

Governor of Guam Voices Fear For Health on Crowded Island

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AGANA, Guam, Wednesday, May 14—Gov. Ricardo J. Bordallo expressed concern yesterday over the effects on public health here if, as now seems likely, large numbers of South Vietnamese refugees remain on this island a long time. Originally, Guam was to be a stopover site for United States-bound refugees from South Vietnam and Cambodia. But organizational difficulties and time-consuming immigration procedures on the mainland prompted officials in Washington virtually to halt the airlift of refugees from the relatively primitive and crowded camps here.

Yesterday, only 852 of the remaining 50,000 refugees here left for the United States.

"Any prudent person," the Governor said, "would have to be apprehensive about the long-term health situation when the population suddenly increases by over 50 per cent."

He made this statement in an interview as the last 3,200 refugees from a five-ship convoy of chartered merchant vessels arrived on Guam aboard the Sergeant Andrew Miller.

Tired refugee officials here laughed about reports from Washington that L. Dean Brown, head of the Indochina Task Force on Refugees, had told a Senate Committee examining his operation's budget that refugee ships were circling Guam because the island was too full to take them.

"That is quite simply not true," said one naval spokesman, adding, "besides, our ships come equipped with anchors. It's airplanes that have to circle."

"I think," said another officer, "Mr. Brown needs a good night's sleep."

100,000th Refugee Hailed

The refugee arrivals yesterday included Phan Truc Chi, a bewildered 12-year-old girl from Saigon, who was singled out by military information officers as the 100,000th refugee to land here in three weeks. She received a lei of plumeria flowers and considerable attention from cameramen.

The large number of refugees, confined in 11 separate camps, has, among other things, strained the island's pure water system.

Governor Bordallo and Rear Adm. G. Stephen Morrison, over-all commander of the refugee program here, both appealed yesterday for voluntary water conservation efforts until the annual seasonal rainfall can replenish supplies.

Admiral Morrison said that at the island's southern end normal usage plus that of the refugees, who use three million gallons a day at one camp alone, has pushed the military's water pumping capacity to its maximum of 13 million gallons a day.

Water pressure elsewhere on Guam has fallen at various peak-usage times.

"We have plenty of water now," the admiral said, "but we can't afford to waste any."

Both officials vowed sterner measures, including temporary water shutdowns, if reservoirs fell too far in the weeks ahead.

Admiral Morrison said the refugee facilities were over capacity now, but added, "We can handle them all for a considerable period of time. Our major concern is the typhoon season, which has started."

Potential Health Peril

While aiding the water supply, the sometimes torrential rains here would also present a health threat through general dampness and mosquitoes, which hatch in the moisture. This would especially affect the 38,000 refugees living in tents at Orote Point.

Five cases of dengue fever and six cases of malaria, both mosquito-borne illnesses, were confirmed in recent weeks. It is believed that all were contracted in South Vietnam.

But Governor Bordallo wants to take no chances. He has twice requested the deployment here of a special Air Force spray plane based at Rickenbacker Air Force Base, Ohio. Air Force sources said the craft would leave for here soon.

Additional ground spraying units also have been ordered to spray malathion against mosquitoes in refugee camps and adjacent villages.

"Guam's citizens are willing

to make great sacrifices to help these refugees," Governor Bordallo said. "For instance, last week we closed all elementary schools for three days so the buses could transport the South Vietnamese. But when you're dealing with the health and lives of people, you can't wait until a problem like some sort of serious illness breaks out. You want to prevent it."

Military and medical officials emphasized that no serious disease outbreaks had yet been encountered.