

TO : Staff

FROM : Refugee Affairs

SUBJ.: Report of Division Chiefs Meeting, September 24, 1954.

Bulletin N° 13

The regular Friday morning Division Chiefs meeting will each week be devoted to the discussion of refugee plans and problems incident to their implementation.

Attendants : Lavergne, Chairman, and Messrs. de Paul, Peterson, Falk, Adams, Safford, Reiner, Cardinaux, Schwartz, Counts and Holiday, Mrs. Spence.

#### FIELD TRIP

Mr. Falk asked that Division Chiefs indicate the names of representatives who would participate in a field trip planned by officials of Central Vietnam and for which an invitation has been extended to Mission technicians through Mr. Dymsha, Acting STEM Representative at Hue. The trip is scheduled for September 28th and will probably take two or three days as transportation in the area is difficult since the territory to be visited is newly liberated and has been held for a long time by the Vietminh. The following individuals were named by their representative division chiefs as participants : Adams, Merrick, Pascal and Kupka. Agriculture and Public Works will designate representatives later.

#### FUNDING

Mr. Lavergne reported that there were constant rumors that refugees in various reception areas were not receiving money intended for them. He reported that he had asked Mr. Falk to arrange a meeting with representatives of Mr. Doi's office, Mr. Chieu, someone from the Ministry of Finance and Treasury and a representative from the Mission Controller's office to see if there might be some way of adjusting administrative devices within the government which may be causing delays in funds reaching the intended recipients.

Mr. Falk pointed out that it was his impression that Mr. Doi had a large "Caisse de regie" which may or may not be sufficient for the problem at hand although it is considerably larger than that usually provided other Ministries. Mr. Falk reported that a meeting was being arranged by Mr. Chieu and will be held on Monday morning.

Mr. de Paul then made a report of the present Vietnam financial situation. He said that there was no actual shortage of cash on hand at the moment since an advance of some ~~500,000~~ <sup>400,000,000</sup> piasters had been made to the Government by the Institut d'Emission. There is a question, however, of anticipating the needs of the next several months. He pointed out that basically it appears that Vietnam will have an income of about 4 billion piasters over a given period, during which period estimates indicate that the ordinary expenditures of the government will be 2 1/2 billion, for refugees about 1.3 billion, for economic development 1 1/2 billion, and the military budget at the moment is unknown.

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It appears that this is relatively unimportant at the moment for the purpose of this discussion since it can readily be seen that in order to finance the refugee program additional funds must be provided. Washington has indicated its approval of providing funds requested by the Mission for the refugee effort. This is conditioned upon working out the needs and use of these funds. Since this is tied in with the entire financial picture, it will take a little time to arrive at the exact details. Suffice it to say that we have assurance that both the piaster and dollar funds necessary to aid Vietnam in a reasonable plan for rehabilitation of refugees seems to be assured.

INSPECTION TRIP TO BIEN-HOA

Mr. Holiday was asked to report on the trip made recently by Mission technicians in company with a number of Vietnamese officials to view the relocation areas in Bien-Hoa Province. Mr. Doi himself headed the Vietnamese delegation on this trip. Mr. Holiday reported that they had seen some 20-30,000 refugees in temporary reception centers and relocations camps on several roads leading out of Bien-Hoa. He commended the Provincial Chief and his Service representatives for having accepted as much as they have in receiving such a large number of people. He pointed out that there are still difficulties in the problem of providing water and sanitary facilities, that there were difficulties in food procurement because of the rather limited quantities of food on hand in the area and the fact that food had to be transported to the area. While people may not be suffering from lack of water at the moment, there is an urgent need for wells in the area to provide water after the rainy season ends. Most of the refugees in the area, he said, are Catholics and are beginning to build some houses under supervision of their priests who seem to have an excellent organization, working under the overall supervision of Bishop Chi. Mr. Holiday pointed out that he was surprised to find that many visitors have been rather critical of the situation in this area. Admittedly there are many problems but in the period of 4-5 weeks the Province has accepted many thousands of new people for which they could not have made advance plans, since the entire idea of refugees moving from North Vietnam to the region south of the 17th parallel did not exist prior to the Cease-fire. He pointed out that the agricultural technicians of the Mission felt that the number of the refugees in the area was greater than could be resettled and rehabilitated there due to the production limitations of the area. It must be considered, he said, that this is a relocation area designed to move people out of Saigon and into areas from which they could later be moved to permanent resettlement sites. He pointed out that no one in his division had ever assumed that the relocation areas along the road were to be considered as permanent resettlement and that with the possible exception of some of the relatively inexperienced employees in the Commissioner's Office, that they too understood that this is not a permanent resettlement effort but an effort rather to disperse people so that they could be serviced better. He indicated that his division had made available to the Commissioner's Office suggestions for proper administration of holding camps and that he had the definite impression that progress was being made and that visitors should encourage rather than offer adverse criticism.

