

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS IN VIETNAM

At the invitation of the Red Cross Societies of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and of the Republic of South Vietnam, Mr. J.-P. Hocké, director of the Operations Division of the ICRC, visited Hanoi from 19 to 27 November 1975, and then Saigon from 28 November to 3 December 1975.

This mission, in which Mr. Hocké was also acting in his capacity as joint director of the ICRC/League Indochina Bureau, had the following main objectives:

- (a) to gather more detailed information on the use of aid already supplied;
- (b) to discuss plans for future assistance and co-operation;
- (c) to re-examine other humanitarian problems, such as the reuniting of families, aid to foreigners stranded in Vietnam without resources, tracing missing persons, etc.

The authorities and the National Societies of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and of the Republic of South Vietnam showed great efficiency and co-operative spirit, and were keenly aware that, out of 137 million Swiss francs spent on aid to Indochina since January 1973, 112 millions had been for Vietnam. A promise was given to increase co-operation in the sense requested by Geneva.

In the Republic of South Vietnam, Mr. Hocké visited new economy zones in the area of Thieu Dao Mott, some 80 kilometres northwest of Saigon, and in the provincial centre of Ben Tre, 130 km south of Saigon, where members of the Red Cross gave medical treatment and distributed food.

Republic of South Vietnam

After the visit of Mr. Hocké, the Red Cross of the Republic of South Vietnam presented a complete report for the period between

1 May and 30 November 1975. During this period, the Society received, through the International Red Cross, 4,343 tons of relief supplies, of which 58 tons were sent by air and 4,285 tons by sea. Of the total, 2,928 tons—comprising sugar, dried milk, flour, raw cotton and synthetic fibres—were made up in the country into food ready for consumption or into clothing, and were distributed by the Red Cross to people in need. When the report was written, there were still 508 tons of relief supplies awaiting Customs clearance in the harbour, while 907 tons of food and other goods had been taken to the Society's central storage depots from which 432 tons had been distributed.

Up to the end of November 1975, the Red Cross of the Republic of South Vietnam had assisted the following persons:

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| (a) displaced persons being re-established in their own villages or in new centres of economic development | 367,865 persons |
| (b) victims of natural catastrophes, people in need in areas devastated by the war, orphans, etc. | 190,890 persons |

In addition to the 432 tons of relief supplies received from the International Red Cross, the Red Cross of the Republic of South Vietnam has distributed 698 tons of supplies sent by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and 40 tons received from other sources, an overall total of 1,170 tons.

The 43 tons of medical supplies sent to the Red Cross of the Republic of South Vietnam enabled the Society to continue uninterrupted the activities of its two dispensaries in Saigon and Gia Dinh. They also made it possible to reopen the dispensaries run by the provincial Committees of the Society in My-Tho, Bèn-Tre, Long-Suyen, Can-Tho, Sadeo, Rach-Gia, Ca-Mau and Tuyen-Duc. In addition, stocks of medicines and dressing were sent to Hué to help flood victims there. Mobile Red Cross medical teams are operating in rural areas and in centres for Vietnamese citizens from Cambodia, as well as in the new centres for agricultural development, which have not yet been provided with proper medical services. In the dispensaries in Saigon and Gia-Dinh alone, the Red Cross treated 61,216 patients in the period between 1 May and 30 November 1975.

Apart from the 4,343 tons of supplies sent to Saigon, 15,781 tons were sent to the Red Cross of the Republic of South Vietnam through the port of Danang and 1,103 tons through Haiphong and the airport at Hanoi. The last two consignments were distributed by the Red Cross in the provinces of central Vietnam and in the Western Highlands.

The Red Cross of the Republic of South Vietnam, in close collaboration with the International Red Cross delegation in Saigon, has worked out an overall plan, properly balanced financially, for aiding people in need during 1976. The plan comprises several programmes, each of them carefully worked out and presented in detail. The needs listed correspond closely with those observed on the spot by Mr. Hocké during his recent visit and corroborated by the delegates and other observers, as well as by reports on the situation in South Vietnam.

The head of the delegation, one assistant and an ICRC doctor, and a delegate representative the League, remained in Saigon throughout 1975. The delegation has done much valuable work in tracing people, and in registering and repatriating foreigners. In addition, from the beginning of June 1975 the delegation has been running a medical dispensary in its headquarters; this has proved particularly useful to foreigners, often with no money and in difficulties owing to the absence of any consular services.

Democratic Republic of Vietnam

During talks in November in Hanoi, Mr. Hocké received a list of medical supplies required by the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The total cost of these supplies is estimated at 2 million Swiss francs. Small quantities of office supplies and paper were also asked for, to a value of about 50,000 Swiss francs.
