

The Netherlands Red Cross also normally receives the most varied requests for information, which are studied and dealt with by the "Section for foreign relations". Between the present Information Bureau, which is being wound up and this section, there is moreover a clear-cut division in responsibilities : the former dealing with supplying information about large groups of persons (Hungarian refugees, Indonesian repatriates, etc.) and the Section for external affairs concerning itself with all individual cases ; for these it has adopted the principle of never revealing an address without first obtaining the permission of the person who is being traced. In such cases, we always ask our local section to make contact with the person concerned and to inform him of the request which is being made. It goes without saying that the system of local informants to the official Bureau which is at present being set up, has been useful to us in such cases in spite of the fact that these activities are not part of their duties.

Panama

In one of the recent numbers of its bulletin, *Revista de la Cruz Roja Nacional de Panama*, the Panamanian Red Cross sets out, in an article entitled "Activities of the National Red Cross", a summary of its activities which it divides in two halves : permanent activities and special activities. With regard to the former, we would point out the services undertaken in three clinics : ante-natal, pre-school and dental, in two homes for foundling children, one of which is at the headquarters of the Red Cross and the other being in the country, and finally in four different children's day nurseries set up in various parts of the capital.

Amongst the permanent services, one can also mention the distribution of meals to needy families, an activity which has just

been re-organized on the basis of a census carried out last March by the " Grey Ladies ", who are closely associated with the organization. Thanks to this recruitment and to the investigations which resulted, 250 needy families were visited and their cases studied, as a result of which the monthly distribution increased from one parcel to four. Moreover, it is intended to assist these families in such a way that they can quickly dispense with the help of the Red Cross, who can then accord that help to other needy families by the same method.

Amongst the activities of a special nature, we would point out the particular attention, considered very important, which is paid to children placed in the care of the Panamanian Red Cross. Parties are organized during which each child receives, in addition to something to eat, a small personal present. Furthermore, a playground has been installed on the terrace of the premises with a trapeze, a roundabout, a small swimming pool, etc. for the children accommodated in the Society's headquarters. These children, therefore, grow up in an atmosphere of care, and under our common emblem they live a gayer and fuller life, one " which will be the basis of a spiritual development, free from all bitterness and rancour ".

With regard to relief action in the case of natural disasters, the Red Cross has considerable reserves at its disposal, in order to be able to provide for any eventuality. Thus, last December, after severe flooding, the organization sent relief of every description to the scene of the disaster: foodstuffs, urgently needed utensils, clothing and medicaments for 500 families who were victims of the disaster. Moreover, on this occasion, it acted as intermediary for other organizations who had contributed to the relief action, particularly the University Students' Federation, the Inter-American Women's Club and the Social Services.

The National Red Cross has a far-reaching project in hand which is of interest to all the personnel at the Society's headquarters. It is, in fact, the reconstruction of the building which is now too small, following the extension of humanitarian activities in Panama during the last few years. This reconstruction has become imperative, not only to enlarge existing services, but also to house the children which the Society lodges there in the proper manner.

NEWS OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES

All these activities and the realization of this project require considerable financial means. Consequently the author of the article—who, to write this, drew his inspiration from information given him by the President of the National Society, Mrs. Cecilia O. de Chiari—puts the accent from the very beginning on financial needs and on the importance which the collection of annual funds assumes for the Red Cross of that country.
