enough to defend itself. The Arabs and Europeans avoided smallness on their part and the dangers that this leads to, by working to assemble themselves as the United Arab Republic and the United States of Europe.

The Federated States of East Asia can form themselves into a unit. First would begin the easiest union, based on similarities of manners and religion: Thailand, Burma, Cambodia and Laos.

Do France, England and the United States like the idea of promoting this? If it is the best way to guard their interest in these countries and peace in Asia, it is possible to wait for their happy initiative. Thais, Burmans, Cambodians and Lao are all too timid to envision this creation. To you, French, English and Americans falls this social and humanitarian role. ¹

PHENG PHONGSAVAN

President of the National Assembly and Deputy from Luang Prabang, Pheng Phongsavan was born in Luang Prabang in the neighborhood adjoining the Royal Palace. His father was an official although he has no direct connection with the royal family. He served in administrative posts until 1942, when he achieved the rank of Chao Muong. He acted in this capacity until 1947, when he was elected a Deputy from Luang Prabang, a post in which he continues to serve at the present time. In 1951 he was a Deputy Secretary of State for the Interior and in 1954 became Minister of Economic Affairs and Public Works.

As President of the National Assembly, he has a much better equipped office than most Lao officials. There was an air-conditioner, and about half the space in the relatively small room was taken up by a huge desk.

¹An article with a similar theme appeared in the Bangkok Post, although the roles of the French, English, and Americans were not mentioned in promoting such a union. Border conflicts between Cambodia and her neighbors appear to make such an undertaking quite difficult. But a beginning has been made—according to a New York Times news dispatch (Feb. 13, 1961) the Philippines, Thailand and Malaya have agreed to form a regional organization for economic and cultural cooperation but non-political in nature.
In general he talked rather freely, although officially:

"Among the most important problems of Laos are the economic ones. We must raise the living standards of the population and above all produce in Laos what is needed. Currently we must import a lot of things. As an independent country we must first of all satisfy the needs of the population and then be able to export goods to have a favorable commercial balance. If the economy can be developed the question of finances can be solved, and the population will be satisfied. If the population is satisfied, subversive propaganda cannot have much effect."

"Roads must be made to reach the different regions. After this we can develop agricultural production and then industry. I have a project that I would like to propose to our friends - the building of a railway line from Luang Prabang to Pakse. This would greatly promote economic exchange between the two regions. It is a big undertaking, but it can be realized. This railroad may cost about a billion kip but can be amortized over ten to fifteen years by French or American interests (a loan from these sources is implied, but it is also significant that in matters of technical and economic aid, France and America are usually mentioned in that order, although it has been the United States which has provided the overwhelming amount of assistance in recent years). There are companies that would undertake this. The government will give them a guarantee.

"Transportation is more important than rural aid, because villages produce things they cannot sell. Now they cultivate products only for themselves. The most important thing is for the government to obtain credit to build roads. The aid we are receiving is not sufficient in view of our current government policies (the clear implication here is that the government of Laos is pro-West and therefore the United States should support it more generously). We also need the Army and police to defend the country (the major amount of aid funds are currently spent to support the Army and police.)

"The government wants to raise taxes but the Assembly does not agree with this because the population is too poor to pay. You can't impose a tax on the population. The assembly has already voted a tax on the exterior signs of wealth (this does not check with the statement of the Finance Minister, but it is possible that two different types of taxes are involved.) Actually, the receipts derived from taxes on customs and import licenses have diminished because business is not very good. People do not have the money. There is not much money in circulation; it stays in the bank."

Commenting on the role of women in Lao politics, he said, "They are not very interested in these matters, spending their time caring for their homes and children" (there is one woman Deputy in the National
Assembly, elected in 1958. She is from Luang Prabang and a member of the Pathet Lao party. Her husband is also a Deputy from the same party. She has been interested mainly in campaigning against prostitution.

"Out of the twenty seats in the last election, the Pathet Lao obtained nine. It will probably be necessary to postpone elections because the government is not prepared. Much time is needed. The affair with the Pathet Lao battalion has had a bad effect, and the government should go and capture them; otherwise they will turn into guerrillas. This is a very easy thing to do in our mountainous country. (During the summer of 1959, one battalion of Pathet Lao forces refused to be integrated into the National Army and after some maneuvering retreated towards the North Vietnam border.) However, we in the Assembly know only the broad outline of these problems. The government can give you the details. ("This is a reference to a feeling prevalent among a number of the Deputies that they have not been taken into government confidence.)

