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REPORTS FOR USOM PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVES
for the Month Ending 31 March 1965

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QUANG TRI (1)

The prov rep reports that the month of March was one of planning and preparation for the Financial Management Team from Saigon. No new activities were undertaken as the province was still operating on the '64 budget. Long term projects were continued. As it is the beginning of the dry sunny season, the province officials hope for early approval of the budget in order to "make hay while the sun shines."

The security situation worsened somewhat during March. The province continues to lose areas to the VC even though there are many refugees. Many other people are coming under VC control as their hamlets are being occupied by VC forces. Several surprise attacks by the VC have had a great psychological impact on the population. The largest was a mortar attack combined with an ambush of the 1st Regiment. During the attack, the Regimental Commander was killed and his assistant captured. Another attack three kilometers from the province capital killed 24 local forces guarding the village with no known VC losses. This was obviously an inside job and demonstrated the ever present VC infiltration, even among the Popular Forces.

There was one large demonstration to condemn the VC because they killed a teacher and a student. This action was indirectly answered by the VC several days later when they gave out the word that they would not destroy or damage any programs designed to help the people educationally or economically. The attitudes of the people have improved in the past month and construction and farming are now in full swing. A new Buddhist school is being constructed in Quang Tri and it is hoped that this is a new channel of activity for the restless Buddhists. This optimistic trend can be expected to continue through the rice harvest during April. This may not mean that we have turned the tide of VC psychological victories but it is a definite improvement over the past.

The funds relocation have been completed. The Montagnard situation regarding relocation remains stable. Security continues to hamper the self-help program, particularly field trips to check on projects. Construction of hamlet schools is progressing and 13 have been completed already. A separate Social Welfare office was set up but as yet they are mainly a reporting agency and do not have funds other than for salaries. The Chieu-Hoi Center was remodelled this month.

THUA THIEN (2)

The prov rep reports that the general situation of the province is somewhat improved and prospects are good that this improvement will continue, barring unforeseen events. The administration of the province continues to improve. A good rice harvest is predicted. Budget activities are at present limited to necessities tapped from a three million piaster advance. The Chieu Hoi program has slowed down somewhat because of the lack of funds. Relocation sites have been inspected and they are in general in satisfactory condition. However, much work still needs to be done. The 1964 self help program now has 263 completed projects.

QUANG NAM (3)

The prov rep reports that the major problem area is that of refugee relief. Like previous relief problems during the past year (flood and typhoon) the system breaks down at the province level. The province and lower level officials usually lack the organizational ability and initiative to carry out such a program. This is the problem of responsibility of the MACV and USOM representatives and they are doing all they can in their advisory role to alleviate this mental log jam.

The military province chief is being replaced by a civilian in the month of April. The prov rep feels that a civilian province chief if he is an able administrator, will improve the social, economic and administrative programs within the province.

Of the 525 hamlets in Quang Nam province, only 12 are considered to be pacified under the six point criteria. MACV has initiated another criterion to be considered before a hamlet can be classified as pacified (reconstructed) and that is the requirement that Mobile Action Cadre or Mobile Administrative Cadre must sleep in the hamlet.

The military situation has been very quiet in Quang Nam during most of March. Rumors and unconfirmed reports from various sources indicate a VC withdrawal of hard core units and this leads to much speculation as to why. Intensified US efforts elicit a feeling that the only solution is to "go north". This illusion is felt to be decreasing the GVN aggressive spirit and is encouraging the military to depend on defensive and static outpost tactics.

The prov rep feels that the Chieu Hoi program in his province remains ineffective, inefficient, and a waste of money. He recommends a regional Chieu Hoi center with well trained personnel to conduct appropriate rehabilitation programs. There should, of course, be Chieu-Hoi reception centers in each province capital.

QUANG TIN (4)

The prov rep reports that the situation in Quang Tin appears to have taken a definite turn for the better. The province is suffering and VC forces continue to dominate the scene. Their harassment of the population and the wanton destruction along Highway 1 continues. However, no large scale VC units have operated in the immediate area of Tam Ky during the past month. No bridges have been destroyed along Route 1 and other than one small demonstration organized by VC cadres little harassment has been suffered by the local people. The province rep feels that the picture in Quang Tin appears brighter than it has for the past twelve months.

The three top provincial officials are all relatively new in their positions (the province chief, deputy chief, and the pacification chief). These men are interested, able, and are desirous of doing a good job. As long as Quang Tin receives support from GVN/USOM the prov rep feels there is no reason to become pessimistic. There is still the need for the GVN to create a realistic working budget and a need for ARVN to get out in the areas and to make a determined effort to render the clear and hold concept.

USOM has no warehousing to speak of. Its two warehouses have been confiscated by ARVN with little or no chance of being returned. At present a small abandoned bar located at province headquarters houses the remaining commodities. There will be a warehouse completed in the next forty days which may help eliminate this problem.

There are refugees in various spots throughout the province that need commodities now but we have nothing on hand to issue.

QUANG NGAI (5)

The prov rep reports that great efforts have been made during the month on the projected construction of a port at Phu Thu village, Tu Nghia district. Technical sea teams from Saigon have inspected the area and it is their concensus that the site can be developed into a port. The VC apparently agree with this opinion as they blew up the bridge leading to it the day after the team from Saigon was there. Provincial officials have given complete assurance of support and cooperation in bringing this project to a successful completion. Security remains the main problem. The road connecting the port site with Quang Ngai must be improved and secured, including the surrounding areas of the port. The province chief is optimistic that the security aspects will be met when the port is completed and has expressed his enthusiasm over the project.

The prov rep mentions a recurring problem in public administration. The regimental commander is more senior than the province chief. Although the relationship between these men appears congenial, it is somewhat strained because of this fact. For example, the province has two helicopters assigned to it but they are usually under the control of the Special Zone, which is under the regimental commander. There were occasions when the province wanted to use them but the pilots would not move without the acquiescence of the tactical operations center, which is under the regiment. This question of seniority and official designation is difficult to resolve unless both men are willing to put aside their own personal pride and inhibitions.

Twelve Quy Chanh returned to GVN control this month, bringing the total to 31 at the Chieu Hoi Rehabilitation Center. The new Chieu Hoi center is still under construction. Two Chieu Hoi teams are operating in the province and have teamed up with special platoons on a number of occasions. These teams are effective despite low pay and meager operational support.

