

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE

As in previous years, the Swiss Section of the International Social Service has published its annual report for 1964, which makes interesting reading. As a tribute to its work, sometimes carried out in co-operation with the ICRC, we cannot do better than quote from the foreword by Mr. Felix Schnyder, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees :

The High Commissioner is fully aware that nothing useful can be achieved in the field of assistance to refugees without the unremitting support of the many governmental, intergovernmental or private institutions which unfailingly work for the refugees, and which are his partners in the day to day accomplishment of his humanitarian task. Among these organizations, the International Social Service, particularly its Swiss Section, deserves a special mention.

We all know that the High Commissioner's task is to give legal protection to refugees. The aim of such protection could obviously not be achieved without constant social assistance for the refugee...

... Thanks to its agencies throughout the world, the International Social Service plays a major rôle in refugee settlement and repatriation, with particular attention to the uniting of families. The professional training programmes and seminars which it organizes periodically contribute to improving the effectiveness of social assistance in every country where this activity is carried on. It also helps in the training of advisers, who are as it were the main-stay of refugee welfare and whom many agencies now call upon for professional and social guidance for refugees.

There is hardly any need to recall the important rôle played by the International Social Service during the Hungarian crisis in 1956 when, in particular, it took in hand the tragic problem of unaccompanied children. At that time the High Commissioner found in the International Social Service a partner of great experience capable of giving sound advice as well as of making qualified staff available.

In this thirty-fourth year of service to both the Geneva and international communities, the Swiss Section of the International Social Service can congratulate itself on having achieved fine results

from which it will, I am sure, derive inspiration and strength to continue the humanitarian task to which it has applied itself with exemplary dedication and efficiency.

WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

The Eighteenth World Health Assembly, held in Geneva from 4 to 21 May 1965, was attended by delegates from some 120 Member and Associate Member States of WHO. Opening the proceedings, the outgoing President, Dr M. K. Afridi (Pakistan), went on to say:

The basic concept of disease eradication has been amply justified by the results of projects sponsored by the World Health Organization. I realize that many of these diseases are still with us and that we will have to continue our struggle against them for some time to come. But because of the valuable fund of knowledge and experience that we have recently accumulated we have reason to be optimistic about the future. We now know that for complete success in mass campaigns two conditions are essential : first, the operations must be conducted under strict supervision and cover as near 100 % of the population as possible and, second, the effectiveness of the preventive measures must be sufficiently high to provide the requisite degree of protection even if in their application in the field the operations fall below the required standard of efficiency. Wherever these conditions can be satisfied it becomes our bounden duty to escalate the operations of disease control to eradication campaigns. To assist such a transformation we have to concentrate on evolving preventive measures of ever-increasing potency, and it is in this field that the World Health Organization has played and will continue to play a crucial role through the comprehensive programme of research in diseases of major public health importance.

The Director-General, Dr M. G. Candau, presented his report on the work of WHO in 1964 to the Assembly. Introducing it, he said that the activities of WHO bore witness to the Organization's will to mobilize past experience and co-ordinate present efforts in a persistent and prolonged attack upon hazards to man's life and health. He continued: