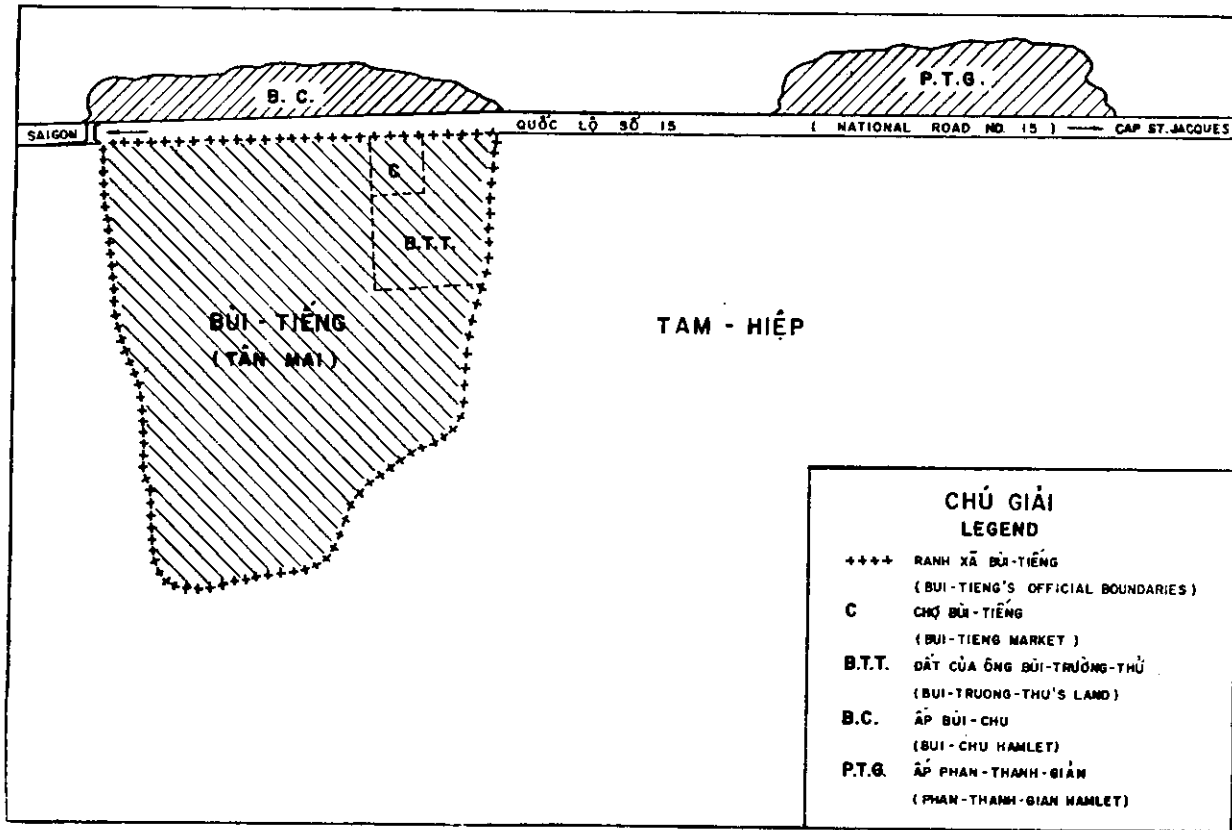
Bui Chu and Phan Thanh Gian Hamlets continued to pay their taxes to Bui Tieng. On Sept. 22, 1958, the district chief recommended to the Department of Interior that Bui Tieng be integrated into Tam Hiep. Three days later the Communal Council of Bui Tieng again sent petitions to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Presidency asking for separation. Father Hy enigmatically added that the conflict was motivated by personal interests rather than public considerations.

The Central Government continued to decline to interfere in the dispute.

(RESPECTIVE LOCATION OF TAM HIEP & BUI TIENG VILLAGES)



(RESPECTIVE LOCATION OF BUI CHU & PHAN THANH GIAN HAMLETS)



## *The Commissar and the Law: Deviations from the Civil Service Regulations*

On April 23, 1957, a new agency was created which in 19 months was to resettle 85,000 persons in 46 new communities occupying 25,000 acres of newly cleared or reclaimed land. The machinery for undertaking this vast resettlement program was the General Commissariat for Land Development (GCLD), an agency directly attached to the Presidency. Its responsibilities included performing technical research and applying appropriate means to exploit the undeveloped lands in south and central Vietnam; transporting settlers to development centers, distributing land, and supplying available facilities for purposes of cultivation; establishing a basis for community development in the centers by increasing productivity and improving agricultural techniques; and coordinating with the Vice President for implementing all necessary plans for these purposes.

On the same date Mr. Bui Van Luong, of the Commissariat General for Refugees and Rehabilitation (Comigal), was designated head of the new agency. Comigal, which had been created on September 17, 1954, and which had been under Mr. Luong's direction since May 15, 1955, was being gradually dissolved as the refugees were absorbed into the existing governmental and community structure.

Mr. Luong expected to absorb some of the personnel from Comigal into the GCLD in the reorganization that would follow. A more immediate personnel problem, however, was that of absorbing the staff of the

Agricultural Development Directorate (ADD), which was the immediate predecessor of GCLD. Its Director, Le Thanh Cuong, was "a young, dynamic specialist in agricultural equipment," according to a GCLD official. "He had enjoyed the confidence of the President during the year of ADD's existence (it was dissolved a few weeks before GCLD was set up). It had an autonomous budget, which enabled Cuong to recruit his entire staff without dealing with the Civil Service Directorate at all. His special employment procedures permitted him to pay salaries far above the civil service scale. This meant that when we absorbed his staff into our agency, and subjected them to the normal government procedures, we had to make drastic salary readjustment, and either run the risk of losing valuable personnel or find some means of continuing their special perquisites."

Mr. Le Thanh Cuong had originally justified his special salary schedule in terms of the urgency of the project, the exhausting nature of the work, the unstable and insecure character of the employment offered by a temporary agency, and the shortage of competent personnel. In commenting on these circumstances, Mr. Hoang Ngoc Than, Director of Cabinet at the GCLD, recognized that Cuong "had sufficient reason for arranging high salaries for his technicians. Many of the engineers had just returned from study abroad, and deserved special consideration. Most of the time they had to work in the field under difficult conditions which justified extra compensation. But I can't see why the clerical and administrative staff, who worked much the same as their counterparts in other government agencies, should have received so much. Mr. Luong and I felt that at least this aspect of the old personnel policy would have to be corrected."

Accordingly, when all ADD personnel were absorbed by GCLD in May, Mr. Luong informed the clerical staff that their salaries would be readjusted in conformity with Civil Service regulations. This announcement resulted in many resignations, as had been expected. This did not, however, affect the working conditions of GCLD. In a few cases clerks were promoted to section chiefs on the basis of ability and educational qualifications; but by the same token some section chiefs who lacked the civil service qualifications were demoted.

"We applied the rules without discrimination," recalled Mr. Than. "I know that many employees felt these measures were too 'drastic,' and I can understand their feelings. But what else could we have done? To prolong the irregularities would have made it more difficult to correct later and would certainly have been a drain on our budget. The Presi-

dent's instructions were to exert every effort to economize on manpower and costs, and we adhered literally to this policy."

But the technicians posed a different problem, according to Mr. Than. They constituted a third of the ADD staff, and would be hard to replace. "A decision to reduce their salaries to the levels paid technicians in other agencies would have resulted in mass resignations. This would have had serious political and economic effects for the nation, since Land Development was a high priority program of the Diem administration. Moreover, engineers and agricultural technicians in GCLD would probably have to spend 25 days out of every month in the field, sometimes doing heavy manual labor and sometimes dealing with Communist trouble-makers. Few of the salaries seemed out of line, and we decided not to make any reductions in technicians' salaries. In order to justify this decision to the Civil Service Directorate, we assigned special titles to those with the highest salaries (who, fortunately, were the most competent). These included the rank of Directors, Advisors, Special Project Officers, and Inspectors. Ordinarily these positions are also entitled to additional allowances in cash and in kind, such as personal transportation and housing, usually worth several thousand piasters a month; but in these cases we ruled that such additional allowances would not be made."

The absorption of ADD personnel having been accomplished, there still remained the problem of accommodating the Comigal staff, which was eligible for re-employment or release as the agency was gradually dissolved. Mr. Luong felt that these employees, who had already served under him in his former capacity, were also entitled to special consideration. Here the principle of selection—for there were by no means enough vacancies in GCLD to absorb the staffs of both ADD and Comigal—was that of seniority. "Those who had been longest with the agency," Mr. Than explained, "were the most competent and experienced. Since we could absorb only half of the Comigal personnel, we decided to take on the specialists and technicians whom we needed, and all of whom we could absorb, and then re-engage the temporary and contractual personnel on the basis of tests (in administration, typing, driving, or other skills). We deliberately set high standards for these examinations: for example, clerical applicants had to have ten years of education (certificate of *trung hoc de nhat cap*, equivalent to the French *Brevet d'étude de premier cycle*), which only a few could claim. This meant that most would be terminated, but they would have no ground for accusing us of favoritism or injustice. Those who passed the tests were paid under the Civil Service scale; those who did not receive a separation allowance equivalent

to one month's salary unless they were terminated for disciplinary reasons. This gesture was not required by the regulations, but it did much to preserve good relations with Comigal's former employees.

"We had thus adhered to our budgetary instructions and had regularized our salary schedule with that of other agencies, except for the technicians whose pay was justified on other grounds."

Because of the unusual character of the GCLD operations, however, other deviations from Civil Service regulations still had to take place. The Director of Administrative Services at GCLD argued that "There are instances when a footpath serves you better and quicker than the main road. In early February 1958, I remember, scores of laborers were needed at a center in the highlands to clear the ground. The work had to be done before the rainy season, and we were forced to hire them without the preliminary usual Civil Service procedures, including the affidavits,<sup>1</sup> political investigation, and budgetary clearance<sup>2</sup> that would have taken months to complete. The Civil Service Directorate was unhappy about this, but we had no alternative if we were to accomplish our mission."

Another Civil Service regulation that the GCLD considered "unacceptable" was the limitation on field trip per diem allowances to two weeks. This rule had been designed to discourage administrators from absenting themselves too long from their desks. According to Mr. Than, however, "This principle should not apply to us. Our technicians are expected to spend as much time in the field as possible. Our mechanics are expected to visit the centers to repair equipment and vehicles. But this regulation tended to return them to Saigon on the 14th day of their trip and to restrain them from making other field trips until the 1-week full-pay period had been exhausted. Since some centers were located 2 or 3 day's travel away from Saigon, the effectiveness of these technicians was greatly reduced. For this reason we suspended the application of this regulation to our technical personnel.

"Even in the matter of classification, Civil Service regulations could not be strictly followed. Each of our resettlement centers had a chief with the responsibility for supervising the entire project, helping farmers, conducting the population census, and reporting on all activities of the center through GCLD channels. These responsibilities were imposed by law (Article 9 of Decree 976, October 4, 1957), and represented a vital element in the success of the field operation. The Civil Service Directorate

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<sup>1</sup>Evidence of birth and identification is important in Vietnamese employment procedure to avoid Communist infiltration and misrepresentation.

<sup>2</sup>Before each individual is recruited, under the surviving French colonial administrative system, separate budgetary clearance is required to insure that an agency does not exceed its authorized strength.

suggested that these chiefs be paid according to their educational level, as was the case in all other Civil Service appointments. But because no special knowledge or background was required for center chiefs, the pay would vary between 3,000 and 4,000 piasters a month, which was not enough to attract personnel of the caliber we needed. The Director of the GCLD administrative services argued that a center chief was more than a regular clerical employee. He spent all of his time at the center, living under conditions approaching hardship because of the primitive circumstances of material life. The centers were often situated in malarial forests. Diarrhea was endemic to the entire region in most cases. Housing facilities were non-existent or inadequate, especially at first. And the duties performed by the center chiefs were equivalent to those of a district chief or engineer. We therefore settled on a flat salary rate of 7,000 piasters on a contractual basis. We realized that the Civil Service Directorate considered this a violation of regulations, but feared that any reduction in this figure would deprive us of essential personnel. Even so, we had received only a few applications from outside and had to train some of our qualified staff to serve as center chiefs."