KONTUM (6)

The prov rep reports that a fundamental problem in the provincial program is the policy of issuing corn and bulgar for human consumption. The prov rep feels that the intrinsic value of these items is "about equal to that of an excess quantity of nuoc mam would be in the United States community". He feels that just as even a colossal advertising campaign in the United States would create few converts to nuoc mam, the same is true in Vietnam of corn and bulgar, the only difference being that the province representative cannot conduct big advertising campaigns. He feels that the program is a failure and could be nothing else from the start. He reports that Kontum may be considered a "hungry" province but the price of rice exceeds the price of bulgar by approximately 10 to 1 and the price of corn by almost 15 to 1. The black market price of corn and bulgar is not even equal to its transportation cost from Saigon, let alone its actual value for the cost of shipping it to Vietnam. The prov rep feels that two conflicting problems are involved. One is the surplus of corn and wheat in the United States and the other is the winning of the people of Vietnam. The prov rep feels that a choice must be made as to which of these problems is more important. Both cannot be solved with a single solution. The prov rep recommends that the United States supply rice for human consumption in Vietnam and lesser quantities of corn and bulgar for animal consumption.

The security situation has made travel more difficult. Movement by road has become much more hazardous and limited. It is impossible to reach the northern-most district by road because several bridges have been destroyed by the VC. The province chief, who ordinarily devotes a large portion of his time to visiting districts and hamlets, is prevented by the security situation from making his usual visits. A provincial radio station was requested in October, 1964 by the province chief from the Ministry of Information. Because of the present situation, its installation is now critically required.

563 families were resettled during the month. An additional 3,000 people might have to be resettled depending upon success or failure of current ARVN operations. There is great difficulty in supplying refugees of the northern-most district. The province chief believes that there may be as many as 30,000 refugees before the end of the year. This is approximately one third of the population and equal to the entire population of four of the five districts of the province. Obviously, the refugees in this number could not be logistically supported with transportation presently available to the province.

PLEIKU (8)

The prov rep reports that the beginning of March with the complete stoppage of all traffic from the coastal areas on Route 19 and the almost constant harassment of all traffic on Route 14 to Ban Me Thuot, the urban people of Pleiku were understandably worried about the ability of the provincial government to provide for their welfare. However, military operations reopened Route 19 to convoy traffic about March 15 and the road has remained open since. Reported shortages of food and consumer goods have been replenished and the urban people are no longer concerned over the problem. Province officials have expressed gratitude to USOM for the timely airlift of 100 tons of rice from Saigon to Pleiku in early March.

During the month there were several VC initiated demonstrations. Groups of Montagnard tribal people came to Pleiku City to demonstrate against the United States and to demand that all Americans go home. Upon questioning the Montagnards, it was learned that the people had been forced to make the demonstrations by the VC and in many cases the demonstrators had never even seen an American or knew what they were doing.

Reconstruction efforts are stalemated because of VC activities. The lack of security has caused the cessation of all visits by government officials to the outlying areas and the VC have stepped into this vacuum and are increasing their efforts to establish an administrative organization in the areas outside GVN control.

There were no Quy Chanh during March and only 11 thus far this year. Two thirds of the Chieu Hoi centers buildings have been taken over for troop billets on orders from the province chief. This arrangement is considered to be only temporary. Plans are under way through USIS and in cooperation with the province psywar committee to strengthen the Chieu Hoi program.

During the month a meeting was held by the province rep and attended by many leading citizens of Pleiku, IVS, USOM and religious groups to discuss the youth development program. The first meeting did not result in concrete plans but future meetings will be held. The first efforts will probably be in the urban areas but future plans will include work in Montagnard hamlets.

PHU BON (9)

The prov rep reports that the province chief's awareness of the lack of qualified personnel working within the technical services appears to be the only asset the technical services in Phu Bon have. The province rep reports that while travelling through the province, one can readily see the results of the work of the technical services -- nothing. In some cases, it is because the service chiefs do not like to work in Hau-Bon and would like to be transferred. The agricultural service is accomplishing nothing. The fishery service had a budget in 1964 900,000 \$VN and spent a total of 15,000\$VN.

The province chief and his assistant have taken it upon themselves to draw roofing and cement out of the warehouse without USOM approval to build some sheds and to be used as awnings. The provincial authorities were told that this should not be done and under no circumstances should the commodities be given to military personnel or establishments.

It was brought to the attention of the province representative that numerous families never received their relocation allowances in 1963 and 1964. The present province chief feels that these people deserve something so a plan is being drawn up to give these people the rewards they should have received in the past. Some of these people did return to the hills after they were relocated as they received little or nothing.

Three of the Quy Chanh that have been working at the Chieu Hoi center will begin work as trainees at the Montagnard training center. A small hamlet of 98 families has been set up in Thuan Man district for the people who have been working in the VC areas in the past. All houses have been constructed from thatch and there are two families per house. Part of the Chieu Hoi staff, along with cadres from the various services, will spend time at this hamlet to initiate programs for these people. This project is an experient but if successful similar hamlets will be constructed in each district.

PHU YEN (10)

The prov rep reports that the security situation has improved compared to last month but it is still the major problem of the province. The lack of security brought about a number of related problems.

1. There was a reported crop failure due to the inability of farmers to cultivate their fields.
2. It inhibited the movement of cadre and GVN officials.
3. It caused an increase in the price of foodstuffs and other commodities.
4. It caused a number of projects to be abandoned or suspended.
5. It brought about an increase in the number of refugees and destitute persons, and
6. It generally inhibited the civilian aspects of the pacification (rural reconstruction) program.

A province committee on refugee problems was organized during the month. This committee includes the province chief, the USOM rep, the MACV sector advisor, and the provincial leaders of various civic and religious organizations. The committee made estimates of the number of refugees and resettlers and their needs.

The Chieu Hoi office reported that 10 Quy Chanh returned to GVN control, bring with them individual weapons and ammunition. The returnees provided intelligence on a small arms cache.

Out of a total of 124 self help projects approved during 1964, 106 projects received construction funds and materials. 78 projects have been completed to date. 26 projects are in process. 18 projects have been suspended because of the unfavorable security situation and 2 projects cannot be implemented as the construction funds issued to hamlet chiefs were reportedly robbed by the VC.

DARLAC (11)

The prov rep reports that many persons (5,000) have fled to hamlets in Land Development Centers occupied or under threat of occupation by the VC. Several Land Development Centers have become bases of operation for the VC. The province is still short on transportation. It has three new trucks and ten old 2½ ton trucks but it is still a large job keeping three running.

Paper work requirements imposed by CPC for refugee rice and self help projects are almost impossible to satisfy. Paperwork requirements are so great for public works projects that many of them cost 40% more than market price due to the long delay in paying the bills.

The Chieu Hoi program is a near failure so far as there is little interest from the provincial headquarters. Facilities have deteriorated to the point of inserviceability. The entire system from reception to release is unsatisfactory. There is no real training and no preparation to make a returnee a useful citizen.

The announcement of the 23rd Division policy that all reconstruction programs should be carried out within five kilometers of a main road has stopped many projects until a final decision can be made whether this policy should be strictly adhered to. This arbitrary decision will hinder education, agriculture and public health activities. The prov rep reports that a new senior MACV advisor has arrived and seems to be more interested in the coordination of effort and an active interest in the USOM programs than his predecessor.

