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REFUGEE RELOCATION - PHU YEN TO CAM RANH BAY

August 1966

HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR ON MICROFILM

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FIELD RESEARCH MEMORANDUM NO. 3

NOTES ON THE INTERPROVINCIAL RESETTLEMENT
OF REFUGEES: PHU-YEN PROVINCE TO CAM RANH BAY AREA
REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM

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15 August 1966

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Table of Contents:

	<u>Page</u>
→ Preface.....	i
→ Summary.....	ii
→ Vietnamese Summary.....	iv
→ Background.....	1
→ The Bai Gieng Plan.....	4
→ The Present Situation at Bai Gieng.....	7
→ Bai Gieng Questionnaire Results, <i>and</i>	10
→ Concluding Note.....	16

Background

The central coastal provinces of Phu-Yen and Khanh-Hoa have been facing contrasting difficulties in the wake of the recent military buildup in the Republic of Viet-Nam. In Phu-Yen, since late 1964, there has been a continuing large scale population shift from outlying areas into major GVN-controlled towns and villages.

Presently, an estimated 15 percent of Phu-Yen's population of 350,000 is displaced. Most such refugees are not only displaced from their native villages, but in the process have become cut off from their former sources of livelihood as well. Moreover, there are few or no opportunities for employment in the areas of refugee concentration.

Bordering Phu-Yen on the south is Khanh-Hoa Province, where employment problems are of a different nature. Khanh-Hoa is the site of Cam Ranh Bay, which is being developed as a major port and logistics center for the military effort in South Viet-Nam. To construct and maintain the enormous port, supply, storage, and transportation facilities in Cam Ranh, the U. S. Army, the Vietnamese Government, and various private construction agencies require great numbers of laborers, both skilled and unskilled. One agency alone in Cam Ranh reported immediate employment opportunities for 5,000 persons.

With the small indigenous labor supply in the Cam Ranh area long-since exhausted, new sources must be tapped if construction deadlines are to be met.

SƠ LƯỢC

1. Nhóm dân tỵ-nạn di chuyển đến khu định-cư Bãi giếng ngày 15 tháng 5 năm 1966 dưới sự bảo-trợ của Chính-phủ Việt nam đều đã nhận được tiền trợ-cấp định-cư, vật-liệu xây cất, thực-phẩm và vật-dụng như kế-hoạch định-cư dự-liệu.

2. Gần một phần tư dân chúng cư-ngụ tại Bãi giếng hiện nay đã định-cư ở đây từ 15-5 tuy không được phép của Chính-quyền. Những người này sống trong các căn nhà xây cất tạm nhưng không được công-nhận cho thụ-hưởng tiền trợ-cấp định-cư hoặc thâu-dụng làm nhân-công trong vùng.

3. Vấn-đề khai-quang đất-đai là một trở-ngại cho việc định-cư thêm dân và xây cất các tiện-nghi công-cộng. Khu đất giành cho khu định-cư Bãi giếng cần có dụng-cụ cơ-giới nặng để khai-quang và san phẳng, nhưng hiện nay chỉ có một chiếc dùng cho công-tác này do Chính-quyền thị-xã cung-cấp và không thể nào thỏa-mãn nhu-cầu.

4. Công-tác xây cất những cơ-sở tiện-nghi công cộng như chợ-búa cần được xúc-tiến để đáp-ứng nhu-cầu dân-số gia-tăng tại Bãi giếng. Nông-phẩm sản-xuất tại Cam-ranh không đáng kể và quanh khu Bãi giếng không có nơi nào buôn bán thực-phẩm.

