

Udorn Monthly Report

February 1966

GENERAL

Some of our mistakes are catching up with us. When our school was built, we had one classroom and hired one teacher, which was enough way back when. Then the small fry population increased to the extent that we had to hire a second teacher, who immediately wanted a set of keys to the schoolhouse. This appeared to be a legitimate request, and we went into action to procure more keys. Having these made, required sending the one set we had on hand to Bangkok. Then Sunday caught us flatfooted with the school room locked and unavailable for Sunday School. Spurred on by some indignant mothers, we finally got the Club bar in reasonable shape and Sunday School began inside the bar. As the strains of "Jesus Wants Me For A Sunbeam" seeped out, regular bar customers were seen to approach the bar door, assume a puzzled expression, and sheepishly retreat to the other side of the swimming pool where, with rapidly growing thirsts, they waited with their fellows for the children to evacuate their favorite spot in Northeast Thailand.

Hog callers will be the next new type of employees. We are faced with moving into the new Operations/Administration Building which has not received the promised new dial telephone system. So, for communications, we plan to place hog callers on the roofs of buildings, and pass notes to them. The hog caller who receives the note will then "call" the message over to one of his colleagues on the proper building, and receiving hog caller will then bellow the message right through the roof to the addressee. (Something like a party line — everybody can listen in and catch up on the other guy's business; may turn out to be both economical and a morale builder, too).

Our recent move turned out to be a tear jerker. Our old Supermarket building had to be demolished to make way for a new supply warehouse. We financed the house for the Supermarket with Club funds a few years ago as a place to help replenish kitchens of the first few wives who, uninterested in the anti-Udorn propaganda, came to join their husbands. Construction of the edifice, as well as money, was a problem, as we had to depend on amateurs; and the building fell down twice before we were successful in keeping it upright. The cost per square foot of this octagon shaped monstrosity probably is not even with that of the Chrysler Building, but who cares? (We bought some groceries).

Visitors to Udorn should not jump to the conclusion that everyone here is afflicted with palsy. The noise due to the operations of jet aircraft here, is getting so bad that the nerves and ears have about collapsed. Also, red eyes are due to lack of sleep, not

hangovers, although we must admit that people are about ready to try any remedy to get relief. Wearing ear muffs or pilots' helmets doesn't seem to be the answer, as they are too hot; and getting people to understand verbal instructions in this four language Tower of Babel is bad enough, now.

The building program inches ahead, with the persons assigned to any phase of construction, glassy-eyed but still fighting. Applicants for jobs of this sort are practically non-existent; the news has gotten around -- that way lies madness.

Although bitterly disappointed in the performance of an American organization which is supervising (?) the construction of one building here, we have had our faith in the human race partially restored by one indigenous contractor. This man approached us nearly three years ago to get the job of putting gutters on the Club roof. All he possessed in worldly goods, he brought with, and on him -- a pair of tattered shorts and a 'T' shirt. No shoes, no hat, not even a pencil. He did have some qualities that the rest of his profession did not -- energy, willingness to work and ambition. He has successfully completed several projects here, and is now erecting two supply warehouses. He now has shoes, a pair of long pants, and his own pencil. We have a soft place in our hearts for this guy.

Sometimes we win, sometimes we lose; and once in a while we do both. The old bar got so crowded it just couldn't take care of the trade. The new bar wasn't used because the patrons didn't like being exposed to the view of the people in the dining room. So we did away with the divider between the dining room and new bar, and replaced it with a solid partition. Also, a door between the old and new bars was opened. On opening night of the two-bar arrangement, the new bar customers were delighted. The next morning we were called to task by hordes of movie goers who could not hear the movie because of the racket coming through the wall between the two facilities. Now we got to work on some extensive interior sound proofing.

Udorn Monthly Report

March 1966

GENERAL

We are thankful that we don't have a crystal ball working here. If we had been able to foresee what was in store for us in March, most of us would probably have taken to the hills. The workload has continued to pile up and there is less and less mention of a "day off".

