

Ref -

A road construction project ~~with major~~ of major economic importance to Northern Bolivia, now ~~reached~~ passing the half-way mark, has been receiving the continuing attention of Advisor ~~Officer~~ ^{Person} of the USMILGP to Bolivia's Army Section.

The road is being constructed from Guayaramerin to Riberalta, through the dense Beni jungle, by the Bolivian Army's 4th Engineer ~~Battalion~~ Batallion which is based in Guayaramerin. Since the road was begun three years ago, Engineer and maintenance advisors from the Army Section have paid regular, ~~periodic~~ visits, inspecting both road progress and maintenance on the many vehicles furnished the battalion under the Military Assistance Program (MAP). Some of these vehicles are in use on the project.

The visits by the advisors combine several smaller missions: ^{the conduct of an inventory of MAP} ~~and~~ ^{and, equip} ~~and~~ ^{ES supplies} inspection of MAP vehicles, ~~and~~ ^{and} maintenance procedures, the discussion of maintenance and supply problems with battalion officers, and ~~and~~ ^a detailed review of the roads progress. The visiting Advisors also offer advice towards the solution of project problems and help in any other way they are able.

The 4th Engineer Battalion is commanded by LTC David Zambrana. His unit has been visited often by ARSEC Engineer Advisor, LTC Ralph G. Angle, ~~Maintenance Advisor~~ and the Enlisted Engineer Advisor, SFC John D. Schollhammer. Joining the two on this visit was the new Maintenance Advisor, CPT Michael McManus.

The 90-kilometer road, which will eventually link ~~Riberalta~~ the two major river ports of Riberalta on the Beni River and Guayaramerin on the Mamore, was begun three years ago as a USAID Civic Action project and then continued by the Bolivian Army with assistance from ARSEC personnel. It is worked on 8 months out of the year, the other four being the rainy season which hinders

any construction efforts.

The economic importance of the road rests primarily on the stimulus it will ~~have~~ give to the settlement of one of Bolivia's richer agricultural areas. At the same time, it will provide

The economic importance of the road is two-fold. First, it will provide a ~~fix~~ transportation link between two major river ports that will cut transportation time from about six days by boat and railroad to about ~~3~~ hours by truck. Second, this ~~impetus~~ to commerce ~~will stimulate~~ settlement in one of Bolivia's richer agricultural areas. With settlement, ~~will~~ an increase in agricultural production ~~which~~ will help in ~~rich but~~ ^{is expected.} ~~overall~~ ^{in this} the development of Bolivia's ~~sparsely~~ ~~settled~~ populated lowlands. ~~The~~ ^{Development} ~~possibilities offered by this road~~ ^{current} kind of ~~investment~~ would work hand in hand with the government's program of resettling Indians from the altiplano which now holds about 75 per cent of the country's total population.

II