5. Qua cuộc phỏng-vấn với 60/o dân tỵ-nạn tại Bãi giếng rút ra được những điểm sau đây :

a. Phần đông dân tỵ-nạn tại Bãi giếng theo đạo Thiên-chúa và đã di-cư từ miền Bắc Việt-nam sau cuộc chia cắt nước năm 1954.

b. Đa-số dân tỵ-nạn định-cư tại Phú-yên từ năm 1954 đều làm nghề nông tại quận Hiếu-xương. Trong khoảng năm 1964-1965, họ lại tỵ-cư một lần nữa để đến sinh-sống với thân-quyển quanh thị-xã Tuy-hòa. Tại đây họ không nhận được trợ-giúp nào của Chính-quyền (một số có nhận được vài vật-dụng hàng ngày do cơ-quan cứu-tế Thiên-chúa-giáo tặng),

và không tìm được cách gì để làm ăn nuôi gia-đình.

c. Một số lớn dân tỵ-nạn đã đến Bãi giếng do sự khuyến-khích của tu-sĩ Thiên-chúa-giáo và bạn đồng-đạo ở Tuy-hòa.

d. Phần đông nghĩ rằng đời sống tại Bãi giếng hiện để chịu hơn khi còn ở tại Tuy-hòa, tuy-nhiên như nhận thấy thì cũng không khả-quan gì hơn tại nơi định-cư đầu tiên của họ tại quận Hiếu-xương.

e. Trong tương-lai, hầu-hết dân tỵ-nạn ở đây đều muốn ở lại Bãi giếng ngày nào còn chiến-tranh. Khi chiến-tranh chấm dứt và hòa-bình văn-hồi, nếu có thể được, hầu-như mọi người đều mong muốn trở về sinh-quán tại miền Bắc Việt-nam để tiếp-tục cấy ruộng sinh-nhai.

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Preface

Early in 1966 the Government of Viet-Nam established the Office of the Special Commissioner for Refugees. One of the first projects undertaken by the new Commissariat was a pilot program of inter-provincial resettlement of refugees. The first resettlement effort in this project was started in May 1966, and involved the transfer of a group of refugees from Phu-Yen Province to neighboring Khanh-Hoa Province.

Since the field data collection of HSR's Refugee Study Project focused on the refugee population of Phu-Yen Province, this inter-provincial refugee resettlement was of special interest. On 25 July 1966 one member of the HSR Field Team (Mr. John LeNoir) and one Vietnamese research interviewer visited the Bai Gieng Resettlement in Cam Ranh City, Khanh-Hoa Province.

Informal conversations were held with the U. S. Army Civil Affairs Officer for the Cam Ranh Bay area and the Catholic priest of Bai Gieng, who also serves as chief of the Resettlement. In addition, a questionnaire was utilized for systematic interviews with a number of the refugee families.

The following report is based on observations, conversations, and interviews during this brief visit to Bai Gieng.

Summary

1. The group of refugees transferred under Government auspices to the Bai Gieng Resettlement on 15 May 1966 have received resettlement allowances of cash, building materials, and commodities, as called for by the resettlement plan.

2. Approximately one-fourth of the present population at Bai Gieng, however, are people who have resettled there since 15 May without Government authorization. These people live in the temporary structures at Bai Gieng, but do not qualify for resettlement allowances or employment in the area.

3. Land clearance is one factor impeding further resettlement and construction of community facilities. The land provided for the Bai Gieng Resettlement must be cleared and leveled by heavy equipment. Presently, only the inadequate equipment of the City Government of Cam Ranh is available for such clearing.

4. Construction of essential community facilities such as food markets must be stepped up in order to accommodate the growing population at Bai Gieng. There is negligible agriculture production in the Cam Ranh Bay area so foodstuffs will have to be imported. Presently, however, there are no commercial food outlets around Bai Gieng.

5. Systematic interviews with a six percent sample of the refugee population at Bai Gieng revealed the following points:

- a. The refugees at Bai Gieng are predominantly Catholics who became refugees from North Viet-Nam after partition of the country in 1954.