Supervisors are so desperate to keep people on the job that they resort to all sorts of stalling tactics and evasions in their attempts to avoid recommending anyone for time off or leave. One such interview took place in the Udorn Maintenance Area:

"Mr. Skreilke, I got to get emergency leave right away!
I just got a message from my wife that my kid has fell off the barn and hurt his head."

"Which barn?"

"The one right behind my house. There aint but one there."

"What was he doin' on the barn?"

"Why, he was just playing and -- What difference does it make what he was doin', anyhow?"

"Well, he probably ought not to been up there. Aint he got nothin' else to do?"

"Yeah, he's got plenty to do, but a kid is got to do some climbin', too."

"Mine aint. I laid down the law on that. What's the matter with his head anyhow? Did a doctor say his head was busted?"

"I don't know what a doctor said. My wife just -- "

"See! You don't know there's anything much wrong with him. Why, we got a guy here, Moxie Balkanite, whose kid fell off his house right smack dab on his head, and he aint bunged up much. There's Moxie, now. Hey, Moxie, come 'ere a minute. I'd like to take this guy to see your kid's head -- the one that fell off your house -- and show him there aint anything wrong."

"Who says my kid aint right in the head? I been hearin' some talk about that, and I'd like to catch the bird that started it! Was it you, fella?"

"Wait a minute, Hoxie. This knuckle-head here just wants leave. He don't know nothin' about your kid. I said we'd like to see your kid's head so ---- "

"Well, you characters aint got no business examining my kid's head! He's just backward, not nutty; and he behaves a sight better'n them wharf rats o' yours. Now, I got work to do. One last thing - you keep your nose outa my business!"

"Yuh see! There aint nothin' wrong with Hoxie's boy, and he had the same kinda accident as yours. Now aint you ashamed o' kickin' up all this fuss! How about gettin' them two chopper crews to hurry and button up them two jobs? We're behind and ---- "

"But I need some leave! I ---- "

"Tell yuh what. Next week maybe I can get you a day off and you can go to Bangkok and call up your wife! Boy! Won't she be surprised and tickled!"

"Aw, what's the use? GOOD BYE!"

FREQUENTLY, we have to ease up on some folks before they break, but sometimes an incident will snap the tension and draw a good laugh, and do the job for us. One day in one of the hangar shops, a man was under a bench trying to move a rubber hose. The hose was pushed in such a manner that the end of it was eased up the pants leg of a mechanic who was standing beside the bench. The mechanic glanced down and one look was enough.

"WAHHEE!" he screamed, dropping his tools and making a valiant but unsuccessful effort to run through a closed door. Finally the nervous knuckles got the door ajar, and with horror written on his visage, he departed, hoarsely croaking, "SNAKE!" Panic struck, and the building emptied, except for one mechanic who had been working for fifteen hours straight and was dead on his feet. This somnambulist, unaware of anything abnormal, wended his way indifferently into the shop just vacated, and mused, "Where'd everybody go?"

"Aint there no snake in there?" quavered a voice from a distance.

"Naw, nothin' but a ol' rubber hose some galoot left on the floor."

Giggling and embarrassed, (but relaxed) the men returned to work.

Another scare has been dissipated. A great many of the taller men here have been observed walking around in a daze. Investigation has proved that they were not victims of some unknown malady. They had only been looking through the new Operations/Administration Building and had almost batted their brains out in one of the two "low bridge" places adjacent to the stair steps. Truly, this is a country for little people, and most of the architects in this land, design structures accordingly. We are glad to report that we won one battle in this area of disagreement, in the matter of beds for the bedrooms on the second floor of the new Operations/Administration Building. Weary of hearing complaints of "beds too short" from some of our visitors, we thought we would lay the complaints and large guests to rest properly and simultaneously by getting seven foot length beds. We are still gloating over this glorious victory which was obtained over a protesting, reluctant furniture manufacturer. With the "aid" of an interpreter the encounter proceeded as follows:

"Tell this guy we want some beds seven - SEVEN - feet long and four - FOUR - feet wide, and ask him how much they cost."

