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Yuvachon Movement

Bangkok, April 27, 1940.

No. 677

Subject: Youth Movement in Thailand.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to enclose herewith a clipping from the Bangkok Times of March 14, 1940, reporting a speech made to the Bangkok Rotary Club by Lt. Colonel Prayoon Bhamaramontri, Minister of State, and head of the Department of Yuvajon or youth movement, of the Ministry of Defence.

The Legation has, from time to time during the past few years, referred to the Youth Movement in the Monthly Political Reports. The movement as sponsored by the Government seems to be in aim, at least, a sort of mixture of our own Boy Scouts, C C C and Y. M. C. A. The address of the Minister is interesting as showing the views of the Government towards the training of youth in this country.

Respectfully yours,

Enclosure:
1. Clipping from Bangkok Times, March 14, 1940.

Erwin L. Neville,
American Minister.

file
Jpm

THAILAND'S AIM.

Thailand aimed for the preservation of peace and desired to remain on friendly terms with all Nations, as well as to preserve her sovereignty in any event of war. It was not enough for a country to declare her neutrality only, but she must also be prepared to fulfil her duties and defend her rights in order to justify her neutrality in every respect.

Thailand has adopted a [illegible] régime which [illegible] in Real [illegible] only when [illegible] know how to [illegible] regime [illegible] effect to the Con-

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...e no. 1 to despatch no. 677 from the American Legation, Bangkok, ...l, on the subject: "Youth Movement in Thailand".

YOUTH MOVEMENT.

ITS PROGRESS IN THAILAND.

MAR 14 1940

H. E. Lieut.-Colonel Prayoon Bhamaramontri, Minister of State, and Director-General of the "Yuvajon" Department, was the speaker at the weekly meeting of the Bangkok Rotary Club which was held at the Trocadero Hotel to-day. Mr. F. R. Dolbeare, the Chairman, presided over a large attendance. Among the guests was Mr. Takashi Komatsu, of the Tokyo Rotary Club, who brought the greetings of his Club to Bangkok and also presented to the local Club the flag of his club.

Lieut.-Colonel Prayoon's subject was "The Youth Organisation in Thailand." He said *inter-alia*:

The Youth Organisation in Thailand started with the Boy Scouts movement, which was founded by His late Majesty King Vajiravudh. This movement, which is now under the Physical Education Department, is also a member of the International League of Boy Scouts. Another movement, known as "Yuvajon," was created in B. E. 2478 by H. E. Major-General Luang Pibulasonggram, the present Premier and Minister of Defence, and placed under the direction of the Yuvajon Department. The Yuvajon organisation was an institution for pre-military education and was divided into three categories. First, the ordinary Yuvajon corps, with a three-year course of training for scholars from upper Matayom classes; secondly, the reserved Non-Commissioned training corps, with a two-year training course for those coming from the pre-University Schools and other higher institutions; lastly, the Reserved Officers training corps, recruited from the ranks of under-graduates in Chulalongkorn University, who had to attend a four-year course of training.

THE "YUVANARI."

Besides, there was a movement for girls, known as "Yuvanari" units, in which girls from the Nursing Schools and from Chulalongkorn University were enlisted for two years of training. The total number of the Boy Scouts and "Yuvajon" was about 80,000 at present.

The aim of the organisation was to give to the young intellectual class a pre-military training, so as to fit them for military service and to provide reserved officers from both categories for the Army.

In general, national defence should be based upon three main factors, namely: armed force, economic potentiality and moral strength. The last-named was considered to be the most important. The present war had shown that it was not with the quantity of the fighting men, but with the quality of their moral strength, that a small nation could resist a much bigger one.

THAILAND'S AIM.

Thailand aimed for the preservation of peace and desired to remain on friendly terms with all Nations, as well as to preserve her neutrality in any event of war. It was not enough for a neutral country to declare her neutrality only, but she must also be prepared to fulfil her duties and defend her rights in order to justify her neutrality in every respect.

Moreover, Thailand had adopted a Constitutional régime which the Nation had still to be educated in. Real democracy could be realised only when the coming generations knew how to exercise properly their rights and duties. In giving effect to the Constitution several questions had to be taken into careful consideration including the question of minorities. Thus, moral education served as a foundation of real democracy in Thailand, to which the youth organisation contributed the most important part.

"In summing up, I wish to state that our youth organisation is by no means a political institution or any kind of militarism, but is a purely national and military organisation, just for the defence of the country and for the training of good citizenship.

"It is the wish of us all that this war will soon be over, resulting in better co-operation and understanding between all the nations.

"I can assure you that we Thai are ready and willing to co-operate with all the nations to inspire the rising generations with a healthier and more constructive spirit, so that world peace and security may be restored for the good of humanity and civilisation." (Applause).

Mr. F. R. Dolbeare proposed a vote of thanks which was carried in the usual way.