- b. Most refugees who resettled in Phu-Yen Province in 1954 became farmers in Hieu-Xuong District. In 1964-1965 they left their homes again to become refugees in and around the town of Tuy-Hoa. As refugees in Tuy-Hoa, they moved in with relatives, received little or no aid from the Government (some received commodity support from the Catholic Church), and found no means of adequately supporting their families.
- c. Most of the refugees who moved to the Bai Gieng Resettlement did so at the urging of the Catholic clergy and Catholic friends in the Tuy-Hoa area.
- d. The refugees, for the most part, consider their life at Bai Gieng to be better than it had been while they were refugees in Tuy-Hoa. However, life at Bai Gieng was felt to be about the same as it had been in their original resettlement in Hieu-Xuong District, Phu-Yen Province.
- e. Regarding future plans, the majority of the refugees intend to remain in Bai Gieng for the duration of the war. However, almost all would choose to return to their native hamlets in North Viet-Nam and resume farming, if conditions ever permitted.

The Bai Gieng Plan

The Bai Gieng Resettlement is the proposed new home for 500 refugee families who are to be brought into the Cam Ranh Bay area from other provinces. The project envisions a resettlement village composed of five hamlets of 100 families each. Plans include construction of wells, a market, sports arena, administration building, church and pagoda, dispensary, and a school. Individual houses are to be laid out in even rows on either side of the proposed community facilities (see Figure 1).

According to the resettlement plan, each new refugee family in Bai Gieng is to receive commodity support for the first six months. In addition, each family will be allotted 3,500\$VN, 20 sheets of tin, 10 bags of cement, and a plot of land on which to build their house. Temporary accommodations will be provided while the individual houses are under construction.

Persons wanting to resettle under this project will be required to secure authorization from the local authorities in their native provinces. Normally, the district chief should certify them as bona fide refugees and give them permission to move from his district. Once a group of refugees has been prepared and authorized to move, the Refugee Commissariat, USAID, and the U. S. Army are responsible for the coordination of plans for transportation and accommodations.

The Bai Gieng project got underway with the first group of refugees (150 families, nearly 1,000 persons) departing Tuy-Hoa on 15 May 1966 aboard a U. S. Army LST (USS Page) for the 15-hour trip to Cam Ranh Bay. These families had all secured necessary approvals and clearances from Phu-Yen officials and were thus considered "authorized refugees" entitled to resettlement privileges and allowances at Bai Gieng.

