

FLOOD PICTURES 1971

VIENTIANE AREA

USAID MISSION TO LAOS
PHOTOGRAPHS

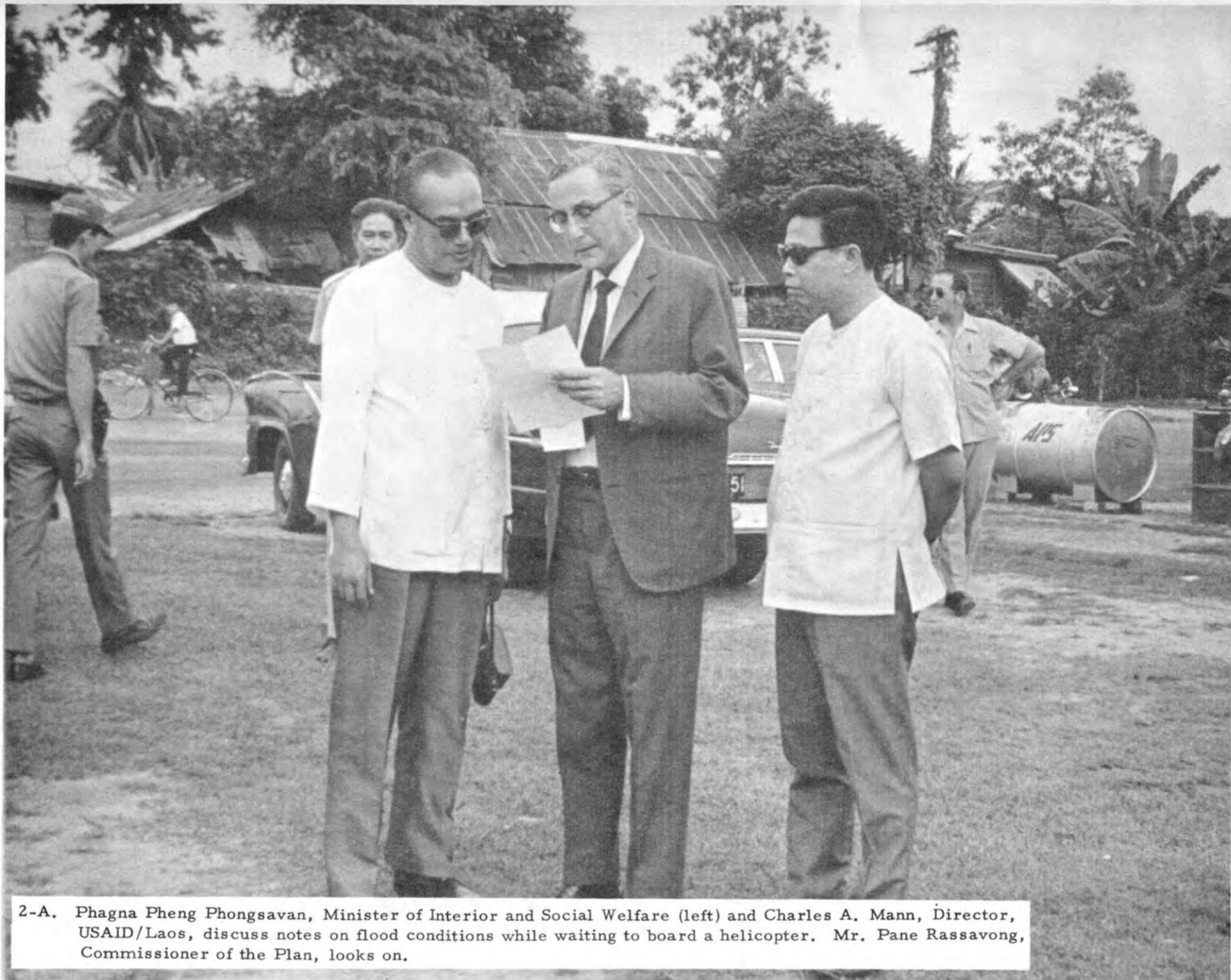
J. Woodson



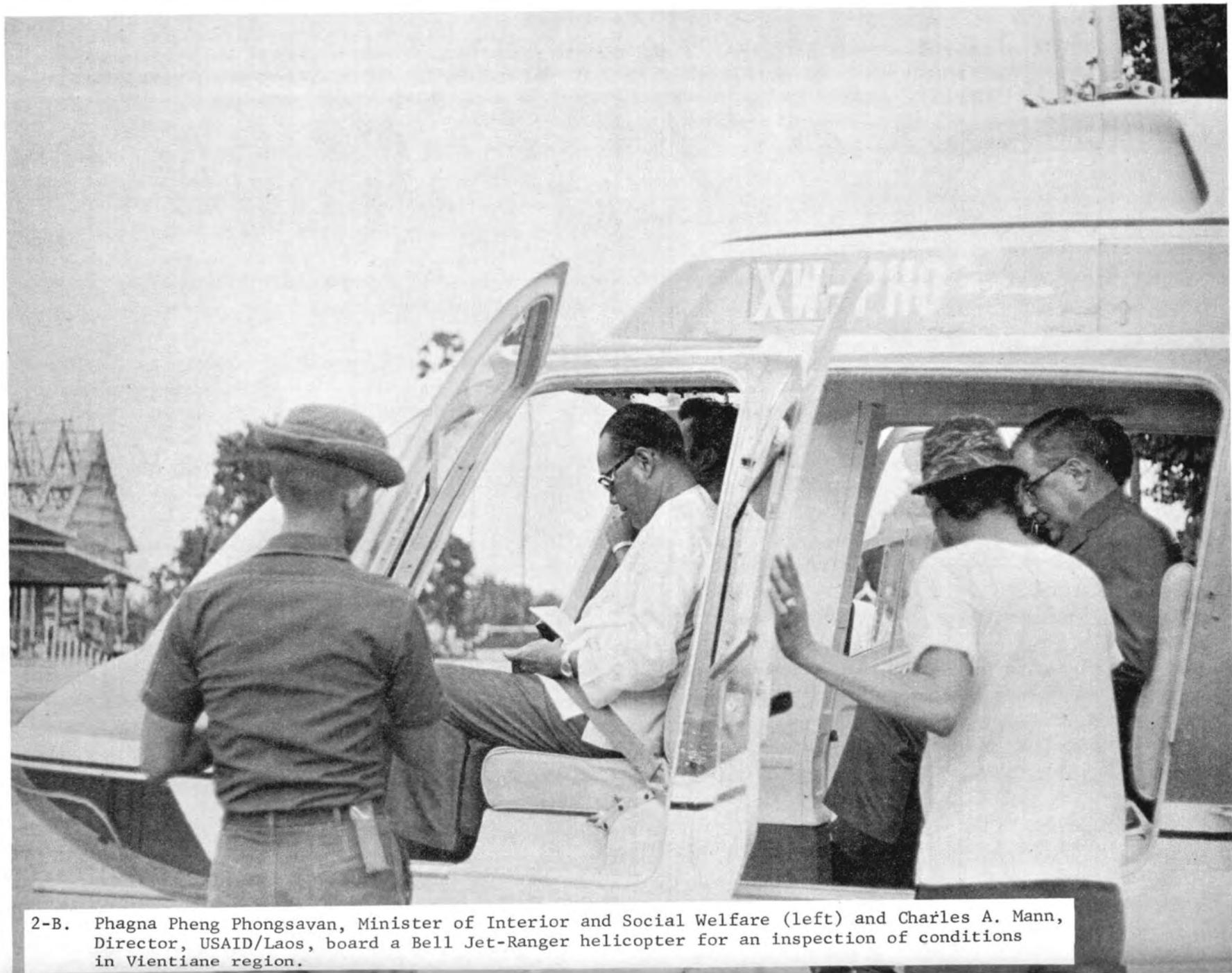
1. Charles A. Mann, Director, USAID/Laos, takes off in Bell Jet-Ranger helicopter for one of his daily inspections of flood conditions and control operations in Vientiane.



2. Charles A. Mann, Director, USAID/Laos, returning from helicopter inspection of flood conditions and control measures, obviously pleased that matters are under control.



2-A. Phagna Pheng Phongsavan, Minister of Interior and Social Welfare (left) and Charles A. Mann, Director, USAID/Laos, discuss notes on flood conditions while waiting to board a helicopter. Mr. Pane Rassavong, Commissioner of the Plan, looks on.