At the time of the 1960 coup of Captain Koung he strongly associated himself with the "neutralist" faction.

OUNHEUAN NORASING

OUNHEUAN Norasing, Deputy from Luang Prabang and member of the Rally of the Lao People, is the son of a former Chao Muong. He has held several Ministerial posts in the government including those of Religion, National Economy and Justice, and is at present High Commissioner for the Provinces of Luang Prabang and Sayaboury. Theoretically, his job is to oversee the work of the local officials in these two Provinces.

"It is necessary to work with the mountain people for many reasons. They compose over half the population of Luang Prabang Province, and the Pathet Lao have been very successful with them. The valley Lao are sophisticated, but the Kha need to be shown that the government will help them. After I have distributed prizes at the Luang Prabang college graduation, I hope to make a trip to Muong Sai, Houei Sai and other places and towns in the provinces. I will then call conferences of Tassengs and Nai Bans and will talk with them. But it is not enough simply to talk. The government must also do something concrete, such as make presents of iron bars which then can be made into points for digging sticks. They should also be given other tools which they badly need."

NOWING RATAVONG

Nowing Ratavong, Lao Ambassador to Cambodia, was born in 1915, and is related through marriage to the prominent Viravong family. Colonel
Phoumi Nosavan, Minister of Defense and Veterans Affairs, is his cousin. He graduated from the Lycee Pavie in Vientiane and also received a diploma from the School of Law and Administration in Vientiane. In 1935 he began his career in the civil service, assigned first to the provincial court in Saravane and later occupying a similar position in Savannakhet. In 1943 he passed his examination to become a Chao Muong, serving as deputy governor of the Province of Savannakhet and from 1944 to 1945, as Chao Muong in Champassak. He participated in the Lao Issara movement and spent the years 1946 to 1949 in Thailand. Upon his return he became Director of the National Information Service and served in that capacity from 1949 to 1950. In 1950 he became Chao Muong in Savannakhet and from 1950 to 1951 served as President of the Lower Court in Savannakhet. In 1951 he was elected a Deputy to the National Assembly from Savannakhet and was re-elected in 1955.

During 1951 to 1957 he edited the now defunct "Xieng Lao" (Lao News). From 1952 to 1956 he served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Interior and also participated in international conferences, such as the FAO International Rice Conference in Tokyo. He has also served as Secretary of State for Justice, and in various financial and commercial assignments in the Lao government. In 1959 his daughter returned from a year of study in the United States.

A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEPUTY

A former Deputy Mayor of Luang Prabang town, he is a member of the majority government party, the Rally of the Lao people. He lives quite modestly in Vientiane in small government-supplied quarters on the grounds of the National Assembly while his wife and seven children remain in Luang Prabang. He complained, "It is very difficult to support my family on my salary of 15,000 kip a month. We are given very little, while the Police Colonel in Vientiane, who has no children, earns 20,000 kip a month."

Our conversation turned to the question of American aid and he said, "The most important project is to build a permanent all-weather road from Vientiane to my province. This route has been worked on for a number of years, but it still closes down at the beginning of every rainy season. What the Americans should do is build the road themselves and then turn it over to the Lao, rather than try to build it with the Lao government; when it is done jointly what happens is that corrupt officials put money in their own pockets. The same happens with the dams. The Americans should build the dam or bridge and then present it as a gift to the Lao government. This is what the French did with the new Lycee they constructed. It is a good method. If a permanent road were completed, it would serve as a monument to American aid, and would be something to show the people."
"Look at the Committee for the Defense of the National Interests. It is composed of the same people who have previously profited from the American aid program. Although they have a good program, they do not execute it very well. I feel that the best way to promote honesty in government would be to give the power back to the National Assembly so that it would be possible to check on government programs. For example, the Army budget is now very high, but the National Assembly has no say on these matters. With strong government policies now, people are afraid to speak out for fear of being called Communist."