Some of the decisions Mr. Luong brought to the President himself, who gave his full support. As Mr. Luong explained it "The President was the pioneer in the Land Development program and recognized that the urgent character of the work sometimes required one to cross the fine lines of normal government procedure. I myself, a career civil servant, am fully conscious of the need for adhering to rules and principles if one is to avoid caprice and intuition as a basis for administrative decisions. *Dura lex semper lex est.* In order to demonstrate our good faith to the Civil Service Directorate, we recruited only temporary employees throughout these direct routes, and invited the Civil Service Directorate to approve the application forms *nunc pro tunc*. The other categories of civil servants were processed according to normal Civil Service procedures prior to their formal employment.<sup>8</sup>

"Rigidity is a vice if carried to extremes, and flexibility has its place even in an apparently routine personnel function. That is why I decided that center chiefs should receive 7,000 piasters a month, the equivalent of a Saigon engineer's salary, and that our technicians should receive full per diem for their field trips. But it also explains why the normal pay scale and per diem regulations are still applied to our administrative and clerical staff."

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<sup>8</sup>Personnel at the GCLD were classified as follows (June, 1959):

Regular	80
Contractual	16
Daily	32
Temporary	2088
	<u>2216</u>

## *Technician's Dilemma: The Kenaf Fiber Case*

Late in 1957 Mr. T. T. Trinh, a French-trained engineer in charge of the Technical Division at the General Commissariat of Land Development, was considering the experimental introduction of a new fiber crop to Vietnam. The proposal, first suggested by an American technician, involved planting kenaf in the resettlement villages in the central highlands.

Vietnam's two principal industries, fishing and farming, required extensive use of fibers for nets and rice bags respectively. Although hundreds of tons of jute were produced domestically, this output had to be supplemented by annual imports of 5,000 tons of unprocessed fiber and of jute bags. An additional \$50 million worth of textiles were also imported annually. An effort to reduce this drain on the foreign currency reserves of the nation had been started in 1956, when French planters began an annual production of 300 tons of jute suitable for making sandals. The use of the Land Development centers in South and Central Vietnam for producing other fibers could theoretically fill all the domestic needs and in time even provide an exportable surplus.

The General Commissariat of Land Development (GCLD) was established on April 23, 1957 under the leadership of Mr. Bui Van Luong, a dynamic, experienced administrator who, after leaving his post as province chief, had served with spectacular success as head of the refugee

resettlement program.<sup>1</sup> The ambitious Land Development program, originating with President Ngo Dinh Diem himself, was designed to resettle unemployed, landless, and unstable elements of the population in centers scattered throughout the vast undeveloped regions of the south and center. This would, it was hoped, develop the agricultural economy, extend help to underprivileged elements of the nation, and create centers of loyalty that would constitute a barrier to Communist sabotage and subversion in the countryside.

The planting of fiber crops in the centers had not been part of the original resettlement plan, which had envisaged the production of rice and vegetables as the agricultural basis for the communities. It was soon learned, however, that soil and climatic conditions and limitations in the amount of land available would make it impossible to support the expected populations with those relatively low-yield crops. In 1957, therefore, USOM proposed introducing the relatively high-yield kenaf fiber crops in the resettlement centers, but because the farmers had not been resettled until sowing time, it was clear that they would be too busy building houses to begin immediately raising a crop with which they were unfamiliar. USOM therefore agreed to postpone the introduction of kenaf and instead suggested an experimental planting at the Gia Ray experimental station of the Department of Agriculture. One hectare of kenaf was accordingly planted there, enough to prove that the climate and soil of Vietnam were suitable.

After the success of this experiment, USOM presented 6,000 kilograms of kenaf seeds to the GCLD for further development. These seeds would be distributed to farmers by the GCLD, which would also provide general supervision and technical advice. After a careful study of the kenaf crop, Mr. Trinh was convinced of "the quality of the fiber, its usefulness to the Vietnamese economy, and its probable value on the international market," he said. "Kenaf is similar to jute and ramie, which we have already used here, but it is easier to grow than either of these and it can flourish on almost any soil. Moreover, its productivity per hectare is greater than that of jute.

"But the seeds and scientific information were not enough. The central problems were administrative: securing official approval of an experiment involving many families living in different regions of the country under all kinds of weather might fail; and, once approval was won, organizing a program many times larger than the original experiment."

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<sup>1</sup>See "Administrative Planning at Cai San" and "Land and Boundary Questions at Tan Mai Village," elsewhere in this volume.

Mr. Hoang Ngoc Than, Chief of Cabinet at the GCLD, noted that "farmers, especially if they are resettled to start a new life under strange circumstances, like to stick to what they know: growing rice, corn, and potatoes, where a good harvest is almost certain if they follow their well-established customs. Kenaf was too new a crop for them and they were reluctant to plant it."

Many of Mr. Trinh's colleagues in the GCLD were also skeptical of the proposal. Criticisms were rampant, especially among those who were unfamiliar with the properties of kenaf: it would be difficult to grow; it would not be profitable; there was no reason to take such a risk when it was known that the settlers could safely grow food; corn and potatoes would bring in a crop in only a few months; perhaps the fiber would not bring the desired revenue; the technique of extracting the fiber was not understood by the farmers; the fertilizer requirement would reduce the profits; the problem of marketing the fiber was unsolved. These criticisms were presented to Director General Luong, who, however, withheld his judgment until Mr. Trinh had explained his position.

Several weeks after the USOM proposal had been presented, Mr. Luong called a conference including the Chief of Cabinet of the Economy Department, the Director of Planning, the Director of NACO, USOM technicians, and representatives of a local jute processing firm. Mr. Trinh was invited to present the economic, industrial development, and technical factors involved. He spoke of the shortage of foreign exchange and the farm income problem. After he was finished, he reported, "most of those who supported the proposal turned out to be the same engineers, mostly younger men, who had favored it in the first place. Among these, fortunately, was Hoang Ngoc Than. There were a number of senior officials who were cautious. Some, whose recent experiences had robbed them of their fighting spirit and intellectual curiosity, opposed any action at all, arguing that many years ago planters had introduced jute: therefore planters could just as easily assume the responsibility for introducing kenaf. Some regarded kenaf as merely a cheap form of jute. Perhaps they feared they would lose face if the younger engineers succeeded. And the jute processors were equally conservative, expressing the fear that kenaf fiber was too hard and would ruin their equipment. These arguments were carried to as high as the Vice President.

"At this point I saw that I was either going to have to drop the project or find some way of carrying it through. I would be acting irreproachably if I let it drop: my responsibility as Chief of the Technical Direction was primarily to study and recommend programs, not to full-fill them. But my conscience would not be satisfied with this abnegation

of responsibility when the nation needed fiber crops and I could so easily see that they were supplied.

"One possibility would have been to leave the whole matter to the Commissar now that I had presented my case. He might reject the proposal, but after all as head of the entire program his responsibility to the national interest was much greater than mine. On the other hand, in order to accept the proposal, he might very well have had to overrule most of his own staff, a responsibility which I was reluctant to ask him to undertake.

"So I finally decided to take matters in my hands, with Mr. Luong's permission, of course, and with the understanding that I would be out of a job, and my colleagues and supporters among the younger elements would be seriously embarrassed, if I failed. I still recall what Mr. Luong told me when we discussed the implementation of the project: 'You confirm my judgment, I made further studies of experiences with kenaf in India and Thailand and became convinced that failure was almost impossible.

"I had the right amount of support. Mr. Than backed me 100 percent. Mr. Dempsey brought a jute bag and a kenaf bag back from Thailand, filled both of them with rice, and test-dropped them from a height of 5 meters (only the jute bag burst). The Chief of the Agricultural Equipment Division at GCLD made extraordinary efforts to clear the land and prepare the soil for the plantings. Mr. Dempsey helped me convince the fiber processors that kenaf fiber was not coarse enough to ruin their equipment, and proved that the fiber was even stronger than jute (although not in all respects equal to it). Strangely enough, the psychology of these people led them to accept the word of a foreign expert where they might have doubted that of one of their own countrymen.

"After a few months of preparation, I ordered 160 hectares planted in kenaf in 1958. The settlers protested immediately, joined by their supervisors in the centers. Our field workers explained that although the cultivation was different from that of rice, it was not difficult, and that a well-prepared plot of ground would produce a very high cash yield. We tried to explain that this was not just a government program, but one that would benefit them. Sometimes when our efforts failed we had to resort to a 'if you work, you eat' policy.

"The farmers weren't the only ones that needed convincing. Funds were delayed because of government red-tape (involving studies of the current international prices). Foreign exchange was still being allocated for the importation of jute, and one monopolistic firm deliberately im-

ported cheap, low-quality jute in order to kill off the infant kenaf industry. Eventually the Vice President stepped in and worked out a plan for progressively substituting Vietnamese kenaf for imported fibers.

“Certain facts about kenaf helped, and I kept pounding away with them. One hectare of rice could not produce more than 3,000-4,000 piasters, whereas one hectare of kenaf would bring in 11,000-12,000 piasters.

“At the end, when the harvest came, the farmers were the most satisfied of all. I arranged for transporting the kenaf to the Saigon processors, and the farmers realized the cash value immediately. An industrial fiber exhibit was organized in Saigon late in 1958. It succeeded in arousing great interest among the visitors. A few weeks after the exhibit closed, the GCLD received requests for kenaf seeds from all over South Vietnam—more, even, than had been anticipated. And in February 1959, GCLD announced its plan to cultivate 2,000 hectares of kenaf that year. The early resistance of certain of our own officials and among the settlers had been overcome. The problem now was to find funds enough for the vast project. Mr. Than and I decided to ask for help for the farmers from the National Agricultural Credit Office (NACO). NACO agreed to lend the settlers 3,000 piasters per year per hectare planted in kenaf. The farmers, knowing they had to repay the loans, began to use fertilizer more carefully than they had that first year when it had been passed out gratis. They also gave more time and effort to cultivation, understanding the outcome might result in big revenues for them.

“Mr. Luong was apparently satisfied with the results. On May 15, 1959, with his approval, Mr. Dempsey of USOM left for Europe to arrange exportation of 200 tons of Vietnamese kenaf. Arrangements were made with USOM to import over 200 decorticators and planting equipment which will reduce working hours from 300 to 16 or 17 per hectare.

“Kenaf was no longer an infant industry.”

## 10,000 Dike Builders: Community Project at Ha Lien

Reconstructing Vietnam's desolated countryside after the restoration of peace required the use of scarce manpower and equipment. The assignment of these resources called for tact, ingenuity, and a willingness to establish priorities among a vast number of competing claims. In Khanh Hoa, a province lying between the sea and the Truong Son Mountains, many dikes and dams were in need of repairs, along with numerous other public works. Normally the reconstruction of these dikes was undertaken upon application by individual farmers to the village and then successively to the district, the province, and the Nha Trang Rural Engineering Sector.<sup>1</sup> Since 1956, Mr. Nguyen Cong Huan,<sup>2</sup> agricultural engineer in charge of the Nha Trang Sector, had the responsibility of studying and passing on proposed projects after they had been approved by units of the local government. Requests he classified "urgent" were transmitted to the Agricultural Directorate and the Department of Agriculture for possible consideration as American aid projects. He decided because of the

<sup>1</sup>The Rural Engineering Service was supervised by the Department of Agriculture. It consisted of four sectors:

- a. The Sector of Hue, including the provinces of Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, and Binh Dinh.
- b. The Sector of Nha Trang, including the provinces of Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan.
- c. The Sector of the Highlands, consisting of 4 provinces of the Highlands.
- d. The Southern Sector, consisting of all provinces of the South.

<sup>2</sup>Mr. Nguyen Cong Huan descended from a 19th-century agricultural pioneer named Nguyen Cong Tru, who had developed the two districts of Kim Son and Tien Hai at Hai Duong Province in North Vietnam. A graduate from the Agricultural College in Hanoi, he had entered governmental service in 1933 and had traveled extensively to study agriculture and irrigation problems.

local importance of the Ha Lien project not to ask for the entire sum from American aid, but to devise means for implementing it jointly with those who would benefit from it.