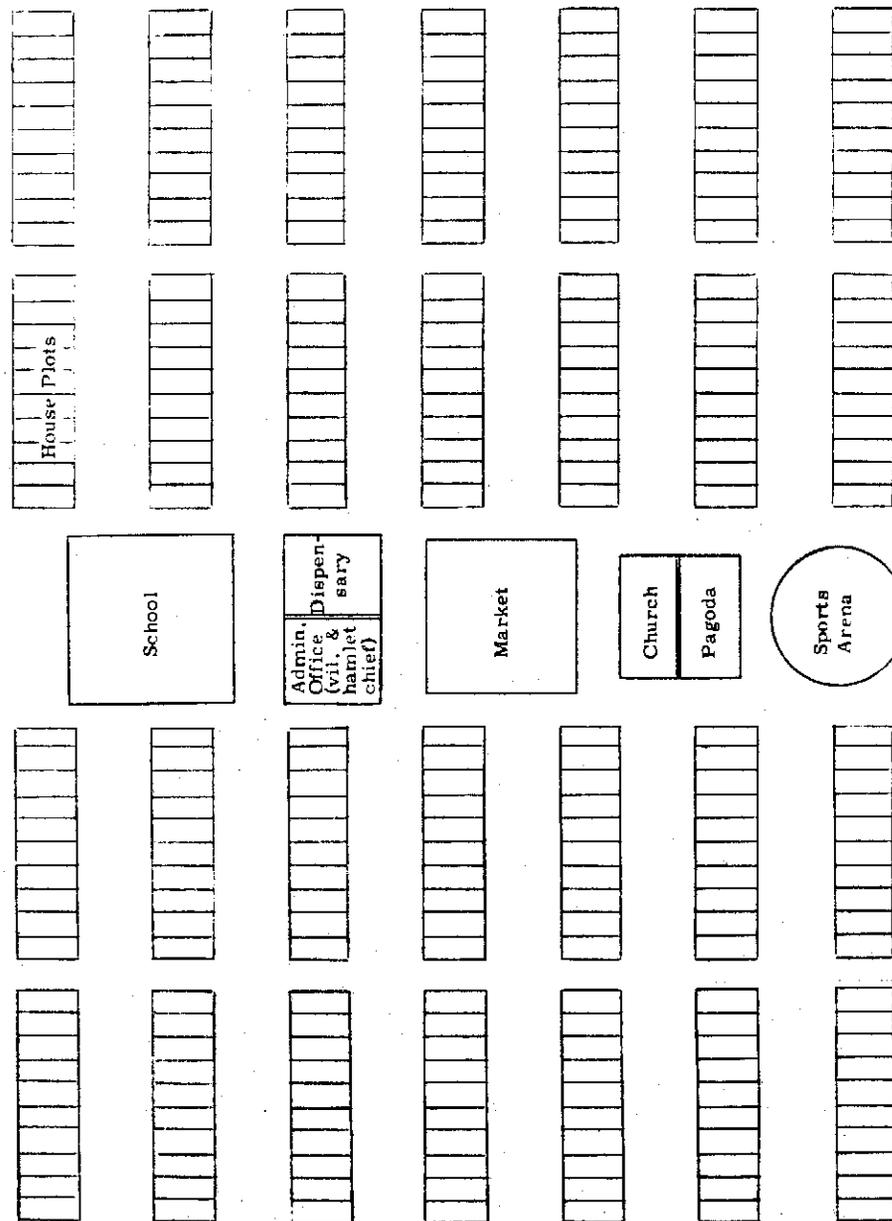
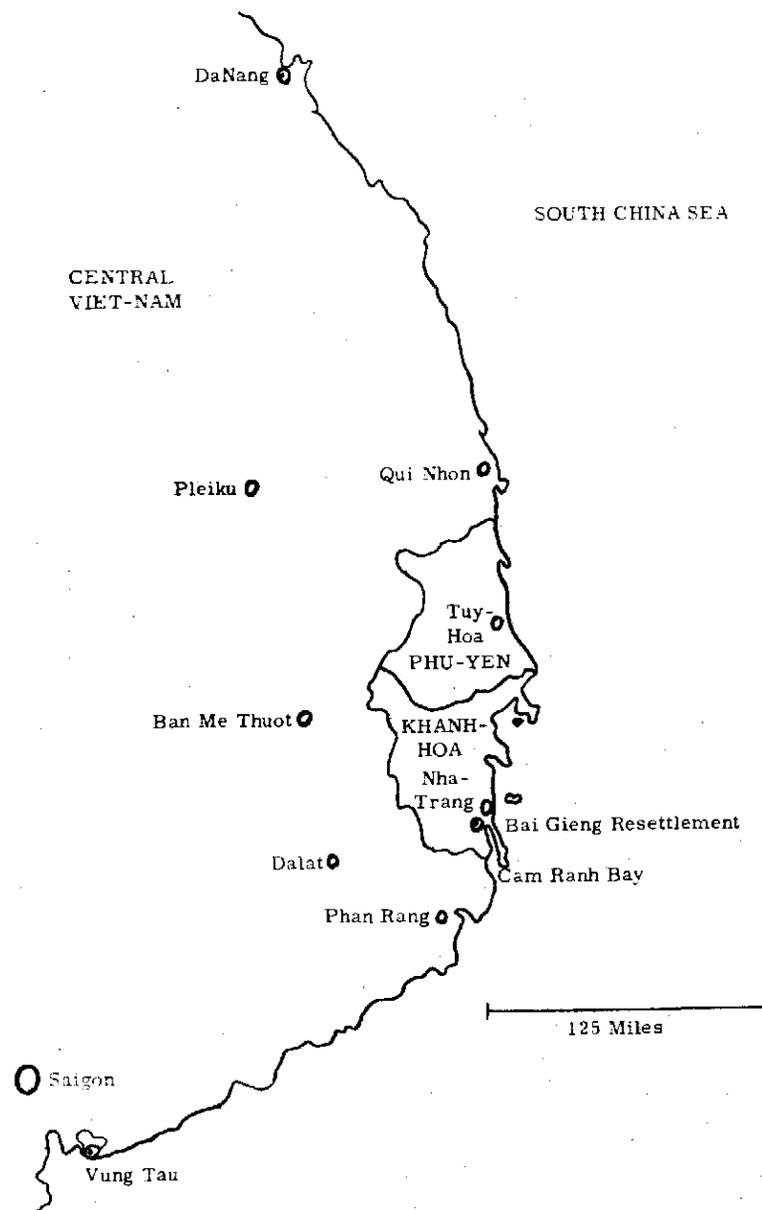


