

Haiti

The Haiti Red Cross is actively pursuing the work it began some years ago in the field of blood transfusion. It may be recalled that in November 1970, the first centre, open 24 hours a day, providing a large proportion of the blood needed in the hospitals of Port-au-Prince, was inaugurated in Haiti's capital. In February 1972, a second blood centre started to operate at Cap Haitien (Département du Nord), and more recently, on 30 November 1972, a third centre was opened at Les Cayes, part of its equipment having been purchased with a grant provided by the Shôken Fund.

At a ceremony held at the inauguration of the centre, those present included the President of the Republic's personal representative, the Minister of Public Health and Population, the President and members of the National Red Cross Society Central Committee and the ICRC Delegate-General for Latin America, who also represented the League. Dr. Verrier, President of the Red Cross Regional Committee, greeted the officials and others present, after which Dr. Laroche put into words the gratitude of the Haiti Red Cross, of which he is the President, to the Government of Haiti and the international institutions of the Red Cross. He ended his speech with the following: "To promote the spirit of mutual aid and solidarity, to create that social consciousness through which a better understanding between all men is made easier, to gather together all persons of good will: such are some of the aims of the mission which the Haiti Red Cross has assumed". Mr. Nessi, Delegate-General of the ICRC, then spoke and congratulated the National Society on this further proof of its vitality in setting up yet a third blood transfusion centre, founded on the International Red Cross principle of free blood, given and received; understood thus, the inauguration of the centre was also of symbolic value.

The Minister of Public Health, Dr. Théard, expressed the felicitations and hopes of the authorities. He outlined the constant development of all the tasks accomplished by the Red Cross, adding: "Blood transfusion services now supplement the wide range of acts

that save human life, in time of peace as much as in time of war, and the very idea of the operation of Red Cross blood transfusion centres, based on blood given free of charge, has opened up a new dimension in the possibilities of therapy in this field". Examples of what has been achieved by the Haiti Red Cross include the training of over 2,000 first-aiders since 1967, the organization, in co-operation with the Ministry of Public Health, of infant welfare courses attended by 500 students, and the promotion of a successful campaign for the extension of Red Cross local branches to the interior of the country leading to date to eleven Regional Committees' being set up.

Iceland

After the volcano erupted on the Icelandic island of Vestmanna on 23 January, the island had to be evacuated and the entire population of more than 5,000 persons had to be accommodated in Reykjavik.

In close co-operation with government officials, the Icelandic Red Cross began administrative formalities including registration of evacuees, and resettlement. Seven schoolhouses provided temporary accommodation, as did available hotels. All registration and tracing data were computerized, immediately.

The movement of household goods and personal belongings was the next problem. The Red Cross was assisted by civic organizations and volunteers, until Civil Defence authorities took over.

Certain psychological problems were noted among the displaced persons, which led the Red Cross to organize a Consultation Service. Doctors, sociologists and jurists volunteered to help. On the initiative of the Red Cross, the University of Reykjavik conducted the social work investigation.

For the immediate future, the Red Cross plans to continue operating the consultation centre, kindergarten activities, social work, juvenile work, helping elderly persons, training and perhaps education.