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Val Agnes

MINUTES OF THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES COORDINATING COMMITTEE
MEETING OF THURSDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 1955.

The 20th meeting of the Voluntary Agencies Coordinating Committee was fully attended as all representatives were in Saigon for the first time in many weeks.

After a short discussion of the report-chart requested by USOM on which each Agency would show past, present and expected relief items etc., Msgr. Harnett started the morning's reports by stating that for the NCWC, the Christmas project of distribution of surplus foods was terminated but because of existing regulations of the shipping agency in which 3 months must elapse before it will be possible to obtain desired listing of cargo they would have to wait that long before knowing what had and what had not arrived on the S.S. Montcalm. However NCWC had received 19,020 bales of used clothing from the States, all of which had been sorted in States excepting the last shipment of which 205 bales were unsorted. The clothes had been sorted into 10 different categories which enabled them to know roughly what is there.

Barrels of dried milk distributed in South Vietnam to date numbered approximately 5,600. Due soon are 2,000,000 lbs. dried milk and 7 more shipments of Surplus Foods are en route to Saigon for NCWC. This first quarter shipment contains:-

- 750 Tons flour allocated per month for Vietnam
- 120,000 lbs. butter
- 750,000 lbs. cheese
- 250,000 lbs. shortening
- 500,000 lbs. butter oil
- 240,000 liquid milk in cans (this was a forgotten item)
- 360,000 lbs. cotton seed oil

Second quarter shipment thus far approved to contain:-

- 1,000,000 lbs. dried milk
- 100,000 lbs. cheese
- 300,000 lbs. butter oil
- 500,000 lbs. shortening

Msgr. Harnett also reported that he had received 10,000 Maternity kits (formerly called "Welcome Kits") assembled by the Refugee Committee of the AWAS, that these would be given to new mothers as their babies arrived. He would like additional kits as 2,102 responses had come from 38 centers when requested for number

of babies born since beginning of "Operation Exodus". To date 1,752 new babies are expected in these 38 centers in the next 3 months.

Asked about the Cooperatives Msgr. Harnett replied that 17 cooperatives were currently working. A very successful enterprise is the charcoal cooperative at Bui Chu where the hand-built burners and sheds employed 200 people. These also have 2 carts and 4 oxen for delivery of their charcoal. All of these seemed to be capable persons.

Another successful cooperative is a pebble pit which brings in about 35 Piastres per day for each of 40 persons. NCWC had invested 200,000 Piastres in this and they care only to know if the group has a good financial plan and good organization within themselves otherwise full liberty is left to the cooperative. The usual organization seems to be for a master cooperative with sub-sections such as the charcoal cooperative which repays the master cooperative. For example - Tan Mai has charcoal, dyeing weaving, brick kilns etc. Asked if the weavers made their looms on the spot or brought them from the north, Msgr. Harnett replied that they were made on the spot but they needed raw materials for weaving. At Chi Hoa the little cooperative there was having trouble marketing their mats because of Chinese subsidized industries already existing in Saigon and Cholon.

Interesting to all was the information that NCWC had promised the Bien Hoa refugees a model chicken farm. This seemed very sound project for the unfertile soil-area of Bien Hoa.

Mr. Wiens of the MCC started his report by stating that his "Poinsetta" distribution was virtually completed. He was rather disappointed however, because after having every part very well planned and organized at the receiving area in Dalat, the Rail Road did not keep their commitment on delivery which caused the trucking plans to fall through - so the dates of arrival to final recipients were not reliable. Discovered after the distribution was finished was the fact that the greatest real need for these food items existed among the tribal people whose rice crops had been destroyed by weather and war. Clothes and 20 tons of Mennonite-canned meat had been distributed to the Dalat area refugees. Soap was currently being given to them.

Mr. Wiens informed that his organization's scheme for community development were planned not only for refugees but for such existing villages or tribal groups also needing such assistance. This would involve a Quaker-type team with workers with some training in first aid social work, and handy-man-practical-fellow

type of helpers. While these are not experts their assistance would be stimulating though maybe a little slow.

