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OFFICE MEMORANDUM ON VISIT TO SEOUL, KOREA

Office of the Vice President, Academic Administration

October 1, 1956

This is a statement for the file and the record covering the visit of Mr. Middlebrook and me to Seoul National University in connection with the cooperative ICA contract involving the University of Minnesota and Seoul National University.

Mr. Middlebrook and I reached Seoul on Monday, August 6 and left on Friday, August 10. During those five days there was an intensive program, worked out by Dr. Arthur E. Schneider, the University's Chief Adviser in Korea, which enabled us to meet various individuals as well as to see the university's physical plant both in Seoul and in Suwon. A copy of the program is attached as Supplement I.

Our visit in Korea was well timed since it permitted us to confer with the new OEC Coordinator, Mr. William Warne, who had arrived only two weeks earlier and who succeeded Mr. Tyler Wood. We had the opportunity to talk with Mr. Warne shortly after our arrival and with his assistant, Mr. Grant Whitman. In this conference Mr. Middlebrook made the point that the University of Minnesota is not pushing for a contract renewal: "The University is not trying to sell anything in Korea, nor is that the purpose of our visit," Mr. Middlebrook said. But it was stressed that if there is a desire in Korea shared by the University, by the Minister of Education, and by OEC for a renewal of the contract, the University is desirous, willing, and ready to assume the responsibilities that renewal entails. We pointed out that with our own increase in enrollment, we have serious problems to face at home and are not looking for additional problems. At the same time, we are conscious of the importance and significance of such projects as ours in Korea and would not want to shirk the responsibilities they involve.

The point was made that in the original formulation of our project, we had no experience on which to go, but that during the two years we had achieved experience. Some of our original assumptions had to be modified. I outlined how we had believed originally that the Korean staff members would come to the University of Minnesota and be integrated in graduate classes just as though they were regularly enrolled students in the Graduate School. Experience had shown that this assumption was not sound and that if we were to accomplish the purposes in mind, it was necessary to work out much more highly individualized programs for the staff members. This necessitated the expenditure of a good deal more time and individual attention than had first been contemplated. All of this was in the context of the need for a maximum of flexibility in the administration of the program.

We pointed out that administratively we at the University were at a middle point between Washington and Korea and that we have felt somewhat hampered in our desire to do the kind of job we believe must be done by the fact that in Washington there was not always a full understanding of some of the perplexities involved in a desire to systematize operations. We made the point that we cannot achieve our purposes with rigid standardization.

Mr. Warne pointed out that he had been in Korea only two weeks, but in his talks with university and government officials, he had found that they wanted the program continued.

We made the point that if the contract is renewed, the renewal should be soon in order that there is no break in operation. This point is especially important in relation to procurement. At this point Mr. Warne asked Dr. Schneider, who accompanied us, for a summary memorandum to give him further background on the project. Dr. Schneider agreed to prepare this.

Mr. Warne indicated that he wishes to visit the University of Minnesota on his return to the United States so that he may have first-hand contact with the University itself.

We discussed the problem of language, and in this context the importance of early renewal was stressed. For if the contract is to be extended, it will give opportunity for better planning and preparation of those who are to go from Seoul to Minnesota. Dr. Schneider stated that he hoped the contract could be renewed early this fall for two years, thus facilitating the planning and preparation of the SNU staff members who are going to Minnesota. Mr. Warne asked Dr. Schneider "to give prompt thought to the matter of renewal."

In his conversation Mr. Warne stressed the importance of educational projects and he seemed to be very sincere in his observations concerning their significance.

In our subsequent conversations together, Mr. Middlebrook made the point that in any final negotiations relating to the renewal contract or amendments to it, Dr. Schneider "should be in on the negotiations."

In subsequent conversations, Mr. Middlebrook brought up the point that Seoul National University might well begin thinking about its own auxiliary services and their further development. He pointed out that while the University of Minnesota is now in Korea, eventually Seoul National University will be operating on its own, and a pattern of good operation not only in the three fields of immediate concern but in broader university context, including auxiliary enterprises, could be set now. The University of Minnesota, Mr. Middlebrook indicated, wants to leave its mark on the development of Seoul National University and this is one way of doing it.

