

now to buy curtains and a few odd things to make it "homier". There are usually around 12 to 18 people eating there, depending on what personnel is in Vientiane from the fixed teams, what visitors happen to pass through and so on. They put two tables together to form a large square to seat 12 persons which makes it cosy. If there are more we have to eat in two shifts. However, the army men never seem to mind as they like to sit around and drink and smoke, and often don't eat until 9 o'clock anyway. Usually we eat around 8:30. The Department sent out a Zenith radio for the mess.

The Officer's mess pays for subscriptions to Time, Life, Newsweek and Saturday Evening Post, secured through a store in Saigon. Books (mostly lurid paper backs) were supplied by the Canadian Legion. There is also a USIS and British Information Office through which some books can be borrowed but there is quite a dearth of general reading material. We also receive, through the Department, airmail editions of the London "Times", New York "Times" and a few other publications.

There are about 37 Canadians in Laos, divided about equally between staff in Vientiane and staff throughout Laos on fixed team sites. About 19 of the army personnel are NCO's - they act as guards, clerks, send telegrams, etc. The other army personnel graduate from one General down to a number of Captains. And there is a Canadian officer who is on loan to the General Secretariat but who eats with us most of the time. The French provide cars (2) and several jeeps all with French drivers so we are taken to and from the office. I tried walking it one morning but found it impossible in the heat. The last few days have been slightly cooler and I have walked home a couple of times around 7 in the evening.

The climate isn't quite as bad as I had feared, although the rainy season will be uncomfortable. The first few days I was here the thermometer hovered around 96 in the shade and the humidity was very high. However, the last few days it has dropped to around 85. We have fans at the office and the mess and each bedroom has a centre fan that we keep running all the time - when the electricity is on. It makes it fairly pleasant for sleeping or resting. However, provided one takes a rest for a couple of hours each afternoon the climate is quite bearable.

There are no street lights so we use a flashlight in the evenings if we go out. The water supply is very erratic. Actually although there is running water in each room, the water is brought by trucks from the Mekong River and de-

livered to the hotel by a hose from the truck (like fuel oil). The Laotians seem to have water barrels at their front door and I have seen the truck delivering water into these barrels. As there must be some 30 rooms in the Bungalow, it must make the water problem difficult. So we never know when the taps will have water in them or not. There is water around 3 in the afternoon and again at about 7:30 in the evening. There isn't any usually in the mornings. If we are in our rooms we leave the taps on so we can hear when the water comes on and then make a dash to have a shower, wash, or do laundry or just fill a pail up.

I decided for a time at least to do most of my own washing as the servants at the mess are not accustomed to doing women's things. There is a plug in my room and I find the travelling iron works beautifully. There is a large, low table in my room so I put a blanket on it and find ironing not too difficult. My room is about 12' by 20'. It has one large casement window with shutters outside. It has plastered walls (for some reason or other I had expected that), a dirty yellow, and unpainted wood floors. There is a straw rug on part of the floor and I intend to get another one, as the bare floor looks so dirty. There are two wardrobes, a bed, two straight chairs, a table, 2 bedside tables and an arm chair with leather upholstery. This chair was supplied by the French and possibly some of the other furniture also. Anyway, it is sufficient and comparatively clean. I am going to give it a good wash down the first chance I get. We sleep under mosquito nets. There are sticks about 4' high which fit onto the four corners of the bed over which is placed a canopy of coarsely woven netting. This netting is long enough to tuck in under the mattress. There is an overlap down one side and you part this to crawl into bed and tuck it under the mattress after you get in. The bed has wooden slats on it covered with a mattress some 3" thick. It sounds uncomfortable but actually isn't at all. The mattress and pillow are a bit musty so I put one of my pliofilm bags over the pillow under the pillow slip. The servant thinks that is a crazy idea - (just another foreign eccentricity) but it does keep out that musty smell. Apparently during the rainy season everything smells musty. Some people here don't use the pillows because of the musty smell but with the pliofilm bag you do not notice it at all.

So far I haven't seen too many insects, crawling animals and so on. Sometimes the mosquitoes are annoying but I spray some DDT bomb around which helps. There are some moths and little black things with hard shells. Gilles had a large cockroach in his room and also a big lizard but so far I haven't seen one. I have a little lizard but he stays most