A STUDY OF ADMINISTRATION
IN BINH MINH DISTRICT

JOSEPH J. ZASLOFF
and
NGUYEN-KHAC-NHAN

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
VIET NAM ADVISORY GROUP
and
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADMINISTRATION

Saigon
October, 1961
A STUDY OF ADMINISTRATION IN BINH MINH DISTRICT

JOSEPH J. ZASLOFF

and

NGUYEN-KHAC-NHAN

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
VIETNAM ADVISORY GROUP

and

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADMINISTRATION

Saigon
October, 1961
A STUDY OF ADMINISTRATION IN BINH MINH DISTRICT

by

Joseph J. Zasloff

Associate Professor of Political Science;
University of Pittsburgh

Smith-Mundt Professor of Political Science,
University of Saigon, January 1959 - July 1960

and

Nguyen Khac Nhan

Faculty of Law, University of Saigon
and
National Institute of Administration

October, 1961
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAP OF BINH MINH DISTRICT</td>
<td>3A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE DISTRICT IN THE SCHEME OF ADMINISTRATION IN VIET NAM</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. BINH MINH DISTRICT</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE DISTRICT CHIEF AT HIS HEADQUARTERS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE STAFF UNDER THE DISTRICT CHIEF</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Introduction</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The Section Chiefs</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. First Assistant to District Chief</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. General Administration</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Finance</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Records</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Military Affairs</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Identity Card Service</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The Technical Services</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The District Police Chief</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Sureté</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The District Information Officer</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Activities as President of the District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- National Revolutionary Movement</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Chief of the District Youth Movement</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Civic Action Agents</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The Agricultural Credit Agent</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The Security Forces</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. The Canton Chief</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF THE DISTRICT CHIEF</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Introduction</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Monday Afternoon, April 4, 1960</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Tuesday, April 5</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Wednesday, April 6</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Thursday, April 7</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ii
VI. OBSERVATIONS OF SOME ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS AND PROCESSES IN THE DISTRICT
A. Introduction 48
B. The Security Situation 49
C. Centralization in the Administrative System 54
D. General Observations about Administrative Processes
   1. General Conditions of Work 55
   2. Relations of the District with the Province and the Villages 57
   3. Communications and Correspondence in the District 59
   4. Financial Relations 60

APPENDIX

I. Organization Chart - THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM 61
II. Organization Chart - THE GOVERNMENT OF A PROVINCE IN VIET NAM 63
III. List of ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES, BINH MINH DISTRICT, FISCAL YEAR 1960 64
IV. BINH MINH DISTRICT STAFF-1960 66
INTRODUCTION

The following study is an account of administration in Binh Minh district, Vinh Long province of South Viet Nam. It is part of a larger investigation undertaken by a team of researchers from Michigan State University, the Vietnamese National Institute of Administration, and the Faculty of Law of the University of Saigon. The team observed the administrative life of Vinh Long province at each of its echelons of administration for a week. A Vietnamese professor of administration and an American political scientist followed the activities at the province level, focusing on the province chief. A Vietnamese member of the Faculty of Law, University of Saigon, and an American political scientist, joint authors of this report, studied administration at the district level. A Vietnamese professor of administration and an American political scientist formed a third pair to examine administration at the village level. Finally, a Vietnamese sociologist (a young lady) and an American anthropologist concentrated largely on administration at the hamlet level, but ranged across the other administrative echelons in pursuit of their sociological and anthropological data. In addition to the professional members of the research teams, each American member had an interpreter to aid him in his interviews. After each day of interview and study at their own echelon of interest, members of the research team gathered in the provincial town of Vinh Long to exchange information and discuss their activities. Upon returning to Saigon, the entire research team exchanged insights based on their own areas of investigation. This research experience permitted each of the members to get the "feel" of administration at the
local level in a southern province. The American members of the team were especially rewarded by the explanations and interpretations of Vietnamese politics and administration which their Vietnamese colleagues provided. The opportunity to exchange ideas during a period of ten days of intensive study was extremely useful. The Vietnamese members of the team profited by a new perspective and objectivity towards their nation's problems which social scientists from the outside could provide. The entire research team heartily recommends this bi-rational pattern of investigation to other university contract groups, technical aid missions, or social science research groups.

The following report is submitted in the belief that a description of administrative activity at the district level would be of interest to those generally concerned with Viet Nam's problems, or those more specifically interested in local administration. An account of the activities of Mr. Nhan and Dr. Zasloff, joint authors of the following report, may be useful in interpreting the material. For one week in April 1960, Mr. Nhan and Dr. Zasloff traveled daily to the district headquarters. Mr. Nhan spent as many hours as possible during the week with the district chief, interviewing him, observing his normal business in his office, and traveling with him on several field trips.

During that period Dr. Zasloff carried out interviews, with the aid of an interpreter, with the functionaries on the district administrative staff. The same week, and during a three day period in the month of May 1960, Mr. Nhan and Dr. Zasloff visited the agroville sites at Tan Luoc, Cai San and Vy Tan, where they observed the activities and carried out numerous interviews. They had the opportunity, too, to examine the correspondence files at the district level. They found great cordiality and cooperation at every level they visited.
with whom they discussed their research objectives before undertaking the study as well as during the week of investigations, had instructed his subordinates to give full cooperation. He himself was very helpful in answering questions and providing information. The tone of cordiality and cooperation which he had set pervaded the subordinate levels.

This account is largely descriptive. A picture will be given of the district in the scheme of provincial administration, with some comments provided on the general legal situation of the district. A brief account of the economic and sociological aspects of Binh Minh district will be provided. The study will then turn its focus to administration. The district chief plays the primary role; his subordinates, the section chiefs, as well as those in charge of the technical services will be described by a resume of their duties and a brief sketch of the man holding the job. A part of a week in the life of the district chief will then be described. Mr. Nhan's long hours with the chief provided the opportunity to reconstruct, in a general and incomplete way, the weekly activities of the district chief. A description of the kinds of problems he meets, the way he spends his time, and the major issues on his mind, will provide an impressionistic insight into the administrative duties and problems of the most important officer at the district level. Finally some observations and interpretations of problems and processes of administration at the district level will be offered. If this account gives to the reader some feel for the administrative activities in a southern district of Viet Nam and suggests some issues for further research, it will have served its purpose.
PROVINCE OF VINH LONG

BINH MINH DISTRICT

1959

Areas:

According to District Information Chief
CHAPTER I

THE DISTRICT IN THE SCHEME OF ADMINISTRATION
IN VIET NAM

At the top of the administrative hierarchy is the chief executive, the President. The responsibility for administration in the field is delegated by the President to his Minister of Interior. Reporting directly to the Minister of Interior are the chiefs of the thirty-eight provinces in which the country is divided. At an intermediary level between the province and the Ministry of Interior, though they have little actual administrative importance, are the three regional government delegations of the central lowlands, the central highlands and the south. Each of these regional delegations has a governor, who was important under the French colonial government but who now has largely ceremonial and investigatory duties. Subordinate to the province is the district. Each of the thirty-eight provinces is divided into two to twelve districts, which is presided over by the district chief, named by the province chief with the approval of the Minister of Interior. The districts are divided into a large number of villages. There is an intermediate level of administration known as the canton, between the village and the district, but this is not generally in use at the present time. The villages are further subdivided into hamlets.