2-B. Phagna Pheng Phongsavan, Minister of Interior and Social Welfare (left) and Charles A. Mann, Director, USAID/Laos, board a Bell Jet-Ranger helicopter for an inspection of conditions in Vientiane region.



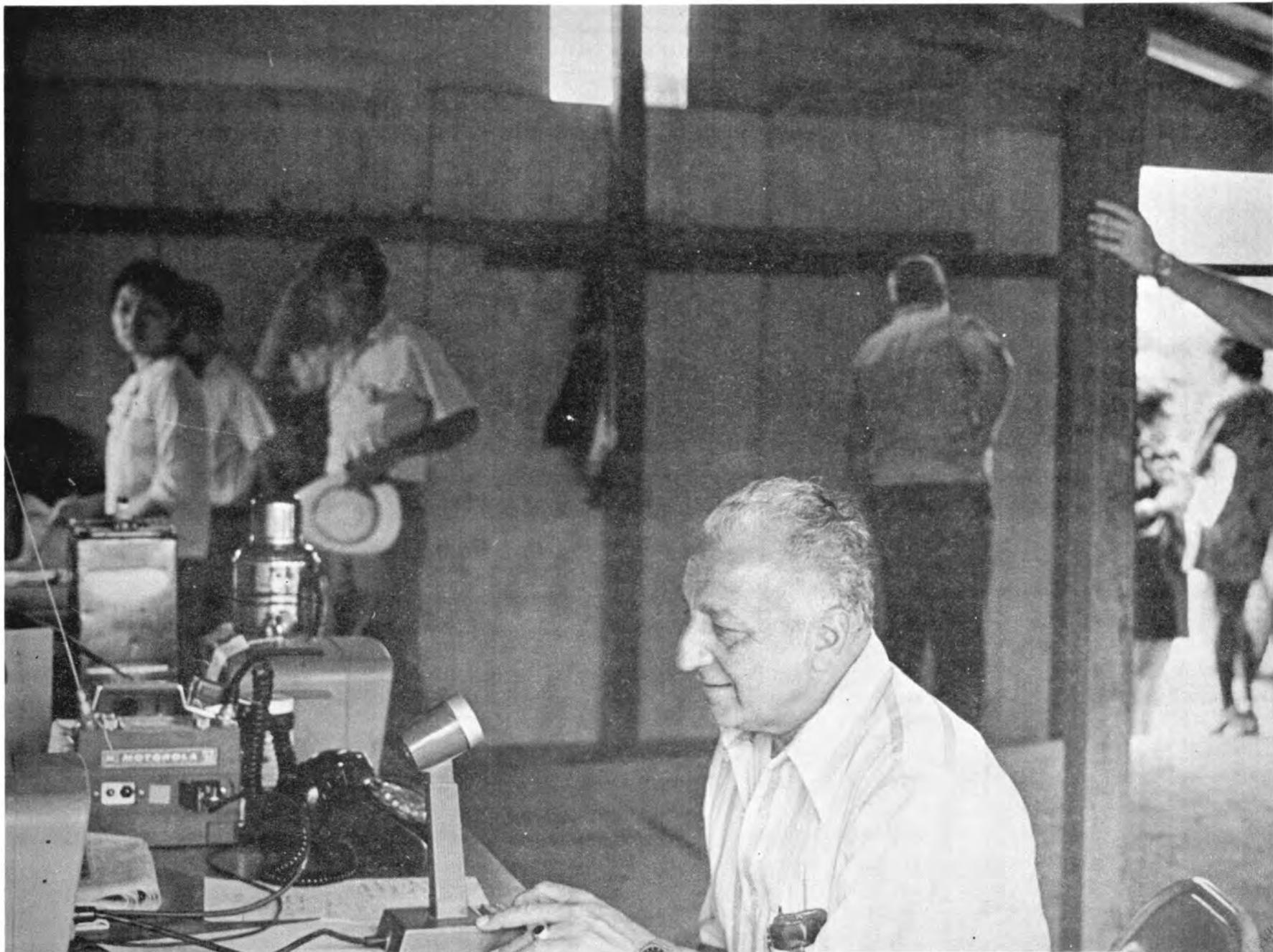
3. Temporary USAID air operations center on That Luang fair grounds, near the ancient temple at the highest point in Vientiane. Operating from here, helicopters ferried personnel and cargo to and from points in Vientiane region, including the STOL bases still serviceable. STOL aircraft connect the U.S. Mission in Vientiane with Udorn, Nongkhai, and the outside world as well as with all points in Laos.



