

23. For a period of nine months, between June 1956 and March 1957, the general situation at Houei Thao remained calm except for occasional exchange of fire. Instances of Laotian National Army soldiers being injured by mine explosions when collecting firewood outside the limits of their posts continued to be reported. From the latter part of March, 1957 to mid-May, 1957, there were several exchanges of fire between the Pathet Lao and the Royal Government soldiers in a variety of circumstances, such as breaches of the Sam Neua Agreement, difficulties of water parties, firewood collecting parties and retrieving of Laotian National Army supplies which had been paradropped for the garrison at Houei Thao and which fell on the Pathet Lao side. The sub-team at Houei Thao exercised close supervision and succeeded in preventing any outbreaks of serious proportions.

SITUATION AT MUONG PEUN.

24. The first incident of firing after the cease-fire agreement of 7/8 November 1955, was reported by the fixed team at Sam Neua on 19 November, 1955. This was soon followed by several others especially in the areas south and east of Muong Peun. In spite of the difficulties of investigation already mentioned, the Commission undertook to investigate the Royal Government complaints alleging Pathet Lao movement and mining at Ban Papek, Ban Nanong and attack at Ba Na Say in the area east of Muong Peun. At the same time the Pathet Lao alleged that the Royal Government had not desisted from intensifying the despatch of reinforcement and from attacking the Pathet Lao troops occupying the posts of Pakha, Kohay, Nakeng, Nanong and Nam Oun. The results of the investigation into the Royal Laotian Government complaint showed:

(a) There were general patrol activities by both sides near the areas regarding which allegations had been made e.g. Ban Nanong, Tik Nok Ngoua and Ban Na Sam.

(b) The post of Ban Na Sam was held by the Laotian National Army on 19 November, 1956.

(c) On the 25 November, the day of the investigation, the posts of Ban Papek and Ban Nanong were held by the Laotian National Army.

(d) Other points in the allegation could neither be proved nor disproved...

The investigation into the Pathet Lao complaint was not completed.

25. During November and December 1955 further allegations were made of incidents taking place in areas around Muong Peun and the situation worsened. On 5 December the Laotian National Army Commander at Muong Peun alleged to the Commission's team that three Laotian National Army posts were being attacked by about 1300 Pathet Lao troops. At the same time the Pathet Lao alleged that Laotian National Army were attacking Pathet Lao posts in this sector and that a battalion of Laotian National Army troops from Xieng Khouang was being used for this purpose. The Commission realising the gravity of the situation asked both sides for an immediate cease-fire. Investigations into the complaints and counter-complaints were ordered. As a result of this action calm was restored, though temporarily.