KHANH HOA (12)

The prov rep reports that security remains the major problem area in the province. VC activity, however, is somewhat lower than it has been for the last months. The prov rep often hears of the need for additional military forces within the province but he feels that the problem could be met by the better utilization of existing military troops.

There appears to be a continued lack of interest in the pacification program on the part of the provincial officials, particularly the province chief and his immediate staff. This lack of interest has resulted in poor planning for future activities and inefficiency in the carrying out of present duties.

There continues to be reports of serious incidents between the Vietnamese Special Forces elements and the local population. In some cases, fear of the Vietnamese Special Forces is greater than fear of the VC.

The Chieu Hoi center was completed during the month. A number of families in Binh Xuong and Can Lan districts having members in the VC were contacted by Chieu Hoi cadre with the aim of having the families persuade their kin to return to the GVN side. The number of returnees increased to 19.

The provincial social welfare team had two men drafted, resulting in a shortage of personnel.

NINH THUAN (13)

The prov rep reports that a committee for the "Campaign of Battlefront Support" has been organized in Ninh Thuan which consists of provincial officials and private citizens. The purpose and plan of this committee is felt to be most noteworthy and a significant step forward in the promotion of the military effort in Vietnam. The primary purpose of the committee is to provide moral support for rural soldiers on the front lines, to offer comfort and consolation to families with relatives in the military service, especially those killed or wounded, to promote the cause of becoming a member of the military service, and to promote better military/civilian relations. They have drawn up a very comprehensive 16-point program.

In light of the existing security situation, the prov rep feels that Ninh Thuan province is a logical place for more intensive social and economic development programs. The local officials are competent and dedicated. The present USOM team is too small to adequately carry out all of the activities that could be undertaken in this province. He feels that at least one more American or Filipino or IVSer should be assigned to the province. Ninh Thuan should also be given greater priority in the fulfillment of logistical requirements. For example, there is a 48 million piaster irrigation project which requires an average of 100 tons of cement and 30 tons of steel bars per month. This project requires that a greater amount of overall effort is needed in order that other programs do not suffer from a lack of material and supplies.

The annual rehabilitation clearing of the north main canal has been started. Because of the serious flood damage, a greater amount of reconstruction work is needed this year. The present allotment of money is sufficient to repair the canal in a partial manner. Because of insufficient cement, USOM is unable to support this program. Two village maternities have been completed with funds supplied through the Ministry of Public Health. However, only 10,000 piasters was provided for each maternity for the purchase of furniture and other supplies not furnished by the Ministry. This amount is not proportional to the size or cost of maternity buildings and represents inadequate forethought and planning. Also, many small maternity dispensaries or information have an inadequate supply of supplies and materials. This problem is acute in those areas hardest hit by the floods since much furniture and equipment was destroyed.

TUYEN DUC (14)

The prov rep reports that Tuyen Duc has been relatively quiet since Tet, although the VC have begun a show of force in Duc Trong district. In two major incidents, civilians were killed and Popular Forces were kidnaped. This district included resettled Montagnards, resettled Vietnamese and native Koho Montagnards, who are growing dissatisfied because the question of land ownership and the inability of the GVN to provide security.

The officials at the province are developing a show of initiative, teamwork and a desire to carry out their responsibilities. There is a greater feeling of confidence in the GVN and in the commitment of the US to Vietnam. The budget meetings revealed good organization by the services and the ready acceptance of funding through the province chief and some provincial level control. All activities brought up in the budget received adequate funds. Reconstruction is generally progressing except for projects pending the availability of funds and construction projects are handicapped because of the shortage. This shortage seriously hampers self help, the construction of hamlet schools, village dispensaries, roads, many of which were nearing completion. There has been a notable improvement in police activities but resources control is lagging. Military civic action is beginning to make its appearance. Student group civic action is being generated by the students themselves and is supported and encouraged by all GVN and US agencies.

QUANG DUC (15)

The prov rep reports that the primary problem in Quang Duc remains the shortage of troops and the inability of the government to furnish security to the outlying hamlets. The burning of bridges by the VC also contributes to the isolation of the outlying portions of the province.

Eight Montagnard hamlets were evacuated because of VC threats and actions. Many of these people moved into the jungle and must be assumed to be under VC control. Approximately 1,600 Montagnards are involved. The people's sympathy appears to be with the government but as the government is unable to protect the hamlets, especially at night, this pro-government sympathy is meaningless.

There was the disappearance or desertion of 64 Popular Forces during the month. The district chiefs go very infrequently to the villages and hamlets. Consequently, the hamlet and village chiefs have come directly to USOM for assistance and requests for security, indicating that the people do not have faith that positive action will be taken by the GVN.

There were no Chieu Hoi returnees during the month. The Chieu Hoi center has been completed and the old center was cleared of Chieu Hoi returnees with the approval of the province chief. Three returnees were hired on USOM provincial projects as masons and carpenters. Three families were resettled in Gia Nghia at the water well irrigation project. The prov rep feels that this has great propaganda value. The returnees are now working hard and have sufficient money to take care of their families.

LAM DONG (16)

The prov rep reports that VC strength and activity in the province has increased since the beginning of the year. VC actions against hamlets and a re-evaluation of those hamlets considered pacified has resulted in a reduction in the number of those pacified from 43 at the first of the year to 29 at the present time.

At the end of the month, the number of mobile action teams will be reduced from 10 to 4. The murder of 4 mobile action cadre in broad daylight in the hamlet in which they were working has resulted in the sudden realization by the provincial officials that they are unable to provide adequate protection for the teams.

Weekly training classes in general agricultural and home improvement are continuing at the Montagnard training center. A class in blacksmith has begun. Extension cadre are engaged in the construction of pig sties and buffalo pens in various hamlets.

The province received three Chieu Hoi returnees during the month with weapons. They had been captured by the VC a year ago and had been working as agricultural laborers.

BINH THUAN (17)

The prov rep reports that two continuing problems in the province. The first is the hamlet health workers who have not been paid their salaries since December, 1964. Secondly, the province has on order 81 bags of cement needed for non-funded projects. This is the time of the year - the dry season - when cement is most urgently needed.

The number of pacified (reconstructed) hamlets has been reduced from 103 to 71. This decision was based on a re-evaluation of provincial ability to provide security. Seven mobile action teams have been working in the 7 districts but have done little in regard to hamlet construction. The mobile action cadre will be reoriented during April.

The headquarters Support Command has contracted to renovate the military barracks at the local airstrip for future occupation by US military units. The laborers working on this project are receiving 21 piasters per hour as against the prevailing rate of 8 piasters per hour. This difference has adversely affected local construction work as everyone now wants to work for the Americans. Local contractors and public works officials are now faced with the problem of obtaining labor to complete their projects. This is an example of where the American sense of fair play has adversely affected the good will between Americans and Vietnamese officials and people in the province. The prov rep recommends that in the future the province chief and his staff should be consulted before any other projects of this nature are begun.