4. An H-34 lands its passengers at That Luang.



5. Mr. and Mrs. Louis Connick arriving by H-34 helicopter at That Luang temporary HLZ during the Vientiane flood. He is the new area coordinator for USAID in Pakse, Laos.



6. USAID air support officer, Franklin Franco, mans the temporary operations center at That Luang HLZ. During Vientiane flood, this was Vientiane's air transport link with the world.



7. Wattay airport went under water August 20, and all civil air operations were suspended. Five days later this is Wattay. We are over the north end of the runway, and a portion of the extended runway can be seen standing above water at the lower left-hand corner. The dike broke off to the right of the picture on August 20, and shortly after the water was overtopping the dike in various places, flooding across the runway and encircling the city to the north. The older and most populous part of Vientiane is situated on a natural levee along the river bank. Across the Mekong in the distance is the Nongkhai province of Thailand, with the town of Ban Si Chiang Mai directly across from Vientiane.



8. Operations area of Wattay airport, Vientiane, August 25, 1971. The revetted RLA ramp in foreground is largely dry, as is the extreme south end of the main runway. Almost in dead center is the CASI hangar and ramp. To the left of the picture is the Air American area and the ASB operations area. Between the CASI hangar and the water tower (right of center) is the civil air terminal.



9. Vientiane, August 25, 1971, from the north. The American Embassy's Na Hai Diao compound, where USAID headquarters is situated, is the large triangular group of buildings in dead center. Lane Xang Avenue runs transversely across the picture beyond it, through the Monument to the Dead.



10. Looking north up Lane Xang Avenue from a spot above the Royal Palace in Vientiane, August 25, 1971. To the left of the Monument is the USAID complex in the American Embassy's Na Hai Diao compound. At right center, Vientiane's morning market is in full blast, and beyond it the huge Ministry of Interior building. A secondary system of dikes, within the city, protected this area from extensive flooding -- the main commercial and governmental section of the city and the largest part of its population. The water that topped the dike just upriver from Wattay was kept to the north of the main city, flowing from left to right across the top of the picture, joining in the far distance with the backflow from the flooded areas downstream from Vientiane. The Mekong River -- its bank almost directly beneath us -- flows from left to right, perpendicular to Lane Xang Avenue.



11. Western section of Vientiane in foreground (we are directly over Ban Hong Kha). Ban Si Chieng Mai, Thailand, across the river, with flooded Nongkhai province stretching into the distance.



12. Thadeua road, the main highway south toward the Thadeua-Nongkhai ferry from Vientiane, with entrance to Chinaimo military base at extreme right. About 50 cm. of water over road.



