

NEWS OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES

Formerly: International Bulletin of Red Cross Societies, founded in 1869

Bolivia

We are now pleased to be able to report on the Bolivian Red Cross, thanks to the reappearance of its official, bulletin *Revista de la Cruz Roja Boliviana*. In the editorial we read: "The substantial reductions which we were obliged to make in our publicity budget, in order to allow for greater allocations for social welfare purposes, prevented us from providing regular information on the effective and unassuming work being carried out by our organization on behalf of the Bolivian population, especially on behalf of needy families . . ."

The cover of this review illustrates, by means of small, revealing pictures, this work, and one is immediately struck by the important part assigned to child welfare in the work of this National Society: a children's canteen, aid to mothers, milk centres and a children's home. In addition, illustrations showing blood transfusions, emergency relief, first aid, social welfare and aid to invalids bear witness to the many different aspects of Red Cross action in Bolivia.

A glance inside the pamphlet confirms our first impression regarding child welfare, for we find this concern for the children, both young and older, revealed in many different ways. On the first page, under the heading "Centre for Mother and Child Care" we see a doctor examining a baby. In the article we learn that another such centre is under construction in a populous quarter of the capital, La Paz; at the first centre, about 5,300 children were examined during 1959. An important pre-natal section, working jointly with the child-care section of this Society, provides medical attention for expectant mothers. The above-mentioned child-care section constitutes the "axis" of the Centre's work; it receives a large number of children with different illnesses each day, as well as mothers who

come for advice on matters of feeding. In addition, the Centre has a laboratory where the necessary analyses and blood-tests are carried out in order to keep a watch on the health of the mothers-to-be.

The "Children's Canteen" was set up in 1954 and contributes to a large extent to the moral and economic protection of the mother and to the child's education before he goes to school, as well as helping the national economy by enabling the mother to work more efficiently in the workshops and factories, and by providing better nourishment for hundreds of children whose mothers go out to work. It also includes a "Mothers Club" and a "Milk Section". The work of this centre, which is spreading to other towns, has already given very satisfactory results; it concentrates all its efforts on helping the children of poor families, without removing them from their mothers, except while they are at work. Thus the Red Cross does not play the rôle of a "guardian", but merely performs the duties which belong to it.

It should be added that the very smallest are also helped and protected by the Red Cross: in the photographs we see some of them in their cots at the Nursery and others learning to walk in the Nursery gardens.

The Bolivian Red Cross also runs another interesting institution: the "Carmen V. de Ernst" corrective home for young women in the region of Uriraflore. This home is entirely maintained by the Bolivian Red Cross and is staffed by a specialized personnel which skillfully performs the delicate task of reintegrating these girls who, "for some reason or other, were living on the fringe of society" into the life of the community. In the dressmaking and knitting rooms, the girls can learn a profession.

In spite of devoting a great part of its work to child-care, this National Society does not neglect the traditional Red Cross activities on behalf of adults and of providing emergency relief. We are shown a consulting room with modern equipment which is open all day to give first aid, etc. to the poor population. During 1959, about 5,000 consultations were given free of charge and large quantities of medicaments, often very expensive, distributed. It should be pointed out, in conclusion, that the Bolivian Red Cross Society gave its assistance on the occasion of natural disasters, such as floods, as well as in the case of strikes, accidents, etc.

When one reads this review, one has the impression of a well-balanced and efficient activity which bears witness to the vitality of the Red Cross in South America.

Germany

A DRIVING SCHOOL FOR THE DISABLED

During the ten years since its re-constitution, the "Landesverband Berlin" of the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic has always felt itself bound to take on, apart from the usual Red Cross duties, various other activities called for by our time which also correspond to the humanitarian spirit of our movement. One of these activities is the driving-school for the disabled run by the German Red Cross in Berlin. This school was set up in 1947 by a private individual who was later obliged for financial reasons to give up this very special undertaking. Convinced that the school responded to a real need, the Red Cross in Berlin took it over in December 1953.

Between that date and Spring 1960, 1,700 learners enrolled, of whom 80 % had suffered leg amputations or were paralyzed (amputation at the knee or upper thigh, amputation of both legs, transverse myelitis, infantile paralysis). Those with both hands amputated (nearly all of whom succeeded in learning to drive after the so-called Krukenberg operation), deserve particular mention. In addition to war-disabled, therefore, we also see paralytics and persons crippled by accidents learning to drive.

The driving-school for the disabled of the German Red Cross now has 3 different types of cars, all equipped with special devices¹. The learners are thus taught to drive whatever their disablement may be. These devices are later installed in the students' own cars, in such a way that the car can also be driven by able-bodied persons.

The great advantage of this driving-school is the fact that it has different types of cars so that while they are learning to drive, the

¹ *Plate.*