BINH TUY (18)

The prov rep reports that the security situation in Binh Tuy remains tense. The VC have stepped up and succeeded in their attempts to surround and isolate district and province capitals. Of the 48 hamlets controlled by the government in one area last October, only 7 have not been absorbed by the VC. The prov rep reports that it appears that the best troops are guarding the important installations in towns while the poorest troops are reported to be in the forest seeking out the enemy. There is an apparent need for Special Forces in Binh Tuy province or at least foreign troops in static defensive positions around district and province capitals in order to relieve the ARVN and enable them to get out in the field.

The VC continue to increase their control over major roads and bridges in the province. Communications are being greatly hindered and restricted. Even the intra-province mail system has been disrupted.

Refugees have been pouring into four major refugee centers in the province: 1) Ham Tan now has 353 families or 1847 people; 2) Vo Dat now has 85 families or 498 people; 3) Vo Xu has 276 families or 2357 people; 4) Lac Tanh has 380 families or 2434 people. The total number of refugees received to date amounts to 7146 people or 1094 families. These people have received over 200,000 piasters during March alone. In addition, 260 bags of bulgar and 348 cans of cooking oil were distributed.

LONG KHANH (19)

The prov rep reports that during March more than 1,000 families left their homes because of VC activities. Many of these including 126 Montagnard families are living in temporary shelters in areas where there is very little opportunity for gainful employment. Approximately 900 families received bulgar and cooking oil from USOM and many received corn, blankets, and mosquito nets. About 300 families received rice, salt, soup and clothing from CARE and some clothing from the Catholic Relief Service. The prov rep reports that there was a very poor response from the Ministry of Social Welfare for items of food, clothing, and bedding needed for the refugees in the province. Although CARE was generous, their generosity was offset by their obvious distrustful attitude and their unreasonable demands for evidence of appreciation. For example, they insisted that a letter of appreciation be written to them by every family that received their commodities.

Two of the new rural life hamlet trucks were damaged by VC mortar fire. The warehouse also received one mortar round through the roof. The round landed by the stock of cooking oil but failed to explode.

In order to increase the effectiveness of the hamlet chiefs, the province held a six day seminar in which lectures and instructions were given by various province chiefs in the fields of finance, taxation, land reform, NACO, economics, budgets, agriculture, administration, animal husbandry, new life hamlets, and the functions and behavior of cadre. 34 hamlet chiefs attended this seminar.

PHUOC THANH (20)

The prov rep reports that 62 persons from Tan Hoa village turned themselves over to provincial authorities late in the month as a result of military operations conducted in their area. They claim to have been waiting for government troops to come for some time. However, the number of ARVN desertions remains high even though there was a decrease from 309 in February to 287 in March. RF/PF desertions decreased from 25 to 23.

The main problem with the Chieu Hoi program is the absence of an adequate processing program. Although some effort is being made towards filling these needs, the fact remains that the province has ^ainadequate security facilities, inadequate personnel, and an inadequate program. The prov rep feels that the establishment of a regional center in lieu of provincial centers may be the answer to the proper processing of returnees. An alternative would be increased training of provincial personnel in program planning, implementation and evaluation of the provincial program. The Chieu Hoi cadre are still not receiving their salaries on time. 11 are currently working on the program but the chief indicates that six additional district cadre are needed. The pay of 1,100 piasters per month is not enough to attract the recruits needed for these positions.

PHUOC LONG (21)

The prov rep reports that a general increase in the security situation has led to increased confidence in the GVN. VC activities decreased during the month but it was estimated that there were still 1 000 VC in the province. The VC launched a mortar attack on the SDC training center and later it was reported that three rounds landed in the province capital. Another Montagnard hamlet, Dak-0 was completely destroyed on March 17, making it the 16th Montagnard hamlet completely destroyed in the province since Christmas.

The dream of having a Montagnard demonstration and training center in Phuoc Long ended this month. After the Central Pacification Committee demanded justification of the 600 000 piasters already spent on the center, the province chief gave the order to close the center and to release the cadre. USOM/Phuoc Long concurred.

Effectiveness of the province government and the district chiefs continued to increase. Good leadership is evident and winning the support of the people is receiving top priority. Combat operations are on the increase and service chiefs are going into the hamlets with combat troops to supervise the work of their cadre and to study the needs of the people. The province chief is making an all out effort to win the people to the GVN and that effort is showing concrete results. The people appear to feel more secure and progress is being made in resettling the refugees in this province. The province chief is visiting hamlets, talking to the people listening to their problems and making an honest effort to reach as many as possible.

The only refugees in Phuoc Long that have received financial assistance to date are Thuan Kiem 3 and Thuan Kiem 4. These people have received their seven piasters per day for thirty days as allotted by the Ministry of Social Welfare. The Vietnamese Labor Federation is the sponsor of these two hamlets and is doing a commendable job in providing them with both moral and material support.

BINH LONG (22)

The prov rep reports that provincial officials have begun to make trips into the hamlets. They have been explaining the various programs to local officials and are inspecting the hamlets. This is the beginning of establishing real communications between the people and the government. There is still the problem of communication with Saigon and the lack of response.

The mobile action cadre have been working in the hamlets and supervision of them is improving. 20 hamlets are considered pacified (reconstructed).

Self help activities have stopped. The vouchers for 1964 have not come in and the 1965 program is just being organized. This program has been a real boondoggle. The absolute lack of supervision of the 1964 program allowed a misuse of the funds.

Eleven of the twelve hamlet schools are completed and the remaining one is almost finished. The 1964 school program produced substandard schools. It grows more apparent that there was collusion on the awarding of contracts' and that the cement issued for schools was occasionally diverted.

BINH DUONG (23)

The prov rep reports that he never fully realized how the lack of one commodity, cement, in this cade, could slow down or completely immobilize so many projects planned or underway. This lack of cement remains the province's number one problem.

The prov rep reports there are less complaints about corruption and iniustice from the people concerning government officials. People appreciate very much the assistance rendered by USOM and the government. They are plainly unhappy with the VC when action is taken against anyone working to improve the people's living conditions. The slaying of the Lai Thieu information chief in the last week of March did not improve the VC's popularity as he was a very energetic and popular person with the people.

Public health had a setback this month when they failed to staff the 8 new maternity dispensaries with the qualified personnel. The lack of cement has halted the construction of pit privy seats and slabs and the Phu Cuong prison and the Chieu Hoi center. Surgical team quarters in Phu Cuong are ready for occupancy except for additional furniture and a small generator for electrical power. The education division also suffered a slight setback when they failed to have the furniture ready for the 38 completed classrooms.

TAY NINH (24)

The prov rep reports that a priority problem in Tay Ninh is the lack of cement for USOM supported activities.