Mr. Klein reported that CARE had distributed 1,000 blankets for the PMS area in Central Vietnam. A cable had been received advising that there were available for him 3,500 cases of Baby Food. He was awaiting answers to his queries of the Ministry of Health as to the evaluation of their use of this kind of food. He asked the members for discussion of the practicability of these goods for Vietnamese babies. All thought these would be most useful especially for small institution groups where controls could be kept on babies most needing this kind of nourishment.

CARE had given 25 cases of aureomycin and streptomycin and 1,000 syringes with needles to the "Operation Brotherhood" medical teams and several thousand needles for distribution through the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Klein further stated that CARE was not going to restock on regular food packages but would try purchasing in quantity from the local market; that he was currently investigating this. Such a project would be a new adventure for CARE because to purchase food on the spot can only be done in a "fooded" country such as Vietnam. The only American item in this package would be condensed milk canned milk - other items would probably be dried fish, rice, nuoc-mam etc.

Another project still in a very "dreamy" stage might be distribution of draft animals, pigs and chickens. He was also thinking of some way to encourage refugees at reception area at Cap St. Jacques where they are developing a large daily catch of fish which at present was amounting to around 5 tons per day.

Dr. Burckhardt, speaking for Mr. Durand who is currently in Geneva, reported that just received was a notice that 100,000 lbs. of powdered skim milk in 50 lbs. bags were en route to Vietnam.

Dr. Kellerman of CWS informed that 2 men from his organization would arrive on 23 February. They are Dr. Helfrish and Dr. Van Beyma. They are on a world tour to survey whether surplus foods are for distribution in needy areas. Dr. Kellerman asked Msgr. Harnett if he thought there were enough of used clothing for refugees. Msgr. Harnett replied that the first distribution of used clothing had been made in Haiphong, Dalat and the mountain areas in general; that NCWC had 8,000 bales on the way; that it was his opinion to get as much of used clothing as possible. Dr. Kellerman stated that based on his observation in the south all that can be

gotten can be used. He would like to have 1,000 bales for each of 6 provinces.

Also reported for CWC was an ETA of 16 February for shipment of vitamins; that the information on tools from Japan had not yet come from there; that the development of a non-catholic community was still in the "search" stage.

Mrs. Brown, chairman of the Refugee Committee of the AWAS reported that 500 lbs. of Multi-Purpose-Food had been received. Because the quantity was so small she asked for suggestions for its distribution. Dr. Japson of "Operation Brotherhood" asked if he could use it in their work in the hospital and was given the food. Mrs. Brown also stated that she was casting about for a project for her committee which would be a challenge yet not too big for her group; that the high school girls had been put into a terrible building; that the girls were unattended at night. Msgr. Harnett replied that there would be 2 nuns with these girls for a period of 2 months.

Mr. Granada, representing "Operation Brotherhood" of the Junior Chamber International reported that 7 doctors and 9 nurses had come into Saigon; that 1 of these doctors is one of the finest surgeons in the Philippines and is here to help set up the hospital; that they had sent several of their teams down to the Camau area. Here they were quite surprised to find themselves swamped with patients the very morning the Minhs had left.

Mr. Granada stated that Japan Junior Chamber was asking how to get their medical supplies out of Japan; that there seemed to be difficulties in getting them into another country. Other members of the committee offered their knowledge and experiences with the export regulations for contributed goods etc., to Mr. Granada. Also reported was the fact that the teams were being pressed by need for certain medicines and the other agencies were asked for assistance. The problem was that the refugees prefer injections of vitamins rather than pills or capsules. The medicines most needed are antibiotics, aureomycin and vitamins.

Mrs. Nixon of USOM thanked all for the assistance given to Mr. Beaudry for his report. She stated that she would continue her conferences with each during the next week.

The guest of the morning was Mlle. Henriette Servais of the A.F.I.C. which was founded in Belgium in 1937. This organization explained Mlle. Servais, is hoping to build a home for 300 girls; 150 from the north and 150 from South Vietnam. They are presently searching for the ground for such a building.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned
at 12.30 P.M.

Beth Blake
Chairman

Members present at this meeting were:-

Msgr. Harnett	NCWC
Mr. Granada	JCI
Mr. Klein	CARE
Mr. Wiems	MCC
Mrs. Brown	AWAS
Dr. Kellerman	CWS
Mlle. Servais (guest)	International Feminine Catholique Auxiliare
Mrs. Nixon	USOM
Mrs. Blake	American Red Cross.