

wood and soon for the first time I will be seeing that rich wood used as firewood.

The Laotians are said to be very honest, pleasant and incredibly lazy. They are small in stature and the women seem to do the bulk of the work. The native costume worn by the women is a wrap around sort of skirt, medium length with a deep band of glittery material at the bottom. They come in a variety of colours (the skirts I mean) and are worn with a white blouse. The women's hair-dos are rather fascinating. Most of them have long black hair which is combed back and fastened in a bun on the side of their heads.

The rigid way in which we have to live here makes it imperative that we take occasional rests for our energy quickly ebbs away. A few weekends ago I was given permission to visit one of my ex co-workers from the Department, Miss Cécile Fyen, on loan to the Commission from the Canadian Embassy, Paris. I took advantage of the French military plane at the disposal of the members of the Commission and flew to Phnom-Penh where Cécile joined me and together we went to Saigon. From there we went by car to Cap St-Jacques, the riviera of Indo-China. The drive by car gave us an opportunity to see the country-side. The sun set was like a painting of Rembrandt. The silhouettes of the palm trees on the water against a background of crimson red were quite breath taking. Cap St-Jacques is a relaxing spot and after a dip in the China sea, I felt totally rejuvenated and quite happy to return to Vientiane.

There is a job to be done in Vientiane and I brace myself up with the idea of getting it done. All of us seem to share the same troubles and to experience the same difficulty in adjusting to a strange way of life, but it has made me learn to appreciate my own country and I find myself often thinking of our multi-coloured maple leaves which I am looking forward to seeing again. However, I am glad to have had a chance to see Indo-China.

Bernadette Léger.

## LETTER FROM HANOI

Hello Everyone,

At last I seem to have some time to send you off a few lines - the stationery has come, and with it, a couple of typewriters, so now no excuse for delay.

Needless to say, it's still rather strange being in this part of the world. So many countries drifted by while I was on the way over - air travel is fun - but it does get one there much too quickly! Anyway, Frank Ballachey and I had a pleasant trip to Delhi. We arrived in Prestwick, flew down to London to do some tropical shopping - and found it was Bank Holiday! I took in a fine play the night I was there - Edith Evans in the new Fry piece - "The Dark is Light Enough". She did it beautifully, of course, and is a wonder to behold. Next morning off for Bombay via Dusseldorf, Rome, Cairo. Dusseldorf looked prosperous and thriving; Rome was wonderful from the air, and we circled about the Vatican and other places, and had great views of St. Peter's.

We had a distinguished passenger on board to Cairo - the French wife of the Agha Kahn. She was Miss France of about 1936, I think - really beautifully turned out. She was joining her husband in Jeddah to make a pilgrimage to Mecca, but I didn't think she was very keen about the whole idea. She was first one off in Cairo, greeted by great mobs of people who bowed low, and said "Good morning, your Highness". The diamonds she wore were certainly the real thing!

Then came the long haul to Bombay - most of the time we were far above cloud other times passing over parts adjacent to what I imagined were the Red Sea, or some other part of Africa - surely the most arid and barren and forsaken land in the world. Bombay airport looked familiar - I took off from there the first time I was going to Delhi. The monsoon was just breaking then, so every little while a great downpour would take place. In the evening we took the domestic flight for Delhi, and after an uneventful flight landed at Delhi's Palam Airport. All the gang were there to greet us - Jack Bryson, Cliff Hughes, Jean Dewan of the Immigration Office staff, so it was a great reunion. Next morning I checked in at the office and spent the rest of the time renewing friendships with the local staff. It was good to see them all again, and I almost wished I was staying there instead of tearing off to this unknown place. The staff produced curry dishes for me, and during the period in Delhi I feasted exclusively on native dishes once more. It was just like old times.