

Senegal

During his recent visit to Geneva, Mr. Alcantara, President of the Senegal Red Cross Society, kindly gave us details of the present-day tasks carried out by that Society which, it may be recalled, was recognized by the ICRC in 1963. In view of the valuable humanitarian work carried out under our common emblem for several years in Senegal, we are pleased to bring details to the knowledge of our readers.

The Senegal Red Cross can point to a slow but steady increase in its membership, both in the capital and the rest of the country. It has seven sections, one for each region. There is in Dakar not only the headquarters of the National Committee but also those of our regional Committee.

The regional Committees are set up as follows: *In Dakar* for the Cap Vert region, in *Thies* for the region of the same name, at *Saint-Louis* for the Fleuve region, at *Kaolack* for the Sine-Saloum region, at *Ziguinahor* for the Casamance region, at *Durbel* for the region of that name, and at *Tambacounda* for East Senegal. Each of these administrative regions has its own regional Committee and is divided into departments. Under our five-year plan, drawn up in 1964, it is planned to establish a committee for each village.

Benefits to mothers and children.—The Society's kindergartens are intended for children from 2 ½ to 6 years of age, preparatory to their attending school; they also aim at providing a useful service to parents. No charge is made if the parents are unable to pay. These kindergartens enable mothers to go out to work. This eases a difficult situation in many households, so that this Red Cross work is a genuine social service for the benefit of needy children.

Furthermore, the fact that children are admitted to school only after reaching seven years of age is another source of difficulty for working mothers. A further advantage of the kindergartens is that

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they teach French, a great help to the children when they do start school.

A medical social centre has also just been opened in one of the suburbs of Dakar. It is run by two voluntary doctors, two pharmacists and two nurses. Milk distributions occur there twice a week thanks to the donations received from the Swedish Red Cross.¹

First-Aid.—First-aid courses are given to youths in three Dakar secondary schools. At the request of the Government, the Red Cross also trains members of such official forces as the fire brigade, the customs and the police in first-aid.

Social Service.—This operates with the help of voluntary women organizers and has now two full-time assistants.

It has a diversity of tasks, extending from home help to the care of "social cases". One of its activities should be stressed in particular, namely visits to hospitals and prisons. Moral comfort is given in this way. In the central prison, social work in the form of a dispensary is under the charge of the Red Cross which acts whenever its services are required.

It should be added that the National Society proposes to concern itself with other activities, especially as regards the Junior Red Cross. However it still lacks training personnel. All the same, the Red Cross is already solidly implanted in Dakar and in other parts of the country and does useful work for the greater good of the population.

¹ *Plate.* The Senegalese Red Cross ensuring milk distribution at Dakar.