When asked what the situation was previously when the Assembly had power and there was much corruption, he replied, "All the power was in the hands of the executive branch of the government, and only a few Deputies (who were also Ministers) got rich. Actually, a few minor officials have been punished for corruption, and are currently in jail; one of the people from Customs, another from the Treasurer's office, and proceedings are being instituted against the Director General of Agriculture."

"The situation is somewhat better now: in my province one hundred per cent of the population was with the Pathet Lao; now only fifty per cent are with them."
BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL DATA ON SELECTED LAO DEPUTIES (1959)

1. SISOUPHAN PHOUNPADITH: Rally of the Lao People Deputy from Luang Prabang, now lives in Luang Prabang where he was born; formerly Chao Muong of Muong Xieng; his father was a merchant and farmer. (In northern Laos these two occupations are often practiced together); his younger brother is a teacher in Luang Prabang.

2. KHAMPHENG BOUPHA: Unaffiliated Deputy from Phong Saly, born in Luang Prabang, and a brother of the present Chao Khouang of that province; his father was a former Chao Muong in Luang Prabang, of apparently modest means; he speaks fluent French.

3. KHAMPHAY BOUPHA: Pathet Lao Deputy from Phong Saly, cousin of Khampheng, born in Luang Prabang; former merchant, has been with the Pathet Lao since its inception; his father is a councilor to the King.

4. TIAO SOUK BOUVAVONG: Rally of the Lao People Deputy from Luang Prabang, formerly Mayor of Luang Prabang town, then Post Office Director in Vientiane, and a Deputy since 1955; was a former Minister of Public Works in the 1957 Souvanna Phouma government; his father was a Prince at the Royal Court; a prosperous member of the Lao elite, he speaks fluent French.

5. OUAN BOUIDARN: Rally of the Lao People Deputy from Luang Prabang; his father was formerly secretary to the police; born in Luang Prabang, was a provincial official before his election.

6. OUAN VINAYNA: Rally of the Lao People Deputy from Luang Prabang, born in Vientiane; formerly a Chao Muong, and worked for a long time as an official in Luang Prabang, now lives in Vientiane.

7. HANG KHAMPHAY BOUPHA: Pathet Lao Wife of Khamphay Boupha; both are Pathet Lao Deputies; she is from Luang Prabang, has five children and was a midwife and teacher before her election; she is the only woman Deputy in the National Assembly; her brother is employed by the Ministry of the Interior.

8. TIAO SOUK VONGSAK: Pathet Lao Deputy from Luang Prabang, born in Luang Prabang, some of an official; was a Chao Muong in government service before he joined the Pathet Lao.
9. CHANDA OUNTHUANG: Rally of the Lao People  
Deputy from Luang Prabang, born in Xieng Khouang; was formerly a  
Chao Muong in Luang Prabang Province.

10. PHAYA PHOUM VONGVICHIT: Pathet Lao  
Born in Xieng Khouang, now Deputy from Luang Prabang where he has  
ever lived; was elected on the strength of his Pathet Lao  
association; married to the daughter of a prominent Luang Prabang  
family; father-in-law was a former Chao Khoueng in Xieng Khouang;  
brother-in-law is in the diplomatic service; another brother-in-law  
works for the American Aid Mission.

11. SISANA SISANE: Pathet Lao  
Deputy from Savannakhet, about fifty years old, has had no formal  
education and is illiterate; is the only Kha in the National Assem-  
bley; his father led the rebellion in Saravane against the French  
from 1936 to 1938; he was captured and jailed until 1945 when he  
was freed by the Japanese; then joined Prince Souphanouvong and  
became a member of the Pathet Lao; speaks no French but does speak  
Lao.

12. THONGDY SOUNTHONE VICHTH: Rally of the Lao People  
Deputy from Saravane, about forty years old; is a medicin Indo-  
chinoise studied at Hanoi; has been an official in the Health Serv-  
ice; is a good musician and the composer of the Lao National Anthem.

13. PRINCE BOUN OUM NA CHAMPASSAK: Rally of the Lao People  
Deputy from Champassak; a brother of Prince Boun Oum; studied in  
Saigon but did not obtain a degree; his father, the hereditary  
Prince of Champassak, was Governor of that province. He is fluent  
in French.

14. BOUNLAP NHOUYVAISONG: Rally of the Lao People  
Deputy from Champassak, is about thirty-five, a business man in  
export-import field; graduated from elementary school in Pakse.

15. MAHA KOU SOUVANNAMEDHI: Santiphab  
Deputy from Champassak; speaks no French, was a monk for over twenty  
years, and resigned from the priesthood in 1945; he studied Japanese  
while a monk and became an interpreter for the Japanese Army during  
their stay in Laos; after they left he became a small trader in the  
Bolovens; is also a former teacher in the Pali school; about forty-  
five years old.

16. KOULILY BANCHONGPHANIT: Santiphab  
Deputy from Champassak, does not speak French; a former business  
man who has not worked for the government previously; this is the  
second time he has been elected to the Assembly.
17. **SISAAT PHOLESENA**: Santiphab  
Deputy from Champassak, about thirty-five, educated at the elementary school in Pakse; was formerly a business man.

18. **KHAMSING SANANIKONE**: Rally of the Lao People  
Deputy from Saravane, was Chao Muong in Saravane before his election; about forty-two years old, is a cousin of Phouai Sananikone; he is on the executive committee of the National Assembly; attended the Groupe Scolaire in Vientiane, and is a graduate of the School of Law and Administration.

19. **LOU BOUALAVONG**: Santiphab  
Deputy from Saravane; about forty-five with little formal education; does not speak French; a business man and former truck and bus driver; became known because of his bus service in Saravane Province; has been arrested many times for his propaganda against the government, and is said to be very popular with the people.

20. **XUN MUONGMANY**: Rally of the Lao People  
Deputy from Saravane; about forty years old, was a teacher before his election; studied in the Groupe Scolaire in Pakse, speaks a little French.

21. **CHAMPA PHOMMACHANH**: National Union  
Deputy from Attopeu; about fifty years old, former Chao Muong in Sam Neua; Born in Attopeu; graduated from the elementary school and speaks some French; his son-in-law, a member of the Rally of the Lao People, is Director of Police in Attopeu, and they occupy the same house.

22. **KHAMEUANH BOUNGNASENG**: Rally of the Lao People  
Deputy from Attopeu; about forty-two, attended the college in Vientiane and studied forestry in Phnom Penh; a former technician with the Department of Water and Forests.

**C. KHAMPAN PANYA**

Foreign Minister in the government of Phouai Sananikone in 1959 and continued in the same position in the 1960 government of Thao Kou Abhay, Khampam Panya is a member of the Committee for the Defense of the National Interest. He was born in Luang Prabang in 1917 (an official source lists 1912) where his father was a mandarin at the court. An only son, he was a widower with one son until his recent second marriage. He received his secondary education in Hanoi, Saigon and Phnom Penh and graduated from the School of Forestry in Hanoi. He also has a law degree from the Faculty of Law in Paris, representing a rather exceptional education by Lao standards.
Khampan Panya began his civil service career in 1942 in the Forestry Bureau in Vientiane, later becoming Chief of the Forestry Division. He served successively as assistant to the Governor of Vientiane, assistant to the Secretary General of the Royal Palace, Director of Protocol for the Foreign Affairs Ministry, Assistant to the Secretary General, Council of the French Union, Director of an economic mission in Saigon and Lao Ambassador to New Delhi. From 1950 to 1957 he represented Laos at various international conferences in France, Switzerland and the United States, and has been a leader of the Lao delegation to the United Nations.

As befits his country's chief diplomatic representative, he occupies the most spacious office of any Lao official I visited. His manner is relaxed and pleasant. In discussing relations between Laos and Vietnam as contrasted with those with Thailand, Khampan Panya said his government wanted to be friendly with South Vietnam, there having been almost one hundred years of association with her as a consequence of French rule. There are strong cultural and kinship bonds with Thailand. For example, Marshall Sarit, the Prime Minister of Thailand has relatives in Pakse, and the Chief of Police of Thailand is descended from the royal family of Luang Prabang.

In discussing the Committee for the Defense of the National Interest I remarked that some government officials had said that although the program of the Committee was good, there were some members who were not. Khampan Panya agreed, saying that ideally, it would have been good to replace the entire Cabinet. "But if certain people are removed, there is no one to replace them. It is possible for people to change. Certain people who profited before have now changed their minds." (There is a rather tolerant attitude on the part of Lao officials, so that even the bitterest enemies of the Pathet Lao, for example, never talked about shooting them.)

"There is already a tax on homes, and the people are paying it. For example, 'one of the most prominent men in the Kingdom' who before did not pay any taxes, has now begun to pay some." When asked what would happen if people did not pay their taxes, Khampan Panya said they would be put in jail. He laughed when I asked whether this would apply to this man as well. "Currently," he said, "the Finance Minister has under consideration a tax on the villages; he thinks that a head tax of about one hundred kip per household might be possible, and thus enable them to participate in the affairs of the Kingdom.

"Roads are a major problem in the development of Laos. Economic self-sufficiency is also an important objective. With regard to the minority peoples we could all live well together if the Communists did not make propaganda. Toubi, Vice-president of the National Assembly, and his half-brother who is Procurator General, are cases of Meo participation in the government."

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1 Khampan Panya referred to the individual by name.
As to the charge that Committee people did not get out to the villages and are not acquainted with the farmers, Khampan Panya felt this probably referred to the Ministers, explaining that they are unable to get out because of the heavy pressure of work in Vientiane. He stressed that Committee members in rural affairs agencies do travel. (As a matter of fact, much of the Committee's strength is in the Army, which has extensive contacts with the rural population.) One of Khampan Panya's assistants added that all members of the Foreign Ministry are members of the CDIN because the Minister is a member. This aide also took pride in the fact that unlike in other government offices, there were no former Pathet Lao here. He said, "No one is permitted to work in the Foreign Affairs Ministry who does not share our ideals and principles. We would rather take a young person as a clerk and train him, than a former member of the Pathet Lao."

When asked what would happen if the United States Congress decided to cut the aid budget for Laos, Khampan Panya replied, "Then we would have to reconsider our (foreign) policy, but I do not believe this will happen because the Americans well understand the situation of Laos."

The following news release was printed in a bulletin of the Royal Embassy of Laos in Washington:

In a recent interview granted to Agence France Presse, His Excellency Khampan Panya declared that several questions need to be restated regarding the "dispute" between the Committee for the Defense of the National Interest and the Rally of the the Lao People parties during the Political crisis of last December.

"...Asked whether the CDIN and the RPL had settled their dispute, the Minister stated: "They have never been at variance on ideology, as reported. In fact, the CDIN and the RPL are both anti-communist and have the same national ideals. However, I want to point out that their anti-communism does not extend beyond the borders of Laos."

Referring to last fall's political crisis, Khampan Panya declared that he wanted to clear up any misunderstanding about that critical period. "The foreign press made several incorrect statements in connection with this crisis" said the Minister. "The first inaccuracy was to report that the trouble arose from dissension within the Sananikone government, between the CDIN and RPL parties over foreign policy. For instance, how could anyone conceive of Mr. Hammarskjold and Mr. Sananikone reaching any kind of separate agreement on the new trend to be given our country's politics when Mr. Sananikone himself had always insisted that I attend all meetings during the Secretary General's visit to Laos".
The Foreign Minister added: "Later it was reported that the Army had tried to seize power during the crisis. This is another inaccuracy. I know the Army very well and I can assure you it never had such ambition. It so happens that during the period of uncertainty we lived through, the Army was the only organized and disciplined force in Laos, thus the only element capable of restoring constitutional legality in order and security. If the Army took over to dispatch current business, it was only to prevent further abuse".

Finally, he denied that the Army's withdrawal from the political scene had followed the intervention of Western Embassies with the King. He said that at that time, the Army took over only to resolve the political crisis. Its objective was the appointment of a neutral government capable of preparing fair elections. The Army was not trying to serve its own interests.

The present Government, whose establishment was decided long before the intervention of the Western Embassies, is endeavoring to fulfill its tasks. It is merely a coincidence that this Government was effectively formed shortly after such an intervention; there is no relation between cause and effect.¹

IMPENG SURYADHAY

Impeng Suryadhay, The Secretary of the State for Education in the Phou Sananikone government, was born in 1923 in Muong Khong, in the Province of Champassak. He graduated from the National School of Political Science of the University of Paris in 1953 and began his career as a high school teacher in Vientiane, after which he became Director of teacher training.

