

WR March 15, 1970

DEAR GRANDPA, all good, at 90 pulling forward  
you are more than right. Reason show a team

I HAVE just completed six months at the  
Agricultural Station. A total of nine months in Peace  
Corps. We have 16 volunteers and 20 more  
coming in Sept. The new volunteers will be teaching  
math & sciences in school.

I spent the first two months working in the  
mechanic shop at Sapa. Sapa was developed in 1950  
by the British Colonial Development Corp. at a cost  
of two million pounds. England wanted to grow  
rice to meet her own demands. Three thousand acres  
were developed, a high pumping station capable of  
22,000 gallons per minute was built to irrigate  
land. Technical people, machinery, buildings were  
in. The project failed for many reasons. Too much  
was done on the draft board in England, the wrong  
variety of rice was used, etc. After the project was  
considered a failure, most of the land was returned  
to the local villages and the machinery, canals,  
buildings were left to rot away. Gambia took over  
and developed it into a rice agricultural station.  
mission from China came three years ago to help develop  
rice projects. They have been very successful. The  
farmer was lucky to get 600 lbs of rice per acre.  
By use of Chinese methods, introducing fertilizer, the

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Chinese are getting up to 7,000 lbs of rice per acre, almost a world record. These men are very dedicated to their work. Probably one of the main reasons of success is that these people come from a country that has only recently been able to scientifically modify its own traditional farming practices and is in a better position to understand the problems being confronted in Gambia. The Britains and Americans have trouble understanding that all countries have <sup>not</sup> gone through an industrial revolution. Many think that if it is good for us, it is good for them. People can not understand the values of another country may be very different their own. As I look right and left, I see America and Britain pouring in huge sums of money into these small undeveloped countries and it is all going to waste. People don't bother to see if these programs will meet the needs of the people. For example, U.S.A. gave Gambia five large Dodge trucks. The trucks are not suited to the rough roads and the mechanics were not familiar with the American engine. The result was that in a few months the trucks were broken down and parts had to be ordered. It takes up to a year to get parts from America. Gambia can not really afford these expensive parts. More harm than good is done in the end. Where I see the harm, Britain and U.S.A. done is a loss to all of us.

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The goal of Sapa is to develop rice as the second cash crop of Gambia. Peanuts is their only cash crop now. To help the farmer, the government has developed a tractor plowing team to encourage the farmer to develop more acres of rice. The farmer pays half the cost and the government pays the rest. A lot of problems have developed so a request was made for help. As I mentioned before, I spent two months in the work shop trying to help the Gambians rebuild many of the 29 tractors here. I saw many areas that needed improvement and the Gambians were anxious to improve themselves. The mechanical superintendent - a British - said no. For the next two months he put a stop to all programs I tried to develop to upgrade the standards in the work shop. He felt that the Black man was inferior to the white man and should be treated as such. His feeling was that the Gambians were not capable of technical learning and should be kept at the lowest education level as possible. I find this attitude quite often among British in overseas programs. I was transferred to the tractor plowing team directed by another British person. His attitudes were much easier to work under.

The problems here were different. When the team first developed - the plow and tractor were very simple and did not take much knowledge to operate. Machinery has become very complicated

And it takes a great deal of education to understand the theory of the machine and know how to work it properly. In U.S.A. people go back to school every year to catch up on the latest advancements. The men here have never gone to school. My first job was repair most of equipment and bring it up to date. At the same time I was trying to teach the men to do it themselves. The men were quite happy in their methods and were not willing to change, especially if they saw the new method would require more work. I am dealing with a foreign language so this makes the task harder. I only have a short period to work in and I can not wait 10 years for a gradual change. Under the present policy it is impossible to dismiss permanent government staff members. Understanding this, I hired six young boys with an education and the ability to reason. They had no background in machinery. I am teaching them to service a tractor and plow and keep it in good running order. It worked beyond my wildest dreams. This meant a lot to me to show British that the Black man is just as capable of learning as a white man. The success has given me a green light to develop other programs. The object is develop a better tractor plowing to plow more acres at a lower cost.

Many new problems have resulted from my new program. I am the youngest person on the team and people resent this. Also the older people resent

The young people I am bringing in. It is human nature, the threat of younger people coming in with a better education. So Peace Corps is not a program where a technical person comes to an area and the people will greet him with open arms and be eager to learn and accept what to have to teach them. By the time I am beginning to understand the culture of the people here, begin to feel my way around, my two years are up. The most I can hope for is some small changes that might encourage the Gambians to ask for more help and continue improving.

The raining season stopped in Oct. and it was cool for two months. The trading season started in Dec. and the country became alive. Peanuts are transported down river or by truck to Bathurst, the big city and capitol of this country. It is made into oil and sent to Britain.

Gambia is very beautiful in terms of the people. Their values are not material items, but people themselves. There is little money so they are forced to depend on each other. It is like going back in history. It bothers me to see countries barging in and trying to develop systems that they think is best for the country. Why not leave them alone? They are happy - and I can not say that much for U.S.A.

When I pick up a newspaper and see the problems

That America is being confronted with, I wonder, is this what man wants? Murder, RAPE, violence, war, pollution what are we leaving for our future generations? This is why I want to spend my life - not running away from the situation, but trying to do something about it. It is frustrating and sometimes I wonder if it is worth it. Why not settle in some peaceful village and live in peace. I guess I got some of the Eaton blood in me.

I hope this will give you some idea of what I am doing. It is difficult to put down on paper a situation that most people will have trouble understanding.

I hope to see you when I return in late 71.

Affectionately

C. H.

Please note correct address

... for the country ... they are happy ... U.S. ... part of a newspaper ...