The Special Forces officers have begun informing the people that future repetition of atrocities and unlawful acts on the part of the Special Forces soldiers will be dealt with harshly. In general the military in the province are cooperating more and more with civilians and have begun programs of civic action. There is still much to be desired. District advisors have shown a great deal of interest in improving their respective districts and have been cooperating with USOM in order to get things done. The military, especially the engineers, have been helping to construct roads and structures for civilians. They also joined with Regional and Popular Forces in putting out a fire at Go Dau Ba.

Social welfare in the province is practically non-existent and in the case of the fire involving 130 families at Go Dau Ba no GVN assistance was forthcoming. Two wires sent to the Ministry of Social Welfare requesting assistance for these people remained unanswered.

The police are placing checkpoints along the highway and those assigned in the hamlets are establishing additional checkpoints for resources control. It is expected this activity will be increased.

A peace movement organized by some Cao Dai priests in Tay Ninh has been outlawed by the GVN. Approximately 80 persons were arrested because of pro-communist activities.

About 50 persons met in Phu Khuong district to protest against the bombings in North Vietnam and the "aggressive" action of the United States. Their leaders were arrested and are now under detention. The chief advisor is now residing in Cambodia. On the other hand, 2000 people demonstrated at Long Hoa to support GVN and US policies.

Of 111 health workers 48 have not been paid. Four locally hired interpreters for the surgical team have not been paid this year. 56 various types of Chieu Hoi cadre not been paid to date although authority to pay them has just been received by the provincial Chieu Hoi office.

HAU NGHIA (25)

The prov rep reports that the absence of a province chief has done more damage to the progress in Hau Nghia than the VC were able to do in a month.

Continued air and artillery strikes on VC areas have prompted a significant flow of refugees not related to those from the Boi Loi Woods.

Despite minor progress in positive reaction to GVN military and paramilitary forces, further gains are unlikely unless the numbers of Popular Forces are sufficient to allow comprehensive defense of already secure areas during the time the ARVN units are withdrawn for operations. Any attempt to effect major expansion of areas undergoing pacification until a holding force is increased considerably may well prove to be disastrous from a psychological, if not from a military, standpoint. This dearth of Popular Force Troops (now less than 1,300 present for duty) is compounded by the propensity of the ARVN battalion in Trang Bang district to sit on its collective duff while using RF/PF for search and clear operations.

Continued progress, although modest, is being made in the Chieu Hoi program as a consequence of the arrival of Saigon cadre. There was coordination of ARVN, psywar, VIS and Chieu Hoi activities. A night broadcasting mission with a female temptress was mounted in Duc Hue district. Large numbers of leaflets were spread over the VC controlled areas. Fourteen new returnees came in, marking the fifth consecutive monthly increase. Nearly half brought weapons with them and one had killed his VC platoon leader and wounded two others. Of long range significance is the fact that the Chieu Hoi service has organized a political training section for all Quy Chanh. This session lasted 15 days and was attended by 2 students. This is part of a program to create an armed propaganda platoon which will be used in conjunction with other military units. Arms issuance has not yet been approved as there are a number of potentially serious problems. For example, the intention to pay the returnees more than the Popular Forces and the hatred of many local ARVN Ranger personnel of the Quy Chanh. cursory interviews with recent Quy Chanh indicate that the bombings in the North have not had any significant effect on the morale of the hard core northern VC cadre. However, there was an occasional evidence of traditional anti-northern sentiment as some felt that the northerners were now getting it too. The northerners have minimized the effect of the bombings and told the others that Chinese assistance was in the offing.

GIA DINH (26)

The prov rep reports that the cement situation persists and has slowed our efforts considerably in building of schools and maternity dispensaries. The maternity dispensary in Tu Duc remains vacant because of lack of water supply. The prov rep reports that he has been trying to get this project moving for six months with little success. The health workers in Gia Dinh have not been paid for a period of four months and the reasons given are that the Ministry of Health would not release the funds.

The second course of instruction for hamlet chiefs was completed 18 March and 78 were graduated. This should significantly strengthen administration within the province.

Twenty-two Quy Chanh returned this month, the majority of whom were forced laborers. The VC had used them to produce guard and transport ammunition and weapons. During air raids and military operations, these forced laborers took the opportunity to return to GVN control.

BIEN HOA (27)

The prov rep reports that VC activity has shown a marked decrease over the previous reporting period. The number of incidents, none of which were serious, has dropped about 50%. All indications are that there seems to be no organized units now active in Bien Hoa province. Of course, this may also mean that the VC units are studying and rehearsing new tactics or the troops are being placed in other areas or that a large scale buildup of some kind is under way.

As part of the provincial resources control program, there are now 22 active checkpoints of all types in operation. The program is moderately effective but many more checkpoints will be required to make it a strong and effective system of control. Progress in this area is necessarily slow.

A very sound plan both in programming and for the implementation of self help projects for 1965 has been evolved. Primary considerations for the allocation of projects will conform to the phase lines of pacification in Hop Tac. This plan envisages a control committee which will look into project justification and needs for areas of intensification before the beginning of the rainy season.

There were seven returnees received by the Chieu Hoi center during March. Numerous leaflets were prepared and dropped in VC areas. Chieu Hoi cadres and returnees visited families with relatives in the VC explaining the Chieu Hoi policies and instructing them how to encourage their relatives to return to government control.

During this month, 75 families made their way from the VC controlled areas of Phuoc Thanh province to Cong Thanh district. The district chief provided temporary housing and social welfare services provided cash allowances.

PHUOC TUY (28)

The prov rep reports that there has been an overall slight improvement in the province as compared with the last few months. The provincial government is continually improving and this is especially true of the province chief who shows an increased awareness of the needs of the province. The deputy chief for administration also is working very effectively.

VC military strength appears to be the same as last month. The 56th has moved to the adjoining province but news has been received that the 57th Regiment is now in the province. VC have stepped up their recruitment program and have had moderate results. Some joined the VC on their own initiative but the majority are in a sense drafted. Much progress is hoped for in the technical fields and USOM supported programs.

The relocation of 374 families from Binh Chau, Xuyen Moc district occurred during the first days of the month. At present, approximately 70 families are now residing in Xuyen Moc district town in or near Long Hai Phuoc Tinh. Efforts are being made to assist them to secure seeds, fertilizer and to build houses. Plans are under way to set up a pressed earth brick making program for the relocatees. They will make bricks to be used in the construction of their own housing. It may also develop into some sort of a cottage industry.

The animal husbandry chief has submitted a request to the province for permission to give relocated families one sow pig for breeding purposes.

The Chieu Hoi program is probably the poorest program in the province. This is not due to the person in charge but rather the poor opportunities for retraining. The number of returnees on hand is 4, five were released during the period and 2 returnees came in.

