

IVS /Ed. Monthly Report covering Oct. 20 to Nov. 20

B. Wilder, Chief of Party.

The attached reports cover the activities of the team members for the month. Also attached is a report written by David St. Louis concerning the ESP Agriculture Program.

November Report, Eng. Section

B. Wilder, Head, Eng. Sec.

I. General.

Progress of the students has generally been satisfactory. The continued move away from rote memorization of facts, dates, etc. has continued. It is harder to evaluate but the teachers report satisfactory progress. The fifth year continues to be a problem as in reality, we have two fifth years : one on a par with past fifth years and one group that is capable of and is receiving some college freshman level material. In all classes, as in the past, English ability is the limiting factor.

This has been a nervous month. The school was visited by a number of military people because they had heard rumors of a student demonstration. The students were campaigning for their class and student association officers. It is felt that this was confused with a move to support General Kong Le.

An NVA'er was assigned to serve as advisor to the Eng. Sec. Student Association. At one meeting two other NVA'ers, working with the students on an athletic program, met with the students. This was evidently misconstrued in Vientiane, as the soldiers also asked about "the three Americans" who were organizing the students. Also under scrutiny was one of the Lao Staff who it seems, had been too vocal.

We also had a "stand-up" strike by the English Section students. Seven students in the first year had been promoted to the second year by virtue of an examination that all students had not had an opportunity to take. The determination as to who should take the exam was made by the teachers. The students claimed this was unfair. They claimed they all should have had a chance to take the exam. They claimed, correctly so, that promotions can be made only at the end of a trimester. Mr. Sargheou ruled that the students had to go back but would be promoted at the end of the trimester. Next year, promotions will be made before the school year starts. This can be done by giving an English test along with the regular entrance exam. The present entrance exam does not require a knowledge of nor does it evaluate English ability.

During the month, no progress was made on the development of the over-all curriculum. Work continues on an on-going basis on individual course materials.

II. English Section Student Association.

During the "Stand-up" strike the students threw their officers out so I would not be able to talk to them. After the strike I refused to recognize the Association as it had no officers. On checking with Dr. Somphou, I found that only one organization on campus had any degree of legitimacy, that being the over-all Student Federation. The others were there but weren't official and weren't recognized by the school administration.

On talking further with Dr. Somphou he agreed that they would continue in de facto existence so the best way to control them would be to recognize them, force them to draw up constitutions and appoint faculty advisors. This has now been done for the English Section Association.

The IVS advisor to the English Section Association was appointed before the Association became official. Since then it has been decided to have two, One American and one Lao.

III. Other Activities.

A. English Books.

The remaining text books for English in the first year have been run on a mimeo machine borrowed from the Controllers office. Collating of the books has also been completed.

B. R. Stuckey and L. Yoder have started an athletic program for the English Section students from 3:30 to 5:00 each day. The American Women's Club has donated 50,000 kip to be used for equipment.

C. The teachers' room containing the teachers' library was reorganized to provide more efficient use of space.

D. Mr. Smith, IVS advisor to the Eng. Sec. Assoc., has made arrangements with the ACA and along with along with students officers, is showing weekly movies at the ESP. Some are shown after school for Eng. Sec. Students, and some in the evening on weekends for the whole school.

IV. Problems :

Textbooks remain a problem. Two book orders that we were expecting momentarily were not filled and were returned to us by the company. They were re-ordered and we are waiting again.

Other problems are internal operational in nature and are being handled as they arise.

V. Comments :

Events of this month are examples of the growing pains the English Section is going through. When we had only 55 students, we were here but not significantly so. At 187 students, the Lao administration is now considering us a significant part of the program. Since the strike, we have been told of several regulations and standard practices of the school that were always there but that the Lao never bothered telling us about or never made us follow. It might be that our recognition is really notoriety. Time will tell.