1 See attached chart, USOM, Public Administration Division, July 1, 1958.

2 L. Woodruff, Local Administration in Viet Nam: The Number of Local Units, Michigan State University and National Institute of Administration, Saigon, November 1, 1960.
The important legal framework for district administration is contained in Ordinance 57A of the memorandum number 115A, dated October 24, 1956. This ordinance gives both the province and the village the status of a juridical person, entitling them to budgets and assets of their own. The district and the canton are described as territorial subdivisions of the province, operating on behalf of the province chief.

Among the major responsibilities of the district chief are the maintenance of security and of law and order in his district. The arrêté of the Governor General in Indo China, dated December 6, 1941, a document still largely in force, authorizes the district chief to detain, from one to five days in the district cell, any citizen who does not comply with the laws and regulations. The district chief is administratively responsible for the district schools, the dispensaries, and the social services. However, the technical aspects of these services are under the supervision of functionaries appointed by the technical departments. The district chief supervises the maintenance of public buildings, bridges, and roads in the district, reporting to the province chief necessary repairs and new projects which should be undertaken. The chief must insure that village and canton administrative authorities perform their duties effectively. He inspects each communal council periodically, examining its administration, its finances, and its taxation. He must report this inspection to the province chief and leave a copy of his report in the communal archives. Where formal sanctions of communal authorities are necessary, the district chief sends a letter of censure to the members of the communal council whom he judges in need of reprimand.

In some cases he reports directly to the province chief who makes the decision whether or not to remove the member of the council charged by
the district chief, or simply to post a formal letter of censure in the communal house for a fixed period of time. The district chief is responsible for tax administration, checking the village tax rolls, looking into the efficiency of tax collection, and examining accounting procedure. He is required to lend his assistance to personnel from the taxation service who come to the district on inspection tours, or to examine cases of tax delinquency or embezzlement. He must inspect and supervise other financial matters of the village, such as communal funds, accounting procedures, and the collection of fines for minor offenses. In all these administrative matters the district chief reports regularly to the province chief.

The district chief has various judicial responsibilities. He serves as coroner and assistant to the public prosecutor of the province. He gathers evidence and brings offenders to court. He must report to the proper authorities those minor serious offenses with which he has no competence to deal. In no case may the district chief himself conclude a lawsuit in his district, even if the contentious parties have reached a compromise. These cases must always be handled by the responsible judicial authorities. In the case of a malefactor caught in the act of crime, the district chief may arrest the delinquent, draw up an official statement, and interrogate the necessary witnesses, without requiring an oath. He may, if he deems necessary, search the malefactor's home to seize necessary evidence. If he judges it necessary, as in the case of a threat to the public safety, the district chief may mobilize the security forces and civilians. In the case of serious crimes, the district chief is instructed to go in person to the scene of the crime, notify the prosecutor of the fact, and conduct an investigation himself in order not to
lose time or evidence. In cases involving public safety or which affect the state of mind of the people, the district chief is required to report immediately to the province chief by letter.

The administrative subdivision beneath the district provided for in the ordinance is the canton. In many provinces, especially those of the lowlands of central Viet Nam, the cantons have been abolished since 1945. The canton is directed by a chief, assisted by assistant chiefs of canton, all appointed by the chief of the province upon nomination by the village chiefs. The canton chief serves the district chief in administrative matters in his territory. He may be important as a mediator of conflicts between citizens in his villages.
CHAPTER II

BINH MINH DISTRICT

The district under study, Binh Minh, is of average size in the administration of South Viet Nam. Its population is estimated at 83,770, living in 16,000 homes in the nine villages which make up the district. My Thuan Village, where the district headquarters is located, contains 17,000 inhabitants and is the largest village of the district. The others range from 4,500 to 12,000 inhabitants. Though these nine villages are theoretically grouped into subdivisions of three cantons, only one chief of canton in Binh Minh district holds formal office. He serves officially as an assistant to the chief of district. The canton subdivision, therefore, has no practical administrative importance.

The overwhelming majority of the Binh Minh population is Southern Vietnamese. Very few northern refugees are to be found in the district. There are approximately 1,000 Cambodians, now naturalized Vietnamese, who work at rice farming. These Cambodians are remnants of the former Cambodian population who occupied the entire territory before the Vietnamese movement south in the last century. They now live largely in one Cambodian hamlet, Tho 11. There are an estimated 300 Chinese, also of recent Vietnamese citizenship, located largely in the villages near the market place. They are engaged largely in commerce, though a few earn their living by farming.

The Hao Hoa is the largest religious denomination in the district, with an estimated 69,000 members. The largest segment, 62,000 members, follows the tradition of Tran Van Soai (Nam Lua). The remaining 7,000 belong to the sect whose chief was Tran Quang Vinh, alias, Fa Cut, who
was executed by the Vietnamese government on charges of treason. The members of this latter sect live largely in three villages: Tan Hônh Bình, Vinh Thao, and Thoàn Hoa. Prior to 1954, the Hao Hoa headquarters was at the village of My Thuan and the sect was generally in control of the region. The remaining religious affiliations of the district population are listed as follows: Buddhist -- 11,400; Cao Đài -- 2,900; Catholic -- 400; Evangelical -- 250.

Binh Minh district is located in the heart of the fertile, rice producing Mekong River delta. It borders the Bassac River, one of the branches of the Mekong. The great majority of the population -- estimated by one official to be 97% -- is engaged in rice agriculture. Approximately 27,900 hectares are cultivated, generally by the family group. A small part of the population engage in fishing as a major occupation. Commercial exploitation of forest resources is almost non-existent. In the total district there are nine rice mills, one brick factory, a small factory for the production of soya sauce, and another for the production of "chao" (a food product with a base of soya, used especially by the many Buddhist vegetarians), one bakery, seven nôu man factories (fermented fish sauce, a basic ingredient of the Vietnamese cuisine), and one salt refinery. These factories are all under family management. There is also part-time family artisan activity, such as the production of concrete jars, fabrication of wooden shoes, making of thread, and the weaving of nets and other fishing equipment. The district contains seventeen schools for children under nine years of age and five schools for the older children, making a total of ninety-six classes. The 2,961 boys and 2,053 girls who attend school are taught by seventy-nine teachers, sixty-five of whom are men and fourteen women. The district has one public maternity clinic which employs a midwife paid by the government and several private maternity clinics.
Each village is expected to have a first aid station but this is often non-existent for medical supplies are scarce. A social service fund theoretically exists in each village, but many villages are too poor to have money in their fund.
CHAPTER III

