

Czechoslovakia

The Czechoslovak Red Cross this year celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation by holding several events which were attended by the highest authorities of the country and of the National Society.

The official ceremony took place on 18 September in the Smetana Hall, Prague, in the presence of the President of the Republic, Mr. Ludvik Svoboda. Delegates from eighteen sister Societies were also present, while the Countess of Limerick represented the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, Mr. R. Gallopin the ICRC, and Mr. J. Barroso and Mr. H. Beer the League of Red Cross Societies.

After several personalities had spoken—including Dr. Fridrich Kuchar, President of the Czechoslovak Red Cross, who recalled the successive stages through which the National Society passed before achieving its present prominence and effectiveness, and the Countess of Limerick who, as Chairman of the Standing Commission, conveyed the congratulations and good wishes of the International Red Cross—the Henry Dunant Medal was presented to the widow of the former President of the Czechoslovak Red Cross, Dr. Frantisek Janouch. He was one of the recipients to whom, for the first time, at the XXI International Conference of the Red Cross at Istanbul, this high distinction was awarded.

This moving ceremony was concluded with a concert and was shortly followed by a less formal meeting at the headquarters of the National Society's Central Committee. The Czechoslovak Red Cross there presented the representatives of international and national institutions of the Red Cross with a gold medal specially struck for the anniversary.

At the end of the afternoon the participants were received in audience by the President of the Republic, to whose address of welcome Mr. Barroso, Chairman of the League Board of Governors, replied on behalf of those present. In the evening a reception was

given by the President of the National Front and the governmental authorities and Mr. Gallopin expressed the good wishes of the International Committee of which he is a member and a Director-General.

Other events had also been organized to underline the interest of the Red Cross in present-day problems and its ambition to study them in order the better to understand them and guide more surely its humanitarian action. A Round Table also met in Prague on 16 and 17 September to discuss the theme "The Red Cross and Modern Society"; this enabled many guests—among whom was Mr. Pierre Boissier, Director of the Henry Dunant Institute—to exchange highly interesting points of view.

We would not omit to state that the welcome extended both by the authorities and the National Red Cross was as friendly as it was generous, and that apart from being invited to an opera performance at the National Theatre, participants were guests at receptions offered by the Czech and Slovak Ministers of Health and were also received by the Mayor of Prague at the Town Hall and by the National Society President at the Lisno Castle.