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VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

Mr. Lavergne then asked if Mr. Holiday would report on meetings with representatives of Voluntary Agencies. Mr. Holiday briefly reviewed the arrangement under which Voluntary Agencies cooperated with FOA/W and the agreement signed with the local government. He complimented them for their spirit of cooperation and willingness to share information and responsibilities in this great humanitarian effort. Every agency now represented in Saigon, including some of the local voluntary agencies, have attended the two meetings held for the purpose of coordinating and correlating their efforts. They can and should be encouraged to make a large contribution toward permanent resettlement of people in need of such help. He pointed out that NCWC had the largest representation here and that, while they were a Catholic organization, their services and material aid was being distributed without regard to the religious affiliations of refugees. Since the great majority of refugees are Catholics, however, they are particularly anxious to cooperate. He asked that Mr. Cardinaux assume responsibility for serving as Mission liaison officer with the Voluntary Agencies until such time as the staff has expanded and some one can be given that job as a full time responsibility. Mr. Cardinaux was then asked to review the matter of bringing in for distribution certain surplus commodities from the States.

COMMODITIES

He explained the agreement whereby Voluntary Agencies can secure such things as powdered milk, edible oils, cheese, etc., for use in assisting needy people in foreign areas. The program in the States is administered by the U.S.D.A. and transportation charges from the States to the respective country provided by FOA, while internal transportation is provided by the recipient government which permits free entry of the products. This has an especially valuable aspect in that voluntary agencies do a great deal of the distributing work and the recipients have a feeling of people to people aid rather than government aid. He pointed out that a large amount of powdered milk had been brought in and there were reports that Vietnamese did not like the milk.

Dr. Peterson indicated that they did like the milk if it could be reconstituted properly and sweetened. The Vietnamese are accustomed to dilutions of condensed milk and they like milk sweet. This greatly increases the cost of the milk, of course, however, some sugar is being used for sweetening the milk of children in a trial distribution under way.

Mr. Cardinaux pointed out that in Korea where people also did not particularly like the reconstituted powdered milk that UNICEF had introduced a plan whereby the milk was used with wheat in the preparation of a gruel which was acceptable and was used widely.

Mr. Schwartz said that he felt that there should be some clarifying of thoughts expressed regarding the surplus commodities which might be brought in for refugee aid. He pointed out that there was a wide list of surplus agricultural commodities such as wheat, milk and the like, stockpiled in the U.S. and that Congress proposed moving these under various aid programs and that he certainly felt it was desirable, but that in every instance evaluation should be made of the best possible approach. For instance, rice is available

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but Vietnam now has a surplus of 400,000 tons of rice and it would seem that the government itself could make a contribution to the effort in the form of rice. While we have surplus wheat from the U.S. available, the Vietnamese are not a wheat consuming people and their experience with the use of flour is limited to rice flour and rice germ prepared in home milling processes. The use of wheat is practically unknown to them.

Mr. Schwartz also pointed out that there was a possibility of developing food tasted in people, the satisfaction of which they could not provide for themselves later on. He pointed out that many tons of milk already committed in view of the apparent local lack of demand for milk did not seem to be justifiable. He pointed out that there would be a big demand for the tin cans that the milk came in.