Later he joined the Foreign Service of Laos and was appointed First Secretary of the Royal Lao Embassy in Washington, where he remained until 1955. In 1956 he was Director of Information and Propaganda Services and in 1957 Secretary General of the Council of Ministers. In 1958 he ran as a candidate for the National Assembly from Champassak; although he polled almost fifteen thousand votes, he was not elected.

He is a member of the Committee for the Defense of the National Interests.

SISOUK NA CHAMPASSAK

Sisouk Na Champassak was, in 1959, the youngest of the higher-ranking officials in the Lao government, serving as Secretary of State in the Ministry of Information, Sports and Youth, and as acting Foreign Minister when Khampan Panya was abroad. A nephew of Prince Boun Oum, his father's elder brother, Sisouk was born in 1928. He attended the University of Paris, the School of Political Sciences, and also studied at Schools of Journalism and Diplomacy. It is not certain whether he received a degree, but in any case his education is superior to that of most other high Lao officials. His wife is French.

In 1954 Katay Don Sasorith, then Prime Minister, asked him to be his Chef de Cabinet, a position he held until the elections of 1955. He was the representative of the Royal Lao Government to the International Control Commission which supervised the Geneva Agreements in Indochina. He also took part in all the political negotiations with the Pathet Lao which took place at Xieng Khuanbong, Rangoon and Vientiane. In 1956, Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma named him Executive Secretary of the Council of Ministers. He was a member of the Committee for the Defense of the National Interests.

Since the end of 1956, he has been the leader of the Lao permanent delegation to the United Nations and in 1960 was appointed Lao Ambassador to the United Nations.

OUKEO SOUVANNAVONG

Director of the Ministry of the Plan and Chairman of the American Aid Committee, Ouкео Souvannavong is a member of one of the most influential families in Laos and has received higher education in France. His comments follow:

"Laos is an agricultural country. More than 90 percent of the people earn their living by farming. Rice is the basic crop and without rice the Lao cannot live. Vegetables, corn and livestock are of lesser importance. Each Lao is a landowner. If the weather is good the people can live from the products of their land, and do not lack anything. The life of the lowland villager is very simple, but in the mountains people make hai (slash-and-burn fields) where they grow rice, vegetables, pepper and sometimes tobacco. Their cultivation is intensive and after two years the land is exhausted and it is necessary for them to select another site. Forests are being cut down for the hai, and the government is searching for a way to encourage mountain dwellers to come down into the

1 See Khoranhok biography for details of family affiliations.
2 Ethnographic reports usually give 4-6 years and sometimes as high as 15 for crops such as opium.
valleys. We hope to provide them with tools for plowing the land so that they will be able to make irrigated rice fields." He added that the USOM Agricultural Division was giving money for the resettlement of the mountain tribes. (The American officials in the Agricultural and Community Development Divisions had no program of this sort in mind, but a request has been initiated by the Department of Forests of the Lao Ministry of Agriculture.)

"The rice culture of the Lao depends on rain. If there is enough, rice grows; if not, a poor harvest results. The government is constructing small dams to irrigate rice fields. In this way it will be possible to conserve rainwater. On the plain of Vientiane, the Lao government has asked a private organization to make a study of irrigation problems. This study has been completed, and we have asked the French Aid Mission to analyze the problem of irrigation and study the soil and the sociological aspects of the situation." (It is interesting to note that although the Americans have been asked to support these programs, they were not asked to undertake the study.)

"We also need money to set up an experimental agricultural station and have asked United Nations support for that. The UN has replied that they must first see the report of the Committee for the Mekong. The Lao government is very much interested in this Mekong project, which is concerned with hydraulic and navigation problems.

"Since I work only with foreign aid programs, I cannot talk with much authority about the national budget, but in principle, it depends on customs receipts, personal tax and a revenue tax. Salaries are taxed and merchants are taxed on their sales.