THE DISTRICT CHIEF AT HIS HEADQUARTERS

Binh Minh district headquarters is located in My Thuan, largest village of the district. It is on the principal route from Vinh Long to Can Tho, thirty kilometers from Vinh Long. For security reasons the headquarters administrative offices are in a compound surrounded by heavy barbed-wire fences. Entry is controlled by an armed sentry standing before the guard post. Until June 1960, when the new building was completed, the headquarters offices were located on one side of the compound in a long, narrow concrete structure resembling a cinder block garage. The structure was divided into seven separate compartments, each about four meters square, where two functionaries worked. One compartment served as the temporary living quarters for the chief and two of his children. The courtyard of the compound bustled with continual activity; armed sentries moved to and from the guard post, messengers attached to the district headquarters carried out their chores, infants played in the dirt, laborers constructed the new district building, and a constant stream of villagers brought their business to the district offices. The district chief, Nguyen Bhuoc Huynh, was a thirty-seven year old army captain. He was born in My Tho, a southern provincial town where he first attended school. Later he studied in Saigon at the French School, Taberd, completing part of his secondary education, though probably not the baccalaureate. Upon leaving school, he served as a minor clerk at the Saigon court before entering the military academy at Dalat. Following his graduation as a second lieutenant in 1952, he fought with Vietnamese units against the
Viet Minh forces, while the French were still in control of Vietnam. Captain Huynh speaks French very well. He obtained the rank of captain in 1955. In 1960 he had six children, the oldest of whom was six. Captain Huynh's father, now residing in My Tho, was also a district chief before retirement.

Captain Huynh was appointed chief of Binh Minh district in the middle of March 1960. His former post had been chief of the public works construction at the Vy Thanh agroville. Vy Thanh was the first agroville completed in Vietnam and has been the showcase for visiting dignitaries. At the completion of its construction, Captain Huynh was appointed as chief of Binh Minh district. Two major factors seemed to influence this appointment. Binh Minh district has a serious security problem. Because of the widespread guerrilla activity a military man seemed desirable. Secondly, an agroville was contemplated for the district at Tan Luoc village and Captain Huynh's experience at Vy Thanh was considered valuable.

Captain Huynh saw himself not as an administrator but as a soldier. "I'm a military man," he proclaimed, "my business is fighting." He professed a lack of interest and a lack of ability in the day-to-day administrative detail. He consigned the bulk of administrative routine to a subordinate, a young man who had served the district as a functionary since its establishment in 1958. The chief devoted his major attention to two activities: the promotion of security in the district, and the construction of the agroville at Tan Luoc. He would frequently participate in security operations and devote his village trips to the organization of guard forces, the Đen Vệ and the Bảo An. Whenever the chief left the district compound, he would be accompanied by several body guards mounted in a jeep and armed with rifles and submachine guns. Captain Huynh was frequently at the agroville site, conferring with the lieutenant in charge of construction.
mounted in a jeep and armed with rifles and submachine guns. Captain Huynh was frequently at the agroville site, conferring with the lieutenant in charge of construction. There was heavy pressure from the province chief, who in turn was pressed by Saigon, to complete the agroville rapidly. It was Captain Huynh's responsibility to recruit the labor necessary to work at the agroville, to provide the security necessary for the work operation, and to resettle the inhabitants.
CHAPTER IV

THE STAFF UNDER THE DISTRICT CHIEF

A. Introduction

The Binh Minh district chief, following the general administrative pattern of South Viet Nam, has three general categories of personnel through whom he carries out his responsibilities. The normal district administrative duties, for which he is directly responsible, are performed by his staff of six section chiefs. Secondly, there are the technical services which must be performed in his district, such as the distribution of agricultural credit or the work of the district information office. Although much of the substantive direction of these services comes from the higher echelon, the district chief must provide administrative direction and coordination to the technical service officers. Finally, an extremely important function is the maintenance of security. The district chief supervises, gives administrative support, and coordinates with higher echelons the activities of these security forces. They are largely the village guards (Dan Ve), the civil guards (Bao An), and units of the national army who may be operating in the district. The general work pattern and the functionaries performing the duties will be described in the succeeding sections.

B. The Section Chiefs

The routine administrative detail of Binh Minh district is carried out by six section chiefs under the direct supervision of the district chief. Administratively, the district serves as a kind of letter box.
between the province and the villages. Orders come from the province, which is the major echelon of administration charged with implementing orders from Saigon. These orders are often destined for implementation at the village level but they pass through the district for transmission and supervision. The major activity of the section chiefs, then, is the processing of paper work between the province and the villages. Orders coming from the province are retyped in nine copies for distribution to the villages. Replies, requests, and reports coming from the villages pass through the district on their way to the province. The district offices consolidate budgets, collate reports, and transmit information in both administrative directions. Though the torpid climate slows down this movement to a plodding pace, the section chiefs methodically process their papers. They prepare their documents by pecking at several of the old typewriters in the offices or writing carefully in longhand.

Each section chief deals with his own area of competence. For a routine issue, the chief of section types a "bordereaux de transmission" (for transmission to the villages or transmission to the different technical services), and submits it directly for the signature of the district chief. When a question requires a decision, the section chief either talks directly to the district chief or sends him the document. The chief then writes his comments on the margin. Frequent reports are required from the district. On some matters, such as progress at the agro-ville, daily reports are required by the province. On other matters, weekly, monthly, or quarterly reports are submitted. (See quarterly report, page 57.)

The six section chiefs range in age from twenty-two to forty-three and all come from the surrounding region. Their salaries average
approximately 2,100 piasters monthly. Most have worked there since the
district was established two years previously, and seem to be well ac­
quainted with their routine tasks, as well as those of their colleagues,
permitting interchangeability of functions. A brief biography of the
men and their major duties follows:

1. First Assistant to District Chief

Mr. Nguyen Than Quang, first assistant to the district chief, is in
charge of personnel and supervises the general administration of the en­
tire district headquarters. Mr. Quang, in his early twenties, was born
in Vinh Long province and received his education, a brevet supérieur,
in the first cycle of Vietnamese studies, in the town of Vinh Long. While
still in school he passed an examination and entered the public service,
working as a clerk for nine months in the district of Tra On. When this
district was liquidated, he was transferred, on March 23, 1957, to the
present district of Binh Minh. The district chief relies upon him to
manage the routine administrative matters.

Mr. Quang opens the morning correspondence and distributes it to
the appropriate section chiefs for action when routine matters are con­
cerned, such as the request for a marriage certificate. More important
communications are referred to the district chief. Though he cannot
officially sign for his chief, Mr. Quang initials certain routine requests
in the chief's absence. Such issues which he might handle without re­
porting to the district chief include the counter-signing of a request
by a villager for an exit visa which is already signed by the village
chief, uncomplicated inquiries from the province for population figures
or reports on incidents, the forwarding to village officials of provincial
court orders, processing of papers authorizing payment of officials,
supplying of data about transfers of teachers from one village to another, and the transmission of general information from the province level to the nine villages in the district. All correspondence which originates at the district must be typed in a minimum of three copies, one for the addressee, one for the province, and one for the district files.

2. General Administration

Mr. Nguyen Binh Khoa handles general administrative affairs. Mr. Khoa, twenty-three years old and single, was born in Vinh Long where he attended school until the fourth year, obtaining his elementary brevet. He entered the public service at the age of eighteen, serving as a district clerk, and was transferred to Binh Minh when his district was liquidated. He earns 2,000 piasters monthly.

Mr. Khoa's routine administrative duties are listed on a typewritten paper which he keeps in his desk. A summary of this list will provide an impression of the kinds of papers he handles and the issues he treats: (1) transmission of papers between the courts and the villagers of the district. For example, in the case of an accidental death, investigation reports must be submitted and a burial permit provided by the district chief. (2) Processing of papers concerning the conciliation of disputes. Disputes which cannot be solved at the village level are often referred to the district. Such cases often include those in which the disputants do not have confidence in the police or village chief because they may be directly involved. In these cases, the district chief gives the decision. (3) Transmission of documents between the village and province for deed registration. (4) Preparation of the report in which the district chief evaluates, on a twenty point scale, the members of the village council. (5) Administrative service to the central
committee for youth functions, such as notification of all the villages about youth demonstrations. (b) Processing of information service material such as the notification of villages about public meetings and special events. (7) Reporting on the control of vice, gambling, and prostitution. (8) Criminal reporting. (9) A report on all work accidents, which require a copy to the Ministry of Labor and a copy to the Procure General. (10) Maintenance of records on the property and assets of the former Hao Hoa chief, Tran Van Soai, and his wives who are located in the district. This property includes rice mills, farms, houses, and land. (11) Organization of all national manifestations. (12) Communication to villages regarding visitors, official delegations, etc. (13) Reports on activity towards the elimination of beggars. (14) Control of charity requests. (15) Supervision of farmers' associations, and the promotion of propaganda concerning government agricultural programs. (16) Inquiry into the property of prisoners tried before the courts. (17) Control of Chinese medicine and pharmacy. (18) Administrative activity for the promotion of the Society of the Victims of War and of the Viet Minh. (19) Maintenance and control of the dossier of two private electric companies in the district. (20) Documentation on the development of new canals. (21) Organization of meetings in the district. (22) Organization of the "five Family Groups" in the villages including the transmission of orders to activate and supervise these groups. (23) Investigations for the public prosecutor. (24) Authorization for house construction. (25) Supervision of the sale of private goods ordered by the court to raise fines and damages of guilty prisoners. (26) Responsibility for fire protection and the reporting of all fires to the province. (27) The selection of candidates for training programs and schools. (28) Purchase of office supplies and equipment. (29) Supervision and control of foreigners. (30) Maintenance
of list of forbidden newspapers. (31) Maintenance of security for district personnel. (32) Control and collection of tax on radios. (33) Maintenance of population figures. (34) Control of the legalized gambling device, the "tontines". (35) The transmittal of general administrative documents such as marriage licences and death certificates.

3. Finance

Mr. Ngo Van Thuc is responsible for finance in the district. Mr. Thuc, forty-three years old, married with two children, was born in Vinh Long and completed six years of school. He first served as a village teacher. In 1935 he entered the administrative service and worked in the district of Cai Whum until 1957. He and his colleagues were transferred to Binh Minh upon the elimination of that district.

Mr. Thuc has largely supervisory and auditory duties in regard to the financial matters of the nine villages in the district. He travels at least once monthly to each village, auditing the budget, inspecting and prodding the tax collection, and supervising payments to the village councillors. He regards his most difficult task to be the preparation of an annual report to the province headquarters in which a record of all receipts and expenditures in the district are recorded. (See appendix for this report.) The district does not have a budget of its own, but rather depends upon contributions towards its expenses by the nine villages. In reality, My Thuan village, in which the district headquarters is located provides the largest part of the district funds. (See the report on village finance by Professor Woodruff for an analysis of the impact of district finance on My Thuan.)
4. Records

Mr. Nguyen Hieu Thuan handles records concerning economic affairs as well as civil status for the district headquarters. Forty-one years old, married and the father of five children, Mr. Thuan was born in the village of Than Loi, where he still lives. He attended the village school, and later served for ten years as secretary to the canton chief. He was, in addition, mayor of his village for three years. He has served at his post as section chief in Binh Minh district since 1957, when the district was established.

Mr. Thuan is charged with keeping current the civil status records. The village authorities are required to issue documents concerning births, deaths, and marriages, and to submit a duplicate copy to the district. The district is responsible for the issuance of duplicate records in case of loss, and when necessary for marriage, identity cards, house purchases, and the many other administrative situations which require them. Frequently Mr. Thuan supplies information to the court in inquiries concerning the civil status of inhabitants of the district.

Mr. Thuan is also responsible for delivery of tax cards for such property as boats, buffalos, and other animals, although it is not his duty to collect the taxes. The documents which he delivers clear the title for the owner.

5. Military Affairs

Mr. Nguyen Than deals administratively with military affairs of the district. Mr. Than, forty-one years old, was born in the village of Tam Dinh where he completed a primary education. Married, with one child, he earns 1,600 piasters monthly, and has no other source of income. He has worked as a secretary to a canton chief for five years, has served in
the customs service and other administrative posts, and then was an administrator in the district of Tan Binh before transferring to the present district of Binh Minh.

Mr. Than's duties were contained in a job description which he cited:

1. Maintenance of records showing the number of village guards and their arms;
2. Maintenance of information concerning former military personnel;
3. Maintenance of recruitment information;
4. Publication of information concerning army orders, forbidden materials, control of explosives, etc.;
5. The drafting of a daily report showing the security situation in all villages in the district. All incidents between the Viet Cong and the security forces must be described in this report;
6. Implementation of court orders for arrest coming to the district headquarters.
7. Submission of numerous daily, weekly, and monthly reports.

6. Identity Card Service

Mr. Nguyen Hue Que is chief of the identity card service of the district. He was born in Vinh Long province and received a primary education in Vinh Long. He then spent two years in a secondary school in Saigon, but was forced to stop during the war. He worked for two years for a Saigon business firm, then came to work in administration at the district headquarters of Tam Binh. When this district was dissolved, he was transferred to his present post at Binh Minh. Thirty-one years old, he is married with three children. He earns a total monthly salary of 2,000 piasters.

The delivery of identity cards consumes most of his time. To secure the obligatory identity card, a villager must present an attestation from the village chief, a birth certificate, and appear at the district headquarters with two witnesses. He completes a questionnaire which is
forwarded to the district sureté, where it is presumably double-checked against existing information. Sometimes inquiries are made into the native hamlet of the applicant. Since the military service laws are frequently involved in identity card requests, and many cases have been found of applicants falsifying their cards by advancing their age, the inquiries are a genuine necessity. Until recent years, the large population of the Hao Hoa in Binh Minh district possessed only a sect card, not an identity card. Since identity cards are now obligatory for everyone, there has been a great deal of activity to provide them for the Hao Hoa inhabitants. Identity cards are made out in triplicate: a white card is delivered to the applicant; a red card is sent to Saigon, and a second red card remains in the district files.