GO CONG (29)

The prov rep reports that the VC campaign to destroy pacification progress apparently never got off the ground during the reporting period and the situation has improved in the government's favor. There are still a number of problem areas, however, There is a need to place more emphasis on the psywar effort and personnel to carry out this program. Permission is needed to continue recruitment, training and employment of Popular Forces in order to keep abreast of pacification. There is a need to step up and make more effective resources control. The provincial administrative system still has a long way to go to be improved and streamlined so it can serve the people effectively.

The prov rep reports that unofficial sources have stated that members of hard core VC military units have been returning to home to pick up their clothing and other valuables, and informing their relatives that they are moving out of the area for an unknown destination with no indication as to time of return. Other unconfirmed information states that the VC are attempting to integrate selected local force personnel into the hard core units. A final unconfirmed report is that the morale of local VC elements has decreased considerably.

There were eleven Chieu Hoi returnees during the period, which was the same number as last month. The Chieu Hoi center is nearing completion and the committee is preparing a plan of operation and rehabilitation courses. The center is still under strength and there has been no indication as to when additional staff will arrive. Chieu Hoi propaganda continues to be a significant part of the overall psywar program.

LONG AN (30)

The prov report reports that overall progress is being made in the pacification (rural reconstruction) goal. The continuation of US air activity both in South Vietnam and in North Vietnam has been encouraging to the general population. Many have expressed support of these actions and the hope that they will continue.

Mobile cadre continue to operate but their effectiveness is considered only marginal. Perhaps a great deal of supervision of these individuals would improve their efficiency to some degree. Of the 154 mobile action cadre in Long An province, fully half of them will be conscripted into the military service during the current calendar year. During the last weekend of the reporting period, two teams which had been working in Hanh Duc district failed to return to the places where they had been working the following weekend. The status of these individuals is still not known.

A number of self help projects are under consideration. None have been approved during the current calendar year. An investigation of the 1965 projects has revealed that approximately 25% of the projects were not completed. The province chief has notified all individuals concerned that the projects must be completed by 15 April or the money returned to the provincial finance chief.

1965 hamlet school construction program continues to be delayed due to the current cement shortage. The Long An Chieu Hoi program continues to have phenomenal success. There were 61 returnees during the month.

KIEN TUONG (31)

The prov rep reports that there appears to be some improvement on the part of provincial officials to concern themselves with civilian problems. Close cooperation was very evident during the preparation for the CPC budget Committee. Every service met with the deputy for administration and the USOM rep to review the proposals so as to clarify requests and make joint proposals. The province committee also delegated a great deal of authority to the deputy for administration, to the USOM rep and to the chief of pacification, and appropriate service chiefs to take the necessary action within the guidelines laid down by the committee. This has already greatly expedited the approval of hamlet requests. So while progress is still slow, the attitude of the provincial officials is encouraging.

75 VIS cadre from the hamlet to the district level completed in-service training during the reporting period. The USOM rep was invited to teach principles of community development and self help group development courses, practical skills and techniques for motivating people and approaches for community development.

A demonstration on the proper preparation of dry milk in line with the milk feeding program was held in Binh Hiep by the agricultural extension home demonstrator. Several recipes using the dry milk were demonstrated and the custard recipe invoked the interest of the young ladies present.

The prov rep inquired as to the possibility of organizing a 4-T club in the local high school. The prov rep and the 4-T leader met with the principal and broached the idea. He was very enthusiastic. A meeting was held near the end of the month and the Kien Tuong high school 4-T club now has 58 members. The prov rep has invited the USIS rep and the MACV S-5 advisor to join in on this project.

KIEN PHONG (32)

The prov rep reports that the cement shortage in Kien Phong is in the its third month. No new self help projects have been authorized, although the province has received more than 30 applications and none can be authorized until they can meet present commitments. The province has an immediate need for 5,000 bags of cement to complete the 1964 projects. Much valuable time is now being lost. The rainy season will soon begin and the accompanying floods will hamper construction. Much interest previously generated for self help has been lost because of the inability of the province to support the projects with commodities.

The province recently received information that Giao Duc district of Dinh Tuong province will be attached to Kien Phong. This action was requested by the province over one year ago in an effort to open the road south from Cao Lanh to An Huu on Highway 4. The Giao Duc portion of the road is eight kilometers and the portion in Kien Phong is fourteen kilometers. This road runs through every controlled VC area and the part time home of the VC 54th battalion. After a formal attachment, the province hopes that an intensified effort can be made to clear the area and open the road. The opening of the road will cut the shipment time of commodities to and from Saigon by 30% and cut cost up to 25%. It will also offer Cao Lan as an alternate Mekong River crossing point for trucks and busses going to Long Xuyen and Rach Gia when the Vinh Long ferry on Highway 4 is blocked because of military convoys.

There was a meeting held at the end of the reporting period which included the province chief, the chiefs of the services, district chiefs, and assistance, and the pacification cadre. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the 1964 programs and iron out why they did not go as well as expected. The review and critique of the programs was given district by district. There were five persistent problems:

1. Insufficient local pacification forces to provide security for the pacification teams. In other words, the cadre had to return to a safe area at night and could not stay with the people.
2. There was a lack of coordination at the district level between pacification groups and the civilian cadre from the technical services. This lack of coordination appears to exist at the province level as well.
3. Technical cadre are weak and poorly motivated and trained.
4. The morale of the pacification cadre is low because of the draft.
5. The political cadre, although highly paid, have accomplished very little. Their efforts were not coordinated with the pacification cadre groups.

DINH TUONG (33)

The prov rep reports that the lack of cement has seriously slowed up important programs during the time for the year when conditions for their rapid progress are most opportune. USOM/Dinh Tuong recently received 300 bags with which to satisfy previous commitments of over 3,500 bags. These commitments include relocation, school construction for 1964, warehouse construction, village dispensary construction for 1964, pig/corn program, and a host of self help projects. USOM is losing face locally because of its inability to meet its commitments. USOM/Dinh Tuong was unaware of the impending cut off of cement until after the fact and therefore did not budget cement use accordingly.

The prov rep feels that 1965 pacification plan is not realistic in the sense that there are not the necessary military resources in the province to carry out the plan. Also, the difference between the resources required and the resources available is discouraging. If the province begins pacification in an area and it has to leave there will be very bad psychological effects.

Province officials are not making enough field visits to keep themselves informed on the practical problems and the actual situation. Decisions based merely on paper often fail to show an understanding of the real needs.

Reception centers are being set up in all districts for the increasing number of people coming in from VC controlled areas. If these people decide to remain in the government controlled area, they will be given help in building a house. Each district is working on the establishment of a special area for this purpose. Funds are limited so only partial payment is now being made. At the present rate of relocation the funds budgeted for 1965 will be insufficient to support those leaving VC controlled areas under stimulus from our information and psywar efforts. At present there are 1,444 refugee families in Dinh Tuong.

