

THE REPORT OF THE BRITISH RED CROSS SOCIETY.

The Report of the British Red Cross Society for the year 1937, just published, from its headquarters, 14, Grosvenor Crescent, London, S.W.1, is an interesting document giving a survey of the work of the Society over the world for last year.

The Foreword contributed by the Chairman, the Hon. Sir Arthur Stanley, G.B.E., records with deep regret the death of Dame Sarah Swift, R.R.C., a Member of Council and of the Executive Committee, who remained in close relationship with the Society up to the time of her death.

The Chairman also records with regret the death of Lieut.-Colonel J. H. Stanley, C.B.E., a Member of Council and of the Executive Committee, who was for many years an active and valued colleague, and was one of the earliest advocates of the formation of a Junior Branch.

During the year the Red Cross has been called upon to extend its primary obligation of aiding the sick and wounded in War, and, Sir Arthur Stanley states, it is only too evident that the immediate future will call for sustained and augmented effort. The International Red Cross Committee has striven indefatigably to administer with strict impartiality the funds subscribed by the National Red Cross Societies for the victims of civil war in Spain. In China, where the need is extreme, the British Red Cross Society is co-operating with the Lord Mayor's Fund to make provision for the treatment of the sick and wounded and to bring a measure of relief to the suffering and destitute.

At home the year has been one of great activity. The number of detachments has increased, 19 Men's and 83 Women's Detachments having been added. The total personnel (exclusive of Air Raid Precautions Reserves) exceeds 30,000.

In regard to the Society's Clinic for Rheumatism the Report of the Medical Board states that during 1937 the Clinic has continued its activities to the fullest possible extent. The number and scope of routine investigations and treatments have utterly cramped the accommodation available. Women patients have had, at the end of the year, to wait weeks before being able to commence treatment.

The importance of referring early cases of rheumatism for treatment is becoming increasingly appreciated. This course leads to correspondingly better results, and the Medical Board report it is most encouraging to find that four evening clinics, held for this purpose, and enabling patients to attend after working hours, are extremely popular.

The report states that the Clinic has built up an organisation capable of curing and relieving the symptoms of a very considerable number of patients suffering from the various rheumatic diseases by carrying out routine and, in many cases, detailed investigations, and by providing physical and other measures of known value. The Medical Board feel, however, that this is by no means sufficient. The clinic should be enabled to make full use of the vast amount of material information it has already collected. The accomplishment of these aims needs not only the provision of research workers of proved ability, but also the provision of further accommodation for the installation of any apparatus advocated by the Visiting Physicians as worthy of trial.

The Report of the Blood Transfusion Service states that there was a most remarkable demand for donors in London from August, 1937, the final four months of the year totalling 2,018 calls compared with 1,683 for the corresponding

period of 1936, and the increase has continued in 1938 up to the time of issuing this Report—498 new donors were enrolled after having been passed as suitable by the Medical Officer.

The outstanding event of the year in regard to blood transfusion was the International Congress held in Paris in September-October, when 22 nations were represented and over 100 addresses and communications were read and discussed.

The practice of drip transfusion, by which a patient receives, drip by drip, from five to ten pints of blood, the operation lasting several days, seems now firmly established, and most of the great London Hospitals now utilise it to some extent. The Report states that the results reported certainly entitle it to be regarded as the most valuable development in technique of recent years.

Brief reports are given of the branches established in Ceylon, the Gold Coast, Kenya, the Seychelles, Southern Rhodesia, the Sudan, the Swaziland Protectorate, also of the Australian Red Cross Society in connection with which it is recorded that Lady Galway has consented to act as representative of the Australian Red Cross Society on the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of the Viscountess Novar, also that the Council received with gratification the information that the International Red Cross Committee had awarded the Florence Nightingale Medal to Miss A. M. Kellett, Matron of the Sydney Hospital, and President of the Australian Nursing Federation.

At the Lady Galway Convalescent Hospital, administered by the South Australian Division, 176 patients, including 133 soldiers and 43 army sisters have been received, and the Junior Red Cross record is, the Report states, an inspiring one. The membership is well over 100,000 and steady growth is maintained, as is also the case in connection with the schemes with which the Divisions are associated.

During 1937 the Red Cross Society in Canada was called upon to deal with its first major disaster in 16 years. An unseasonable week of warm weather at the end of March melted very rapidly the heavy snows of the winter 1936-37. All the rivers in Western Ontario overflowed their banks. Great damage was done in a suburb of the city of London, where hundreds of homes were destroyed or severely damaged. The London Branch of the Society met the situation magnificently and due to its foresight there was no loss of life. Before the flood reached the city, small boats had been brought from a neighbouring summer resort and emergency preparations had been made for the care of 5,000 homeless victims. The actual number rendered homeless was well over 4,000. In the lower stretches of the Valley comparable arrangements were made by other Red Cross Branches and altogether relief was provided for nearly 10,000 people. A special relief fund was organised throughout Canada and approximately 225,500 dollars was collected for the relief of the victims.

The summarised Report of the Indian Red Cross Society states that it is impossible for Red Cross Societies to ignore the sufferings of the victims in the unhappy Civil War in Spain, and in the Sino-Japanese conflict, while, on its own borders, the Waziristan Campaign has called for increased Red Cross activity.

The First Annual Meeting of the Indian Committee of the Florence Nightingale International Foundation was held in the Red Cross Building, New Delhi, on November 17th, when the Indian Red Cross Society was represented by its Organising Secretary. At this meeting a formal constitution for the Indian Committee was introduced. An Indian nurse, Miss Nowroji, of Bombay, was given the scholarship for 1937-1938.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)