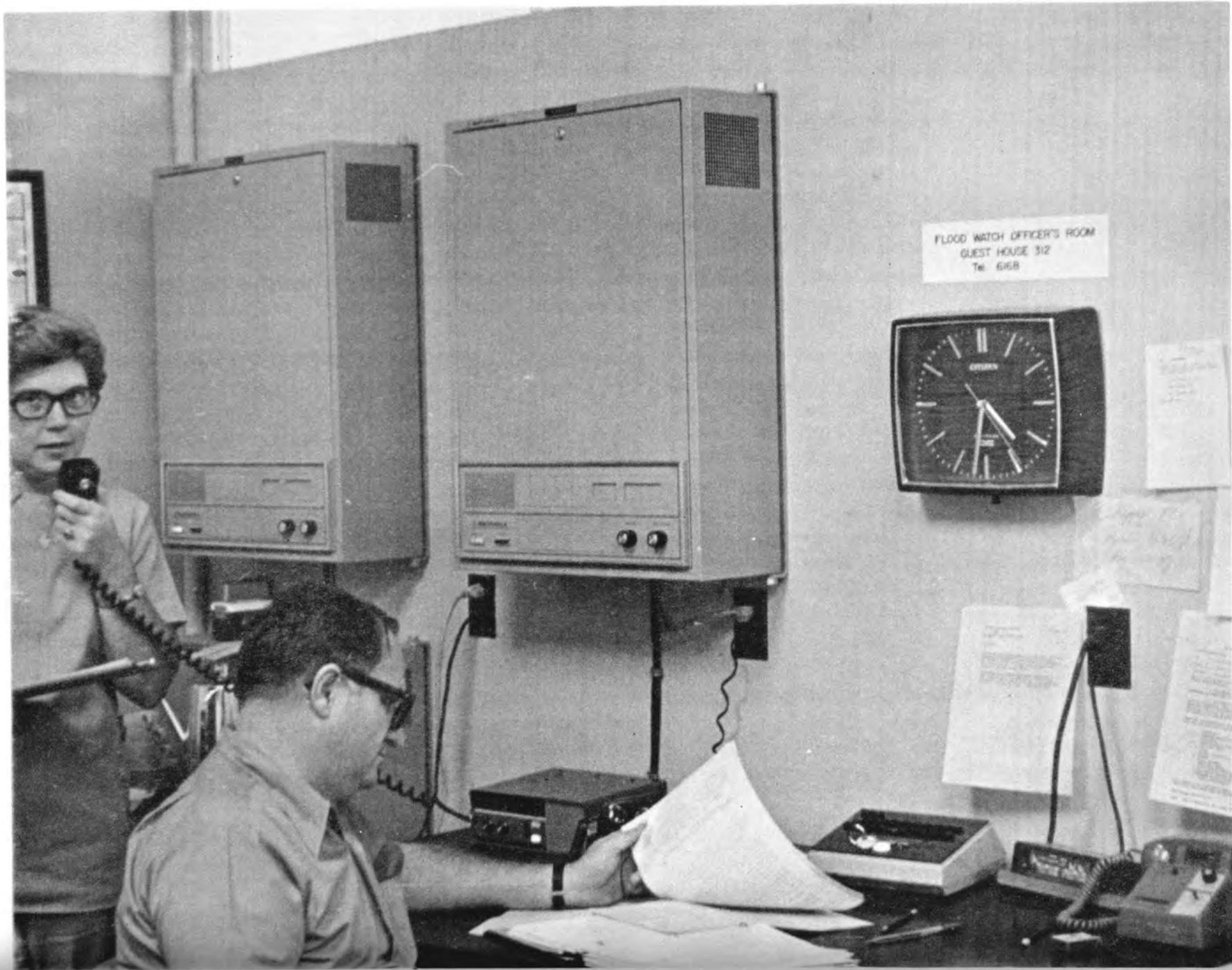
13. Seen from a point directly over the new (under construction) town houses at USAID residential compound at KM-6, Vientiane. The National Highway cuts across the upper part of the picture, north to the left. When this picture was taken on August 25, transportation between KM-6 and the city was being maintained by means of 6x6 trucks, equipped with seats. The dry road, cutting across the picture just below center, is the perimeter road outside KM-6, running toward the radio station and the power substation behind KM-6. Although floodwaters reached the gate to KM-6 (center left) and flooded the houses in the annex (along perimeter road), there was no flooding in KM-6 itself. Note swimming pool at lower left.



14. Sunset Village, a USAID residential compound for single employees, about one kilometer closer to Vientiane from Km-6, stands surrounded by water, with some light flooding of the grounds. Sunset had been evacuated well before the flooding began. In 1966 this area was under several feet of water.



15. Flood waters swirl across a Vientiane street.



FLOOD WATCH OFFICER'S ROOM
GUEST HOUSE 312
Tel. 6168

16. When the Mekong reached 11.5 meters a flood watch was established on a 24-hour schedule, manned during the night by two officers. It was located in the USAID emergency action room, where there is access to all voice radio channels used by the Mission, and to the SEACOM telephone system. At regular intervals, flood information and instructions to Mission personnel were broadcast over citizens band Channel 9, which is reserved for emergency action use by the U.S. Mission. All Mission personnel (Americans) are supplied with CB-9 receiving sets, and during the emergency everyone listened faithfully to Wilma Ditter, Office of Management secretary, whose other role is JANO (Joint Alert and Notification Officer) radio operator. Hunter Fitzgerald, USAID Educational Advisor, is taking his turn at the flood watch.



17. Every truck became a bus in Vientiane.



18. Another Vientiane street, showing the rush of the current.



19. Bright sun, deep water, so let's make a raft.



20. Street leading toward USAID warehouses 9 and 10 and Property Management Warehouse.



21. For the young, floods are more fun than worry. USAID Property Management Warehouse in background. Only drowning reported in Vientiane in first week of flooding was one infant.



22. Closer to the warehouses (see 20 and 21).



23. USAID warehouse 9 (left) and Property Management. These 25,000 square foot buildings had been banked with sandbags, which in turn were covered with polyethylene plastic, as the Mekong approached the 11.5 meter mark, and all stocks were raised several feet. Pumping managed to keep them fairly clear of water. As the flood persisted, percolation of water through the floors became a problem.