Ha Lien, a region located near the sea, was periodically submerged under salt water during high tides. Only 40 percent of its population were fishermen, the other 60 percent being either landowners or farmers and wood-cutters. Mr. Millard Cox, an agricultural specialist assigned to the United States Operations Mission in Vietnam, considered these farmlands marginal because of the intrusion of alum and sea water which limited the yield of satisfactory crops to one every third year.

"A dike had been erected privately at Ha Lien in 1932, but the damage caused by high tide during wartime, when no repairs were possible, resulted in its eventual collapse," according to the Executive Secretary of the Village Council of Ninh Ha. "Rice crops were thereafter ruined by sea water and submerged by floods alternately. The population asked the French authorities to repair it, but without success. Under the Viet Minh<sup>3</sup> regime, the authorities repaired it 5 or 6 times, but so hastily and ineffectually that the dike offered little protection against the high tides. Toward the end of 1955, twenty landowners submitted an additional request for help to the new regime. It was approved and forwarded to the authorities through proper administrative channels."

### PREPARATIONS

Early in April 1956, Engineer Huan began to study the construction of a new Ha Lien dike. "Before I can start work," he explained, "I have to see the location personally, learn something of the history of its operations, and then acquaint myself with the opinions of the population to see whether they would be willing to provide labor, financial assistance, or other resources. Only then can I work out the technical details of such a project. An operation like this includes two phases, the one requiring construction contractors, and the other involving the organization of a community project to provide an adequate supply of unskilled labor."

Administrative arrangements for financial support were completed under American Aid Project Agreement No. 30-12-046. This was approved by the government on April 9, 1956 and accepted by USOM on July 16, 1956. On July 23, 1956, a total budget of 320,000 piasters was granted for the purchase of materials and the construction of two control gates for the dike. These were to be constructed in stone and concrete, two and a

<sup>3</sup>Communists who occupied the area after the withdrawal of the French, some of whom went underground after the Republic was established in South Vietnam.

half by three meters wide. Six small concrete gutters half a meter wide were also planned, with wooden locks for the control gates and gutters. The same locks would stop sea water from flooding ricelands at high tide, and fresh water from flowing into the sea during the dry season. "Because of the violence of the sea water and floods during the rainy season, it was necessary to place heavy stones at both ends of the bridge to reinforce it. All of these operations had to be undertaken before the construction of the dike could begin," according to Mr. Huan.

No aid contributions were necessary for the portion of the project to be carried out under community development procedures. "It was necessary to cooperate closely with the village and district authorities, however," stated Mr. Huan. "I therefore presented the general outline of the project to provincial authorities in order to elicit their administrative help so I could schedule the technical and community phases of the operation consecutively."

#### PUBLICITY

Mr. Huan considered the possibility that this project might be resented as a form of forced labor. Every year intervillage community development projects were said to require 8 to 10 days' work from each member of the youth organization, not including the time absorbed by other village projects having only local interest. The total of such labor demands was still much less than in former years, Mr. Huan knew. "During the French occupation," one youth recalled, "we had to spend 20 days on *corvée* every month, and provide our own food at the same time. The French did not allow us to keep much of our own rice on hand for fear we would give it to the Viet Minh. Besides being underfed and working without any respite we were beaten and even threatened with death. When the French soldiers assigned us work we could not do, they would beat some of us to frighten others and to force them to do the work; once they assigned 9 men to move a big heavy safe, and when they could not move it, they shot 1 man, and forced the 8 survivors to do it. We had to repair roads, bridges, and water pipes which had been destroyed by mines; build blockhouses and fortresses; and carry war booty. Today we are reconstructing villages and contributing to the welfare of our neighbors. Moreover, now we do not have to work so hard. We still have plenty of time for rest and can enjoy what we are doing."

In spite of reassurances like these, Mr. Huan reasoned that in

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<sup>4</sup>Men and unmarried women between 18 and 25 in most villages in Vietnam were automatically members of a youth organization which held regular meetings for political and civic instruction and the performance of community services.

order to gain complete cooperation from the people upon whose work the project would depend, it would be necessary to carry out extensive advance publicity on community development projects. "I decided to ask for cooperation through all the organizations and services available, such as Civic Action personnel, the local militia, youth organizations, and the district information center," he stated. "I trained the youth leaders and asked the district information center to organize meetings at which the farmers could discuss and criticize my project. At these meetings some said that this approach would fail, since the previous authorities had attempted it without success. Others proposed erecting the Ha Lien road first, before starting work on the dike. I let the people discuss these points and the youth leaders answer them before explaining to them the advantages of the dike. I emphasized the farmers' request for the erection of the dike to protect their ricelands and stated that if their neighbors had a spirit of mutual aid they could erect it themselves. I explained how mutual operations could be carried out by the villagers, and pointed out that if the people of each village helped the people in other villages, they would be helped in turn by the others, so that eventually the benefit would be general. Finally everybody agreed. At the beginning most people considered the community development operations as a form of *corvée*, and even now a few of them still think so. Most, however, have realized the value of the work they have done, and have changed their minds.

"After the campaign had been completed, I approached the local administrative service to explain the project. I planned to ask the village youth organization to hand banners in their villages months ahead in order to add to the publicity. I suggested the following slogans: *A patch of land is a piece of gold. Block salt water, give prosperity to the people. Sweat will give us a golden bowl.* I hoped the youth leaders themselves would sell the idea in their villages."

#### RESEARCH AND PLANNING

"On September 12, 1956," Mr. Huan recalled, "440 village youths, the district chief, and I attempted to dig and erect an experimental dike. I hoped that this experience would help the leaders supervise their own groups. We were able to move 450 cubic meters of earth. I took this as a sample in arriving at an average working capacity of 1 cubic meter for 1 person working one day. On December 12, one thousand youths built another dike as a pilot project on the same site. I invited the provincial representatives to assist in this operation, and to encourage the

youths, the representatives and I also started working with them. In order to secure data about the tides, I asked the villagers and fishermen for information. They answered that according to local legend, on the 15th day of the 7th month of the lunar calendar, the sea would overflow, and on the 20th day of the 11th month the water would withdraw again. I compared this saying with Navy reports and learned that on December 21, the winter solstice, the tide is at its lowest level in the year. The water rises to 70 centimeters at 8:29 a.m., then withdraws and rises again at 6:00 p.m.

"I also looked over the region to see if I could find a local shrub or plant which could hold up the earth of the dike. I found a kind of fern with deep roots that would not pierce the dike and would still hold up the earth. Farmers used to grow them around their rice fields. It was not injured by salt water.

"As to weather, I inquired for meteorological information from Saigon; their reply was 'cloudy, possible showers, cold'."

As a result of these inquiries, Mr. Huan decided to schedule the operation for December 21, 1956. The work was to be done in twelve hours. He decided that it would be necessary to build 2 dikes about 2,550 meters long, 1 meter high, and 3 meters wide at the base and 1 meter at the top. This would protect 550 hectares of land frequently invaded by salt water, and reclaim 200 hectares from the sea. The volume of earth to be moved for the construction of the two dikes would total 10,000 cubic meters. Assuming 1 worker could dig and dike an average of 1 cubic meter of earth in a day, it would require 10,000 persons to complete the job in a single day, before the sea could invade the site. "I considered this a conservative estimate," stated Mr. Huan. "An experienced farmer could dig and dike 2 to 3 cubic meters a day, if the soil was soft.

"After notifying the Ministry of Agriculture, the USOM representative, and the Province Chief of these plans, I asked the authorities of Ninh Hoa District to assemble 10,000 young men and women between 18 and 35 from the 128 hamlets (located in 28 villages) of the district\* to participate in the dike construction on December 21, 1956. The district authorities agreed to protect the site against threats of propaganda or sabotage from the Communists."

A week before the work was to begin, members of village youth organizations were instructed to conduct an inventory of the village tool supplies and to borrow whatever would be necessary. Teams were placed in charge of liaison, health, and water supply. Mr. Huan asked the Navy

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\*The total population of the villages participating was 72,249.

to bring 30,000 litres of water by motor boat from Tien Du Island (about 3 kilometers away) and Ninh Ha village, using the services of 2,000 girls and 30 boats to bring the water from the sea to the working site. Leaders of the youth organization served as supervisors. The Rural Engineering Sector was to provide a surveyor and chief supervisor. On December 18, the final work assignments were prepared and the supervisors notified of the detailed work plans.

### "D-DAY"

On the afternoon of December 20, young people from the farther points—as far as 15 kilometers away—began to gather at Ninh Ha Village. Where possible, public transportation was provided. Nearer villages had begun preparations at 1:00 a.m. in order to arrive at the working area at 3:00 a.m. December 21. A festival was arranged at Ninh Ha, where dinners were given, moving pictures were shown and taken, and a singing contest was held. "In spite of the cold and rainy weather, the participants were enthusiastic and gay," Mr. Huan reported.

At the working area, headquarters were set up for guests and members of the general committee, and a first-aid station and loudspeakers were installed. At 4:00 a.m. the supervisory team inspected the people of each village at their appointed stations.

Mr. Huan anticipated that to place 10,000 workers along the 2.5 kilometers would require five hours. He divided the dam into 28 sections (one for each village represented), the length of which depended upon the number of workers available (ranging from 70 to 300 men). Every section was marked with the name of the village. To help the illiterate locate their own sections, Mr. Huan used symbolic designs such as crabs, crayfish, fish, etc.

Digging started at 6:00 a.m. It was raining hard and the work was difficult and unpleasant. In muddy places, the earth sank in and the workers had to use tree branches to gain a footing. In spite of the difficulties, only half an hour's rest was taken for the midday meal. To encourage workers, members of the liaison team sang or made announcements over the loudspeakers every ten minutes.

Drinking water was a problem because the Viet Minh had circulated a rumor that water at Tien Du was unwholesome and malarial. Although Mr. Huan knew this was false, he added purification compounds to the water tanks for the sake of reassuring the others.

At 11 a.m. the guests and officials arrived, including the province chief, Mr. Millard Cox from USOM, the district chief of Ninh Hoa and

neighboring districts, military officers, and notables from other public and private agencies.

"The guests of honor also dug the earth to symbolize the community spirit," Mr. Huan recalled. "At 2 p.m. we asked the Air Force to make a survey, take pictures, and give us a report. The work had been expected to take from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., but by 4 p.m. some villagers had finished and gone to help others who had more difficult tasks. A friendly rivalry developed and the best workers were congratulated or given symbolic presents such as honorary flags and woolen blankets. When the work was over, the workers felt that they had won the 'battle against the sea,' many pointing out that other difficulties compared to the tide were minor. When a village finished its section of the dike, a special committee inspected it, and hoisted a flag if the work was satisfactory, or ordered it completed if not. At 4 p.m., three-fourths of the work was done. Hundreds of fern plantings were now made along the dike on the sea side to protect it. By 5 p.m. all the work was completed, and the 10,000 participants trod in Indian file along the dike to inspect their project and to tramp it down. The dike was inaugurated at once and officially transferred to local ownership. From then on the landowners were to be responsible for the repair and maintenance of the dike.

"The supervisory team spent that night at the dike to see how the high tide would affect it. The tide rose high, but did not overflow the dike. It stood firmly. We had done our work well."