Mr. Lavergne then asked that since the problem seemed rather involved and the majority of the members of the staff were not too well acquainted with the details, that those who were form a committee to consider the matter and offer some specific suggestions. He asked that a committee composed of Messrs. Cardinaux, Schwartz, Falk, study the matter and report recommendations at the next meeting.

#### CHINESE REFUGEES

Mr. Lavergne reported that Mr. Shen, the Chinese Consul had met with him and said that there were now 6,000 Chinese refugees in Saigon, and that about 2,000 had been satisfactorily resettled and that they had found employment through the efforts of the Chinese Relief Committee. The other 4,000 are still being housed in 80 different centers in Saigon - mostly Chinese schools, temples and hospitals. The Chinese Relief Committee has done an excellent job but unfortunately it depends upon voluntary contributions for its resources. He asked the Mission's good offices in helping him introduce the problem to the Vietnamese Commissioner's Office. He said he would ask specifically that the Refugee Commissioner make available to him some roofing material. He had a plan to build houses out of locally available materials and the labor of construction would be contributed by the refugees themselves at no cost. He said that there were about 1,500 artisans and small business men in the group and that if he had about 880 sheets of roofing he could house 1,500 satisfactorily in a short time and because of their occupations they could be considered rehabilitated. He said that land owned by certain members of the Chinese community at Phuyto had been offered free and was immediately available. He added that some of the others were being considered for employment on rubber and tea plantations. He said that there were still from 12,000 15,000 in the North who wanted to come down and that he was in touch with Chinese Consul General up there, and that they hoped that the government of South Vietnam could extend the aid requested.

#### WELCOME KITS

Mr. Lavergne reported that a trial order of welcome kits purchased by FOA from CARE have arrived. The kits include such items as soap, shampoo, tooth paste, tooth brush, towel, etc. The material for 10,000 kits arrived along with 2,000 of the bags. The other 8,000 bags will arrive in about ten days. Inasmuch as the welcome kit got here after most of the refugees have

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already arrived, it can no longer be considered a welcome kit. It apparently has little value on that basis. The Commissioner General has therefore asked that no further order be placed and that a different method of distribution from that previously planned be worked out. Mr. Ackley has been given the responsibility for working out with Mission personnel concerned a new plan for distribution.

#### SUBSISTANCE ALLOWANCES

Mr. Schwartz pointed out that he felt that 12 piasters per day per adult plus 6 piasters per day per child which rounds out to an average of 54 piasters per family was excessive. The amount places cash income for refugee families over the average income of Vietnamese. He feels that this may be one of the reasons why refugees after being admitted to reception centers are not anxious to move to resettlement areas. They have more cash on hand than they are accustomed to have and actually more cash/many other people working for a living. than

Mr. Lavergne commented that the amount had previously been arrived at by the Vietnamese Committee in North Vietnam. The cost of living in North Vietnam was probably 60% greater than South Vietnam. Too, there is the condition that the person who is leading a normal life has other sources of food supply in the form of green plants which grow rather promiscuously throughout the country and which are not available in areas where temporary reception camps are located -or at least not in significant quantities. The average Vietnamese farm family has its own rice while the refugees must purchase everything at higher costs because they are concentrated in the several reception areas. There has been a certain amount of inflation and the problem should be studied rather carefully before it is determined that the amount received is too much.

There is also the government's plan that this amount is to be downgraded as other items are provided and as the refugees become in a more favorable position for providing themselves with food.

#### 100,000th REFUGEE

Mr. Lavergne reported that the Navy has arranged in cooperation with Vietnamese authorities a welcome ceremony for the 100,000th refugee transported on U.S. Navy ships. The ceremony is to take place at 1:00 pm today. The President will welcome the refugee and his family at Quai Catinat.