24. USAID Warehouse 9.



25. Thong Toum warehouse complex; note containers raised on oil drums.



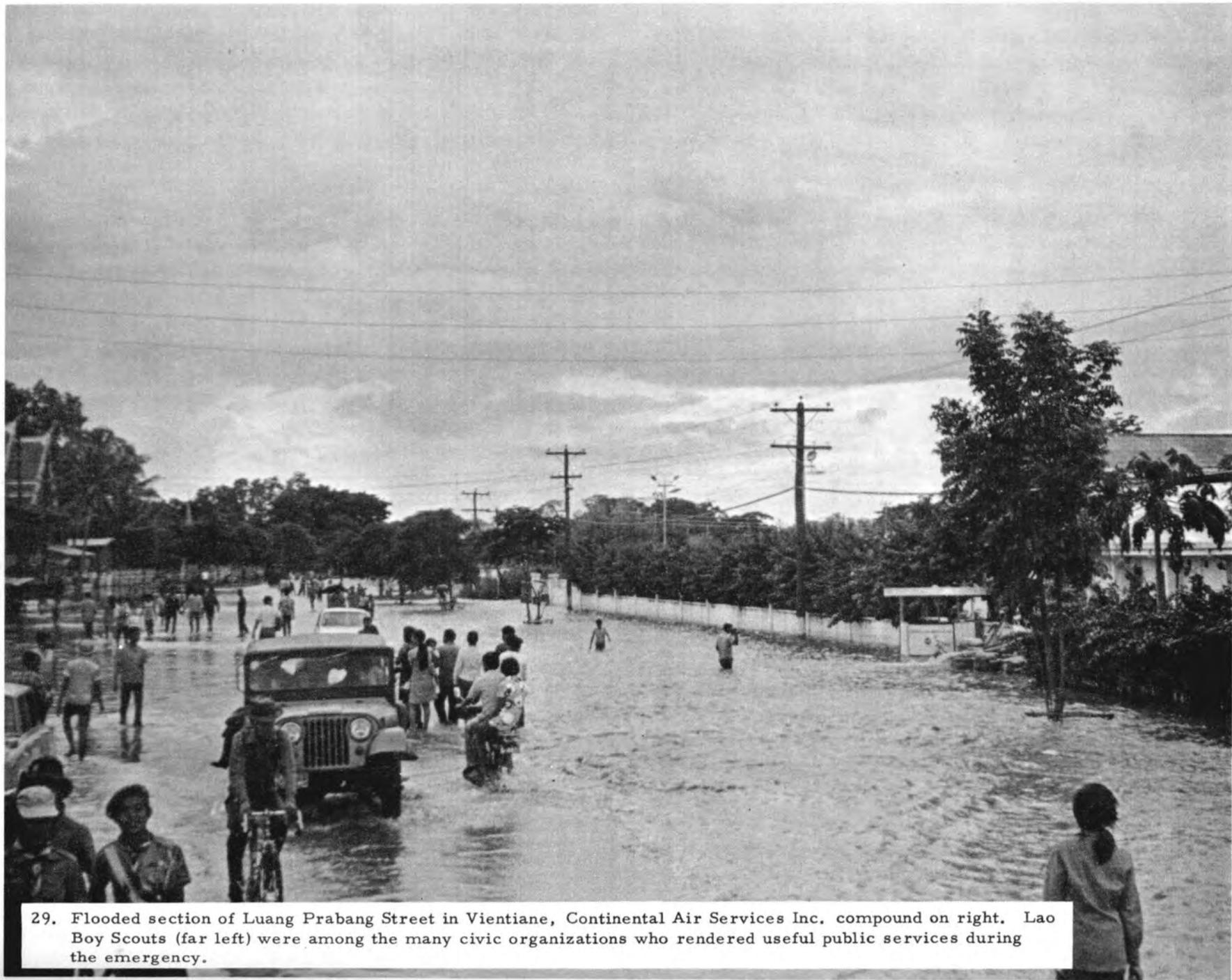
26. Lane Xang Avenue, looking north toward Monument. Partially finished dike is part of secondary system of dikes for protection of market and governmental area in mid-city.



27. Another section of the mid-city dike, which was quickly erected of piled laterite, covered with plastic sheeting as protection against rain and erosion.



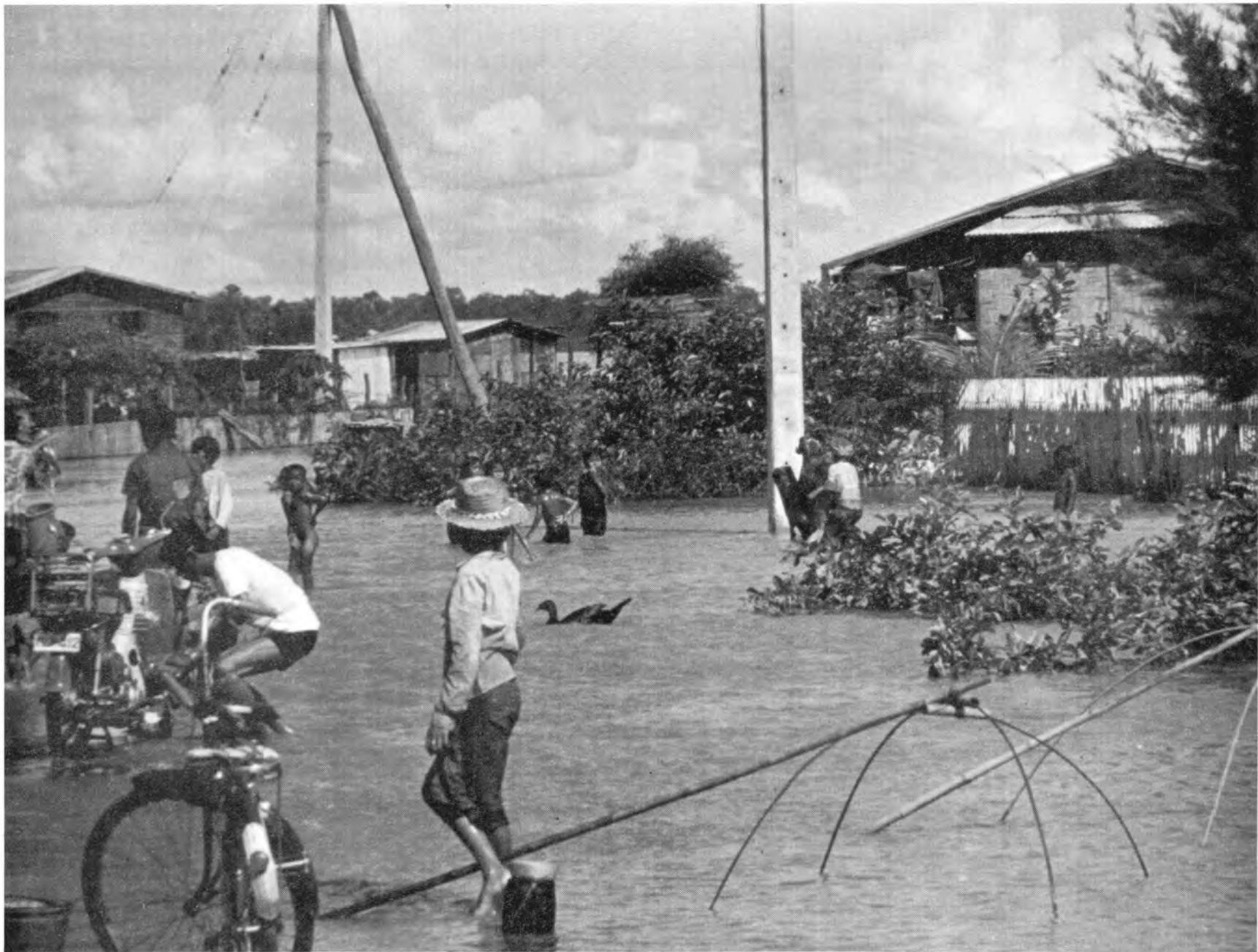
28. Constructing the mid-city dike. USAID Public Works, FHWA, Ministry of Public Works, the Prefect of Vientiane, the RLG military, the National Police, the Ministry of Social Welfare -- all these and many others worked shoulder to shoulder, their efforts being coordinated by RLG action committees at the Ministry and municipal levels.



