

Donation of Hour's Pay Urged by Exiled Cubans 8/29/69

Said 'Sure-Fire' Way to Aid Storm Victims

Leaders of the Cubans living in exile in New Orleans are promoting what they say is a sure-fire method of gathering cash donations to aid victims of Hurricane Camille in Louisiana and Mississippi—giving an hour's pay.

Dr. Alfredo Gonzalez, coordinator of the New Orleans Chapter of the Truth About Cuba Committee, said Thursday that Cubans living in exile know what it means to lose everything and are concerned about helping the hurricane victims. He said that "many of these victims of the Communist hurricane 'Fidel' could not even use their knowledge and profession-

al skills to rebuild their lives" and had to rely on the assistance of others.

Manuel Gill, committee secretary, said many Cubans here contributed directly to the American Red Cross, adding that some \$2,000 worth of food and other items and \$200 in cash have already been collected by the Cuban Lyceum, the Cuban social organization here, and turned over to relief organizations.

But they feel this is not enough, Gill added, so they decided to donate an hour's wage each to the Camille victims.

Gill said there are about 2,000 Cuban workers in the New Orleans area and such a donation should generate about \$4,000 in a week's time.

"If the majority of New Orleansians would do the same," he added, "more than \$1 million could be collected in a week."

He said Cubans are no strangers to hurricanes and the deduct-an-hour's-pay plan has often been used in Cuba before Fidel Castro took over the government.

Gill said after Hurricane Betsy ravaged the Cuban nation in 1965, Castro's government took a day's pay from every worker to fund reconstruction and relief efforts.

"Many Cubans here have relatives whose homes were again destroyed by Camille," Gill said, "but they cannot offer any direct assistance to them. We know help is needed here, so most have agreed to give an hour's wage to the Louisiana and Mississippi victims.

"When you think about it, the only real insurance is people—your neighbor—and we know by experience that this one-hour wage donation made by the residents of New Orleans may very well be their own best insurance for the future."

Gill also said Luis Manrara, president of the Truth About Cuba Committee, has informed the local branch that Cuban residents in Miami are also collecting aid funds for the storm disaster areas.

Meanwhile, the American

Red Cross in New Orleans reported that contributions to its National Disaster Relief Fund totaled \$195,291.80 as of Thursday afternoon.

In addition to its more than 24 emergency centers in operation in Louisiana and Mississippi, the Red Cross has also recently opened an emergency center in Picayune, Miss., at the city hall.

The Louisiana Disaster Fund announced late Thursday afternoon that the 58 bank offices in the New Orleans area have collected a total of \$62,683.43 in its general public \$1 to \$5 campaign.

Between Saturday and Tuesday, \$30,678.02 was collected. Wednesday's collections amounted to \$24,007.19 and Thursday's collection netted \$7,998.22.

In Baton Rouge Thursday the LDF was officially made a state-wide campaign and all bank offices were designated as collection centers for monetary donations.

The LDF expects to raise \$1

million by the end of September. William T. Hackett, director of the State Department of Commerce and Industry, was named head of the drive.

He said plans are underway to make the fund a permanent setup to provide for future disasters.

He added that Lamar Walters, executive vice-president of the Louisiana Chamber of Commerce, will head a newly-created committee to determine the beneficiaries of the fund.

Fund officials said they are considering any surplus monies to Mississippi victims of the hurricane if there is a need there after Louisiana citizens are taken care of.

Campaign workers were divided into a number of sections to appeal to organizations and corporations for funds.

The committee will meet on Sept. 10 in Baton Rouge.

HOUSING OBTAINED

In aid to storm victims in Plaquemines Parish, the Red Cross has succeeded in obtaining more than 170 apartments in New Orleans.

The Housing Authority of New Orleans has made available 100 housing units, said Jere Nichols, Red Cross director in Plaquemines. The Red Cross has also contracted for 71 housing units in the Bridge Plaza Apartments in Algiers through the Federal Housing Authority.

In other relief activity:

— Trinity Episcopal Church in New Orleans has raised \$3,700 in contributions for the relief of Episcopal churches on the Gulf Coast.

— Five Explorer Scouts from Post 446 in Luling collect-

ed two tons of clothing, dry ice, food, building materials and water and distributed it to residents in the Back Bay area of Biloxi.

— B'nai B'rith donated two mobile disaster units, one to the Red Cross and the other to the Salvation Army; and money from the organization's Camille Disaster Fund is coming in from Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas.

— The American Forest Institute has dispatched a task force to work with the U.S. Forest Service in an attempt to salvage timber on land owned by small farmers in Louisiana and Mississippi.

U.S. Coast officials have reported that a number of tenders have been busy resetting channel buoy markers that were moved out of place by Camille.

A 75-foot construction tender from Galveston, nine buoy tenders and a number of smaller craft have moved in to begin repair and replacement of lights and beacons and other aids to navigation.

A Coast Guard spokesman said priority has been given to marking shipping channels and all main ship channels are now open, but complete restoration of all markers and other aids may take weeks.

Col. Herbert Haar, district engineer in New Orleans for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, said that speeding vessels in the Mississippi River near Venice are hampering the work and damaging floating plants, such as barges, and endangering workers on them who are engaged in hurricane repair.

He urged all vessels to slow down when they approach such plants.