

## A GLANCE THROUGH THE REVIEWS

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Entitled "Spotlight on 1962" this issue of the official organ of the League of Red Cross Societies presents, in word and picture form, an overall view of the relief actions which the League undertook or directed in 1962. The fullness and the gravity of many of the disasters which have occurred in the last few months (floods in Pakistan, earthquake in Iran) have led the League to establish an emergency relief programme on an international scale.

A certain number of measures have been taken in co-operation with the National Societies to prepare and organize the relief actions, because the day has gone when Red Cross intervention could be left to improvisation. Its field of action is increasingly touching on specialized spheres. "One of the most important aspects of this preparation is the training of personnel to staff a relief operation, with a knowledge beforehand of the problems which they may be called upon to tackle", says Mr. J.-P. Robert-Tissot, League Relief Director, on this subject, and he adds: "The effectiveness of future Red Cross action in the international relief field will depend on the degree of preparedness of National Societies and the League, on their promptness in meeting the needs of emergency situations and on the extent of the means available... In 1962, the League organized post-basic courses for such personnel, nominated by National Societies; others are planned for 1963."

The question of refugees is also one of the serious problems claiming the League's attention. Mr. Robert-Tissot says in this respect: "The Red Cross has therefore come to commit itself to long-term actions where the very nature of the problem implied a continuing emergency (Hungarian and Algerian refugees); it has temporarily supplemented deficient medical services by providing doctors and nurses (the Congo); and it has given its support to programmes reaching as far as the complete resettlement of disaster victims or refugees (Algeria, Togo, the Congo and Burundi). The best example of this development to date is the action undertaken by the League on behalf of the Watutsi refugees: it is not only giving them temporary medical assistance, but is also helping them to resettle in their new home by taking an active part in the building of houses and by giving them the means of cultivating the land allocated to them."

From this, it can be seen that the Red Cross is being increasingly called upon to go beyond the limits of temporary assistance. Moreover, the accession to independence of several African countries has led the

League to schedule a development programme in which it is intended to help the National Societies which so need, to organize and develop their different services and to promote the creation of new Societies. To this end, declares Mr. K. Seevaratnam, Assistant-Director of the League Development Programme, "Personnel, material and financial aid will be given by the League and National Societies", in order to bring about "the creation of an efficient Red Cross Society in every independent country; and the creation of a programme so dynamic and flexible as to permit its adaptation to local conditions... We are concerned with helping people everywhere to help themselves."

This issue also contains articles by Mr. C. A. Schusselé, League Junior Red Cross Director, and by Mr. J. Gomez Ruiz, Assistant-Director of the same bureau, and by Dr. Z. S. Hantschef, League Medical Director. Mr. Schusselé gives some explanations on the World Conference of Educators to be held in Lausanne next August on the occasion of the Red Cross Centenary, and which will include Junior Red Cross teams, members of the teaching profession and representatives of various ministries of Education. Its aim will be "to encourage closer cooperation between Junior Red Cross and educators and to discuss and devise new programmes suited to today's needs."

Dr. Hantschef recalls the decisions which were taken at the Mexico Conference to develop the blood transfusion programme in Latin America. Thus, he writes: "Press reactions called the Red Cross insistence on free blood 'a bombshell' for a region where blood is still largely a saleable commodity: nevertheless interest had been aroused in this vital issue, which the League hopes to support by closer contacts with the Latin American National Societies, extensive documentation and by putting more experienced Societies 'in partnership' with those developing their blood programme. A beginning was made this year in another part of the world by the loan of two American Red Cross experts to the Societies of Ceylon and Indonesia. Further regional help for next year, still in the planning stage, is a blood transfusion Seminar in Turkey."

The Rio de Janeiro Meeting brought out growing Red Cross interest in the many different aspects of social service and paved the way for a definition of the Red Cross rôle in this field. Delegates gave their support to a frequently-voiced suggestion to form an 'Expert Committee' which has been called to meet in February, under League auspices, to study the contribution which the Red Cross can make to social welfare, particularly in relation to Government services, and how best it can achieve its aim to introduce a human element into public services."