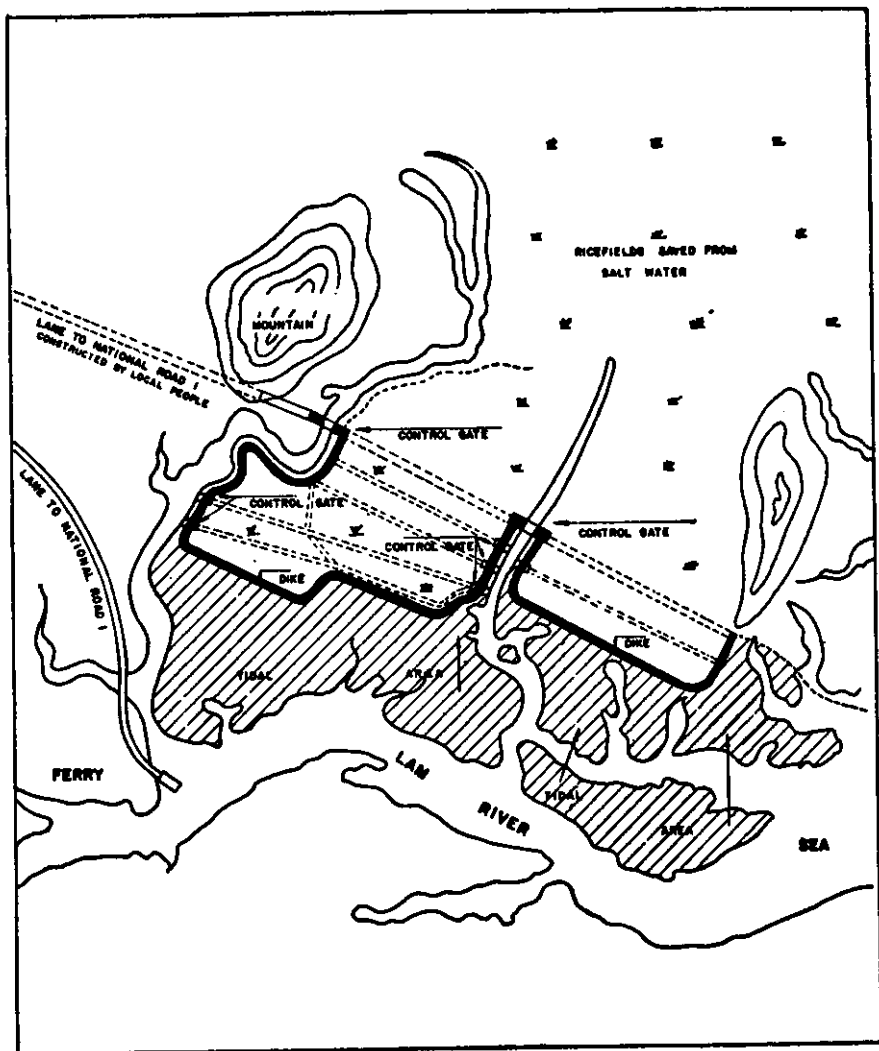
Mr. Huan stated that cooperation among the villages had saved 500,000 piasters, assuming the average pay of 50 piasters per work day. "When the work was finished, the district chief suggested rewarding the workers. The riceland owners agreed to award them 1,000 piasters per mau\* of riceland saved from the sea, but the workers declined out of respect to the mutual aid spirit," according to the Administrative Secretary of Ninh Ha Village. He added that his village had 519 mau of ricelands, 36 of which was reclaimed from the sea, producing 1,500 gia of paddy estimated at 45,000 piasters. Three hundred mau of village land were protected by the Ha Lien dike. Another 12 mau of lagoons were also saved for fish breeding, which itself yielded more than 5,000 piasters a year.

When the work was over, the workers received 55,820 piasters from American aid funds; and the Catholic Welfare Relief in Nha Trang distributed 5 tons of rice, 750 kilograms of cornflour, and 900 kilograms of butter from American surplus commodities. The military commander

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\*One mau equalled  $\frac{1}{3}$  hectare in Central Vietnam.

## THE HA LIEN DIKE AREA



of the region presented woolen blankets, and the Province Chief gave 6 honorary flags and a sum of money.

Some farmers complained that only a few landowners would benefit from the ricelands they had recovered. But one answered, after the work was completed, "At least some farmers will have more lands to till. They will be able to improve their standard of living. This should please us as well."

A district chief said of the Ha Lien dike that it was a very good job, well planned and well organized, although the amount of ricelands saved from the sea was not as large as had been expected. On a chart, he pointed out, Ha Lien dike would protect 750 hectares of ricelands, but actually part of this could not be cultivated because of the continued presence of alum. "We still need a more solid dam here, as well as others in the same region, before the sea water can be conquered," he said. He pointed out that as it was it would be difficult to mobilize peasants again if the dike should break, since, after all, only a few riceland owners had benefited. Another high administrative official at Khanh Hoa Province agreed that Mr. Huan was successful in mobilizing the people and that building the dike in such record time was a worthy deed, well recognized by the population. But he feared that the dike had been built too hurriedly and was therefore not substantial enough to withstand the continued pounding of the sea.

Nearly three years later the dike was still standing, though its outlines were beginning to erode. Nevertheless, Sector Chief Huan himself considered the building of the Ha Lien dike—a difficult task which could have easily failed if it had not been well planned—an unqualified success. In spite of the difficulties—coordinating the operation, getting drinking water, and countering Communist propaganda—the farmers had not been intimidated or discouraged. Mr. Huan recalled hearing one of them remark after the Communists had uprooted the markers and surreptitiously distributed "Don-Work" tracts, "The sea itself is defeated. Communism is only man-made; let us go ahead."

## *Planning the Municipal Market at Dalat*

Dalat is in the center of Vietnam's most attractive resort area, offering tourists a pleasant, cool climate, a selection of picturesque palaces, villas, and hotels, and a rolling countryside dotted with lakes and waterfalls. Its year-round gardens of flowers and green vegetables and its pine forests make it a luxurious picnic ground, and its resources in wild game also appeal to the huntsman. In view of this unusual combination of assets President Diem conceived the idea of developing Dalat as a cultural and intellectual center not only for Vietnam but for all Southeast Asia. This consideration has dominated city planning activities since the national independence.

From the time Dalat was founded in 1900 until 1950 it served as a resort city for the French Government officials stationed in Indochina. Few Vietnamese were privileged to settle there unless they were very wealthy or were working closely with the French colonial rulers of Indochina. Its population increased tenfold in 20 years, from 5,320 inhabitants in 1935 to 53,732 inhabitants in 1956.<sup>1</sup> Its area of 67 square kilometers remained unchanged.

<sup>1</sup>Population statistics: 1935, 5,320; 1943, 19,420 (the increase coming largely from French refugees from Hanoi and Haiphong); 1952, 25,041 (from the continued influx of Vietnamese refugees from Laos); 1956, 53,732 (from a new wave of refugees from the North); 1958, 67,220.

As a result of the 1942 and 1943 bombings in Haiphong and Hanoi, many French private citizens moved to Dalat. While the rest of the country was disturbed by the Japanese occupation from 1940 to 1945 and the political events that followed, Dalat was relatively calm between 1946-1950. After 1950 it became a settlement center for refugees successively from Laos and North Vietnam. Many of these newcomers lived in poverty beside the wealthy settlers. It was not long before the Viet Minh took the opportunity to infiltrate the recent arrivals.

In March 1951 a French Surêté Inspector named Haaz, whose abuses of power had earned him the hatred of Dalat residents, was assassinated without warning. The French Government retaliated by shooting a score of men and women who had been imprisoned on suspicion. The populace revolted in protest, and Chief of State Bao Dai with his entourage retreated to Nha Trang. Mayor Tran dinh Que was removed from his office and his powers transferred to a French official. Mr. Cao Minh Hieu was asked by Bao Dai to be the second Vietnamese mayor on May 27, 1951.<sup>2</sup> He accepted on condition that he receive full responsibility and authority for administering local security. After conducting a thorough house-to-house search for subversive elements, he gave freedom to many political prisoners arrested by the French, thus regaining public support. After 1952 Dalat was again secure, and refugees and others came in ever-increasing numbers to settle.

Problems of city planning were now foremost. The mayor began to think of redesigning the city with special reference to the plight of workers and vegetable growers. Arrangements were made to permit tenants to become small landowners,<sup>3</sup> on the theory that "once they had land to till, enough food to eat, and clothing to wear, they would lose interest in Communist promises," in the words of Mayor Hieu. Areas for the refugees were established at Anh Sang, St. Jean, Thai Phien, Da Phu, Phuoc Thanh (reserved for the veterans), Sao Nam, and Tay Ho. These areas were called "stopper hamlets" in recognition of their function of holding back the Viet Minh.

In September 1956 Mayor Cao Minh Hieu was replaced by Tran Van Phuoc, and the attention of city planners turned to improving Dalat's appearance for tourists, installing fluorescent lamps around the lake, and improving the surroundings of Can Ly, Lienkhang, Gougah, and Prenn Falls. During this period a three-year plan was devised for

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<sup>2</sup>Dalat had three Vietnamese mayors between 1950 and 1959: Dr. Tran Dinh Que from Nov. 1950 to May 1951; Mr. Cao Minh Hieu from May 1951 to Sept. 1956; and Mr. Tran Van Phuoc from Sept. 26, 1956 to the present. Before 1950, all mayors were French.

<sup>3</sup>Property within the city could be purchased at auction. Properties outside the city could be acquired from the city, which gave pieces of land from 500 to 4,000 square meters for clearing. Land could also be bought for 2 piasters a square meter.

reducing the population of Dalat from nearly 54,000 to 30,000 or 40,000.<sup>4</sup> This was to be accomplished by moving the vegetable growers and occupants of temporary corrugated-iron-roofed houses to Dran, a neighboring district. The Province of Tuyen Duc was created on May 19, 1958 to accommodate this problem regionally by the Decree No. 261 N.V., incorporating Dalat, Djiring, and Dran District. It had an area of 5,067 square kilometers, suitable for the cultivation of rice, fruits, and vegetables, and for cattle and poultry farming.

### THE MARKET PROJECTS

As in other cities and villages in Vietnam, the market place was an important community center. The original Dalat market was built in 1936 to provide a shopping center for its current population of 10,000. As the population increased, vendors were forced to set up stands on the pavements and streets adjacent to the market.

Former Mayor Hieu recalled that "traffic conditions around the market became so crowded that I finally had to order sidewalk peddlers off the public streets to avoid accidents. This forced them to move their activities to the square in front of certain shops adjoining the market (see Shops C on Map I). This in turn was sharply protested by the shopkeepers, who finally addressed a petition to the Bao Dai imperial cabinet. The Cabinet Secretary sided with the shopkeepers and ordered us to revoke the order. I tried to get a written order from the Cabinet Secretary so the city would not be held responsible for a condition that endangered both the peddlers and the general public, but no such order was forthcoming. I therefore required the vendors to remain in the designated area. But because of the influx of refugees, the number of vendors continued to rise, and it became increasingly obvious that new market facilities would be necessary."

In 1952 the city officials began to consider enlarging the market. Following their regular custom, tentative plans were repeatedly considered at the monthly meetings of the city council and the chief city administrative officials.<sup>5</sup> Three possibilities were considered:

1. Building neighborhood markets in addition to the present

<sup>4</sup>According to the urbanism plan for Dalat, residences were classified into the following categories: A--Houses to be moved, no more of which could be built; B--Houses needing improvements further building of which was limited; C--Villas and gardens to be protected, with future building controlled; D--Vacant lots reserved for the expansion of the city where building was to be permitted only if it conformed to the plan approved by the President; E--Old farmlands to be cleared or tribal villages to be rebuilt; F--Forests, reserved only for controlled wood cutting; G--Forests to be preserved and used for hunting.

<sup>5</sup>These services included: Cultural (Education, Information and Youth), Security (Police Sureté, Civil Guard, Gendarmerie, Militia), Finance (Treasury, Taxation), Social (Social, Health, Sanitation, Civic Action, and Veterinary), and Economy (Public Works, Cadastre, Economics, Forestry).

market, in the newly founded hamlets such as St. Benoit's, Da Nghia, and Lo Gach;

2. Enlarging the present market;
3. Building a fish and vegetable market close to the present site, the latter to be used solely for bazaars and the sale of dry goods.

Some neighborhood markets were actually built, but shoppers continued to go to the central market, where a greater variety of goods was available. As a result, the neighborhood markets disappeared one by one.

Mayor Cao Minh Hieu and the city council met often to discuss these problems. At the council meetings of September 17, 1952 and September 30, 1953, plans for the expansion of the present market were discussed. (See Map II, attached.)