#### RESETTLEMENT PLANS

Mr. Lavergne said that each of the Refugee Commissioners, (and there have been four) have had some sort of plan for resettlement and rehabilitation of refugees. Each plan varies considerably from its predecessor. Further, Mission technicians have submitted reports offering suggestions and pointing out problems. Since the rush of refugees seems to be letting up, it seems desirable that this wealth of material be evaluated and certain plans acceptable to the Mission be determined for the purpose of further discussions with the Vietnamese authorities. It is assumed that a large portion of refugees are agricultural people and that the Ministry of Agriculture might play an

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important part along with some other government agencies in this effort. He appointed a committee composed of Mr. Schwartz, as Chairman, Dr. Adams and Mr. Ackley to study the material and be ready to report recommendations for the consideration of the staff at next Friday's meeting. He asked Mr. Holiday and Mr. Cardinaux to consider themselves as ex-officio members of this committee to see that the members of the committee had access to all of the background materials available.

#### ADDITIONAL STAFF

Mr. Lavergne reported that he had asked Mr. Cardinaux and Mr. Holiday to go over the staffing pattern for refugee and rehabilitation specialists and to firm up the organization as quickly as possible. Dr. Peterson reported that two sanitary engineers on TDY with his staff had arrived and that he felt his division was in a better position to render aid in the water and sanitation efforts of Vietnamese Ministry of Health.

Mr. Schwartz pointed out that in connection with water problem that there was a private firm in Saigon which had considerable background information on water tables and had done a lot of testing and had, he believed, considerable background information which might prove considerably useful. He felt that they might not be willing to part with this information since it had business value to them and it was a private organization. On other hand, they might be willing to cooperate to certain extent and if their information has value, certain contractual services might be arranged for if deemed desirable.

#### GENERAL ITEMS

Mr. Safford remarked that the matter of powdered milk still seemed to be rather confused, as Voluntary Agencies had brought in some and planned to bring more, and that if people did not use it that it presented public relations problems. Also, if it made children ill, he wondered if it was wise to make it such an important issue.

Dr. Peterson pointed out that the reason for certain persons sometimes becoming ill from the milk was largely due to the introduction of milk protein to people not accustomed to it, and that the body must become adjusted to it. It temporarily upsets and it is not particularly dangerous. On the other hand, it is easily contaminated and must be handled with care. The sugar which is a must so far in the use of this milk is a very expensive item and he feels certain that no additional milk should be brought beyond that already requisitioned.

Mr. Schwartz commented that sugar is in short supply in the Philippines and under government agreement export sugar goes to the U.S. and that it was rather difficult to get any waiver to bring sugar from the Philippines here. The best and most economic source of sugar at the moment is Formosa.

Mr. Schwartz reported that his division had a project with the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture for some six million piasters that could be used in aiding refugees. He said that representatives of the Agricultural Service were procuring locally certain seeds. Another representative of

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the service has the responsibility of purchasing all available hand tools useful for rehabilitation of the refugees. Hoes, saws, spades, etc., have been purchased and a token distribution already made. He pointed out that lack of simple hand tools is delaying the construction of housing and production of vegetables, etc. by refugees attempting to resettle themselves. He said that the amount purchased was small, because of the short supply, and that the distribution would be completed rather quickly.

Mr. Lavergne reported that Mr. Schwartz's division had sent exploratory telegrams to the Philippines Mission with the idea of bringing in immediately additional hand tools.

Mr. Schwartz said representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture were exploring the possibility of local firms manufacturing more of these hand tools. There has been suggestions with the Cao daists at Tay-Ninh that they might convert a military production factory to the purpose of producing such items. Mr. Schwartz indicated that the small suppliers of such items had some difficulty because if the tools are sold to a government agency they must wait for reimbursement, while they must pay cash for the raw material they buy. Therefore, they often prefer to sell to individuals for cash and pass up government orders.

Mr. Holiday stated that all voluntary agencies are now housed on the 5th floor of the Perchoir Building and that they are being provided with office supplies, janitor service, office equipment, etc.

Mr. de Paul reported that Mr. Clinton Morrison, Deputy Director for the Far East FOA/W will arrive in Saigon Monday or Tuesday and will be accompanied by Miss Helene Granby who will probably stay in Saigon for a week or so.

Meeting adjourned.