"We cannot realize our Five Year Plan without American aid. Among our industrial developments, we have authorized a cement plant in Thakhek, which will be owned by Prince Boun Oum. A cigarette factory seven kilometers from Vientiane is already functioning. (This is owned by Oukeo's brother and staffed mainly with Vietnamese.) There are also saw mills and factories for matches, ice, soda water and 'Green Spot' (a soft drink). After the Lao learn more of the technical tasks they will replace the Vietnamese in these enterprises. A sugar factory will be established, combining Thai, Lao and Chinese interests, and there will also be some printing companies.

"The most important thing for economic development is for Laos to be able to produce enough for her own needs. Thus we have no need to import cloth; we can do our own weaving. We can also produce our own vegetable oil and items like peas and pineapples, and set up tanneries to cure skins. In this way, we can utilize our local products."

When the possibility that American aid might be decreased was mentioned, Oukeo replied that at times the program has not functioned well, and that the employees have not been content because they were not paid
on time. "If American aid were to be decreased, aid would be requested of other countries, perhaps France, but this is a political question, outside my scope."

"In our towns there are mostly officials and foreigners. The Lao, for their part, live mostly in the villages. For this reason: it is necessary to give a lot of aid to the rural areas. We have asked the Japanese Aid Mission to make a study of dam construction to help irrigate the Plain of Vientiane and possibly to supply electricity as well. Included in this program is the tentative electrification of some villages. At present electricity is available only in the cities, and usually only in stores and the homes of officials, at that. Japanese aid is currently limited to one billion yen. If there is any money left over, we will also ask them to build a bridge."

In reply to a question about the Committee for the Defense of the National Interests, Oukeo again replied that this was something outside his sphere of concern, but later indicated that the CDIN members were inexperienced and thus made the work of the other officials more difficult.

III

UNATTRIBUTED COMMENTS OF OFFICIALS

LAO OFFICIAL OF SUB-CABINET RANK
(Official A)

He stated that government policy was pro-American and anti-Communist and that although Laos is not formally a member of SEATO she counts on its protection.

He said, "Sixty-five percent of the rural population is now with the government. It is very important for the government to come into contact with the masses. Now many of the Pathet Lao have quit the party since they were not paid. The police, the administration and the military must work with the people. Rural aid, that is, aid for village schools and medical work, these are the important things. At present there are plans to place a group of police in each Tasseng, but not enough are available. They will make patrols and contact the villagers." When asked how this would correlate with the program of "Teams of Six" of the Army, he said that the police would go to the areas where there are no military. "The police will make propaganda, show films and form a liaison with the population to put across the government's point of view at village festivals and ceremonies. These projects must be pushed as much as possible.

"Previously, only fifty-five percent of the population was with us, but after the elections of 1958 we have gained about ten percent. By working with the people I won the election in Nam Tha and defeated my
Pathet Lao opponent by a margin of 3,000 votes. Future elections should be delayed six months or a year, so that the population can be completely won over. But, we must change the Constitution to make sure. There is no idea of having a dictatorship, but the people must be won over to the side of the authority through the activity of the government.

"Because of family ties encompassing the Army, the young elite and the Committee for the Defense of the National Interests, any kind of coup d'état, such as has occurred recently in Thailand, would not be possible in Laos."

On the subject of American aid, he felt that it if were constant, perhaps in five years it would be possible for Laos to dispense with this assistance.

In reply to my question he said, "The monks have no right to participate in politics. Actually, they are supposed to be neutral but the Santiphab has exerted some influence on them."

"Last summer," he continued, "there was a one-week seminar for the chief monks from each province. I worked in cooperation with the U. S. Information Service, which has also helped start a newspaper specifically for the monks. If we can make the monks instruments of propaganda then we can be sure of reaching the population. Through religious publications we can tell the population about the Communists and the affair in Tibet. Two old people, who are now in Muong Xieng, who had fled the Communists, came to the seminar here and explained how the Chinese had destroyed Buddha images and defrocked the monks.

"The Asia Foundation has aided us with specialists to help decorate the pagodas. I am very happy with this program. We will have a conference of the chief provincial monks in Vientiane every year, and then also have conferences with the monks in the provinces. I am very happy to work with U.S.I.S. and the Asia Foundation. The best propaganda can be made through the monks because the population respects them. It would be a good idea to distribute medicine through the pagodas, because unlike the local chiefs and teachers, monks cannot sell goods. There are about sixty-thousand monks in all of Laos. (According to official statistics there are less than one-third that number.) It would be a good idea to send them to America and other countries."