C. The Technical Services

A second category of personnel working at the district level are the technical service officials. In Binh Minh district, they comprise the police, the sureté, the information service, the youth movement directorate, the civic action representatives, and the agricultural credit organization. These officials rely upon the district chief for administrative support and receive his instructions concerning general policy in the district; however, they normally receive their program work and substantive direction from their superior at the next highest administrative echelon. The technical services are not located within the district compound, but have their offices spread throughout the main street of My Thuan village. A brief account of these technical services and the men who fill them will follow.
1. **The District Police Chief (Can Sat)**

The district police chief, nearly fifty years old, lives with his wife and four children in the several rooms adjoining his police headquarters, on the main street of My Thuan village. His basic salary of 2,500 piasters plus family indemnities amounts to 3,400 piasters monthly.

The police chief has nine subordinates who perform police functions at the market place of My Thuan, headquarters of the district, and at the ferry. Two policemen are attached to the district chief. The market place, especially in the placement of vendors and the maintenance of order, requires most of the time and energy of the district police force. Regular rounds are made by the policemen in My Thuan village. Inquiries for the provincial court, transmitted by order of the chief of district, are part of the district police activities. Political issues and secret criminal investigations are generally referred to the sureté.

To demonstrate the range of his activities, the police chief cited three recent examples of his performance: (1) he picked up a prostitute whom the chief of district had decided to send to court; (2) in a recent quarrel he tried conciliation which failed, and he referred the case to the district chief; (3) receiving, through the chief of district, a request from the provincial court in Vinh Long to inquire into the death of a child killed by a falling tree, he made the inquiry and reported through the chief of district to the Procure General of Vinh Long.

The district police chief has no official connection or jurisdiction over the chiefs of police in the villages. However, when he is required to make an official inquiry, he often contacts the village police for their guidance and assistance. The work of the district police is overt; the policemen perform their functions in uniform. Their responsibilities
consist of preventing 'infractions' of the law, proceeding against law
breakers, and reporting accidents and infractions of the law.

Discussing his own personal security, the police chief pointed out
that he must be discreet and does not dare wander too far from village
headquarters, normally returning to his home after his work. He pointed
out, however, that district policemen are in less danger from the Viet
Cong than members of the sureté.

2. The Sureté

The district sureté office is assigned three men: the chief, the
assistant chief, and a third man normally assigned to agroville duty.
In the absence of the sureté chief, the assistant chief was interviewed.
A man in his late thirties, he had served with the sureté for the past
seven years, and had been posted at Binh Minh the previous year. He had
been a sargeant in the French army in Viet Nam during the period of co-
lonial rule. He was a primary school graduate. Including family allow-
ance, his monthly salary totals 3,000 piasters.

An important function of the sureté is the gathering of political
information, assembled largely through informers. Among the routine ad-
ministrative tasks performed by the sureté are the communication of se-
curity information about prospective government employees and response
to inquiries about requests for identity cards. Also, a team composed
of one policeman, one civil guard, one village guard, and a sureté mem-
ber, makes regular rounds in My Thuan.

The assistant sureté chief described his talent for sniffing out
competent informers. After striking up a relationship with a potential
informer, he assigns him several tasks to test his mettle. If his man
is worthy of the trust, the sureté assistant engages him and promises
payment for the information he provides. The district chief normally decides the amount of payment. There is no direct liaison between the informer and the sureté officials, as a general practice. The informer uses intermediaries, often his wife or children, to pass on information so that the Viet Cong do not discover him. The assistant sureté chief travels frequently about the district, attempting to gather information.

He stated proudly that he had recently been able to confiscate three Viet Cong rifles, and to pick up a man who had divulged information about Viet Cong accomplices. This outstanding performance, he pointed out, would be recorded in his personnel dossier, and he would receive a bonus (which could possibly diminish, he intimated, as it passed along the administrative echelons to him).

During the interview with the assistant chief, curled up on a mat in the corner was a twenty year old peasant in tattered clothes. His feet were in manacles, the left side of his face was swollen and his eye and cheek were badly bruised. He was suspected of Viet Cong membership. He had been arrested following the report of an extortion letter received by a village landowner. The writer of the letter demanded money of the landowner. Refusal to pay would result in his assassination by elements of the Viet Cong army, the letter threatened. The sureté officer claimed that the young man on the mat had written the letter. The young man had confessed to authorship but denied that he was a member of the Viet Cong, stating that he had used this ruse to extort money from the landowner. The sureté officer said that the prisoner would be sent to the court in due time.
The District Information Officer

The duties of district information officer are carried out by Mr. Tung. Now in his middle thirties, Mr. Tung was born in the northern part of central Viet Nam, in Nghe An. He is one of the few functionaries working at the Binh Minh district headquarters, perhaps the only one, who is not a southerner. He received his education at a Catholic seminary which he left at the age of thirteen. He served as a bookkeeper with the Japanese occupation forces in 1942. In 1945 he entered the resistance against the French, led by the Viet Minh, and worked in the eighth zone. Achieving the rank of captain in the Viet Minh army, he served as a specialist in organization matters, he stated. In 1952 he quit the Viet Minh and became a school teacher in the district of Tan Binh, a district near Binh Minh in Vinh Long province. Later he entered the government information service, received one month's training at Can Tho, and in 1957 was assigned to the district of Binh Minh, subsequently receiving a second month of training. In 1958, he attended the personalism course for civil servants given in Vinh Long. He earns a salary of 2,000 piasters monthly, a sum which he considers is neither sufficient reward for his services nor adequate to meet his needs. In addition to his tasks as district information chief, Mr. Tung serves as the district President of the National Revolutionary Movement, the President of the District Farmers' Association (Hiep Hoi, Nong Dan), Director of the Association for Assistance to Families of Communist Victims, and commissioner for propaganda, research and training at the agroville (Uy vien Tuyen Truyen và Nghien Cuu).

The information chief has the duty of distributing news emanating from the department of information to village cadres. He organizes public meetings to propagandize the programs of the government such as
agricultural reform, community development, the agrovilles, and farmers' associations. He organizes anti-communist manifestations throughout the villages of the district. In each village, a village information officer maintains a room known as a phong, which presumably serves as an information center. Some hamlets have established a small information shelter, known as a tram. Prior to 1957, each village was allocated a budget for information activities, but recently this budget has been eliminated and each village must raise its own funds. There are nine phong in the villages of the district, and fifty-six tram. The village information officer in charge of the phong receives a monthly salary of 300 piasters. Sometimes films are shown at the end of which a collection is made from the villagers to sustain the phong and tram.

The district information chief is a key member of the mobile propaganda team of the Binh Minh district. This armed propaganda team was organized at the instructions of the province chief on March 28, 1960, as a measure to combat the increasing activities of the Viet Cong. It was to operate throughout the nine villages of the district during the period from April 4, 1960 to June 30, 1960. The team was composed of members of the Youth and Information Service, a representative of the National Revolutionary Movement, a member of the League of Civil Servants, a representative of the Civil Guard Battalion, and a Civic Action Member. The team was instructed to go into the villages for two days to confer with members of the village council, the National Revolutionary Movement representative, the information commissioner and the youth representative to draw up plans for their propaganda sessions. Their object was to organize study sessions, theatrical performances and film showings; arrange to listen to broadcasts, and lectures; and to organize whispering
campaigns for propaganda purposes. They were instructed to encourage the villagers to paint slogans and posters denouncing the Viet Cong, praising the government, and urging the population to join enthusiastically in the meetings and demonstrations.