At the end of 1953, an annex to the market B and B' was built with a corrugated iron roof to replace the lot A' that had been designated for vendors. This was completed in 1955 and reserved for the vegetable sellers. It was only partially satisfactory, however, because rain made the annex too muddy for ready accessibility, and the vendors suffered losses in patronage during the wet season. Nor did the annex conform to later plans for beautification of the city.

### THE MARKET EXPANSION PROJECT

Shops owned by private entrepreneurs entirely surrounded the municipal market (see Map II). Any enlargement would therefore require the purchasing of at least 12 shops (C), to provide space. The September proposal would give the market a T shape. The shops purchased for the expansion would be reconverted and used for restaurants, bazaars, and cafés. Another floor would be added to the market, and the walls of the shops in the center would be razed to provide two communicating passages to the market. An annex would be built on the present parking lot (H), connecting with the shops and the market.

Section (A) would be reserved for dry goods (materials, cosmetics, groceries, etc.) and (H) for fishmongers, butchers, and vegetable sellers.

The hill (I) would be cut in to a depth of 30 meters, and the soil removed would be used to fill the hollow at (K). The vacant lot thus created would be used for a road around the market and a series of 30 shops which could be rented by the city. This would double the size of

the existing market. As former Mayor Hieu stated it, "The cost of cutting the hill and filling the hollow would be about 3 million piasters. The estimated cost for enlarging the existing market, building an annex and a parking lot, and compensating the present owners would be about 12 million piasters. This would have been much too costly for the city to finance, however, and the project had to be abandoned." Indeed, when the purchase of private lands for the annex was discussed with the proprietors, they set a price of 6 million piasters (as opposed to 4 million which the city authorities considered the property worth).

Because of the cost of the project, shopowners around the market objected strongly. They also pointed out that the expansion would leave no room for a parking lot, which would complicate transportation and traffic.

### THE NEW MARKET PROJECT

The city council met again on May, 1956. It was presided over by the Mayor and attended by 5 of the 9 councilors. The chiefs of services were also present as observers.

By now, the increased stability enabled the city government to consider beautifying the city by building a new market, paving roads in the business center, installing lights around the city lake, and improving sanitary conditions in the valley between the existing market and the Civil Guard quarters. This valley, an area of some four hectares, was used for vegetable growing around the edges, but was largely wasteland that served as a city dump. Its location in the center of the city made it an eyesore, and in a discussion of this problem it was suggested that the property might become the site of the new market.

The city council approved this proposal with the proviso that the municipal technical services, the National Directorate of Public Works for the Highlands, and the Directorate of City Planning and Public Building approve. Architect Nguyen Duy Duc and Chief Engineer Nguyen Ngoc Ky drew up the plans with the concurrence of the Secretary of State for Reconstruction and Urbanism. The four-hectare lot was large enough to build a market of 1,900 square meters and allow ample space for roads and expansion. Unused portions of the land could be divided into lots for sale to shopkeepers and others.\* The present value of the land was 1,000 piasters per square meter. Thus, by selling

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\*Ex-Mayor Hieu and his former Deputy Chu Ngoc Lien hoped that the land would increase in value after the market was built. They also hoped that the property could be developed by a single group of enterprises so that economies in building the shops at the same time could be effected.

the lots, the city officials hoped to be able to obtain about 20 million piasters to help support the project.

Four considerations were presented by the mayor at the May 10, 1956 meeting of the city council:

1. Economically, the increase of the size of the shopping center would give entrepreneurs room for commercial expansion.
2. Socially, the city would be more beautiful if this hollow, then partially used for vegetable growing, were developed into an attractive market area.
3. Politically, it would help gain public confidence by providing work for citizens left unemployed by the withdrawal of the French Army.
4. Commercially, it would increase the value of the land around the market; it would add 10 million piasters to the city budget (in the hope that the lots could be sold for 20 million piasters, of which only 10 million would have to be used for the market).

Mr. Hieu summarized the project as follows: "The estimated expenditure for the building of the market would be 18 million piasters. Ten million of this would come from the sale of land, and 5 million would be borrowed from the National Civil Servants' Pension Fund. Alternatively, the city could request a 5 million piaster subsidy from the Central Government, or take 3 million from the municipal budget."

The mayor requested the city council's opinion on two points:

1. Should the new market be built on the recommended site?
2. Should the city be authorized to borrow 5 million piasters from the National Civil Servant's Pension Fund?

The city council's debate produced the arguments that: if each square meter were sold for 1,000 piasters, the total cost for a 5 x 20 meter lot would be 100,000 piasters. After the shops were built its value might be 500,000 piasters, but it would be imprudent to assume that 20 million piasters could be acquired from the sale of this land, because it might be necessary to sell the land gradually to permit businessmen from Dalat or other cities to buy and build shops as their capital became available.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup>According to Mayor Phuoc, the land sales could assume an increase in value because of the new market. He urged that it be sold to businessmen who could invest enough capital to build several shops at once for resale to shopowners, thus economizing on building costs.

Sentiment against raising taxes was also present.

In spite of these questions, the city council agreed:

1. To build the market on the suggested site;
2. To authorize the 5 million piaster loan;
3. To request the Central Government to subsidize the balance of the cost.

Architect Nguyen Duy Duc was asked to design a one-story market structure with a harmonizing concrete roof and large public staircases connecting with the original market. The plan was approved by the Secretary of State for Reconstruction and Urbanism. Mayor Hieu submitted this project to the President and requested a loan of 5 million piasters. While waiting for the approval, he was sent to another post in Saigon, and was succeeded on September 26, 1956 by Tran van Phuoc. Upon reorganization of the provincial government, Mayor Phuoc was designated Chief of Tuyen Duc Province on May 19, 1958, retaining also his functions as Mayor of Dalat.

Mayor Phuoc considered that the financing should be immediate rather than over a 3-year period, and sent the city council a letter on April 26, 1957, requesting permission to borrow 18 million piasters. It was approved by them, also by letter.

Shortly thereafter Mayor Phuoc received an unexplained order from the Presidency to redesign the project. On December 10, 1957 he wrote to the city council requesting that the loan be increased to 30 million piasters. This was also approved.

A meeting of city officials and notables to discuss problems of the market was held on January 22, 1958 to approve the new plan. The estimated expenditure for the final project was to be 40 million piasters, 30 million of which was to be borrowed from the National Civil Servant's Pension Fund.<sup>8</sup> A private contract for the building of the market was let on June 2, 1958, and the work was to be completed within 20 months thereafter.<sup>9</sup> The contractor was to receive a bonus for prior performance, and pay a fine for any delay.<sup>10</sup> The city was to supply steel and cement.

<sup>8</sup>This 30-million piaster loan with compound interest was to be paid in 15 years. Each year 2,891,000 was to be paid, beginning in 1959. The total repaid would thus amount to 43,500,000 piasters.

<sup>9</sup>Mr. Nguyen Linh Chieu, a Saigon contractor, won the bid at 20,210,000 piasters.

<sup>10</sup>The bonus amounted to 2,000 piasters per day, up to a total maximum of 100,000 piasters, and the fine, 4,000 piasters per day the first 2 months, 8,000 the 3rd and 4th, and 16,000 per day the 5th month. Delays of more than 5 months could result in cancellation of the contract.

The new plans called for a three-story market having a ground space of 1,600 square meters, and a height of 19 meters, with verandas 6 meters wide surrounding the building. It was to be 80 meters long and 30 meters wide at its greatest dimensions. The ground floor was to be used for fish, meat, and vegetable stands and for storage of goods; the second floor for haberdashery stands; and the top floor for outdoor entertainments and modern sanitary installations. There was to be a stairway with three landings and four 1-way stairways, which were to link the second floor with the market square. A freight elevator, counters, and plumbing would be installed, and a flying bridge would link the new building with the old market.

Construction was expected to take place under the supervision of the General Directorate of City Planning and Public Buildings. The Service of Highways and Bridges of the Public Works Department was to be responsible for supervising the building of roads, drains, and ditches.

According to city officials, the Dalat market would be a work of art: not only the most beautiful market in Vietnam, but also among the best known markets of the world. Mayor Phuoc added, however, "The new market is a commercial enterprise, not a charity organization; it will be developed by men with business experience." He himself had experience in building the Phnom-Penh market, and promised to devote special attention to such problems as stagnant and waste water and acoustics.

The city also planned to build a modern water supply and filter system; enlarge the municipal stadium; construct an outdoor swimming pool with water heating system; install electric lights along the suburban streets; and start work on buildings for the university. From the lake upward stores were to be constructed to harmonize with a master city plan.

#### THE CITY BUDGET AND FUNDS FOR THE MARKET BUILDING

The 1958 city budget (27,372,000 piasters) could be summarized as follows:

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Municipal Revenues</i>	
41.0%	economic	1.58%	license taxes
22.5%	management and administration	20.86%	real estate taxes
15.0%	public utilities	2.86%	rental of public land
8.5%	social welfare	10.00%	daily taxes
11.5%	police and security	14.60%	additional taxes
1.5%	miscellaneous	6.30%	excise taxes
		44.80%	national subsidies

A larger market was expected to provide increased revenue from the rental of stands and the issuing of licenses.<sup>11</sup> Taxes were already con-

<sup>11</sup>The cost of a license for each stand was 300 piasters. Vendors who sold vegetables and sat on the floor or were in rear areas were not required to purchase licenses.

sidered high by the business elements in the community.<sup>12</sup> Five years earlier, taxes and license fees were relatively low in comparison with incomes, but there were then fewer sellers and the buying power of the French Army was still high. The increased competition and the loss of a large consuming public were not expected to keep business at a satisfactory level.

Market vendors were informed of plans for the new market, which they regarded as a convenience for buyers. They were not convinced, however, that this was going to improve sales, since with the enlargement of facilities it was to be expected that there would be more stands. The fact of increased competition combined with expectation of a static or even reduced population was not considered a favorable factor.

Thus, the prospect of an increase in tax revenues and of market revenues was considered fragile and uncertain by the business elements. The main resources of Dalat were vegetables and tourism; but the local consumption of vegetables was limited, and tourism could not directly increase municipal revenues. (Tourists were relatively few in number in 1958, and those who came to the city spent their money in hotels and restaurants rather than in the market place or shops).

City officials, however, expected to repay their 43,500,000 piaster debt within 15 years. They argued that Dalat would attract many tourists who would be willing to spend money freely, and that Dalat as well as the national economy would be more prosperous. They expected tourism taxes, a 10 percent hotel tax, and a tax on consumption of electricity and on the use of the market to increase city revenues. As the mayor stated, "Building a market is a community project. Once built, it will benefit the residents as well as the government." He expressed confidence that in spite of some criticisms the program had encountered and the difficulty of borrowing the necessary funds, the judgment of the government would be fully upheld by the future usefulness of the market. "In the past, administrative experience has proved that building a market has never been an unproductive effort," he said.