"We must work in rural action programs, using the military and the police in the villages as well as the monks. We must be in contact with

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1 He did not attempt to relate this attitude to families divided between the Royal Government and the Pathet Lao.

2 Two Lao monks studied in the United States in 1959 on American government scholarships provided by the United States Information Service.
the population. This is the only democratic solution. These programs have just begun. We must make this effort. We cannot hesitate or neglect these programs.

"If we don't have enough time to work with the villagers, we will postpone the elections for a year or so, to give the program a chance to work. We are in the process of reconstruction; we must wait for the population to develop. We can't force them with dictatorship. If we use the method of force, we can win the population only for two or three years, and then what?

"We must also watch the Chinese (in Laos).

"We must indoctrinate our officer corps and our younger element in the Army. As for the Committee for the Defense of the National Interest, it is not the time for this, for now we must all work together and face the common enemy. The young people do not have the experience; they did not fight the Vietminh; they were in France."

OFFICIAL ASSOCIATED WITH THE COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE NATIONAL INTERESTS (Official B)

One of the chief spokesmen for the Committee for the Defense of the National Interests, Official B, appeared to be impressed with his own importance and was much more difficult to see than many other Lao officials of equal rank (in all fairness to him, however, during the period of these interviews, he had a great many official responsibilities):

Referring to the time he called "the period of parliamentary democracy" in Laos, he said it did not succeed very well. "You cannot go directly from the shadow of colonialism into democracy. For example, Indonesia has more resources than Laos, but nevertheless she was compelled to revert to directed democracy.

"The Lao people did not understand democracy. The old Deputies became demagogues. They did not pay their taxes. They wanted freedom and independence, but this did not mean to them civic responsibility. The idea of liberty and the right of free speech was abused.

"The people were not aware of their rights. The Deputies did not represent the people. They put the people against the government. The people did not pay taxes. Each time the government proposed that the people participate by paying taxes, the Deputies refused to vote the measure.

"Formerly, the government did not have much power. For example, an official would arrest a thief, but then a Deputy would interpose himself
and use his influence to come between public authority and the person concerned. The Deputies enriched themselves without fear of the authorities doing anything. There were many scandals." (Unlike many of the old line officials cited above, who were also Deputies, he holds no elective post. This is true of most of the other members of the CDIN, an exception being the Finance Minister, Leuma.)

Souvanna Phouma's policies of neutrality were a bad thing. When you realize that the Lao people, who are already an indifferent people by nature, are confronted by the idea of neutrality, this acts as an anaesthetic. The idea of neutrality implies being corrupt with the money of the Americans and leading a luxurious life.

"We lost the election (of 1958) because the Pathet Lao exploited this issue. During 1957, the year when the Pathet Lao were integrated into the government, there was a maximum of influence traffic connected with the importation of cars and things of which we have no need, things of which the farmers know nothing. The Americans wanted us to import luxuries like fountain pens and automobiles." (Pheng Phongsavan, President of the National Assembly, made a similar remark. This is of course contrary to the ideas of the American aid officials.)

"We have decided to be against the Communists and to do away with the business of licenses (a reference to the import licenses which were issued under the old program when the currency was artificially stabilized at the rate of 35 kip to the dollar; many frauds were involved in the buying and selling of these licenses).

"Corruption has not been eliminated, but it is now down to a normal basis." (The toleration of a certain amount of corruption is interesting, particularly when it is stressed by one of the leaders of the so-called reform movement. In a country like Laos, the degree of corruption is difficult to determine since inadequate accounting methods are practiced.)

"Now we give direct aid to the peasants. We are concentrating on rural medicine, agriculture and Operation Brotherhood." (The Junior Chamber of Commerce, which supports OB is largely a semi-political organization composed of many of the same members of the young elite as the Committee for the Defense of the National Interest.)

Official B also stressed the importance of schools. All this seems to be largely political rhetoric, as the ideas are not reflected in budget allocations. Since the CDIN draws a large measure of its strength from the Army, it is not to be supposed that they would advocate a major reallocation of funds, but rather that the Army wishes to take over some of these programs. It is, of course, possible that there is considerable conflict within the Committee on this point.