"He say you don't need bed that big."

"It's not for me, and it's none of his business, anyway! Go on and tell him to say how much they cost."

"He say who use such big bed?"

"NONE OF HIS ---- ! Okay. Tell him we just hired a bunch of men nearly seven feet tall, and they got no place to sleep; and this time find out the PRICE of these beds."

"He say -- you let these men come to town, or keep at Air Base? He say police ought to know."

"Keep at Air Base; no let come town. Dad gum it, you got me talking like you, now! This time find out what the beds cost, and cut out all this other monkey business!"

"He say ---- "

"Well, he say what? What's the matter, now?"

"He say no like such big people. He afraid."

"Oh, for gosh sakes! Tell him he doesn't have to get near these people! Just get the price of these beds!"

"He say he don't know. He never do before. He say he tired, now."

"Look, you tell this guy I'm gonna go get the POLICE GENERAL if he won't answer my questions!"

"He say okay. He make bed."

"How much for ten beds?"

"He say one bed - five hundred Baht."

"How much for ten?"

"No make ten."

"Why not? Are you telling him exactly what I'm telling you to tell him?"

"No, sir."

"NO! Why not?"

"He my friend. This too much work."

"Now you listen, kid, and listen good. I'm gonna get the Police General and come back here in five minutes ---."

"He say Okay. Make ten. Four thousand baht."

"Okay, when will they be finished?"

"He say you come back."

"Come back? Nothing doing. I want the answer now."

"He say maybe rainy time."

"rainy time? What's that mean?"

"Like you say July."

"JULY! JULY! I'm gonna throttle both of you! So help me, I'll -- (Whoa. Down, boy. Take it easy. Beds, beds, not murder). I want these beds in the next ten days and no fooling!"

"He say okay."

We got the bedrooms in the new Operations/Administration Building open, and they aren't half bad. A few problems have popped up. We forgot that in this area a shower (if available at all) usually consists

of a goose neck shower head, and the water sprays unimpeded and tidis-
circulated all over the bathroom. We told the cognizant people to
put in shower curtains (should have known better) and the results were
curtains which divided the bathrooms in two, but were nowhere near the
dresses, and the water went all over the bathrooms as before. Shelves
for toilet articles were placed directly over lavatories, so that a
man could easily scalp himself if he tried to lean down to wash his
face. Blueprints for telephone line conduits must have been some old,
worn copies of another building, as the outlets (nicely covered up by
plaster) were not where the blueprints showed, and could not be located
until we started the hunt and peck method with a chisel. Also some kind
guy hooked up the swimming pool and shower drain lines in such a manner
that the waste water flowed beautifully along the front sidewalk of the
new building.

We think we are making some progress but suspect that the torn-up
appearance of this place will continue ad infinitum and probably cause
some Udon graduates to bang into some problems when he confronts
St. Peter. Such a conference may take the following form:

St. Peter: "Who are you, boy?"

Udon Alumnus: "Without thealright, Hechmils, second class,
Alr America, Udon."

St.P.: "You got your Alr America I.D. card? Hand it
over. My goal! This picture shows a young
guy. You claim that's you?"

U.A.: "Yes, sir, I had that picture taken before I
got to Udon. That place sure eggs a guy.
I couldn't get no sleep, or time off, neither.
We just never did catch up with work. Once
I got home leave, but when I got home my girl
wouldn't have nothin' to do with me. Said I
wasn't me, but was a impostor. So I come back
to Udon."

