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Field Trip to Rach Gia

Our planned field trip to Rach Gia on Civic Action activities was terminated by myself upon arrival at province headquarters at Rach Gia.

When we arrived, we learned that both the province chief and the deputy were ~~about~~ of town and that the province chief would not be back until some time Tuesday or Wednesday. We were conducted to the presence of the chief of administration for the province. He said that he was expecting our arrival and showed us the telegram from Mr. Chau which he said he had received on Friday. He then told us that the only Civic Action activities going on in the province was in a district south of Rach Gia where a considerable number of Vietnamese refugees from Cambodia were being resettled. He said to go there required a twelve hour boat trip each way and that there were no facilities available down there for overnight visitors and that the water was dangerous. While he was relating this to me through Mr. Hoc, Mr. Hoc, in an undertone, expressed his opinion that something was fishy about the situation. Since it was then approximately 4:30, I thought it might be wise to go to our quarters and discuss the situation and make plans as to what to do. I then asked the chief of administration if he had made arrangements for our billeting. He said that he could make reservations for us at the guest house, implying that he had not yet done so. He then took us to the guest house and while he and an attendant scurried around, looking for vacant rooms and trying to round up sheets, etc., Mr. Hoc and I decided to return to Saigon without any further attempt to conduct our study. This action was taken for the following reasons:

- (1) If Civic Action were doing refugee work as a special project, the research would be useless from our point of view.
- (2) If it was true about the length of time required to go to the district, it would require four more days of our time which would be uneconomical from all view points for the results that could be obtained.
- (3) It seemed to us that our presence in Rach Gia Province was not particularly desirable from the point of view of the local government.

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I might point out that the province chief of Rach Gia is a military man and the only cold receptions that we have ever had in the past have also been from military province chiefs.

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