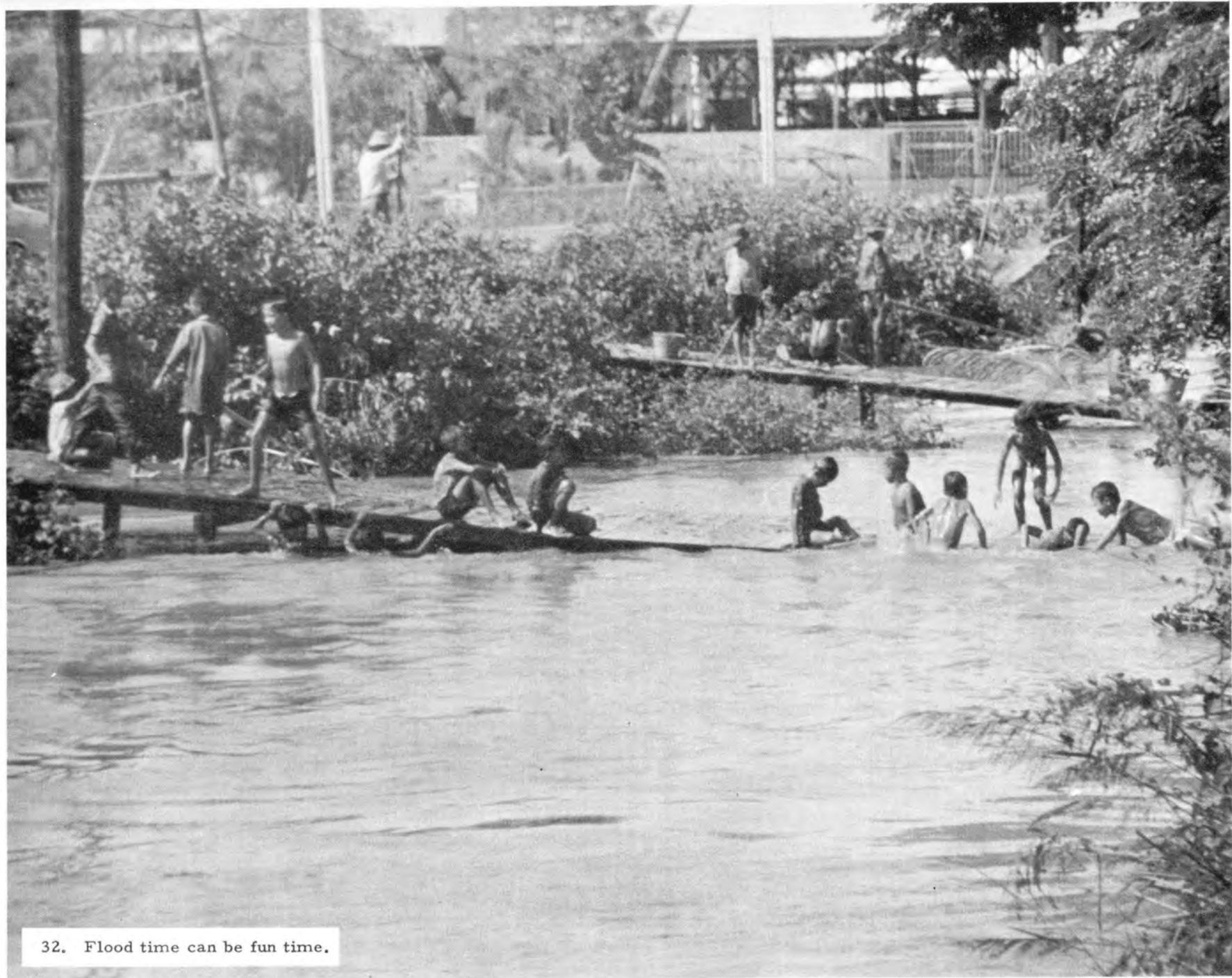
29. Flooded section of Luang Prabang Street in Vientiane, Continental Air Services Inc. compound on right. Lao Boy Scouts (far left) were among the many civic organizations who rendered useful public services during the emergency.



30. Snack shops improvised new arrangements and continued business as usual.



31. The adaptable Lao people take the flood as an opportunity for washing motor bikes, fishing, and frolicking in the water with the ducks.



