

Afghanistan

One of the principal activities of the Afghan Red Crescent is that of social assistance. As part of its action programme it distributes to those in need in Kabul and in the various provinces, relief in the form of cash, coal, clothing and food. It intervenes in cases of natural disaster. Thus, only citing this example, when the floods in 1965 had caused thousands of homeless, it brought them considerable aid and actively co-operated with the civilian and military organizations.

As it has informed the ICRC, it intervened in more recent circumstances on behalf of persons who suffered from the particularly harsh winter last year in Kabul and elsewhere. Following a programme drawn up beforehand and estimated for a length of 20 days, 3,750 persons received food in daily assistance. It can be said that in all 75,000 were aided by the Afghan Red Crescent which also had to arrange distributions of clothing during the winter season.¹

Burundi

The Red Cross Society of Burundi, officially recognized by the ICRC in 1963, today carries out useful and varied work. It gives medico-social assistance to orphanages, social centres and the Bujumbura prison. It teaches the armed forces, members of the Society and the general public first-aid, under the supervision of a leading official and medical adviser of the Society. It helps refugees, providing them with food and setting up milk centres for refugee children. It has organized Junior Red Cross branches in schools. Recently it extended its scope to blood donor recruiting.

As can be seen, its programme is very varied, and we believe our readers will be interested in the personal impressions of Mr. J.

¹ *Plate.* — Afghanistan: The Red Crescent distributing clothing and food.

Pascalis, Assistant Secretary-General of the Swiss Red Cross, and which were published in *Youth*¹. Mr. Pascalis went to Burundi last February and was then able to see how efficient were the Red Cross junior first-aiders.²

“ Burundi, like most of the young National Red Cross Societies, concentrates on training first aiders, and I had the pleasure of meeting several groups during a brief stay at Bujumbura, capital of Burundi. I was even able to attend a lesson, given simultaneously in two languages (by an Instructor trained in 1965 by a Rumanian delegate of the League of Red Cross Societies) and a practical stretcher bearing exercise, performed with remarkable care and skill.

First aid training in Burundi consists of two 2-hour practical and theoretical lessons a week, over a period of 4 months. This means 64 hours instruction, followed by 2 weeks practice in a dispensary.

It is mainly during this 4-month period that student first aiders' activity is intense in various fields. They are split up into 10 sections of approximately 50 students each. Each section is directed by an elected committee. They wear an attractive uniform, consisting of a pale blue shirt (blouse for girls), with a Red Cross badge and beret. They are recruited among secondary school pupils and young workers.

First aid (highway first aid, first aid at sports events and other celebrations attracting large crowds) is not their only activity; they also help to recruit blood donors, distribute milk and join in various relief operations of the Burundi Red Cross, sorting out worn clothing, preparing educational, health and relief material. They also realise that they should spread knowledge. I have seen sections giving sketches to counteract witch-doctor consultation, promote temperance, reduce theft, and encourage respect for the old and crippled. Some of the sections engage in folklore activities. This attracts a number of idle young people to the Red Cross.

In order to become a first aider, however, a young person must pass an examination and possess certain qualities, particularly of an

¹ League of Red Cross Societies, Geneva, 1968, No. 2.

² *Plate*. — A Red Cross first-aid course.

ethical nature. What most impressed me was the conscientiousness of these young people. And yet they often lack material, even essential material, needed for their work: pencils, paper, slates, handbooks, dummies, dressings, slings, first aid kits, and premises. The Burundi Red Cross would like to be able to make a small recognition to its instructors. Everything is lacking except good-will, enthusiasm and a true Red Cross spirit. These qualities are happily to be found in that small industrious country, on the borders of Lake Tanganyika and at the foot of mountains and hills.

When I passed through, the student first aiders organised an impromptu and magnificent parade, with two hours of fascinating and excellent demonstrations.

I met other dedicated people and witnessed other activities: blood transfusion, prisoner relief, work in orphanages and dispensaries, milk and clothing distributions, etc., etc. The Burundi Red Cross is a young National Society which relies essentially on its youth to develop and carry out its tasks."

Ecuador

The Ecuadorean Red Cross will now be publishing a monthly Bulletin for members of the Society in Quito and provincial branches where most active humanitarian work is being pursued.

No. 1 issue has recently reached Geneva which contains a variety of information in different spheres such as first-aid, home-care, medical instruction and general dietetics. The publication also contains notes concerning certain services which are especially active in the country, such as ambulances which were called upon in 1967 in a large number of cases: the transporting of 2,517 sick, aid in 28 accidents at work, 205 traffic accidents, 5 railway accidents and 13 outbreaks of fire. More than a thousand calls for help had to be answered in different emergency situations. Needless to say, members of the Junior Red Cross gave most useful aid in such cases and fresh youth sections are constantly being formed in the Secondary Schools of Ecuador.