

THE RED CROSS AND SOCIAL WELFARE

In July 1975 the League announced its intention of organizing, in collaboration with the French Red Cross, a meeting of officers of European National Red Cross Societies responsible for Social Welfare. The aim was twofold: to analyse from the social welfare aspect the Final Report on the Re-appraisal of the Role of the Red Cross, entitled *An Agenda for Red Cross*, and to examine the place and role of the Red Cross in present-day social welfare policy. Twenty-one National Societies accepted the invitation and sent thirty-two representatives to the meeting held in March 1976 at Lamorlaye in France.

The participants were divided into three groups. A report was submitted by each group at the closing plenary session.

A 20-page account of the deliberations has now been issued by the League, under the title *Meeting of Officers Responsible for Social Welfare of European National Red Cross Societies*.

We shall not quote the League's report *in extenso* but shall give here a passage in which one of the groups attempted to define the types of Red Cross social welfare needed in the future.

It would seem that the majority of tasks for the Red Cross should fall under the following four points:

1. influencing public opinion and people's attitudes in order to make them more aware of their responsibility towards each other;
2. acting as humanitarian bridge between the social welfare services of the State and the people;
3. functioning in a pioneer role to bring about new services through setting up pilot projects or by influencing the authorities;
4. filling gaps where governments or other agencies are not able to or do not provide services.

The criteria for starting new Red Cross social welfare activities or for keeping up old forms of service should be the following:

1. emergency help in a suddenly arising social welfare situation is asked of the Red Cross either by a representative group of people or by the authorities;
2. the government authorities on any level request the help of the Red Cross; also providing the necessary funds,
3. assistance is needed by marginal groups in society that do not get sufficient help from the government or from any other agency;
4. there are pressing reasons for the sake of the clients to keep up a service that could be performed by the government as well.

HONDURAS

In its issue of August 1976, *International Review* mentioned that the Honduran Red Cross was continuing to distribute milk every day to under-nourished children. The powdered milk for this operation had been made available by the Swiss Government to the ICRC which was pleased to contribute to the National Society's campaign to continue its milk distribution programme in Tegucigalpa and elsewhere.¹

In May this year, during a mission to Central America, Mr. C. Du Plessis, ICRC regional delegate, went to a poor quarter of the capital where he attended a distribution being carried out with great dedication by the women's voluntary service of the Red Cross. The ICRC has just send a further consignment of milk powder to the National Society so that it may continue this good work.

¹ *Plate.*