

All these young volunteers carry out their duties with enthusiasm and dedication. For the Vietnam Red Cross these first-aiders are an assurance of being able to discharge its humanitarian mission now and in the future.

Haiti

The official inauguration ceremony of the new headquarters of the Haiti Red Cross took place at Port-au-Prince on December 12, 1968, which also symbolized the remarkable efforts made by the Red Cross over a long period inspired by Dr. Victor Laroche, its new President.

Dr. Duvalier, President of the Republic, attended the event and leading personalities of Haiti, members of the Society's executive committee together with Mr. Pierre Gaillard and Mr. José Gomez Ruiz, representing the ICRC and League respectively, were present.

The new headquarters, consisting of two modern buildings, one for offices and the other for a large auditorium, had been donated to the Haiti Red Cross by the President of the Republic, who was warmly thanked by Dr. Laroche. He then ended his speech by pointing out that the new headquarters are intended to become a centre for medico-welfare, educational, training and assistance work.

“ This building which is a concrete example of the highest human aspirations will in future be the planning centre for Haiti Red Cross activities. At this new stage a definition must be made of the concept which should guide its action and indicate its technical and social role according to the direction desired and expressed by our honorary President.

“ If the National Red Cross Societies are ruled by the same fundamental principles and have to resolve many similar problems, each of their action programmes depends on the particularities of their own respective countries. Co-operating in the solution of problems raised by the suffering and needs of the Haitian popula-

tion, our National Society must adapt itself to the real needs of our communities. To accomplish its mission, to "serve" better and give the most definite meaning to this word, the Red Cross of Haiti will plunge its roots into our own traditional setting. We must draw on those powerful ideas which should be the inspiration of our action both in our national individuality and in the Red Cross ideal. Whilst conforming to the Red Cross principles, our Society must express an aspect of the national activity. Energetic auxiliary to the Public Powers, it must take an active part in the medical education of the population, in the fight against sickness, accidents and natural disasters which constitute a threat to health, security and life. Its task is to co-operate actively and with dynamism with the insurance and welfare institutions. Its programme of action will be conceived with a view to prevention and not only to intervention. This action will be educative and of a formative character, whilst intervention will only have been the result of rational planning".

After Mr. José Gomez Ruiz, Head of the Latin American and Caribbean Service of the League, spoke a few words in his turn and expressed the League's congratulations and good wishes, the symbolic ribbon was cut and those present then visited the new headquarters.

It should be mentioned, in conclusion, that Mr. P. Gaillard, Assistant Director at the ICRC, assured the President of the Haiti Red Cross of the International Committee's support and examined various problems of common interest with him.
