

OCCASIONAL LETTER to
UMN Personnel and Stations:

Dear Folks,

10020101/0012

Toward the end of the ~~bins~~ I had planned to visit the E.No.3 Project at Okhaldunga but just couldn't leave work here at that time to make it. Then Dr. Jimmy Dick suddenly showed up here in town with his knapsack and growth of road beard in November and after talking with him and realizing that I could make a 12-day round trip I hurriedly arranged to go back with him. I have just returned to Kathmandu and want to send around this report of what I saw and experienced.

The car took us in the early morning out to Ban ipa where we took to the footroad in frost at 7:30 AM. A very able Tamang employed by the E3 Project accompanied us and carried a load. It is a 40 kosh hike which we did in 5 days. I think Jimmy can do it in 4 days when he goes alone and takes his own needs-of-the-road. The first half of the trek is relatively easy and level as it follows in river bottoms. An auto road is reaching now many miles out this way into the mountains (just like the car road is reaching westward to Trisuli on the Gorkha road). We saw Jeep tracks almost up to the end of our first day's walk. These auto roads penetrating into several places of the mountains are more than on paper; they are being constructed and in a few years will be the basic framework on which genuine economic development will take place. In five or ten years we may be driving on them between our stations. The airfields in the mountains will help create the same results. They are sound good developments that should have every encouragement.

The second half of the trek was a continuous up and down over several small and large mountains, one they say is over 9000 feet, and ending on Okhaldunga ridge at about 5500 feet altitude.

At present our UMN Project here consists of a dispensary service undertaken by a staff of four: Dr. Jimmy Dick, Sister Jill Cook, medical assistants Hastaman and Meriam Rai. Of course the whole Dick family is there, now with 3 children. The workers began a year ago in rented quarters in the Okhaldunga Bazaar and later moved to two rented Rai village farm houses about 30 minutes walk outside of town. They are in these buildings now which have been somewhat altered and a couple of side buildings added for patients and etc. So you can imagine the limitations and problems under which the team so far has been living and working. This is an inevitable stage of the "game" and our folks are doing very nicely in it. There are good relations with the dozen Rai neighbor homes. The Dick children are more Nepali just now than Scottish. Patients are coming with confidence for treatment and a goodly variety of operations are being done. Sunday night we met at 6:30 for the weekly service and 20-30 people were present. Lines of communication and transportation are satisfactorily developed, mainly out south to the railhead at Jainagar. They have an Agent there who received and forwards consignments of medicines and household supplies.

The location of this E.3 Project is in general in Rai territory, with of course Brahmins, Chetries, and bazaar Newars mixed in and then also Tamangs. But the area is also right on the south edge of the Sherpa country. They reach down from the high north country through the Solung area right down close to the district seat at Okhaldunga Bazaar, where our project is located. The result is that a goodly number of Sherpa patients attend the dispensary. The 2 "Swiss" cheese factories are North and Northwest of the place, and Mr. Everest is almost due north of our location. The Red Cross Tibetan Refugee Camp is also north.

In our Project the beginning stage of surveying and feeling one's way out from temporary quarters is well over, and the situation in terms of government permission is sufficiently clear, so that the present big problem has been to make the final and basic decisions as to actual location and plan of work. So during the days of this visit we have spent long hours pooling all the facts, considerations and viewpoints at our disposal and coming to decisions. Let me define the outcome briefly as follows:

UMN will pay Rs.2500 NC for a piece of sloping hillside land, which is a mixture of rocks and millet fields, here in the Rai village. Upon the advice of the Governor we will pay for it but it will be the property of

H.M.'s Government in the land deed and will be so registered at the Revenue Office in Okhaldunga. Then the Governor will sign it over to the UMN to use for as long as we occupy it. On this land we will build a dispensary building (8 rooms), 2 deras, and three residences. The piece of land is near a stream. From the stream a water supply ~~will~~ system will pipe water to the buildings, and a small hydro-electric plant will also be built into the stream to supply some lights. Under present conditions the Plan will include three main services: (a) This dispensary offering treatment and operations; (b) itinerant health education work in the surrounding area, and (c) agricultural improvement work (which will make its own location when workers for it arrive). To carry out this program we will want to add in staff two sister-nurses (Ann Avis will be one in January) and 2-3 agriculturalists. Of course in years to come needs and opportunities may lead to enlargements but the above is the basic plan for the time being.

I came out the southern route in 4 days, hiking out across the plains to the railhead at Jainagar, then an 8 hour rail ride to Raxaul and home by plane from Simra. It was a little easier and faster to go out this way rather than back overland. One last word. On the opposite and east side of Okhaldunga ridge, about 2 hours walk away, is a remarkable, elevated plateau, very much like an airplane carrier ship. It is a mountain rising among the others which has been sliced off flat at about 4000 feet. On a portion of it they have finished about 3/5th of a new airfield which will accommodate the DC-3 planes in the spring, as the report goes. The Governor is working hard at it. What a blessing this will be to a very wide area.

God has given us to live in very alive days here in Nepal. Very much is going on. God has given us a very clearly defined calling to work in all our projects. There is more work for each of us than we can possibly get done. So let's keep on hitting it hard right down the line. "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies." Our E.3 folks ask for our prayers especially in these formative days and now as they take steps to permanently settle into this village.

As ever,

Jonathan Lindell

P.S. May I remind you that radios (as well as bicycles and cars) are required to be registered with your local government and a license obtained, and this renewed each year, or you are in for trouble and a fine. This means anywhere in Nepal and any kind of radio.