

MALAYSIA

Mr. A. Tschiffeli, the ICRC's regional delegate in South-East Asia, has sent us some information on the activities of the Malaysian Red Cross Society, particularly about the distribution of powdered milk donated by the Swiss Confederation. As will be seen, such distributions are very effectively carried out by the National Society, under the auspices of the ICRC.

At the end of November 1973, the ICRC sent an initial consignment of 5 tons of powdered milk to the Malaysian Red Cross Society for distribution to the needy. The Society had already set up a Special Committee directed by its Vice-Chairman Tan Sri Jamil Rais and comprising representatives of the Ministries of Health, Education and Welfare Services. Twenty-three distribution points were selected in eight of the thirteen states of the Federation, including Sabah and Sarawak in the northern part of the island of Borneo. Six hundred carefully chosen Red Cross volunteers carried out the distribution to more than 5,420 persons, mostly children but also expectant mothers and needy old people. A programme for each distribution point was drawn up and approved by the Central Committee.

The size and duration of programmes differ. Smaller programmes may cover about fifty persons and larger programmes several hundred. Four of them lasted only a month owing to the inadequate quantities available. On the other hand, eleven projects are scheduled to run for three months, two for six months, and six for a year. Yet the consignment of powdered milk covers only one-half of the programme, and the implementation of the programme as a whole depends on further relief to meet needs which are still very pressing.

The Malaysian Red Cross Society enjoys the high regard of the public and the authorities. It is soundly organized and directed by extremely active, competent and dedicated representatives

of various ethnic and religious communities. The Society has successfully conducted first-aid activities, rural and school social welfare work, blood donor recruiting, and emergency relief in natural disasters such as floods that frequently strike the country. It is well equipped to provide relief and supplies to populations cut off by those floods.

The Malaysian Red Cross Society is also responsible for a 24-hour ambulance service in the federal capital, Kuala Lumpur, which has a population of approximately 800,000.