

Saigonese Offered Inducements to Return to Land

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SAIGON, South Vietnam June 23 (UPI)—Nguyen Duc Long, a soldier of the former South Vietnamese Government, clutched a child as he heaved his 90 pounds of rice aboard the bus leaving Saigon.

"The Government is giving us the rice and money to buy seeds, so we are moving to the country," he said.

He, his wife and two children are among a growing number of families who have decided the city has little to offer and are heading to the countryside.

The last official figures, issued through July 4, said that more than 125,000 Saigon residents had left for the countryside since the April 30 takeover of South Vietnam.

Authorities have made it clear they intend to build the new South Vietnam on an agricultural base. One of their main aims is clearing cities of refugees.

Officials have said in interviews they hope more than half the three million residents

of Saigon will move out, and the sooner the better.

Those who leave are given land and transportation to the countryside. They have been promised rice and subsistence wages for as long as six months or until their first crop comes in.

Saigon residents are being encouraged to head for three underpopulated provinces, Binh Long, Phuoc Long and Long Khanh, north and east of Saigon.

Authorities say they are prepared to settle 350,000 persons in the area as quickly as they will move out of Saigon.

While heavy pressure has been applied on Saigonese to move out, no force has been used. But officials have made clear in the poorer sections that rice handouts, which have been fed more than a million persons since April 30, will not continue forever.

"Saigon is a city of consumers producing nothing," a Government official said.