Activities as President of the District National Revolutionary Movement

The information chief is also president of the district National Revolutionary Movement, the government political party. The honorary president of the NRM is President Diem. The party attempts to operate as a mass popular movement, providing a framework to organize people for political rallies, manifestations and public demonstrations. It serves also as a transmission belt for directives from the government to various elements of the society. The central core of its membership and its active leadership is provided by the government civil servants, whose league is a subsidiary member of the NRM. This means, in fact, that the government functionary becomes a member of the NRM through membership in the civil servants association. The party does not limit its membership to civil servants; it reaches into the general population for mass membership.

The NRM organizational pattern in the Binh Minh district follows the general pattern for South Viet Nam. The basic unit of the party is at the hamlet level. A hamlet NRM group, called AP Bo, contains approximately twenty to forty persons. Several AP Bo form a Xa Bo. The Xa Bo are joined together in the Quan Bo, the party organization at the district level. The district level organization is then represented in a province level organization, and finally, the provinces are represented in the organization at the national level.
Discussing the motivation of villagers to join the NRM and to contribute their two piaster monthly dues, the district information chief gave a resumé of the advantages of membership: (1) if a person is arrested, the party might intervene to his advantage; (2) if a party member wishes to leave the village for a few days, the exit visa might be more easily obtained; (3) party membership gives a "certain security" to the member.

Party members are exposed to a weekly political training session, at which the goals of the government policies are diffused and members are urged to promote government support among their friends and neighbors. The district information chief was proud of the fact that he had been instrumental in increasing the party membership from 1,400 members, its size when he arrived in the district, to 2,370 full members and 4,923 associate members by February, 1960. Associate membership is supposedly a trial period lasting three months, but many members remain in this category for a much longer period. A membership of more than 7,000 in a district of 8,300 represents a significant organizational achievement, the information chief felt.

In the election for the National Assembly in August 1959, Mr. Tung mobilized his district party for political activity. Groups were assembled for propaganda purposes and urged to spread the word in favor of the official party candidate. They were instructed to cast their own ballot for the official candidate and to secure cooperation from their family. The NRM official candidate won 53,000 of the total 70,000 votes cast.
Chief of the District Youth Movement

The chief of the youth movement of Rinh Minh district, a man in his early thirties, was born in a southern province and went to school in Vinh Long. Prior to accepting work with the youth directorate in 1956, he worked as a village school teacher. He is married and has six children. His salary of 2,100 piasters is hardly sufficient to support his family, he pointed out, but he receives help from his parents who live in the region.

The Republican Youth Movement was originally formed in 1957. It currently recruits youth from the ages of eighteen to thirty-five, theoretically on a volunteer basis but in fact great pressure is applied by the government to mobilize the greater part of the rural youth. The basic unit of the youth organization is the Toan, containing eight to twelve members. From this basic unit a hierarchy is built at each administrative echelon, up to the level of national organization. Men and women serve in separate units. The organized youth have a prescribed uniform consisting of black trousers, white shirt, white beret and scarf, both for men and women. Each village has an executive committee of the youth organization, aided by village notables, which directs training, organizes sessions for propaganda, and generally prescribes the program for fulfilling the directives of higher headquarters. Hamlet youth chiefs must attend training sessions weekly, returning to their own group, in theory, to pass on their newly acquired knowledge.

A project undertaken early in 1960 laid plans for the selection of suitable young men from the Republican Youth Organization to be trained as members of village defense groups. These village defense groups composed of the most vigorous youths would replace the current village guards.
The village defense groups were to be trained by the Seventh Army Division of the Vietnamese National Army. At the time of this research the defense groups were expected to contain a minimum of forty persons in each village, led by a chief, an assistant chief, and four section chiefs, each with ten men. The groups were then to be armed with bamboo staves for symbolic training. It was expected that later they would receive firearms. In addition to being trained for fighting the Viet Cong, the youth group members were being organized to provide intelligence about Viet Cong activity. In fact, the youth chief, in discussing the new concept of these youth defense organizations, suggested that "each member can be a sort of secret agent for the government."

The director of the Republican Youth Movement for the district had the duty of organizing, supervising, and encouraging the formation of youth groups. To carry out his function, the youth chief makes frequent visits to the nine villages of the district, organizing training sessions, holding meetings, organizing rallies, and generally coordinating youth activities for the district. His superior at the province level, from whom he receives technical instructions, is the assistant province chief for security affairs, an army major.

5. The Civic Action Agents

Two agents of the Commissariat of Civic Action serve the Binh Minh district. During the period of the research visits, the civic action agents were constantly at the agroville site, engaging in propaganda activity. The Civic Action Commissariat is an agency organized on a national level, containing some 700 cadres. Their task is the promotion of propaganda and community development work. In Binh Minh district they were charged primarily with promoting the agroville. No interviews were
completed with the civic action agents.

6. Agricultural Credit Agent

The district representative of the National agricultural credit agency was absent from Binh Minh during the visit of the research team. This agency was established to provide small loans to farmers and one representative is normally located at the district headquarters in Binh Minh.

D. The Security Forces

The district chief has responsibility for supervision or coordination of a variety of security forces. These include primarily units of the national army, to whom he is often called upon to give administrative support, the civil guard whom he deals with more directly, and the village guards. The civil guard is a quasi-military organization now under the jurisdiction of the province chief. It supplements the national army which is limited to 150,000 personnel by the Geneva Agreement. The civil guard is recruited on a national basis, wears a uniform, and has full time military duty. A major function is sentry duty at important installations such as bridges, administrative headquarters, communications centers, and important roads. Civil guard officers aid in the training and supervision of village guards. The village guards are recruited from the villages and perform guardpost duty, security for the important officials, and make local sorties against marauding Viet Cong.

In the Binh Minh district there are approximately 120 civil guards and 200 village guards. The command post of the district civil guard is located at the district civil headquarters in My Thuan village. Civil guard reinforcements are sent to the village guards in each canton.
E. The Canton Chief

Although the Binh Minh district is officially divided into three cantons, only one canton chief actually holds office and he does not perform normal duties. He serves formally as the assistant chief of district, empowered to sign for the district chief in his absence. The canton chief, Mr. Nguyen Van Hieu, formerly a chief of district himself, was stricken with Parkinson's Disease a number of years ago. He now moves about slowly and suffers with trembling limbs. Mr. Hieu received his education in Saigon at the French Lycée, Chasseloup-Laubat, where he was a classmate of the Vinh Long Chief of Province, Mr. Ba. Although the administrative activity of Mr. Hieu is slight and his duties are largely ceremonial, he continues to draw a salary of 4,000 piasters monthly as chief of canton.