St.P.: "Well, we haven't got much we can use you on
here. We're trying to pretty up this place,
and could use some gardeners. But we're sure
not going to put any Udon people on that
kind of work. You boys managed to keep Udon
all torn up for years. That can you do?
Don't start talking choppers; we don't use 'em
here."

of a goose neck shower head, and the water sprays unimpeded and indiscriminately all over the bathroom. We told the cognizant people to put in shower curtains (should have known better) and the results were curtains which divided the bathrooms in two, but were nowhere near the drains, and the water went all over the bathrooms as before. Shelves for toilet articles were placed directly over lavatories, so that a man could easily scalp himself if he tried to lean down to wash his face. Blueprints for telephone line conduits must have been some old, unused copies of another building, as the outlets (nicely covered up by plaster) were not where the blueprints showed, and could not be located until we started the hunt and peck method with a chisel. Also some kind soul hooked up the swimming pool and shower drain lines in such a manner that the waste water flowed beautifully along the front sidewalk of the new building.

We think we are making some progress but suspect that the torn-up appearance of this place will continue ad infinitum and probably cause some Udorn graduate to bump into some problems when he confronts St. Peter. Such a conference may take the following form:

St. Peter: "Who are you, boy?"

Udorn Alumnus: "Wilbur Wheelwright, Mechanic, second class, Air America, Udorn."

St.P.: "You got your Air America I.D. card? Hand it over. My gosh! This picture shows a young guy. You claim that's you?"

J.A.: "Yes, sir, I had that picture taken before I got to Udorn. That place sure ages a guy. I couldn't get no sleep, or time off, neither. We just never did catch up with work. Once I got home leave, but when I got home my girl wouldn't have nothin' to do with me. Said I wasn't me, but was a imposter. So I come back to Udorn."

St.P.: "Well, we haven't got much we can use you on here. We're trying to pretty up this place, and could use some gardeners. But we're sure not going to put any Udorn people on that kind of work. You boys managed to keep Udorn all torn up for years. What can you do? Don't start talking choppers; we don't use 'em here."

"Listen to that racket in the kitchen! Them rats is as big as hogs. We aint been able to get rid of rats since Egbert and them rapscallion Timberlake twins tarpented old Tom fifteen years ago. Merrey, but that old cat sure did go fast sittin' down and pullin' himself along with his front feet. I never will forget that cat holleerin' at them little rascals all the time, too; but we couldn't stop 'em, and Tom never did come back."

"Well, maybe Egbert's just wadd and had somethin' else on his mind. We aint right nice anyway, not goin' over to see him and Mamie. She's so proud of him. Let's get ready and go take them some pound cake and cherry pie."

"All right. What are you goin' to wear?"

"Why you know I aint had no new dress for eight year, since I got my blue taffeta. I'll wear that. My only other dress is tacky and neerly wore out, anyway."

"Why, Emmy Slocum! Mama would turn over in her grave if she could see you goin' outside the house in that dress! It's clear above your ankles!"

"Well, it'll just have to do. I can't help it if it drawed up. Hurry up. You think we ought to take a jar of wattermelon rind pickles, too? Egbert liked them."

"Yes. Come on; let's get on over there. He was the nicest little boy in this whole town, and I know he just can't wait to see us. He was always so thoughtful. You remember that time two years before the war when he brought us a Christmas card?"

U.A.: "Anything at all. I don't care what. I been hearing about how everybody here gets a day off a week. For that I'm ready for anything."

St.P.: "Well, I don't know. All we got here right now are some cloud moving jobs. You either take that, or go to the other place down below, or back to Udon."

U.A.: "Okay, okay. I'll take it; and if the cloud moving jobs are finished, my next choice is the place down below. Now about that time off business. We get off a day every week?"

St.P.: "Nothing doing. Other people got used to getting off once a week on ~~shift~~, and we got to keep 'em happy since we're stuck with all that happiness propaganda. But not you Udon guys. You didn't get time off in Udon so you don't get it here. I admit it killed you, but we're not going to try any new fangled ideas like changing peoples' habits. Come on in and grab hold of that little cloud there. We'll give you a tryout, anyhow. But don't let's get any of that continuously torn up business started here like was going on in Udon. We're supposed to be perfect here already, and can't use that old Udon excuse of "the building programs's not completed."