In the conferences it developed that the language problem might be more helpfully met by having some member of the University of Minnesota staff

go to Korea and give basic language instruction over a period of nine months of the year, preparatory to a staff member's coming to Minnesota. These staff members are now given three months instruction, but most of them are so busy and have so many commitments that their attendance at the language courses is not good. We concluded that more systematic language instruction, immediately under the direction of the University of Minnesota staff member, might well be made a requirement in connection with the selection process. It was our belief that such instruction could be part of our contract and covered in the same way that the special instruction in physiology was covered.

Dr. Schneider made the point that in our fall language instruction program at Minnesota, the Korean staff members should be grouped if possible to recognize the degree of competence in English that each man has. He believed a minimum of two groups was essential and that three groups would be better.

The present contract could be extended for two years on available funds and it was our judgment and that of Dr. Schneider that renewal for two years without asking for supplementary money was desirable. Dr. Schneider indicated that if contract negotiations made it desirable, he could conveniently come to the University in December. A target date for a signed renewal should be as early as possible and certainly by July 1, 1957.

My notes at this point contain a few miscellaneous items. Mr. Middlebrook and I were impressed with the keen interest of the staff members with whom we talked in American publications. It is our thought that we might send Dr. Schneider a complete list of University of Minnesota Press Books still in print, with the thought that he, consulting with some of the staff members, might make a selection that could be added to the library. The cost to the

University of Minnesota would be relatively slight and it would be an enormously happy good will gesture.

Mr. Middlebrook repeatedly stressed the desirability of thinking in terms of a total campus plan at Seoul National University which would look to the future. He and I are both in agreement that rehabilitation should have precedence over any new construction.

There is a systematic practice in Seoul National University, and we gather in Korea generally, of down-grading students in their examinations. This has bearing upon the records submitted by students who are seeking admission elsewhere, particularly at the graduate level. We are told that the entrance examination to the graduate school at Seoul National University is a real academic hurdle and that high standards are imposed. Accordingly admission to the Graduate School at Seoul National University is probably better evidence of achievement in potentiality than the actual graduate records that a student might submit.

Mr. Middlebrook wondered if it would be possible for the University of Minnesota to get war surplus material for use at Seoul National University. He will check into this upon return.

There were a number of discussions concerning the installation and handling of equipment that is now beginning to arrive. There has been some thought that it probably would be desirable to have one person in the field of medicine, in engineering, and in agriculture go to Seoul to assume responsibility for advising and helping in installation. As we looked at the situation more in detail, Mr. Middlebrook and I became convinced that there would be many advantages in having one person sent to Korea to supervise all installations, provided such a person had broad background. Les Wood's name came to mind as an ideal person to undertake such an assignment.

Moreover he would be in position, at least informally, to give much needed assistance in problems pertaining to rehabilitation and plant operation. It seemed to us that such help is needed and that a person like Les Wood could make a real supplementary contribution in this area.

In our conferences, many of them informal, with President Yun and his associates, various points were raised. Seoul National University is an expanding university and undoubtedly will continue to grow. Mr. Middlebrook pointed out the implications of this in connection with long-term land acquisition policy and suggested that it might be well to begin now to study and plan in connection with land acquisition. Sooner or later the problem of expanding enrollment will have to be faced, and it may not be too early now to have preliminary discussions concerning the limitation of enrollment. There appears to be a tendency for each of the colleges to be pretty much self-contained in its instructional program. We raised the question of whether it would be desirable to have one college serve the students of another, and how such inter-college services might be achieved. We pointed out that at Minnesota such inter-college relationships tend to have a unifying influence as regards the University as a whole. Mr. Middlebrook raised the question of how economies in operation might be achieved through administration and thus introduced the whole problem of operating costs.