Mr. Hieu was a rich landowner, owning with his brother-in-law over 1,000 hectares of rice land before the land reform. Once the land reform program is fully implemented, he will be permitted to keep only 100 hectares of rice land. He pointed out that his land had not yet been fully expropriated by the government for resale because it is located in areas infested by the Viet Cong and the land is impossible to transfer. Legally he is entitled to receive rent from the land which is tilled by peasants living on it, but he claimed that he cannot collect his rents since the agents and the village officials fear entering the area to collect it. They would risk assassination by the Viet Cong. The rent which he succeeded in collecting, he claimed further, was far inferior to the value of the land, but he dared not demand more because of the security problem.
A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF THE DISTRICT CHIEF

A. Introduction

When the research project for the study of administration in Vinh Long province was first constructed, it was decided to observe in close detail, if possible, the daily activities of the three principal administrative chiefs of the three principal administrative echelons, the province chief, the district chief, and a village chief. It was hoped that a Vietnamese professor might accompany the chief for the major part of his activities. It was impossible, at the district level, to be with the chief at all times. He handled secret and personal matters, and he was engaged several times in military operations on which it was impossible to accompany him. Moreover, in the narrow confines of the district chief’s office, the presence of an outsider obviously altered the normal train of activity. It was possible, however, to examine the paper work which the district chief processed during a good part of the work, and to engage him in conversation about administrative matters. This experience was extremely useful for gaining insight into the administrative activity of a district. In the belief that these conversations about administrative activity and a description of the routine administrative matters handled will be of interest to students of Vietnamese administration, the following account is offered. It is incomplete and impressionistic and should be viewed simply as a sample of the tasks and problems of the district chief.
The district chief was available to the research team a good part of each day from Monday to Thursday during the week of April 4, 1960. Late on Thursday night, he departed with a military unit for operation against the Viet Cong reportedly active in a jungle area nearby.

B. Monday Afternoon, April 4, 1960

When Mr. Nhan arrived at the office of the district chief at 2:45 PM, Captain Huynh was studying secret dossiers regarding the activities of the Viet Minh which had come from the Ministry of Interior through the chief of province. From time to time during the conversation between Mr. Nhan and Captain Huynh, section chiefs would arrive with papers for signature and inspection. A review of some of the papers which the chief inspected and signed follows.

Captain Huynh put his signature on a circular destined for three of his villages. The circular contained an order from the province for young men to be selected for training as members of the village council and as hamlet chiefs. Next, Captain Huynh examined a receipt from a village which showed that delinquent taxes owed by certain businessmen in the villages had been paid. Earlier, a request from the provincial tax service had passed through the district, asking for action in collection of taxes from these businessmen. The district would now return the receipt from the village to the province level and the cycle would be completed. The chief then signed several papers which showed that notification of criminal judgments had been transmitted to the appropriate judges. Among these papers was notification to a village woman that she had been fined 800 piasters for her part in a quarrel. The judgment would be sent to the village council to be delivered to the woman. Following the delivery
During the processing of these papers Captain Huynh commented that he lost much time dealing with unimportant papers like these, and was asking for permission to have his section chief sign for him. Captain Huynh interrupted the conversation to meet outside of his office, in private, a visitor who was a specialist in the recruitment of civil guard troops. The chief returned to his office to withdraw money from his desk in order to give his visitor an advance to pay the twenty recruits who had been gathered for service in the security forces. A telegram was brought in from the province ordering the district chief to send a representative immediately to receive instructions regarding a new training program. The district chief instructed one of his assistants to take the district jeep and drive immediately to the province. For the rest of the afternoon Captain Huynh discussed district administrative problems with Mr. Nhan. These discussions will be treated in the final section of this paper.

0. Tuesday, April 5

Tuesday, April 5th, was a national holiday, Than-Minh, to commemorate the dead. Orders had been issued from Saigon that this holiday would be given a political orientation, using religious gatherings to promote patriotism for the national government and denunciation of the Viet Minh. The province chief transmitted orders to the district chief to organize village celebrations commemorating the dead, especially those who fell as a result of Viet Minh attacks. The order from the province headquarters had been received only a few days earlier, and the district chief explained that he did not have time to make properly solemn
arrangements for the religious ceremonies, such as children's choirs. The district chief had ordered the village chief of My Thuan to work with the district chief of information to prepare a memorial service for the four neighboring villages of the district. The ceremony was held at the village temple, the Dinh. There was, in addition, a service commemorating the dead at the Hoa Hao cemetery in the village.

Mr. Huynh, outfitted trimly in his dress military uniform, attended both of these ceremonies. The canton chief, too, sat at the table of honor in the Dinh. Also at the table of honor was a civil guard lieutenant, a former colonel in the Hoa Hao army, now an influential member of the community. The district chief pointed out that he and the canton chief were Catholic and that their attendance at the Hoa Hao religious ceremony was a matter of official presence.

The district chief spent the afternoon in his office, joined by Mr. Nhah, processing administrative papers. The following account will describe a sample of the papers with which he dealt. The chief recorded in a notebook that he was transmitting a message to a villager to appear before a neighboring district chief. This communication had come directly from the neighboring district and had not passed through province Headquarters, the usual channel. Next, the chief handled a letter from the province, inviting a delegation of certain women from Thanh Loi village to attend a speech on April 11. The speech would be given by a lady civil servant on the subject, "The Goals of the Service for the Amelioration of Family Life." Explaining why these particular women were selected from the village of Thanh Loi, the district chief pointed out that they were probably former agents (Can-Bo) of the wife of the Hao Hao chief Nam Lan. It was thought useful by higher authorities to
involve these ladies in governmental projects. Next he dealt with an official letter from a NACO (National Agricultural Credit Organization) representative in the district requesting the chief to investigate the retention by a village chief of 4,000 piasters purportedly belonging to NACO. Captain Huynh noted on the margin of this letter that the village chief should be brought before him with the 4,000 piasters. Captain Huynh explained that though this might appear to be a criminal offense, he knew that the village chief had spent the money for public use. The village chief had needed the cash and could not sell the public stock of rice because of the government price policy. The government had fixed the price of rice at forty piasters per gia in order to prevent Chinese merchants from profiteering. It was their practice, it appears, to buy rice at the period when it was cheap and sell it later in the year at a higher price. Now that the free market rate for rice was only thirty-seven piasters, it was impossible for the village chief to get rid of the rice and raise the money he needed for village expenditures.

The district chief next examined a report which showed the quantity of medical supplies in one of the villages. Eight other such reports would be collected dealing with the same subject and forwarded to the medical service of the province level. A special messenger then came requesting the chief's signature on a proces verbal dealing with fraud on an agricultural reform matter. Questions of fraud in agrarian reform arose frequently. To investigate charges of fraud in each district a commission was established composed of the district chief as president, a representative of the agrarian reform ministry of the province, a village chief, two members of the village council, one representative of the landowner, and one representative of the tenant. The chief signed
the process verbal, which he had no time to read, but pointed out he had confidence in the document since it had been prepared by the chief of the Provincial Agrarian Reform office.

The district chief then put his signature on a document listing the salaries of the members of the village council. The list of salaries of council members follows:

**Binh Thoi Village:**
- Village chief: 1,300 piasters monthly
- Councillor for security and finance: 1,200 piasters monthly
- Political Councillor: 500 piasters monthly
- Youth Commissioner: 200 piasters monthly
- Information Commissioner: 200 piasters monthly

**Tan Hoa Binh Village:**
- Village chief: 1,500 piasters
- Finance Councillor: 1,400 piasters
- Police Councillor: 350 piasters
- Information Commissioner: 250 piasters
- Youth Commissioner: 200 piasters

The differences in these salaries were explained by the fact that the richer villages could offer more money to their officials than the poorer ones.

The district chief next read a letter from a woman in Saigon asking for the arrest of her servant, a young girl now living in a village of Binh Minh district, who had committed a theft in her house, she charged. This woman had filed a complaint with the Saigon police who suggested it would take too long to follow the case through normal channels and suggested that she contact the district chief directly. The chief explained
that he could not procure his personal court authority and he sent the letter to the village police councillor with instructions to investigate the matter and report.

Captain Huynh now signed an authorization for Mr. Quang, his principal section chief, to be absent in Saigon for a week to take a civil service examination which would permit him to rise into the civil service cadre. A guard then came into the office to ask Captain Huynh to sign a paper showing he was reporting back from leave. Next, the district chief signed a receipt from the Vinh Long court showing that a reimbursement of twelve piasters would be made to a village woman for an excess fine she had paid. This woman would be obliged to go to the Vinh Long post office, thirty kilometers from her village, to receive her twelve piasters.

The district chief then examined the report of the police councillor of Bong Thanh village giving an account of the death of a village guard from a neighboring province who was assassinated by the Viet Cong. A police investigation was made and a death certificate was drawn up to be sent to the victim's village. Along with this report from the village was a table showing the number of casualties from communist attacks, with the most recent casualty added to the list. Captain Huynh described the area in which the guard was assassinated as a swampy area strongly infiltrated by the Viet Cong. The Captain had already participated in operations in this area attempting to flush out the guerrillas.

The district chief next signed a service order providing for a multiple personnel transfer. The chief of the district youth movement was transferred by central headquarters and the assistant to the district civil guard chief was promoted to the youth position. A member of the
A civil guard was appointed to fill the vacancy of the assistant to the civil guard chief. At this point, Mr. Quang, the section chief, entered the chief's office to discuss a problem which required a decision. A communication had arrived from one of the villages reporting that land expropriated under the agrarian reform program had not been accepted by the peasants to whom it had been attributed. The land comprised ten hectares and would cost 5,000 piasters per hectare, to be paid out over a period of six years. Mr. Quang reminded the district chief that as president of the agrarian reform committee of the district a decision was required of him. The alternative solutions were discussed: (1) the situation could be reported to the agrarian reform ministry in Saigon and the decision left to them, with perhaps the suggestion that the land might be sold to other purchasers; (2) the district chief might order the village authorities to purchase it and maintain it as public rice land. Mr. Quang pointed out that the peasants might have received threats from the Viet Cong and were thought reluctant to make the purchase. The fact that the land was far from the village headquarters and under serious danger from the Viet Cong might make the village officials equally reluctant to purchase this land. Captain Huynh finally instructed his assistant to write to the agrarian reform ministry in Saigon with the suggestion that this land be sold to other purchasers, if possible. He added that if no other purchasers were found he might try to work out a method for the purchase of this land by the village.

Next, the chief read a letter coming from a village requesting information regarding a dispute over fishing rights in a village. A notation by one of the section chiefs was on the letter stating that an official circular describing fishing regulations was being sent to the
village under separate cover. The district chief added his initials of approval on this notation.

The district chief next reviewed a letter which was prepared in his headquarters to inform his nine villages that young men must be selected for training programs at the province headquarters. This program would train youths for future service as members of the village councils and as hamlet chiefs. Instructions about the program had arrived the previous day through the messenger who had been summoned by the province chief. The letter for the villages, to be signed by the district chief, had already been stamped "Very Urgent" (Hoa Toc). The chief commented wryly that this classification would not speed up the communication, but it might impress the village authorities. He added that Vietnamese administration has a tendency to overclassify its documents, using the terms "urgent" and "very urgent" too frequently. He added that during the Korean war, the Americans had used these terms only twice: once to order the attack and the second time to order the retreat.

The district chief next signed a payroll authorization for the civil guard. Normally the payroll is drawn up at the beginning of each month to be distributed at the end of the month. After payment, the payroll is sent back to the chief of the provincial civil guard. During this pay period, however, one of the members of the civil guard was absent without leave. For this reason, the chief of the civil guard of the district had requested the district chief to sign the authorization which would return 300 piasters not utilized for payment of the AWOL soldier to the province. The district chief next dealt with the request from a villager asking a furlough for a son taking military training at Quang-Trung. The villager had promised the village chief that he would be responsible
for the return of his son to the military post. Acknowledging that the village chief had approved the request, the district chief added his countersignature.

The district chief next signed an authorization to issue duplicate identification cards to a number of villagers who had lost theirs. He then handled several communications from the provincial court regarding inhabitants of his district. He signed a communication to the treasurer of the city of Can Tho reporting that a man the treasurer wished to contact in his district was not there. Next, he signed a transmission certificate for a document destined for one of the villages in which four tax rolls were listed. These tax rolls, previously approved by the provincial taxation service, showed these four categories: (1) rice fields and gardens; (2) boats; (3) houses; (4) animals. The district chief then examined a communication from a village which requested that Vietnamese of Cambodian origin be given permission to celebrate the Cambodian New Year for five days. The chief signed the letter, which had been prepared for him, granting his permission for the five day celebration, but admonishing the Cambodians that gambling was forbidden.

D. Wednesday, April 6

On Wednesday morning, Captain Huynh accompanied the members of the research team to the agroville under construction at Tan Luoc. Since the completion of the agroville held a high priority among his administrative duties, Captain Huynh spent a good deal of time at the agroville and in administrative activities concerned with agroville construction. A full account of the agroville project is found in another report.
In the afternoon, Captain Huynh was in his office handling routine administrative papers. Mr. Nhan had the opportunity to peruse them with the captain and a sample of the documents he processed follows. The chief signed a registry from a local rice mill which showed the name of the peasant and the amount of rice he processed at the mill. The chief remarked that his signature on the report was a monthly formality, but he was not confident of its accuracy. He intended to pay a visit to the rice mill when he had time. Next, the chief read a notice from the National Institute of Administration which stated that a number of NIA courses were printed and available for sale.

An adjutant of the civil guard, also acting as the chief of its intelligence service, came to discuss with the chief of district the site for a youth meeting the following morning. The youth groups of the four closest villages were being assembled to denounce the Viet Cong, especially their recent destruction of a leprosorium at Ben Son. Three possible sites for the manifestation were discussed: (1) the court in front of the Civil Guard headquarters; (2) a football field in the village; (3) the school court of My Thuan village. The civil guard headquarters was rejected for security reasons, and the school court seemed the best alternative. The adjutant and Captain Huynh then discussed the case of the alleged Viet Cong agent who had been arrested the previous day for attempted extortion (cf. p.25). Captain Huynh made clear that he believed the prisoner was actually a member of the Viet Cong, and suggested to the adjutant measures that should be taken with the prisoner to discover the truth.

Captain Huynh next examined the letter from the My Thuan village chief reporting the visit by six Viet Cong members to the house of the