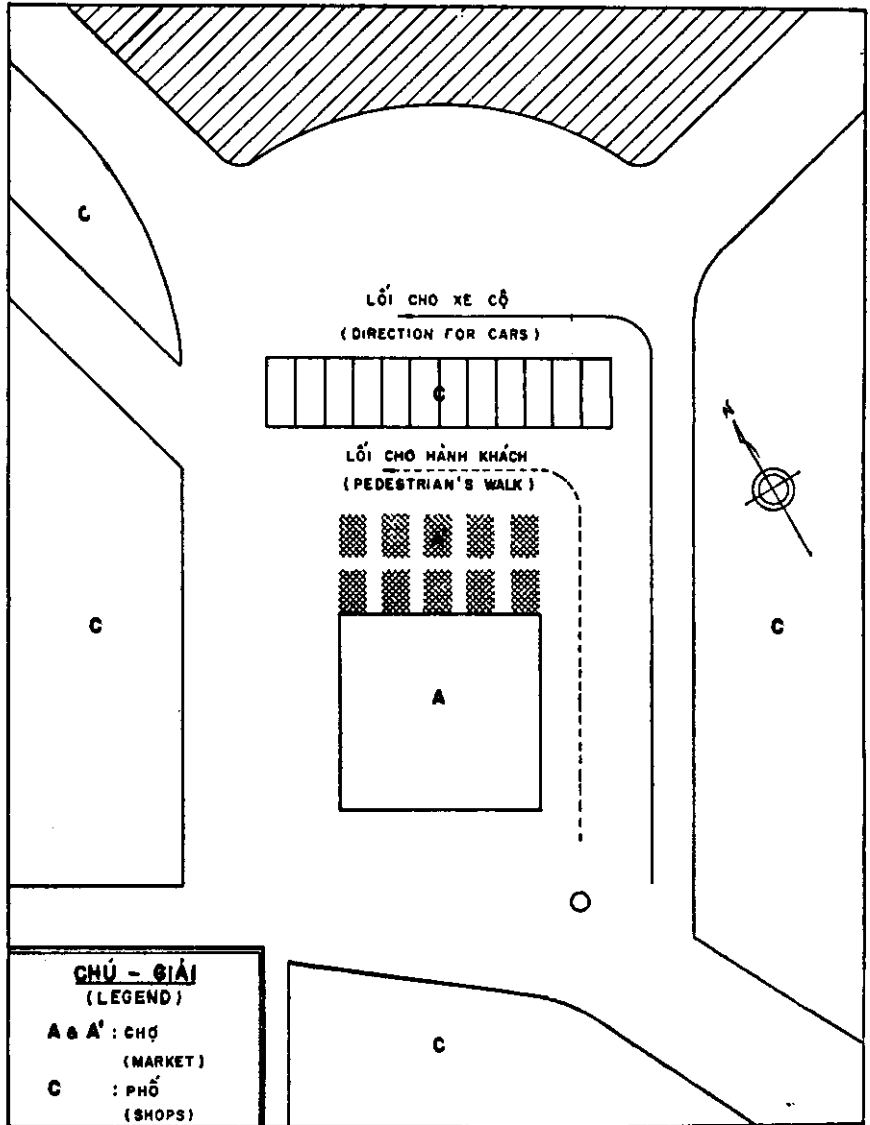
On October 14, 1958 the cornerstone for the building was laid. A loan of 30 million piasters for the building had already been negotiated with the National Civic Pension Fund, and in a little more than a year and a half the city could reasonably anticipate completion of the new market.

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<sup>12</sup>Each stand (1 × 1.8 meters) was to pay 70 piasters per week. Stands in the annex were to pay the same rate on a daily basis.

# VỊ TRÍ CHỢ CŨ (LOCATION OF OLD MARKET)

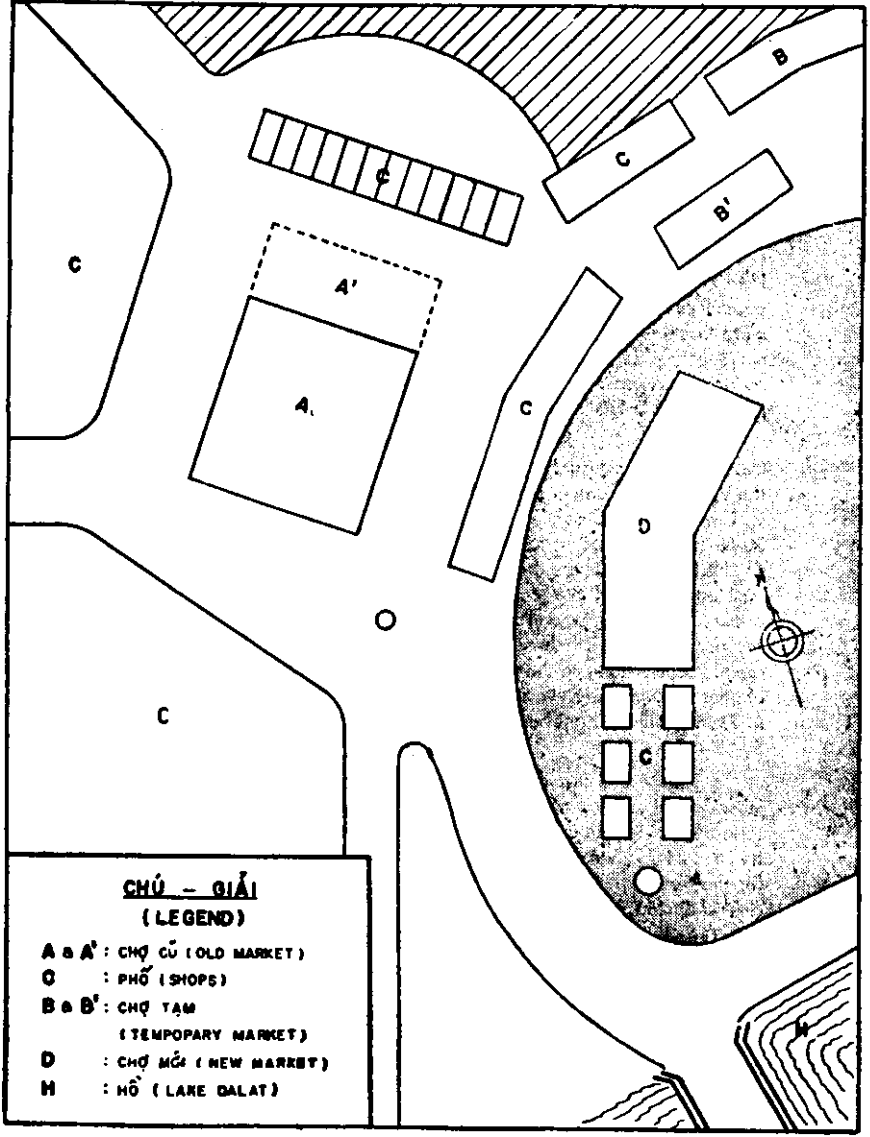
LƯỚI SỐ 1  
(CHART 1)



# VỊ TRÍ CHỢ MỚI

(LOCATION OF NEW MARKET)

LƯỚI ĐỒ SỐ 2  
CHART 2)



## The Classroom-Laboratory Controversy

The almost explosive increase in high school enrollments after Vietnam achieved independence made it an urgent need for the nation to expand its school facilities.<sup>1</sup> Additional classrooms had to be constructed, more teachers had to be provided, teaching methods had to be improved, and adequate laboratories were called for. With the help of friendly nations the Vietnamese Government began to resolve the problems of providing these facilities.

One of the first of these efforts was American Aid Project Agreement No. 30-65-153, signed June 10, 1957 by Mr. Truong Buu Dien, Chief of the Vietnamese Education Department Foreign Aid Service, and Dr. Carl C. Cress, USOM Secondary Education Advisor. The purpose of PA No. 30-65-153 was stated as follows: "to assist the Vietnamese Department of National Education to enlarge the present secondary school facilities throughout the country. This assistance will take the form of constructing, equipping and staffing 115 additional classrooms in 30 public secondary schools. These additional units will range from 2 to 7 rooms, depending upon the classroom needs of the location. Eighty-two of these classrooms will be used as science laboratories" (PA 30-65-153, p. 2) and will be "furnished and equipped as science laboratories" (PA 30-65-153, p. 4).

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<sup>1</sup>The number increased from 21,817 in the school year 1954-55 to 35,584 in 1956-57.

"The second phase of the project provides for the purchasing of laboratory equipment and classroom furniture for the 82 science laboratories. Thirty-four of these laboratories will be for physics, 24 for chemistry, and 24 for biology. At present there are no laboratory facilities for the teaching of science in any of these 30 secondary schools" (PA 36-65-153, p. 2).

The above classrooms were to be built in the following towns or villages:

Location	No. of New Classrooms	No. of Science Laboratories
1. Can Tho	4	4
2. Vung Tan	2	—
3. Thu Dau Mot	2	—
4. Tay Ninh	2	—
5. Tra Vinh	3	3
6. Soc Trang	3	3
7. Bac Lieu	3	3
8. Bien Hoa	3	3
9. Sadek	2	—
10. Long Xuyen	3	3
11. Rach Gia	2	—
12. Chau Doc	3	3
13. Vinh Long	4	4
14. My Tho	6	4
15. Ben Tre	4	4
16. Gia Dinh	4	4
17. Ha Tien	4	4
18. Ba Ria	4	4
19. Go Cong	4	4
20. Tan An	4	3
21. Ca Mau	4	3
22. Tourane	3	3
23. Nha Trang	2	—
24. Faifoo	3	3
25. Phan Rang	3	3
26. Phan Thiet	2	—
27. Hue (Ecole de la Citadelle)	4	4
28. Quang Ngai	5	4
29. Qui Nhon	4	—
30. Tuy Hoa	3	3
31. Bong Son	2	—
32. Darlac	7	4
33. Blao <sup>a</sup>	7	3
TOTAL:	115	82

<sup>a</sup>By later amendment, Di Linh would replace Blao for the same number of classrooms and laboratories, on suggestion of the Chief of Province of Lam Dong. Both Blao and Di Linh belonged to Lam Dong Province.

The Vietnamese Government's responsibilities were to provide the land sites and architectural services, and to pay the salaries of 115 new instructors for the classrooms constructed. Counterpart funds<sup>2</sup> were to

<sup>2</sup>Counterpart funds represent piasters generated by American military aid and deposited in the National Bank of Vietnam for use by the Vietnamese Government on projects agreed between it and USOM.

pay the local costs of construction of the classrooms and laboratories (estimated at 11,500,000 piasters, on the basis of 100,000 piasters per classroom of 8 x 9 meters) and to provide classroom furniture (estimated at 1,150,000 piasters, or 10,000 piasters per classroom).

A Vietnamese Government project manager was to be responsible for sending monthly progress and funding reports to the U.S. Technical advisor for USOM project control purposes. These reports would record (1) funds previously released to this project; (2) expenditures for the past month; (3) accomplishments; (4) anticipated progress for the next month, and (5) request for release of counterpart funds. Release of counterpart funds would be contingent upon receipt of this report. The project provided also for the ICA purchase of \$119,000 worth of imported scientific and professional instruments, apparatus and supplies, chemicals and chemical preparations, and other commodities. Mr. Dien, who was designated project manager, had studied many years in the U.S. and spoke and wrote excellent English. He had an M.A. in Political Science and was familiar with the American high school and university systems.

On June 22, 1957, the cities and provinces concerned were advised by Education Department circular that the project had been approved. They were requested to prepare dossiers on proposed classrooms and send them as soon as possible to the department so that application could be forwarded to USOM for release of funds. Each dossier was to include a map of the proposed site, a plan of the classrooms to be constructed, and cost estimates. The first completed dossier reached the department in Saigon on August 13, 1957.

By December 1957, requests for fund release for the construction of 22 classrooms had been sent to USOM. Approval was granted immediately for 15 of these, and 1,500,000 piasters were released for the construction of 4 classrooms at My Tho, 7 at Di Linh, and 4 at Phuoc Tuy (Baria). The rest had not been approved by the end of the month, either because they did not reach USOM in time for the monthly release of funds, or because some were held up by the USOM Education Division.

In the middle of October 1957, Dr. Carl C. Cress was replaced as Secondary Technical Advisor by Mr. Starr M. King. Mr. King had been a science teacher in several American high schools for many years. He was eager, he said, to help the Vietnamese Government improve its science teaching facilities. He toured many different schools in Saigon and in the provinces as soon as he arrived, before he undertook any direct recommendations. His principal finding was that schools throughout Vietnam needed well-equipped laboratories. "Teachers and school

heads I have met all agreed with me on the necessity of laboratories for science teaching," Mr. King said. "Since Project 30-65-153 contemplated the construction of science laboratories for secondary schools, I considered it essential to emphasize that phase of the project. Although I felt that the project required some interpretation, I was of the opinion that its spirit should be understood as contemplating the construction of neither 115 classrooms and 82 laboratories, nor 115 classrooms alone; but 33 classrooms and 82 laboratories. The project even subdivided the laboratories into 34 for physics, 24 for chemistry, and 24 for biology. It also provided for the purchase of \$119,000 worth of laboratory equipment and supplies. Naturally such equipment and supplies would not fit into small classrooms normally used as a laboratory. Obviously, it seemed to me, the intent was to provide an environment for experimentation."