On August 9 we met with Minister Choi and at this conference Minister Kim, reconstruction, came in briefly. Dr. Choi made five points:

1. It would be desirable for the University of Minnesota staff assigned to Korea to stay in that country longer--at least for one full semester. He believes strongly that our staff should do some demonstration teaching, perhaps four or five hours a week (the full local load is a minimum of 10 hours). He believes this demonstration teaching will be especially important as new

equipment begins to arrive and there will be need for integrating it into the instructional process.

2. When equipment begins to arrive, there will be a need for mechanics to help Seoul National University install the equipment and demonstrate its use. In this connection Dr. Schneider pointed out that not only are installation and demonstration important, but the problem of maintenance and repair. Dr. Choi thought that one person in medicine and one in engineering would be a minimum requirement.

3. He and Minister Kim have agreed that the contract should be renewed for two more years, through 1959, without additional funds.

4. There is a great need for more assistance in the Liberal Arts College by way of equipping the basic science laboratories, particularly those in Physics. Dr. Choi believes that under our present contract such help for the Liberal Arts College is not possible, but if students are to have the good foundations necessary for further work in engineering and medicine particularly, they need good laboratory training in the sciences in their preparatory years.

5. Dr. Choi raised the problem of housing for visiting staff and acknowledged that it was a serious problem. He said he is contemplating the use of certain housing on the campus which could perhaps be adapted within a year for staff use. (Dr. Schneider subsequently pointed out that relationships to OIC and the general policy of housing in Korea are involved and that accordingly Dr. Choi's suggestion may not be entirely feasible or desirable.)

Dr. Choi heartily approved the suggestion we introduced that a Minnesota staff person in English come to Korea for a year to give English preparation, and that taking this preparation should be a requirement for any staff member who may be going to the United States.

Dr. Choi also thought there would be great help to Seoul National University if the director of the central library could be sent to Minnesota.

A memorandum covering this meeting with the Minister of Education was prepared by Dr. Wood and is attached as Supplement II.

Mr. Middlebrook, Dr. Schneider and I also met on August 9 with Dr. Chester Wood and five other OEC representatives. Dr. Wood reviewed the project and stressed the desirability of extension of the present contract with amendments, including public administration, for which funds are available, rather than attempting to draw a completely new contract. Mr. Middlebrook and I underscored the point that the work in public administration should not be as a special contract, but should be covered by an amendment to the present contract.

We discussed the housing problem, which is an important negative factor in recruiting our staff to go to Korea. There was some indication that housing might within a year become available.

One of the OEC staff members suggested that possibly Dr. Schneider needed an assistant. We countered by pointing out that our planning involved three long-term staff members, each to head the three areas in which we are operating, who would serve as deputies for Dr. Schneider. We believe this would be a better administrative arrangement than an attempt to have a single deputy or assistant to Dr. Schneider.

There seemed to be general OEC willingness, led by Dr. Wood, to recommend renewal of the present contract with such amendments as are mutually agreeable.

A memorandum covering the conference with OEC staff members was prepared by Dr. Wood and is attached as Supplement III:

In conferences with President Yun, it was brought out that it is well to have a Minnesota staff member stay at least a term or semester, with arrival if possible one month in advance of the beginning of the term.

A few miscellaneous points come to mind. Mr. Middlebrook, Dr. Schneider and I agree completely that it would be highly desirable on administrative and psychological grounds to hold Minnesota activity in Korea to Seoul National University. We so advised Dr. Chester Wood and he agrees. The point was raised by the possibility of having a program in business administration to be carried out at another institution.

Mr. Middlebrook raised the question of whether the best results, in the long run, for the agricultural development of Korea would not come through a consolidation in one unit of agriculture and agricultural experiment activity. Administratively and institutionally these are non-separables. If actual administrative unification cannot be achieved, it might be desirable to press for more and more interchange of staff and cooperative activities.

At a dinner given by OEC, Mr. Warne definitely committed himself to a renewal of the project.

In a final round-up meeting with Dr. Schneider, Mr. Middlebrook and I discussed a number of points which we immediately reduced to a memorandum. These relate to procedures that we believe should be followed, and likewise raise some additional points that we shall wish to discuss together with Dr. Tyler for clarification. This memorandum reads as follows: