

We have endeavoured in this commemorative issue to cover broadly some of the Society's major achievements at home and overseas. These would be incomplete without some reference to the work of our Overseas Branches, many of whom have by now become national societies, and to the Voluntary Aid Detachments: the basic structure of our membership, the corps d'élite of the British Red Cross Society, who have played such an important part in our history since their foundation of fifty years ago.

In passing, we would like to remind our readers of the place occupied in the Society's history by its magazine, which is now entering the forty-ninth year of its publication. It was at a meeting of the Executive Committee on 19th January, 1914, that the Chairman laid the first copy on the table.

Nineteen sixty-three is a year for reflection; a year for looking forward and a year for celebrating . . .

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## Liberia

*Mr. Gerald C. Coron, Assistant Regional Director for the South-eastern Area Office of the American National Red Cross, recently spent eight months in Liberia as League of Red Cross Societies Delegate charged with helping the National Society to reorganize its structure and develop its activities. The result of his efforts is a perfect example of the League's technical assistance to a National Society. There is an interview in the Monthly News and Report (1963, No. 1) published by the League, which gives a very good idea of certain possibilities and difficulties in the task being undertaken today in Africa by the Red Cross and which we consider worth reproducing.*

Mr. Coron, how did you approach your mission?

First I contacted Government authorities and made a quick tour of the whole country to study its characteristics, the needs of the population, and to find out what the Red Cross would be able to do for them. I talked with farmers, teachers, doctors,

administrators—and I soon realized that the Red Cross had an immense rôle to play in both social and humanitarian fields. Imagine, if you will, that 75 per cent of the children are under-nourished ; many of them do not have shoes, and there are innumerable cases of hookworm. Tuberculosis is still uncontrolled in the country ; 5 per cent of the population are tubercular.

To which spheres of activity did you give particular attention ?

Hygiene and health education, as you may surmise. Working with the Public Health Services, we opened a dispensary in Monrovia where 500 children, from birth to six years of age, are treated each month under the direction of a pediatrician and four nurses. A milk station was also opened in connection with the dispensary.

The young are the best distribution agents for rules of hygiene. Junior Red Cross has now spread into all the local chapters, and in 12 schools the Juniors are responsible for cleanliness. Our project also plans for Juniors to construct toilets in all schools, and cultivate gardens.

First aid has been developed as well ; for example, basic principles have been instilled in six schools in Monrovia and at the National Police Academy where nine instructors have been trained. We principally emphasized artificial respiration, treatment of injuries, individual hygiene, and the treatment of snakebite. In two schools at Monrovia, we gave Home Nursing courses ; individual hygiene, how to make a bed, how to care for the sick, for a new baby, etc. . . .

What is the structure of the Liberian Society ?

The structure is essentially democratic and adapted to the administrative and sociological characteristics of the country. At the head of the Society is a Board of Governors composed of 44 members and representing the entire country. The main job of this Board is to define the general policy of the Liberian Red Cross. There is a National Office at Monrovia which acts as an executive secretariat and includes an Executive Secretary and three field Delegates. I worked particularly with them, and we trained them in all fields so that they are able to travel throughout

the country to organize local committees, teach first aid, organize Junior Red Cross in the schools and, above all, explain the general objectives of the Red Cross. In this way we opened 13 local chapters, distributed somewhat according to the administrative divisions of the country. Each chapter is made up of a Board of Directors, first aid services and Junior Red Cross. The Monrovia chapter has 50 members who have elected a representative to the Board of Governors.

What are the future plans of the Liberian Red Cross ?

Next summer, the Red Cross will train teachers in first aid. We have a five-year plan aimed at training a large majority of the students. The programme of disaster relief has begun, and it is planned to give local chapters the responsibility of furnishing a shelter for victims in their areas and distributing food and clothing.

In addition, to commemorate the Centenary, the Liberian Red Cross plans to train a theatrical group which will present scenes of Red Cross activities, or to give a parade on the theme " What is the Red Cross ? " There will also be special radio programmes, and a series of six Red Cross stamps will be issued.

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## United States

The American Red Cross held its 38th Annual Convention in May 1963 in Philadelphia at which more than 4,000 delegates were present. On that occasion, Mr. John F. Kennedy, President of the United States and Honorary President of the National Society, sent a message to the American Red Cross which was read out at the inaugural session, the purport of which was as follows :

I am very pleased to send greetings to the delegates and guests assembled for the 38th American Red Cross Convention. Your national convention has special significance this year, since it is held in observance