According to Mr. Dien, however, the project provided for the construction of 115 classrooms, of which 82 would be used as laboratories. As he interpreted it, this meant that 82 of the 115 classrooms would be furnished with scientific equipment for use during certain hours; for other courses they would be used as simple classrooms. "To the Vietnamese," he said, "a laboratory means simply an ordinary classroom with a single demonstration table at which the instructor performs experiments before the students. In the Vietnamese secondary school, students do not perform scientific experiments themselves. A laboratory means something entirely different to the American.

"When prescribing 6 classrooms and 4 laboratories for My Tho and 4 classrooms and 4 laboratories for Gia Dinh, the project did not contemplate building 6 classrooms *and* 4 laboratories for My Tho nor 4 classrooms *and* 4 laboratories for Gia Dinh;" Mr. Dien pointed out; "otherwise we would have 115 classrooms and 82 laboratories in the project. The project should be interpreted as providing 6 classrooms, 4 of which would be used as laboratories at My Tho, or 4 classrooms, all of which would be used as laboratories at Gia Dinh." As evidence of this interpretation he cited construction costs, which were estimated at approximately 100,000 piasters per classroom regardless of whether the classroom would be used as laboratory or not. The funds allocated for furniture were also the same for classroom and laboratories. If separate laboratories had been envisaged, the funds would have had to provide two or three times as much. There would also have been a difference in size between laboratories and regular classrooms.

This was the interpretation taken originally by the Department of Education in requesting the provinces to prepare their dossiers. It was

feared that refusal to approve them because of Mr. King's interpretation would result in a loss of prestige for the department.

As of the end of 1957 fiscal year USOM had released in full the funds allotted to the 44 classrooms, about 30 of which had been approved by Mr. King. No laboratories were requested. In the meantime, laboratory equipment ordered from a New York chemical company had arrived in Saigon and was "languishing in the storehouse waiting for the laboratories to be built."

In an effort to clear up all misunderstanding and confusion created by the "115 classrooms" and to carry out the purposes of the 1957 project and the aims of USOM "to help Vietnamese secondary schools with more facilities in the teaching and studying of experimental science," Project Agreement No. 30-95-130, FY 1958 was signed in June 1958. In preparing this agreement, the Vietnamese Education Department representative was again Mr. Truong Bui Dien, and the USOM representative was its Secondary Education Advisor, Mr. Starr King. Plans were drawn up for suitable laboratory facilities, with funds provided to furnish and equip 45 laboratories and 71 classrooms. The building of a demonstration school in Saigon was also contemplated, again with the intention of emphasizing the need for more adequate facilities for teaching the sciences.

In fuller and more elaborate terms, the new agreement set forth a program to develop a program of science education in the *lycees* by providing:

1. "Laboratories designed to encourage students' participation in laboratory science.
2. "Equipment and supplies necessary for the introduction of such a program.
3. "Classrooms and furnishings to meet the growing demands and increased interest in education.
4. "A new demonstration school completely equipped and staffed to assist in the improvement and development of secondary education in Vietnam."

The project also contemplated the preparation of course syllabi which would furnish direction for the student's work in the laboratory. It provided as well for the further training and professional personnel in the U.S. and other countries.

In carrying out the project, USOM would have the following special responsibilities:

- a. To construct science laboratory facilities for practical experimentation for as many secondary schools as possible. All schools would be considered eligible for at least one laboratory. Schools with an enrollment of 1,500 or more would be considered eligible for two laboratories. The total number of laboratories in this project was not to exceed 45, however.
- b. To provide equipment and supplies for student use in the laboratory. Participation by the student would impart skill through experimentation and knowledge through observation and offer new experience for the Vietnamese science student.
- c. To provide funds for the construction of approximately 71 classrooms for schools which were also building laboratories.
- d. To provide locally manufactured furnishings for approximately 53 classrooms constructed by the Vietnamese Government and approximately 71 classrooms built by USOM.
- e. For the demonstration school: to provide building commodities and equipment and the services of an American architectural advisor through dollar funds, and the services of a local architect, construction costs, and locally manufactured furnishings through counterpart funds.

It was specified that each classroom would be 8 x 8 meters and each laboratory 8 x 27 meters. Construction costs were estimated at approximately 100,000 piasters per classroom and 300,000 piasters per laboratory.

The procedure for release of counterpart funds was slightly changed: all requests from the Vietnamese project manager for commitment of funds for the construction of classrooms and laboratories were to be accompanied by a set of detailed plans which would show exactly how the classrooms or laboratories were to be built and where they were to be located relative to the remainder of the school building or buildings. No "model plan" would be acceptable unless it was actually to be used for the construction of specific classrooms or laboratories. All plans were to be approved by the USOM technician and the Vietnamese project manager.

In order to save time, Mr. King had a plan for a model laboratory drawn up (see p. 292), with all facilities for individual student experimentation: benches, water, work counters, instructor's desks, disposal pipes, closets, sinks, and other special equipment. This was approved by

Mr. Truong Buu Dien and the Ministry of Reconstruction and sent to the schools to guide them in the site location and cost estimates.

The schools were advised of the 1958 project by circulars dated September 20, 21, and 22, asking them to forward their dossiers to the department for classroom and laboratory construction as soon as possible. A complete dossier would include land site, plan (based on the suggested design), cost estimates, and proposed contract.

On October 18, the National Department sent Mr. King a note asking his approval for the construction of 4 classrooms at Truong Tan Buu Secondary School in Gia Dinh. The note specified that no laboratory was contemplated for this school. Mr. King replied as follows:

October 22, 1958

Dear Mr. Dien:

I have on my desk a request received October 18 for approval to build four classrooms for Truong Tan Buu Secondary School in Gia Dinh. The document states that no laboratory is contemplated.

Project 30-64-153 (1957) lists four classrooms for Gia Dinh. An official detailed list for all schools prepared May 31, 1958 includes four classrooms for Ho Ngoc Can Secondary School, none for Truong Tan Buu.

Since construction of laboratories is the major purpose of this project and the school proposes no laboratory, approval cannot be given for just classrooms. It is now almost February 1959 and in February 1958 all proposals in February 1957 were clarified to insure laboratory construction primarily.

Several visits have been made to both of these schools in Gia Dinh and laboratories have been discussed and the authorities there have indicated verbally their cooperation and their approval for one laboratory. Never has the question of classroom construction been proposed since there appears to be no room on the lot for more than one laboratory and only then if the remains of an old swimming pool are removed.

Now the documents deny the intent to build a laboratory and request classrooms. In conclusion I can say that four classrooms and a suitable laboratory would be approved if a proper place can be found for this much construction. However, this is unlikely and there remains only a chance that a laboratory will be approved if it is requested. I trust that eventually construction documents will follow the project requirements and requests will be made which can be readily approved.

Secondary Education Advisor  
Very truly yours,  
Starr M. King,

Mr. Truong Buu Dien's reply to this letter was in the following terms (in Vietnamese):

November 3, 1958

Dear Mr. King:

Project 65-153, February 1957 briefly stipulated that Gia Dinh Province would be granted 4 classrooms, but did not specify which school.

According to the Chief of Province of Gia Dinh, what Ho Ngoc Can Secondary School needed now was not classrooms but laboratories. Accordingly, he suggested that 4 classrooms be constructed for Truong Tan Buu Secondary School to be used as girls' school.

As far as the construction of a laboratory for Ho Ngoc Can School was concerned, and for which a sum of 300,000 piasters was reserved on February 1958,

the construction dossier and agreement will be forwarded to your office in the near future.

Your attention is also called to the fact that on May 31, 1958 our department did not send you any list of the schools that were to receive additional classrooms.

Truong Buu Dien,  
Chief of Foreign Aid Service

The list referred to, according to Mr. King, was jointly prepared by himself and Mr. Dien late in May. It named the specific schools which were to receive classrooms. There were 2 schools in Gia Dinh, but the list specified 1 (Ho Ngoc Can) and made no provision for the other (Truong Tan Buu). If approval was given to Truong Tan Buu school request, Mr. King asked, where would funds be found if Ho Ngoc Can School also requested new classrooms? Moreover, because the site referred to in the above letter was inadequate, there would not be enough space for the laboratory at all if authorization was granted for constructing the classrooms.

"My letter," Mr. King explained, "was merely to call Mr. Dien's attention to the fact that schools not listed among those who requested the 115 classrooms were asking for classrooms which would increase the total beyond that number. It also called attention to the fact that after a visit and verbal discussion at the school, in which the laboratory was the sole topic, along comes a petition for classrooms never requested before and no laboratory, which struck me as inexplicable. This is not the first instance of a request for classrooms from schools never heard from before. I called attention to the fact that the school at Gia Dinh, which was included in the list, conceivably might invoke what appears to be its right to 4 classrooms. Then I would be stuck for 8 with funds for no more than 4. I would still make any rearrangement not to exceed the total of 115, but that was my limit, and if I didn't keep alert I would soon contribute to further confusion by simply approving requests."

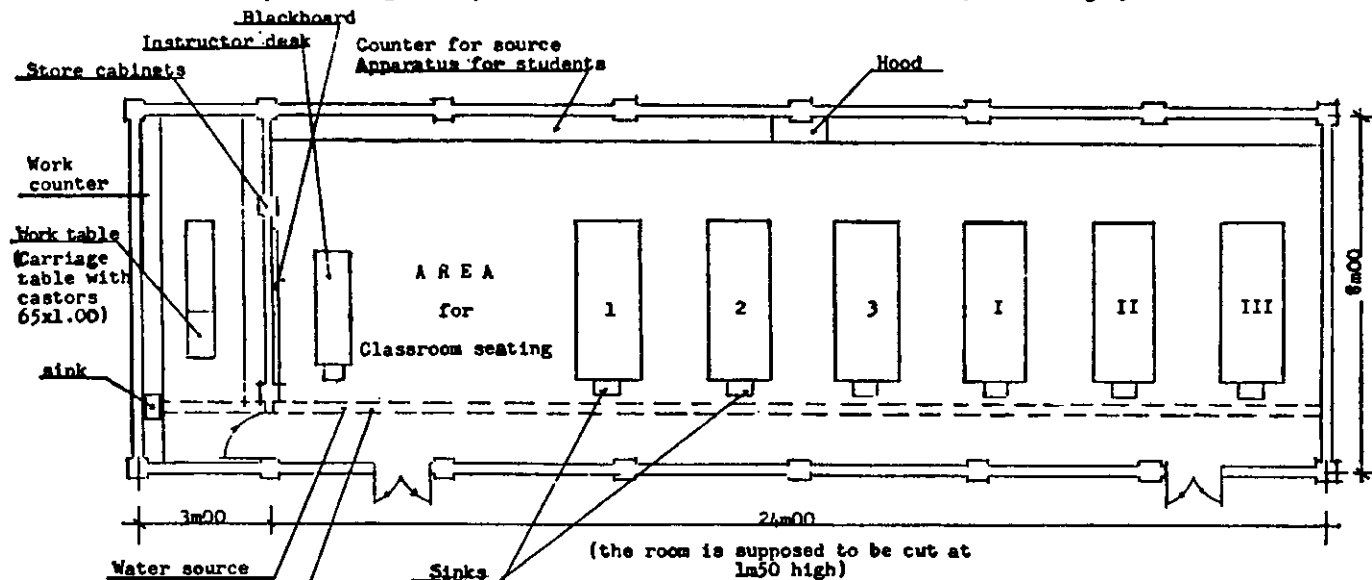
Mr. King revealed that requests for construction of laboratories and allotted classrooms, or laboratory construction alone, were approved at once, while approval of requests for classrooms alone were delayed. He feared that once the funds were released for the classrooms, the schools might not submit dossiers for the construction of laboratories.

"I am aware of the fact that Mr. Dien wanted as many classrooms constructed as possible," said Mr. King. "I tried to satisfy his needs and overcome the confusion created by the 1957 project by incorporating provision for these laboratories as a priority. The classrooms would then be approved as a bonus."

Mr. Dien said that if there were delays, American experts were often responsible for them. They had toured all the places once before

# SCIENCE LABORATORY

(Plan designed by USOM Technician and Viet Nam Project Manager)



(the room is supposed to be cut at 1m50 high)

1, 2, 3 Students' chemistry bench  
8 stations with superstructure  
for reagent bottles.