The 1964 funds for the Chieu Hoi building have been expended and projects have been completed at the new reception center. There were 52 returnees during March. 47 other Quy Chanh were returned to their homes and 18 were sent to Saigon for vocational training. An armed propaganda team is now being formed and a qualified leader needs to be selected. This will increase the effectiveness of the psywar effort.

KIEN HOA (34)

The prov rep reports that a principal problem continues to be the pay of village officials. The village chief and the other officials are grossly underpaid in relation to the responsibilities assigned to them, their living conditions, and the personal risk involved. As the village chief is the closest representative of the GVN to the people, it is important to have effective and competent village chiefs. It is impossible to attract the qualified men that are needed with 15,000 to 17,000 piasters per month. A good village chief can be very influential with the people and could tend to make them pro or con GVN.

Compared to February, there was a sizable increase of Chieu Hoi returnees during the reporting period. 34 Quy Chanh admitted to the center during the month. This increased the total number of returnees in residence to 43. Many problems still remain, however. The Chieu Hoi cadre have not been paid for the past five months. This remains the biggest problem in respect to the Chieu Hoi program and its operation.

The public health service in Kien Hoa is almost non-existent and has further deteriorated due to confusion over administration of the program. The chief of the rural health service is without a doubt the weakest official in the province and needs to be replaced.

The social welfare service in Kien Hoa is contributing very little to the program of this province and needs to be reorganized and given a real function.

Supplies from Saigon are arriving in an ever decreasing rate. Several delivery orders already approved are over three months old. For example, milk ordered in September has not arrived and bulgar wheat has been particularly slow in coming.

VINH BINH (35)

The prov rep reports that the number of VC incidents during March was the lowest in seven months. It has been reported that the VC are transporting weapons and explosives from the arms factor in Ba Xuyen province. It is believed that they are planning to sabotage interprovince and district roads as well as important installations such as the provincial air field and sector headquarters and administrative offices.

The prov rep feels that it is evident that the rural population is beginning to realize that the GVN exists for their benefit. It is expected that in the next month or two, many families will be coming out of VC controlled areas to be resettled in the GVN areas. This movement can be attributed to the recent concentration of ARVN artillery bombardments on VC controlled areas. The rural population is beginning to see that the VC cannot support them in many manner if they continue to live in those areas.

The prov rep reports that the Cambodian political organization, the Khmer Serei, is agitating for a Cambodian province chief to be put in office in Vinh Binh. The prov rep feels that the Cambodian in this province have no reason to complain or agitate against the province chief or his administration, as the present province chief has done everything in his power to give the Cambodians equal rights and to assists them as much as possible,

The prov rep reports that the rural health service in Vinh Binh is unorganized and very uncooperative. The rural health service chief appears to lack the initiative needed to support existing projects and to control his health workers.

VINH LONG (36)

The prov rep reports that all construction was stopped because of the cement shortage. There is much roofing committed but it cannot be released for this reason.

During the month, the Joint Financial Management Team came to the province to review the 1965 pacification budget. The province was prepared to present arguments on their requirements for additional funds. However, the budget was more or less "cut and dried", based on Ministry recommendations. Two sections of the budget were very disappointing to the province: (1) no money was authorized for electrification, and 2) the province received the same allocation for classrooms as in 1964 but there was authorization for training of 675 rural hamlet teachers. The prov rep feels that these decisions were made with little knowledge or considerations for the existing situation. One criterion for building schools has been that they be constructed in secure areas. Although Vinh Long has more secure area than many Delta provinces but it received fewer classrooms than most. 70 hamlet teachers have already been drafted and 80 more will be drafted soon yet the province received authorization to recruit and train only 75.

The province has begun to check into the cadre situation and has discovered many interesting things. It appears some cadre have been working in offices and for other services and have actually been quite "immobile". Others are only seen on payday. It is hoped that from this survey and evaluation system will be set up to "select out" ineffective members and to recruit new members to fill the slots.

AN GIANG (37)

The prov rep reports that slow but constant progress towards complete pacification (rural reconstruction) and economic development continues in An Giang. Little if any significant VC activities occurred during March. The prov rep offers three principal reasons why An Giang enjoys relative peace as opposed to other areas even in adjoining provinces:

1. There is the cohesiveness and the political solidarity of the Hoa Hao people. This group comprises over 80% of the population of An Giang. They are closely knit and especially loyal to the local Hoa Hao leaders to the extent that any VC cadre attempting to operate in the area have a difficult time and their presence is soon revealed by ordinary citizens to the provincial government.

2. There is the topographical factor and the military factor. To a large degree, An Giang consists of vast open rice fields where floating rice is planted. There are no significant forested areas where the VC may remain in concealment. VC activities affecting the province usually occur only in border areas. VC units operate out of other provinces where they have concealment and where they have some measure of political support. The VC are discouraged from many actions because of the constant patrolling of the border by Regional and Popular Forces under control of the province chief and by relatively prompt reaction by these forces to any VC attack.

3. There is a solid psychological factor; that is the provincial administration has been relatively successful in projecting a favorable image of the government and its activities to the people. The province chief and his officials make numerous trips to the districts, villages, and hamlets. Oftentimes the visits take the form of official dedication ceremonies featuring honor guards, bands, speeches, with flags and banners and the appropriate awarding of gifts, followed by an official luncheon. These tactics are effective in presenting the government in a favorable light and in creating a feeling of nationalism.

The prov rep feels that because An Giang has been so successful in keeping out the VC it should be included in the Hop Tac priority area or as a major oil spot in a separate Hop Tac area. This plan may maximize the political potentials of the Hoa Hao people in the surrounding provinces. Priority should be given to An Giang in all economic programs. This would project the image of the government to the people and would be used as a model of what can be done when the people support the government and resist the VC.

KIEN GIANG (38)

The prov rep reports that the overall security situation in Kien Giang has not improved. However the number of incidents and harassments has declined during the month. This decline was due to unilateral action on the part of the VC and not necessarily to effective GVN measures. Although the population appears to be extremely receptive to the bombings in North Vietnam and to the selective bombing missions in the province, many feel that this will mean some sort of a quick victory. If this quick victory does not come it may be a great psychological letdown.

The shortage of cement seriously affects the completion of certain program in the province.

Public administration problems focus on the provincial financial service as well as on district, village and hamlet administration personnel. The financial service continues to have problems in justifying the 1963 and 1964 vouchers. Part of this problem is caused by the financial service not assigning enough personnel to the job. District, village and hamlet employees have added to the problems by not correctly managing the projects not submitting the proper paperwork. Public administration training courses are planned for these personnel in 1965.

During the month 12 Quy Chanh were admitted to the Kien Giang Chieu Hoi center. The present Chieu Hoi facilities leave much to be desired but plans for the new center have been developed.

