

Poland

The Polish Red Cross celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation on 27 April 1969 in Warsaw. An official ceremony took place in the morning at the Palace of Culture and Science, in the presence of the country's highest authorities.

The first speaker was Professor Dr. Han Kestrzewski, Minister of Health and Social Welfare. He greeted the Polish Red Cross on behalf of the government and spoke of the outstanding service which it had rendered the Polish people and the humanitarian cause in the world.

Mrs. Irena Domanska then recalled the birth of the Polish Red Cross over which she to-day presides, and she outlined the ever-increasing task and usefulness of the Society within and for the benefit of the nation and the international community. We might mention, incidentally, that our February issue contained an important article written by her, summarizing the work of the Polish Red Cross, showing clearly the effectiveness of its action under our common sign both in the social and medical fields, and the variety of its assistance to the population.

As an example of progress achieved, Mrs. Domanska singled out the constant increase in membership, the extensive training of first-aiders, home-help for the sick and service in hospitals. She concluded: "To-day, on the occasion of this fine ceremony uniting voluntary workers old and young, including youth who, in a few years, will direct the humanitarian activities of the Polish Red Cross, I wish to thank warmly, on behalf of all Polish Red Cross voluntary workers, the representatives of our country who are with us to-day, and express the conviction that the Polish Red Cross, which is about to start its second half-century, will, as it has always been throughout its history, be ready to serve the people and the nation, and develop its activities for the benefit of man and peace".

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

The Countess of Limerick, Chairman of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, Mr. José Barroso, Chairman of the League Board of Governors, and Mr. Roger Gallopin, Vice-President and Director-General of the ICRC, payed tribute to the fine work accomplished by the National Society in circumstances which were often dramatic.

Referring to the Second World War and the years which followed, Mr. Gallopin said: "One cannot help expressing admiration for the way in which you have worked to reconstruct, to heal wounds, trace the missing and restore your country to health. Your Society, exemplifying united good will, has raised to a high degree the effectiveness of all forms of Red Cross assistance to the community". He also pointed out "the interest which the Polish Red Cross has constantly displayed for the progress of humanitarian law and, of course, of peace. In that spirit, it has contributed constructively to the work of various meetings convened by the ICRC, either to obtain guarantees of immunity for civil defence personnel, or for the intensification of Red Cross efforts to promote peace".

This moving ceremony was concluded by a concert.

In the afternoon, the Central Committee of the National Society gave a reception at its headquarters for the leading members of several National Red Cross Societies who then conveyed congratulations and good wishes from the institutions they represented.

Other events took place on the following days. One of these was a reception offered by the President of the State Council and Marshal of Poland, Mr. Marian Spychalski, which was attended by leading members of the International Red Cross and National Societies.