Norm Monthly Report

April 1966

GENERAL

Four months and twenty-one days after the date when the structure was supposed to have been completed, we moved into the new Operations/Administration Building. (Some items have not been completed yet, but we were so excited about the new place to work, and so anxious to get out of the old building before it fell down on us, that we just couldn't wait any longer). Regardless of the drawbacks of the new edifice, it is a great improvement. After the move was completed, some of us went back to the offices just abandoned to see if anything had been left in the lifeless frames. This ghostly, ghoulish reminder of the dead past still sends a faint odor of the expired candles inhaled in his shallow cryp beneath the tiled old floor. Within those hollowed walls, one can sense the still echoing cries of anguish, the violent curses, the hilarious laughter, the dreams and plans which accompanied the development of this base. Probably a phase to avoid from now on.

More people continue to report here for duty and more are still to come. The Club has been serving roughly twice as many meals as it is set up for. Guest memberships have been reduced again, and dependents, except for school children and teachers, have been barred from the dining room between 1130 to 1215 daily except Sunday. (Guest groups will just have to wait until the waiting people get fed). We now have sleep-in Club employees, most of whom work in the dining room, and are developing into first class operators as they attempt to get food to the hungry customers. Consideration is being given to substituting blankets for the mattresses, as they complain that their light skirts do not provide long enough strides to make the desired speed.

The food piling is practically completed, and for the first time we have the prospect of going through the rainy season above water and out of the mud. Rubber boots are being offered for sale at large reductions in price.

The completed piling brought on some more traffic problems. The lady drivers trying to get into the same parking place, collided. Both got out and, with an additional complication due to the fact that one slipped, carried on the following conversation:

NO, I'M ~~SO~~ SORRY! You aren't hurt are you, or your darling little child?"

NO, no harm done. Harkly, I'm tho thournd, Im thournd.
Are you all right, dear?"

"Yes, I'm fine. For Heaven's sake! Just look at that fender! It's ruined! Will you tell me just why you weren't looking where you were going? Or did your steering wheel come off? You realize I had the right-of-way, don't you?"

"Whattt thith about right-of-way? And I wath looking where I wath going. You weren't. You were looking at that nathty dog you got with you! Why didn't you leave that thtinking thing at home?"

"Thtinking? Thtinking? Oh, stinking. My dog is every bit as clean as that runny nosed little ape of yours, and much better behaved! Have you got insurance? We'll sue you if you don't pay for our repairs!"

"Itth none of your bithneth whether we have inthyuranth. I never thaw thutch a hateful woman! I'm going to find my huthband."

With unerring judgment, both ladies headed for the bar where it was almost certain their husbands would be found. Leaving the dog and child outside, they entered and found the menfolks enjoying themselves and not interested in their problem.

"Collision!" jeered one, "Neither of you dames can drive a nail, let alone a car. I'll roll yuh high dice for the damage, Bill. Okay? Hey, bartender, gi~~me~~ the dice cup."

"Shoot. Four sixes in one. Stand, huh? Three fives - horse on me. Coming back. Hold one ace. Four fives in two. Shoot. Three sixes in one. Hold sixes. No help. Horse and horse. Come back. Five threes! I'm dead. Nothing. You win. Now, you girls get out of here and take the kid and dog home. Then come back without 'em or not at all. Savvy?"

Since it appears we will not have enough water to last through the dry season next year, plans are being made for everyone to take leave and time off during Aprill/May 1967. We are still trying to build a reservoir, or in some way catch enough water during the rainy season to tide us over; but prospects appear dim. This campaign for water resources has been going on for well over a year already; but with a few exceptions, it appears to excite little interest. The small lake from which we drew all our water until January of this year is practically dry, now.

Power is another problem. We have outgrown our electric power production, and are setting up a priority system to decide who loses out first when the load becomes too great, as it has been doing frequently lately. So far, no one has admitted that the world will survive if he has to do without air-conditioning or lights for a while. We understand some help is forthcoming. WHEN?

The heartstrings of the Americans way over here may be stretched a bit, but nearly all are still intact; and thoughts are never long away from home. And there are always some home folks who remember the travellers, their weaknesses and idiosyncrasies. To "see oursel's as ithers see us" is not always too flattering, even when affection influences judgment. One of our number related some of his experiences (exactly hearsay) on his home leave to a typical small town. The old maids who had known him all his life, spied him from a window of their ramshackle old house.

"Sally! Looky yonder comin' down the street - there's Egbert, Mamie's boy. Well, did you ever! Aint he got big?"

"It sure is him. All dressed up, too. I never did think he'd amount to nothin', but he went out and made good - buying them Hong Kong suits and all. Mamie was tellin' me all about him. She thinks he's the smartest boy in town. Always good to his mother, too."

"Well, I don't know. Mamie's still takin' in washing. Has been ever since her husband run off with that circus woman. I bet he's comin' here to see us. I got plenty of pound cake. He used to like that better than anything."

"Why, Emmy! He liked my cherry pies ever' bit as good. Is my petticoat showing? He's party near our gate. Let's both open the door at the same time when he knocks."

"He went right by."

Both struggled briefly to keep back the tears.

"Well, maybe he's in a hurry. I guess he's been awful busy. Looks like he could say hallo, though."

"The little smart aleck! He never was no account, even when he was little! I always said there was something wrong with him. His eyes were too far apart. Always into everything, stealin' apples from ol' man Bates's orchard, and turnin' Mis Allen's privy over that time."

Udorn Monthly Report

May 1966

GENERAL

As we may have expected, the rainy season started ahead of the normal time, just when we were hoping we might sneak by with completion of a water storage project before the annual drenching began. Work continues, with heavy equipment attached to large trees by cables, so the expensive earth moving machines will not disappear into the treacherous mud and dark waters that are upon us. Contractor's employees are offering good prices for any sort of individual life preservers and Scuba gear. Much time is lost when hats are seen on the surface of the drainage canal, and employees stop work to dive in and insure that a man is not attached to the underside of each hat. On a few of these hat investigations, a violently resisting, cursing, struggling contractor's employee has been hauled out and his work interrupted, while he convinced his rescuers that he was doing his job and not drowning.

The Ancient Mariner's Lament of: "Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink," holds true for Udorn if we separate the two lines by the several months between the end of this rainy season and the dry, baking heat of next year's March, April and May. The agonizing departure of the priceless liquid on its downward course to whatever useless fate awaits it, is like some dreadful dream where disaster approaches, and, immobilized, we have no power to escape the impending danger. In the meantime, on with the digging as conditions permit, bring on pumps and hoses, and we will fill whatever storage is finished next autumn with the residus of this summer's bumper crop of raindrops.

But why worry about next year? With the present witch hunts being conducted (with us the quarry) by so-called companions in the defense of Western Culture, maybe no Americans will be here to need any water. Progressive deprivation of privileges, harassment, and general accusations of wrong doing (no specifics or facts are made available to us - we must be guilty; somebody said so) have begun to get peoples' backs up. Already some are preparing to send families home, after hearing the Commissary and Supermarket privileges were no more. Others gaze with longing eyes and thoughts of transfer to the "hazardous" stations, where, almost any day one can fall down and hurt himself while carrying groceries home from the Commissary. Will the Club be next?

The floor of the new bar has been done over, and is now attractively finished with new tile. This, plus the teak plywood panelling of all dining rooms and bars, made the rest of the floors look hideous; so all these spaces will soon have tile floors. New dining room chairs will be available shortly, and further enhance the swanky atmosphere of the eating establishment.