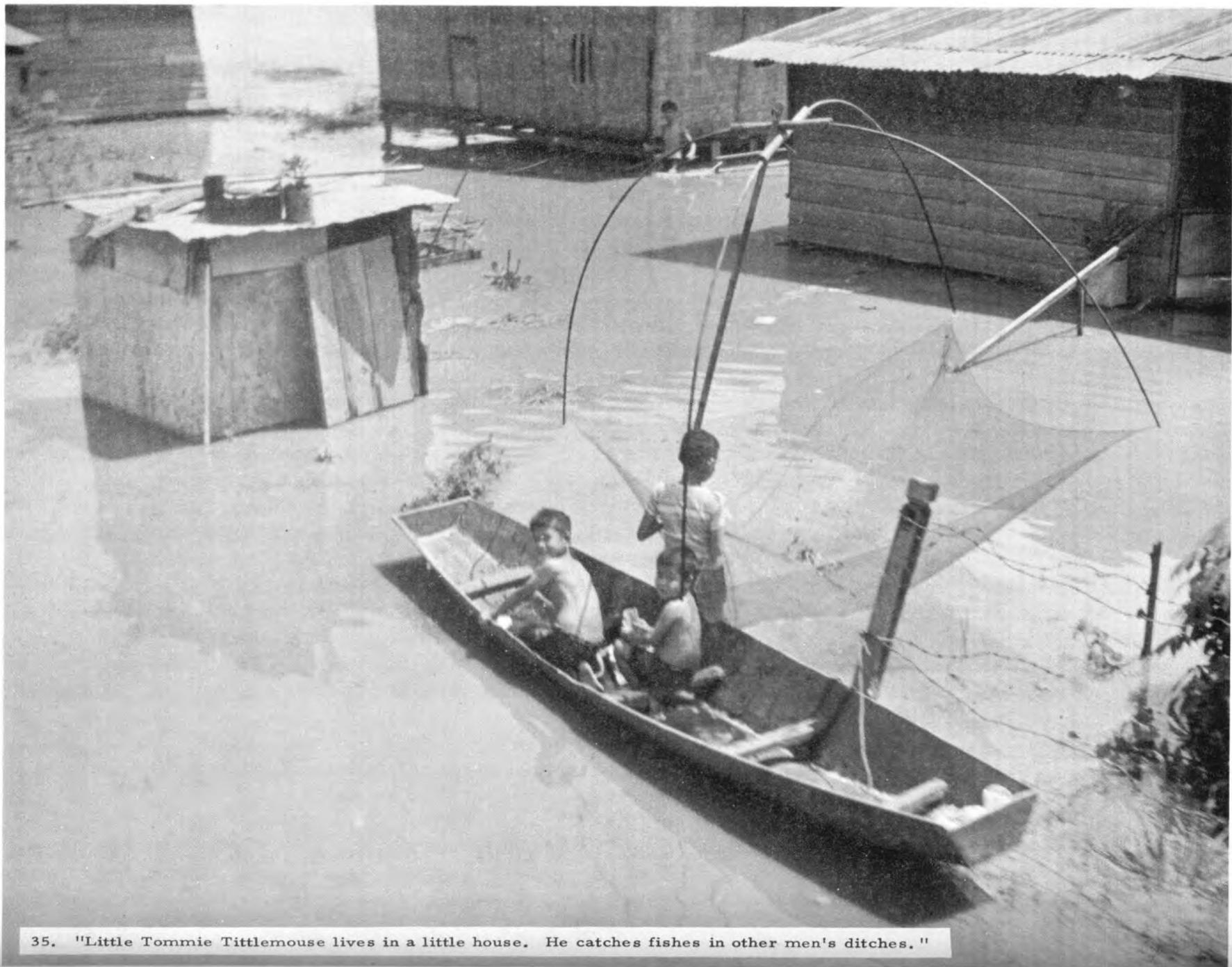
32. Flood time can be fun time.



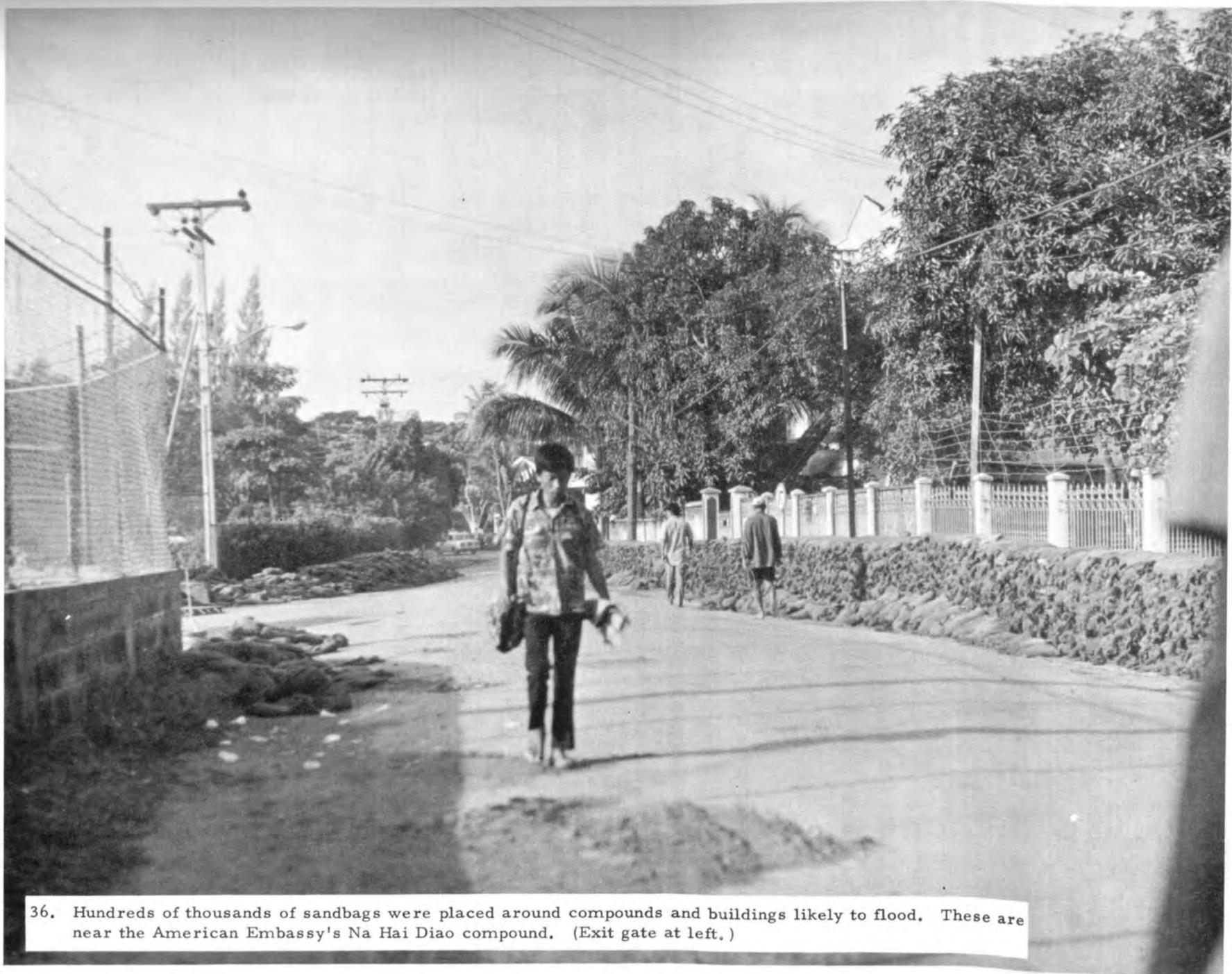
33. The fishing is good in the heart of the city.