FIGURE 1: APPROXIMATE LAYOUT OF BAI GIENG RESETTLEMENT

The Bai Gieng Resettlement in Cam Ranh City¹ was established to accommodate refugees transferred from Phu-Yen and other provinces having labor surpluses. As the first effort in the program of inter-provincial refugee resettlement, the Bai Gieng Resettlement will be important not only as a pilot project for future resettlements in the Cam Ranh Bay area, but for possible similar projects in other areas.

¹Cam Ranh City is the administrative designation of the area adjacent to the Bay. The various hamlets and villages in the area, which taken all together, hardly resemble a city at present, are incorporated into this administrative framework much like a province. The Cam Ranh City "Mayor" is comparable in status to a Province Chief.



From 16 May to present, however, approximately 50 additional families have moved to Bai Gieng by their own means and of their own accord. Since Phu-Yen provincial authorities had not certified them as refugees, Bai Gieng officials consider them to be "unauthorized refugees" who are not entitled to resettlement allowances. Further, the families had not secured required clearances to move from Phu-Yen and, therefore, lacked sufficient credentials to be employed by any of the agencies in Cam Ranh.

The Present Situation at Bai Gieng

The majority of the people at Bai Gieng have been there for nearly two and a half months. The population has climbed to approximately 200 families (or 1,400 persons), all of whom live in crowded temporary shelters and tents.

The 150 "authorized" families have received building materials and money to start construction on their houses. The houses (mostly half completed) appear to be individual family projects, but, so far, are relatively well constructed with cement floors and tin roofs.

The 50-odd "unauthorized" families are allowed to remain in the temporary shelters and are given "left overs" from the commodity support program. Efforts are being made to arrange necessary authorizations and clearances for them. In the meantime, however, they can neither receive normal relief allowances nor obtain employment.

Another problem facing the Bai Gieng project is that of land clearance. The land made available for the resettlement must be leveled and cleared with heavy equipment before further construction can be undertaken. Presently only a fraction of the allotted land has been cleared for use.

The City of Cam Ranh, reportedly, has only two bulldozers, which are heavily committed to other tasks in the area--thus are available to the Bai Gieng Resettlement only at infrequent intervals. The land clearing equipment of private firms working throughout the area has not been made available to the Resettlement.

One other issue which will require attention in the near future is the development of sources and outlets for commercial food supplies. After the first three months, the resettled family is to receive a limited amount of commodity support. This commodity support will be discontinued after the first six months. Within the next few months, then, there will be a growing demand for foodstuffs on a commercial basis. There are, however, no commercial distribution outlets around Bai Gieng. Moreover, there is negligible agriculture production in the Cam Ranh Bay area so foodstuffs will have to be imported probably from Nha Trang and Phan Rang.



Temporary quarters at Bai Gieng Resettlement.
Each tent houses several families.



Temporary quarters constructed of sheet tin.