Consumption of all food at the Club continues high, but the rate at which ketchup and mustard disappear is stupendous. To reverse this situation, we plan to replace the present spout tops of the plastic squeeze-type dispensers with revolting plastic visages through which the condiments will ooze in a sickening manner. We fondly hope that many stomachs will consequently be turned, and patrons rendered unable to stand the sight of viands of any description. Also, generous portions of plastic flies, beetles, ants, etc. will be mixed at random in various dishes. Both of these methods together, should drastically reduce the demand for edibles, and, if the campaign is as successful as we expect, our accountant has informed us that we may decrease our foraging trips to Bangkok by one trip per month.

The building program moves along, with two new supply buildings about completed, two hangars progressing fairly well, and two more supply buildings and a utility building to be started soon.

Long range power and water reservoir plans have been made and funded and we hope to get in gear on these right away.

We are still lagging on procuring the additional qualified personnel we have been authorized, and some of those who have arrived should have stayed home.

Road paving work, except for some parking areas, has been finished once, and the bad spots redone with appalling disregard for good workmanship. Another repair session will have to be undertaken.

The traffic control of the administrative area is not agreeable to all, as indicated the following conversation:

"You know which way a guy's supposed to drive around here?"

"Naw. Nobody knows. Them guys that t'ought up dis nonsense ought to see a head shrinker. Yuh come in th' main gate, tryin' to git to Operations, and there's a road to the right with nobody on it, but a sign that says "Do not enter." Okay. Yuh head on west and there's a bunch of people traipain'

across the road between the Ops Building and the Club. They git clear, and yuh caint move for guys drivin' into them parkin' places. Then yuh git to the road on the west side of the Ops Building, and what's there? A sign that says "Do Not Enter" and a arrow pointin' toward the hangar. Yuh go past the hangar and on across the airplane bridge, and head back east on the taxiway to th' transient airplane parkin' area, but the bridge to the Ops Building aint finished. So yuh go on out to the Airport Terminal Road and follow yuh nose, and in about five minutes you're back at the main gate agin. Now, I ask yuh, how's a guy gonna git to work?"

Udorn Monthly Report

June 1966

GENERAL

The new company provided Snack Bar went into operation in early June, and is considered a very attractive and useful building, greatly appreciated by the employees.

When the Snack Bar was planned, and all during the funding and construction phases, it was referred to as the indigenous Snack Bar. The name was adopted by the operator and we were unpleasantly surprised to see a large plastic sign - INDIGENOUS SNACK BAR - prominently displayed. This name probably would have been somewhat less than pleasing if seen by high level personages of the host country, so the sign was hurriedly taken away and the plastic letters taken loose. Frantic shuffling of the available letters resulted in selecting "U SING - DINE" as the new name. (That word "indigenous" is not only dull sounding, but also doesn't provide enough of the right letters to develop many names with romance, zing and aesthetically acceptable, too).

The Operations/Administration Building front yard has not blossomed out exactly as planned. We got about one quarter of the area sodded before the rains came and caused work stoppage and a tremendous growth of crabgrass and weeds. We had some labor difficulties too; the first batch of people hired for this job apparently had something on their minds which interfered with any muscular activity. These were advised to seek some other occupation such as posing for statues, for which employment they were doubtless most admirably suited. Next we collected a few men right out of the rice paddies and they were excellent workers. Not being able to tell time, they continued work from the time they started, right on until they got sleepy. However, the second day they failed to arrive, and investigation resulted in our discovery that they didn't know how to get here - somebody had to fetch them. This got to be too much trouble, and the matter was dropped until later on somebody evidently told these folks that they were supposed to be paid for work. They were paid off and disappeared. The whole affair has left us wishing we had had sense enough to plant cotton or alfalfa, instead of fooling with that lawn business.

The building program jerks along at varying speeds. We are almost out of unused real estate, and if no more land is made available, eventually we will have no more new construction going on. Maybe we can finally take some pictures of this place without the photos becoming obsolete in a short time due to a new building being started.

