

BAHAMAS

Elsewhere in this issue may be found the announcement of the ICRC's formal recognition of the Bahamas Red Cross Society, whose headquarters is at Nassau. In this connection, two ICRC delegates went recently to the Bahamas, and we give below some interesting items of information which they obtained concerning the very useful work the Society is performing at present.

The Bahamas Red Cross Society has 3,500 members, operating in 123 Registered Member Groups on the 700 islands and 2,000 islets comprising the territory of the Bahamas. Communication presents one of the main problems for the Society's everyday activities.

Welfare activities, which are many and varied, constitute the Society's main work. In Nassau, it prepares cooked meals for aged or needy inhabitants, while food parcels are shipped to needy cases in a number of islands; used clothes are collected, repaired and distributed; Red Cross workers organize a home help service for handicapped persons and old people living all alone, or else provide companionship by visiting them in their homes; volunteers offer their cars to take patients to and from clinics.

The Society runs a home for deaf children, some of whom were the victims of a German measles epidemic which struck the Bahamas a few years ago. Medical equipment, such as wheel-chairs, crutches, and so forth are available on loan. Milk is distributed to the pupils of more than fifty schools.

The Bahamas Red Cross has some interesting plans in hand. An energetic recruitment campaign to increase the number of Junior Red Cross members, who already total nearly 2,500 boys and girls, has been launched. The Society also intends to train over the next few years a corps of volunteers who will assist government services in time of natural disaster or other emergencies. Action was taken to put this plan into practice in 1975; basic first aid courses and more advanced courses in medical knowledge have already been attended by many people eager

to join the volunteer corps. A little later on, the Society would like to set up a blood bank.

The Bahamas Red Cross enjoys the understanding and support of the authorities, who show great interest and confidence in its activities.

NICARAGUA

In May 1976, the new building of the National Blood Transfusion Centre of the Nicaraguan Red Cross was inaugurated and started its activities, as mentioned in the League's news sheet Transfusion (No. 7).

Following the earthquake in 1972 which entirely destroyed the Red Cross blood bank after ten years of activity, the Nicaraguan Government requested the National Society to organize the blood programme throughout the country.

Thanks to the financial and technical support of the American National Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross, and in co-operation with the League, this request became a reality.

In 1973, the American National Red Cross sent to Managua a team for a survey and agreed to finance the construction of a new building to house both the Nicaraguan Red Cross Headquarters and the new blood centre. In addition, the American National Red Cross provided the Centre with the necessary modern equipment for blood collection, storage and distribution for a total capacity of 35,000 blood units per year, and will cover the running expenses for the first year of activity. United States laboratory technicians were also sent to Managua to train the local technical personnel.

For its part, the Spanish Red Cross provided financial assistance to organize a blood donor recruitment service with its staff and publicity material, and offered the new centre a 4-bed mobile unit.