Bai Gieng Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire prepared for the visit to Bai Gieng was administered to twelve families selected at random at the resettlement. The interviews were conducted with the heads of families in their own living quarters. The following is an outline of the responses:

1. What was your native hamlet?²
 - 8 of the 12 lived in the same village (Hoa Phong) in Hieu-Xuong District, approximately 20 kilometers west of Tuy-Hoa.
 - 2 of the 12 lived in the same village (An Ninh) in Tuy-An District, approximately 30 kilometers north of Tuy-Hoa.
 - 2 of the 12 lived in An Chan and Hoa Dong; both villages approximately 20 kilometers from Tuy-Hoa.
2. What was your occupation in your native hamlet?
 - 9 of the 12 were farmers (owned land). Their average land holdings were 2.8 mau³. (Distribution: lowest--1.0 mau; highest--3.5 mau).
 - 2 of the 12 were carpenters.
 - 1 of the 12 was a military dependent until November 1965 when her husband was killed. As a widow she did not work.

²Ten of the twelve respondents made distinctions in referring to "native hamlet." These interviewees had moved to Phu-Yen Province from North Viet-Nam in 1954 and hence spoke of "native hamlets," both in North Viet-Nam and in the South. For clarity and consistency, the interviews and this report employ the term "native hamlet" in reference to the original resettlement location in South Viet-Nam.

³A mau is 10,000 square meters or slightly less than 2 1/2 acres.

3. What was your average daily income in your native hamlet?
 - The 9 farmers averaged 100 piastres daily (Distribution: lowest--40\$VN; highest--200\$VN).
4. When did you first become a refugee?⁴
 - 2 in 1962
 - 2 in 1963
 - 5 in latter half of 1964
 - 1 in July 1965
 - 2 in October 1965
5. Where did you go when you first became a refugee?
 - 10 of the 12 respondents went to the City of Tuy-Hoa to resettle.
 - 1 went to My Thanh (25 km southwest of Tuy-Hoa).
 - 1 went to Phu Lam (5 km southwest of Tuy-Hoa).
 - [6 of the 12 reported that they moved in with relatives (all "cousins")]
6. What aid did you receive at this first resettlement location?
 - 5 of the 12 respondents reported receiving no aid at all.
 - Of the 7 reporting aid received: 4 received wheat, milk, salt, nuoc-mam, and old clothing from the Catholic priest of Tuy-Hoa; 5 (including 2 who received Catholic aid as well) received rice, wheat, maize, and medicine from the Vietnamese Government.
7. Were you able to find a job at the first resettlement location?
 - 4 of the 12 respondents reported working as laborers. All had previously been farmers. None reported that his income had been sufficient.

⁴For those who had been refugees from the North, Questions 4 - 7 refer to the displacement and relocation after they had resettled in Phu-Yen Province in 1954.

- 3 of the 12 reported finding no work at all.
- 2 of the 12 reported unemployment for themselves, but stated that their wives sold vegetables on the local market. Both men felt that the income derived was inadequate.
- 2 of the 12 (the two carpenters) resumed carpentry, but reported that they were unable to support their families.
- (The widow respondent did not work.)

8. When did you move to Bai Gieng?

- 7 moved on the 15th and 16th of May 1966.
- 5 moved on the 27th of May 1966.

9. Why did you move to Bai Gieng?

- 9 of the 12 reported that they were influenced by the Catholic priest and other Catholic friends.
- All respondents cited difficulties of finding employment and earning livings as a reason for moving. Two respondents cited insecurity of the first resettlement site in the Tuy-Hoa area as a factor in their decision to move to Bai Gieng.

10. Did all the members of your household move to Bai Gieng with you?

- All 12 moved with their entire households.

11. What are you doing now to earn your living?

- 8 of the 12 reported that they were constructing their houses and would not seek employment until completed.
- 3 of the 12 report no work at all.
- 1 of the 12 (the widow) sells nuoc-mam for a daily income of 20 piastres.
- Note: the 4 respondents in the previous two categories moved to Bai Gieng on 27 May 1966. They are obviously part of the "unauthorized" group in that they have not received the normal resettlement allowance and cannot find employment. The one other family of the 27 May group is building a house, but apparently through their own means since they report receiving only 8 kg of rice from the priest and 4 kg of wheat from Korean troops.



Crowded temporary facilities.



Individual houses being constructed on assigned plots. Land in foreground had recently been cleared.

12. What is your present average daily income?
- See Question 11.
13. Have you received any aid since coming to Bai Gieng?
- 7 respondents (those who moved to Bai Gieng on 15 May 1966) report receiving wheat, rice, potatoes, tools, cement, and 3,500 piastres in cash. 2 of these respondents report receiving old clothing from Korean troops.
- Of the 5 respondents of the 27 May group, 2 report receiving no aid whatsoever, while 3 report small amounts of rice, wheat, potatoes, and old clothing from the priest and Korean troops. One respondent reported receiving medicine from the Vietnamese Government.
14. Do you think that your life here in Bai Gieng is better, the same, or worse than it was:
- a. at your first resettlement location?
- 9 interviewees felt that life at Bai Gieng was better than what it was in their first resettlement location in the Tuy-Hoa area.
 - 2 reported that they thought conditions were the same. (One of these respondents had received the full resettlement allowance. The other was of the 27 May group and had received no aid at Bai Gieng.)
 - 1 no response.
- b. at your native hamlet?
- 8 reported that their life at Bai Gieng was about the same as it had been in their native hamlet. 3 of these 8, however, stated that they believed that once they started making money their lives would improve.
 - 3 respondents felt that life at Bai Gieng was worse. (Of this group, 2 had received resettlement allowances and 1 had received nothing; 2 had originally been farmers and 1 a carpenter.)
 - 1 no response.

15. What do you think you will do in the future if the war continues?
- 10 stated that they intend to resettle in Bai Gieng permanently. (3 of these respondents qualified their statement with: "providing the VC don't come here.")
 - 1 respondent stated that he did not know what he was going to do. (He had received a resettlement allowance and was constructing a house, however.)
 - 1 respondent (a former farmer) reported that he wanted to join the Vietnamese Army.
16. What do you think you will do when the war is over and peace is restored to Viet-Nam?
- 10 respondents stated that they would return to their native village (including 8 who had stated that they would resettle permanently in Bai Gieng in Question 15). 8 of these 10 respondents were originally (pre-1954) from North Viet-Nam and intended to return to the North if peace were restored.
 - 1 respondent reported that he would remain in Bai Gieng even after the war.
 - 1 no response.
 - (Note: 7 of the 10 respondents who indicated that they would return to their native villages were formerly farmers. All 7 stated that they would resume farming. The 3 other respondents in this category were the 2 carpenters and the widow. The respondent who intended to remain at Bai Gieng after the war was a North Vietnamese farmer.)

Concluding Note

Certain salient points in the refugees' responses to the questionnaire should be underscored for their significance in planning possible future resettlement projects.

The reasons cited for moving to Bai Gieng indicate an effective local leadership among Catholics in the Tuy-Hoa area. In future efforts it may be feasible to call upon community and religious leaders to assist in planning and organizing relocation projects. Local opinion leaders, for instance, may be effective in disseminating information regarding procedures for securing necessary government authorization for resettlement.

Dealing with local leadership, however, requires close attention to religious, regional, and ethnic differences within the population and their sensitivities to "favoritism," whether real or imagined. This can be a significant factor where the population group encompasses an ethnic dichotomy such as lowland Vietnamese and Montagnards or a secular animus as often found with Catholic and Buddhist groups.

At the time of the interviews, the "authorized" refugees had been at Bai Gieng for approximately 2 1/2 months. All of those interviewed were still involved in constructing their houses and were unable to work for the agencies requiring laborers. In future resettlement programs in which the transfer of manpower is a factor, consideration might well be given to expediting the resettlement process by providing more guidance and assistance in individual home building.

Finally, certain qualifications should be pointed out regarding the respondents' attitudes toward the resettlement at Bai Gieng (Question 14) and long-range expectations (Question 16). At the time of the

interview the refugees had not completely "resettled" inasmuch as they were not yet gainfully employed and were still living in temporary community shelters. Eventually, with a steady income, established home, and community services and facilities such as those planned at Bai Gieng, there may be marked differences in what the refugees' responses would be.

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