I, II, III, Students' physics-biology bench-  
8 stations.

and yet they still held up the dossiers and wanted to visit each site again before making decisions. But the schools needed classrooms and could not wait; they were losing their original hope and enthusiasm.

Mr. King considered frequent visits to schools necessary for him "to learn first-hand what the school officials have in mind." "Otherwise," he added, "for all I know I might be approving construction of a building in a rice paddy, knee-deep in water, or where another building is already standing with no explanation for how this curious situation was to be resolved. When the first laboratory I approved was completed, before I learned about it, a permanent partition was built dividing it into two classrooms! Naturally I had no other alternative than to insist that the partition be removed."

In December 1957, agreement was reached on the construction of one laboratory in Gia Dinh for common use for both Truong Tan Buu and Ho Ngoc Can Secondary Schools. The building of classrooms was postponed until a proper site could be found. Laboratory requests under the 1958 project were beginning to arrive. Classrooms which were to be built simultaneously with laboratories were also approved.

It appeared that the purposes of PA No. 30-65-153 would be fulfilled.

## *Elementary School in Vinh Xuong*

Toward the end of April 1958, an elementary school was under construction in Vinh Xuong, a district in the Province of Khanh Hoa. The school was located on a large park on the bank of the Nha Trang River, shaded by a grove of coconut trees. In contrast to the small, dingy houses of Ngoc Hoi hamlet nearby, the school, with its paved floor, its brick walls, and its 4 classrooms seating 70 pupils each, seemed all the more impressive. A handsome gateway was being built at the entrance; but work on the school itself was coming to a standstill for want of building materials. The building stood roofless.

### THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The Ngoc Hoi School was the first of 22 elementary schools to be built in Khanh Hoa as part of a 3 year project for erecting 1,300 schools throughout the 39 provinces of Vietnam (see Appendix I). USOM Project Agreement No. 30-64-152 (see Appendix II), signed by representatives of the Vietnamese and American governments on April 30, 1957, had provided for American aid funds to supply half of the building and maintenance costs for each school approved and built in accordance with approved plans. The other half of the costs were to be borne from Vietnamese sources.

Khanh Hoa and the other provinces were informed of these plans even before the agreement was signed. In Letter No. 18817 GDNGV, on

December 12, 1956, the Department of National Education announced that during fiscal year 1957 a total of 400 elementary schools were to be built with 50 percent USOM support. Twelve hundred teachers were to be recruited throughout Vietnam to accommodate these schools. The entire operation was assigned to the Elementary Education Inspection Bureau' which was to secure local authorities' cooperation in choosing the final sites, recruiting the necessary teachers, and helping organize the local building committees.

On July 2, 1957, the provinces were invited to submit plans to the Ministry of Education for the schools proposed under the revised program. These proposals were to include for each school:

- (1) A statement of need
- (2) Nomination of building committee members
- (3) Estimate of costs
- (4) Construction plans
- (5) Map of proposed site

Khanh-Hoa province was authorized to build 22 schools comprising 66 classrooms. USOM would pay 100 percent of the cost of building 10 classrooms, and 50 percent for the remaining 56, totalling 1,900,000 piasters. The building committees (Item 2, above) were to include a representative of the provincial government, the reconstruction bureau, and the provincial elementary education bureau, and two representatives of the parents' association. They were to be in charge of building operations and the purchase of school equipment within budgetary limitations.

On February 24, 1958 the Ministry sent another letter announcing changes in the budget of the elementary school project. The reason for this was the necessity for building 100 more classrooms in the resettlement centers, a new program which was ordered by the Presidency and merged into the Ministry's existing projects.<sup>1</sup> Khanh Hoa Province was still authorized to build 22 schools containing 66 classrooms, but the USOM funds would now provide only 50 percent of the building costs (totalling \$1,650,000).

The official in charge of this program in the Department of National Education was Mr. Truong Buu Dien, Chief Service of the Foreign Aid Budget. Mr. Dien was a young and active official who had completed his professional studies in the United States of America. He was supposed

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<sup>1</sup>Resettlement centers referred to Land Development projects, not refugee centers. See "The Commissar and the Law: Personnel Problems at the Land Development Directorate," elsewhere in this volume.

to work with both the local authorities and with the Education Division of USOM. He noted that in the beginning of the program there were differences of opinion between the Vietnamese authorities and USOM about the allocation of funds for the building of the schools. The Vietnamese authorities had wanted to make allocation according to the financial ability of each province (some receiving full support, others 50 to 75 percent. Some provinces needed only funds covering expenditures for school equipment and teachers' salaries, and were willing to provide building costs out of provincial or village budgets). The American technicians wanted to make the allocation on an equal basis, that is, to assign fifty percent of the building costs in each case, as provided for in the project. (Exception would be made only for special cases, such as the building of schools at the resettlement centers.)

Another problem, according to Mr. Dien, was the fact that all school sites had been changed many times especially in areas where provincial boundaries were altered. Each change required approval by the Ministry and by USOM. Other delays were caused, at first, especially, by the time-consuming process of collecting the documents required for fund approval and release; the principle of releasing funds only after the building of the schools was completed; a three-month home leave for the American technician in charge of the project; the absence of American technicians in the provinces; and the lack of cooperation among local authorities, government technicians, and the local population. Even after a proposed school had been approved by the Ministry and USOM, it usually took months to secure budgetary authorizations and to transfer the funds to local officials.

After studying the problem of delays, he proposed some modifications of Project Agreement No. 30-64-152 which he believed would remedy the situation. Soon afterwards, on November 11, 1957, an amendment to the Project Agreement was signed (see Appendix II, below).

At the beginning of 1958, the Ministry appointed two traveling inspectors to improve the school construction program liaison between the department and the local authorities. This expedited the slow communication procedures that had previously characterized the administration. Nevertheless, while estimated expenditures amounted to 12,518,416 piasters as of February 13, 1958, only 1,275,000 piasters of the total aid funds of 57,785,000 piasters had actually been released. All the funds thus released had been transferred to the Khanh Hoa Chief of Province to be spent on the school building project.

## USOM EDUCATION DIVISION

In November 1957, Dr. Robert Leetsma was assigned to the Education Division of USOM and entrusted with the administration of the school building project. He was very much interested in this project, which he described as the first important long-term education aid program undertaken here with U.S. aid funds. In order to carry out the project as quickly as possible, at the request of Vietnamese officials he promptly agreed to propose an amendment to the Project Agreement on November 17, 1957. The purpose of the amendment (see Appendix II below) was to increase the discretionary powers of local officials and simplify the method of releasing funds. Under the former system, when USOM received a school building request from the Department of Education, it *almost always approved it and within a week sent all the documents* related to the school to the Vietnamese Aid Government for the release of funds. But the release and use of funds thereafter involved long and difficult processes.

Between November 1957, when Dr. Leetsma was appointed to his post, and March 1958, USOM fund releases amounting to 25,237,500 piasters were approved and allocated as follows:

DATE OF APPROVAL	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF CLASSROOMS	PIASTERS
November, 1957	112	317	10,425,000
December, 1957	56	163	4,075,000
January, 1958	68	192	4,800,000
February, 1958	54	140	4,137,500
March, 1958	23	72	1,800,000
	313	884	25,237,500

But although over 25,000,000 piasters had been earmarked for fund release, the General Direction of Budget and Foreign Aid stated that by the end of February 1958, only 1,250,000 piasters had been spent. Dr. Leetsma discovered that there was a long delay between the release of the funds and the beginning of construction. He explained that Project Agreement No. 30-64-152 was being administered so as to encourage active cooperation of local authorities, but that this was a slow and cumbersome process.

Funds released by the General Direction of Budget and Foreign Aid were as follows:

MONTH	PIASTERS RELEASED
Feb., 1958	1,275,000
Mar.	4,346,000
Apr.	6,000,000
May	3,500,000
	15,121,000

## KHANH HOA PROVINCE EDUCATION BUREAU

The Province of Khanh Hoa had a record of active participation in educational activities. In 1956, under the earlier Project No. 30-69-071, the Khanh Hoa authorities had advanced 300,000 piasters from the provincial budget to build 4 schools in the expectation that USOM would ultimately provide 720,000 piasters through the Department of Education for the building of 9 schools with 18 classrooms. But because of procedural delays, these funds had not been obligated during the fiscal year,<sup>2</sup> and the province did not receive the expected reimbursement. This meant a loss of prestige as well as funds, and it explained the great caution the provincial official displayed when they received the project for building 22 additional schools during fiscal year 1957. It was they who decided not to authorize the building of schools until the funds had been received from the Central Government.

In Khanh Hoa, the officials directly in charge of this program were the Deputy Province Chief and the Chief of the Provincial Education Bureau. The Deputy Province Chief, who had been at his post in Nha Trang for five years, was well acquainted with the aid programs.

Mr. Nguyen Huu Hoang, Chief of the Provincial Education Bureau of Khanh Hoa, had spent 35 years in teaching and educational administration. It was he who directly supervised the community participation in the construction of the projected schools and administered the funds on behalf of the province. He had planned for the construction to take place during the summer vacations so that the schools would be ready for the academic year beginning September 19, 1958. On July 27, 1957, he had presented a report recommending construction of the Ngoc Hoa school to the Ministry of Education, only 25 days after the program had been approved December 6, 1957. The Ministry also approved the detailed plans on January 3, 1958, and on March 15 allocated 1,275,000 piasters for the construction of 19 of the 22 schools planned for Khanh Hoa Province. Construction actually began April 5, 1958.

One of Mr. Hoang's first tasks was to convene the delegates of the Provincial Administration, the Reconstruction Office, and the parents' association to discuss the program. He hoped that an annual contribution of 50 piasters from each family member of the association would provide the school with a water closet and other improvements, once the organization had begun to function. But he feared that if old financial procedures still had to be followed, government funds would become available only on

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<sup>2</sup>U. S. fiscal years run from July 1 to June 30. USOM funds may not be obligated after the end of fiscal year unless they are re-programmed for the following fiscal year by USOM-Vietnamese agreement.

the presentation of invoices, and it would be very difficult to meet his construction schedules.

Both the purchasing and receiving of materials and equipment for the Ngoc-Hoi school were performed under the authority of the province chief by a special committee, of which the district chief was chairman. The building committee had also been appointed by the province chief. It consisted of two sub-committees, one for Control (including one representative each for the province chief, the Reconstruction Agency, and the provincial education staff, as well as two parents) and one for Operations (with the building committee chairman himself serving as chairman, and additional members elected by Vinh Ngoc Village and approved by the province chief).

The building committee was under the chairmanship of Mr. Nguyen Tri Tin, Deputy Village Chief. It included a Deputy Chief of Committee and five advisors, all of whom were joiners and bricklayers who were directly involved in the purchase of building materials and in the construction of the school. Mr. Tin had originally estimated the school building costs at 180,000 piasters. Under the existing policy, the Vietnamese Government was to provide 50 percent of the total cost (i.e., 25,000 piasters for each of the 4 classrooms), and USOM was to provide the remaining 50 percent (i.e., 100,000 piasters). The part of the cost borne by the Vietnamese Government was to be provided out of local and communal sources, in the form of either materials or labor. Half of this, in turn, was to be provided by the Vinh Xuong District. Provincial authorities were still expecting funds from the national government.

As of the end of April 1958 the building materials alone had cost 170,000 piasters. Of this the village had contributed 45,000 piasters for down payment on purchase of materials, 50,000 piasters in the form of public land on which the school was being built, and 7,000 piasters for fencing and a flag pole. Unskilled labor had been contributed by the five hamlets of the Vinh Ngoc Village, which had also brought in bricks and cement for building purposes. Mr. Tin estimated that the village's contribution had totaled more than 100,000 piasters, and argued that it had already done more than was required.

As for equipment and furniture, USOM had committed itself to provide funds amounting to 7,000 piasters per classroom. Four teachers were also to be recruited, at an average monthly salary of 2,500 piasters. The latter costs were to be borne by USOM for the first 8 months and the national budget for the next 4 months. Mr. Tin feared that once USOM and national aid was withdrawn, the province would be hard-