CHUONG THIEN (39)

The prov rep reports that the newly constituted combat command 31, which replaces the brigade organization, has not freed the province chief from the task of basic planning. He still remains the senior ARVN force commander in the province. This slows the overall pacification effort as the province chief must spend 80 to 85% of his time leading with military matters. The prov rep recommends that an additional officer be assigned to take over the ARVN forces in Chuong Thien or assign someone to be province chief and allow the present province chief to spend full time with his military duties.

Long held beliefs that the VC pacification program exists have been validated. They are developing "combat hamlets" vs. our "new life hamlets". The basic difference is that the VC hamlets are well organized, clean, economically self supporting and have an active defense system. For example, a cottage industry in one hamlet was as large as has been previously witnessed anywhere in Chuong Thien province. New canals are being dug and pineapples are under cultivation. The VC also have a relocation program for younger families. These areas coincide with the areas just outside the planned GVN sphere of interest. Unless the USOM/GVN activities exhibit a more qualitative basis, there is little likelihood of changing the present attitudes of the people. For example, in one area only five kilometers from the province capital, the people refuse medical assistance offered by ARVN medics.

Kien Thanh district town was mortared the night of 26-27 February, causing extensive damage. Three civilians were killed, 10 wounded and several badly burned. 70 families were left homeless as 59 homes burned to the ground. The morning after the incident, the province chief distributed 40,000 piasters, medical personnel were brought in as the district dispensary also was destroyed. On March 5 relief supplies from the Ministry of Social Welfare were airlifted to Kien Thanh and were distributed. Supplies included clothing, mosquito nets, sleeping mats, cooking oil and rice and a community committee has been formed to rebuild the homes and 1500 sheets of roofing are scheduled for the project. 800 sheets have been airlifted thus far.

PHONG DINH (40)

The prov rep reports that a persistent problem is the absence of an effective resources control program. Another problem noted was the absence of a plan to combat the increasing VC economic encroachment and the need for additional training for hamlet and village officials.

The prov rep reports that there is considerable discussion in the province concerning the possible ending of the armed conflict this year. However, most feel that even if the conflict does end this year isolated actions of terrorism and harassment may continue indefinitely. The majority of persons appear opposed to negotiation but would rather see a clear cut decision.

17 pacification (rural reconstruction) cadre in hamlets and villages have resigned retired or found new employment. Action is being taken to replace them.

The provincial VIS chief has received 500 GE radios for sale under the radio program.

An estimated 100 families have fled Ham My and Hiep Hung villages in Phung Hiep district because of air activities against the VC. These people have temporarily resettled in Phung Hiep village. The provincial social welfare personnel spent some time administering the needs of the relocatees. Of these 700 families, it is estimated approximately will elect to resettle in secure areas.

Getting jobs for Chieu Hoi returnees is a major problem because of red tape. A few of them were accepted in private firms and with regional forces. The remainder just go back to the hamlet and live with their families with the 500 piasters given to them.

BA XUYEN (41)

The prov rep reports that in every village or hamlet visited by the provincial pacification inspection team, one of the first questions or requests concerned the self help program. This and the numerous applications at the province office indicates that this program is one of the most sought after program by the rural population. The prov rep feels that an aggressive self help program is extremely valuable in the rural areas. However, he reports that the program is failing because of the absence of the basic commodities, such as cement, roofing and reinforcing bars. At the end of the reporting period, USOM/Ba Xuyen owed 2,675 bags of cement, 3,666 sheets of roofing and 2,330 kg of reinforcing bars. These commodities are for projects already signed off by the province committee. Unless a quick solution is found, the rainy season will be here and the rural population will be too busy planting and working the fields to participate in the program. USOM will also be in a position of having promised something that it cannot deliver.

As a consequence of the increased Chieu Hoi propaganda there has been a corresponding increase in the number of returnees. However, the 43 Quy Chanh for this month pose the serious problem of what to do with them after their processing and indoctrination courses are completed.

On March 17, 1,000 persons were attending a monk's funeral in the vicinity of the Bai Xau pagoda, two paramilitary men threw grenades during a quarrel. This resulted in 7 killed and 20 seriously wounded. 17,500 plasters were distributed to the hospitalized victims from MIDCAP funds.

AN XUYEN (42)

The prov rep reports that on March 25 an air drop to Nam Tan provided much needed food to 1,000 inhabitants who were fast approaching starvation. Approximately 30,000 lbs of bulgar was dropped and all but one bundle landed within the drop zone. Nam Can, a district headquarters, is the only GVN controlled area in Nam Can district. They are in their second year of a continuous VC economic blockade. Located in a mangrove swamp area, Nam Can must import all its rice. The air drop has done much to revive the spirit in Nam Can and may turn out to be the reason which will enable Nam Can to remain within the GVN sphere.

The Chieu Hoi program continues to be the most effective and best directed program within the province. Eleven more came in during the reporting period, bringing their wives and children. The total population of the center is now 61. Two new buildings have been completed at the center this month but the center is still overcrowded. If the program continues at the present rate, more facilities will be needed. The program is getting through to the VC and they have made some attempts to disrupt it. During the night of March 26, the VC ran into an ambush that protects the center. The province agrees that a special effort must be made in the next month to increase the security and improve the activities of the center.

BAC LIEU (43)

The prov rep reports that indications are that VC strength in Bac Lieu is measurably lower than it has been in some time. The number of incidents has decreased and freedom of movement has increased. There are reasons to believe that many of the local units have been levied to fill slots in other units further north. If this is true, it is interesting to note that the VC may be making interprovincial transfers of their regional force units.

There are some problems in Phuoc Long District. The regional Forces stationed there are Hoa Hao, as is the district chief himself, but the district population is not. There is considerable animosity on the part of the public against the Hoa Hao stationed there and with evident reasons. There have been reported kidnappings, extortion and general harassment of the people by the regional forces stationed there. This situation cannot continue with any profitable result for the GVN. The prov rep reports that the province chief may replace both the district chief and the Hoa Hao company.

Rural health workers are having pay difficulties. Since the AGHD was created, it has failed to forward the salaries to the provincial rural health chief in Bac Lieu. It was difficult enough paying them under the old system but now it is out of provincial hands.

Self help is not organized in Bac Lieu and the problem is at province level. There is no lack of interest on the part of the hamlets. One possible cause is that there have been four different pacification chiefs in the last six months.

There were 14 Chieu Hoi returnees during the month. This is the highest figure for any of the six months that this province has been in existence. The province rep believes that this may be caused by disenchantment of the local force personnel because of their lowered unit strength and their continued punishment from air and artillery bombardment.

CHAU DOC (44)

The prov rep reports that in March, the province had 15 Chieu Hoi returnees who brought in with them a number of grenades, a Thompson sub-machine gun, and a US carbine. The total number of returnees is now 36 for 1965.

The self help program is receiving a push from the Filipino representative, and the future of the program appears promising. During the month, a maternity/dispensary and a two-room school were completed.