34. Four boys and a homemade raft explore around a flooded dwelling.



35. "Little Tommie Tittlemouse lives in a little house. He catches fishes in other men's ditches."



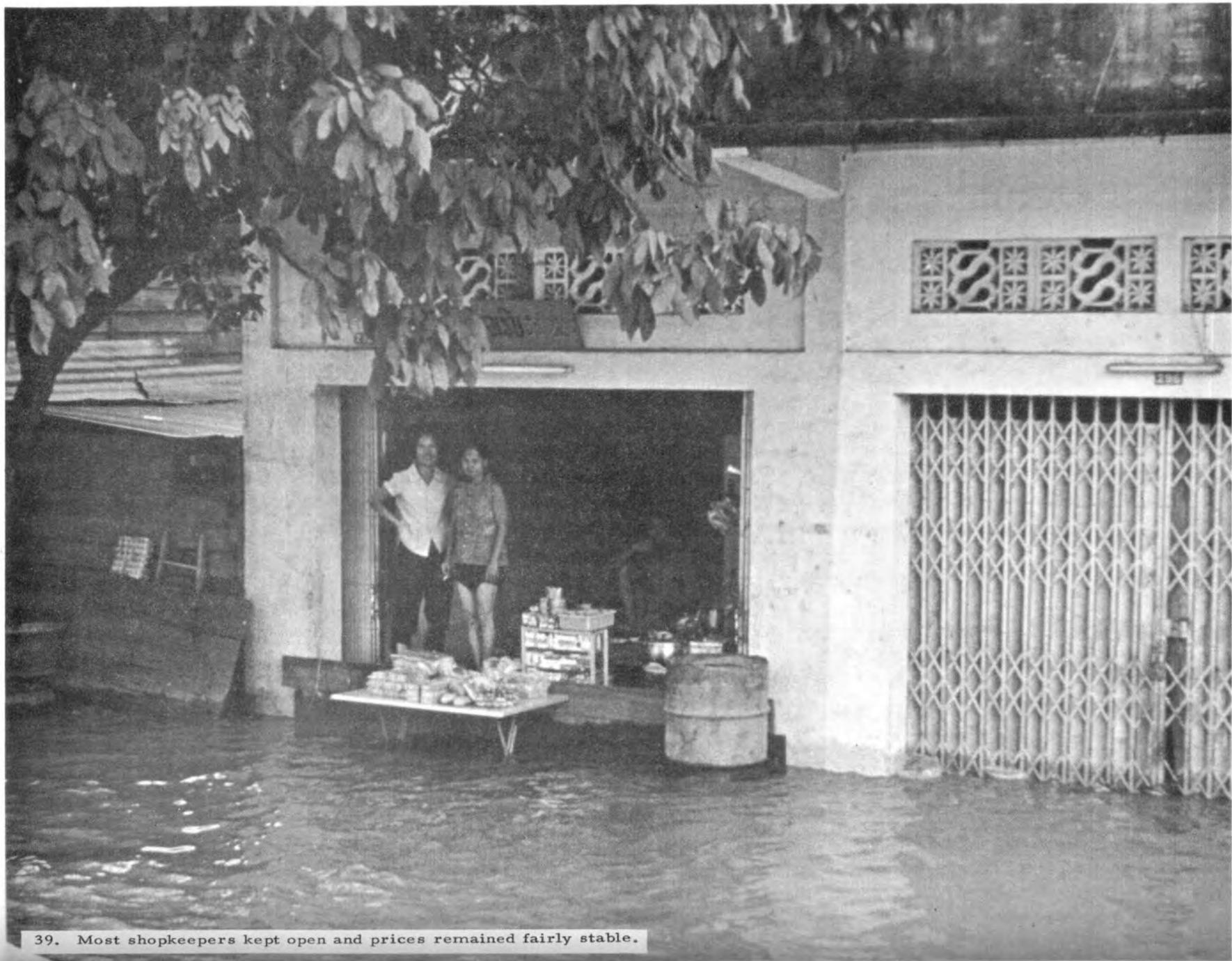
36. Hundreds of thousands of sandbags were placed around compounds and buildings likely to flood. These are near the American Embassy's Na Hai Diao compound. (Exit gate at left.)



37. Near the entrance to Wattay airport most traffic takes to foot.



38. In the Wattay section of Vientiane.



39. Most shopkeepers kept open and prices remained fairly stable.



40. Fruit seller operating under difficulties.