Employees here have many fine qualities, but a good many of them are the worst suckers that we have ever seen for believing rumors. Many times we have been flabbergasted by being faced with such gossip. The latest rumor (sponsored by some of the idle wives, it seems) was that we were going to move this whole operation to a new location. A few of the people who have been here a long time, got tired of listening to the clacking tongues, and, to have some fun and stoke the furnace a bit, went to the Club bulletin board and put up signs offering for sale all their household effects, cars, etc. This display absolutely proved the situation as far as some of the females were concerned. A group of wives gathered around the bulletin board and carried on the following conversation:

"Now, do you believe me, Oleta?"

"Well! Why is it that they don't tell us these things? These stupid --. Look, Matilda's husband is selling her new stove! I'm gonna buy that, and her dishes. I've always wanted some dishes with that pattern. Wonder if she will actually sell them for \$4.00 like this sign says? Here comes Matilda. Now you stay out of this. I saw that sign first! Oh, Matilda, honey, I believe I'll take those dishes and stove. Here's the money."

"What dishes and stove?"

"Why, the ones you're advertising."

"I'm not selling my dishes or my stove! Who said such a crazy thing?"

"Your husband, that's who. Look there. Now I'd like to get Bob to come by your house and pick them up this afternoon. Okay?"

"No, it's not okay. Why don't you keep your nose out of my business? Just wait till I catch Fred!"

"But, Okay! Haven't you heard? It's all over town. We're all moving."

"No, I never heard. I stay at home and take care of my house and don't try to get somebody else's dishes. You started all this just to get my dishes!"

A management type employee was passing by and was immediately seized by the women.

What is going on? Why are we all moving?"

"Moving? What are you talking about?"

"Look at these signs. Now, don't try to hide it! What I want to know is why you told some and not others. So they can sell their things first and get the best prices, that's why! Your friends. I, for one, don't appreciate it one bit!"

"Where did you girls get all this baloney? You just have been hitting the pipe."

"Somebody said so yesterday, and I was fool enough not to believe it."

"Who? Who said it?"

"Well --. I don't really remember. It was just a bunch of us together. You know."

"Now, I don't know. If somebody said it, who is 'somebody'?"

"Well, that's what's going around."

"Same stuff you got mixed up in last year. If you'd do some work once in a while, maybe you wouldn't have time to hang around the Club making up all these lies. We're not gonna move anywhere. Can you understand that, chicken brain? Now, I got to go. You girls go on some place else and don't be hanging around this bulleting board anymore. As for you, Oleta, you better exercise something besides your jaws. You must have picked up ten pounds in the past month. Just look at those hips! You better quit talking and eating so much and do some calisthenics. Now, beat it."

Now that we have some good ramp lights, life should be a little easier for the poor, harassed night supervisors. The hangars have long since been unable to accommodate the aircraft being worked on at night. Lack of good ramp lighting not only reduced efficiency but also provided a means for a few employees to crawl into one of the larger planes and take a nap. Incidents such as these resulted in some fairly uncouth remarks like the following:

"Dad blame it! I finally found yuh! Come outa there! I told you to work on them brakes and here yuh are, flaked out!"

"Aw, I just stretched out a minute. I'm tard."

"Tard! I'll kick your rear end higher'n a kite! And you're the guy that had the guts to put in for time off! I been huntin' you for a hour. You done had your time off, buster. Now you're gonna get a fat lip if I get any back talk. Get going on them brakes and stay on them brakes till them brakes is done! Then you call me and I'll tell you what to do next; and maybe it'll be fix them brakes agin', or somethin' else, or pack your gear. Move!"

Soon we hope to have two new gates in place to stop people from using our aircraft ramp and administration area as a highway. Not only is the present situation creating a nuisance but also a danger to pedestrians and maintenance personnel.

Other improvements are coming along (although at far too slow a speed) and some of these days we may have a big enough facility, manned with qualified people, to take care of the requirements. Now, if we could just get another 40 acres of land, and the funding, in 1968 we could -----; but we better save that until next month.