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SWITZERLAND HELPS . . .

. . . in Europe

The Swiss Red Cross sent money and food to the flooded areas in Italy in November, and a helicopter flew out at once to help in assisting in the evacuation of the victims.

Help to Czechoslovak refugees goes on. So far 8,000 are in Switzerland, half of whom have asked for asylum. A Society for Swiss-Czech Friendship has been founded. Language courses are being organised and Czech culture exhibitions and concerts are arranged. Every Canton enables workmen to be employed. University students number several hundred, 200 alone in Zurich. In Berne, the students sold candles in aid of their Czech colleagues, and in Zurich valuable paintings were sold.

The reception centre at Buchs was closed at the end of January. The Czech Minister of Health visited Switzerland in December. Prof. Ota Sik, who decided to stay in Switzerland, has been giving lectures on his economic reform model. Prof. P. Kielholz, Psychiatrist in Basle, was honoured with a gold medal for his services to the Czech Community in Switzerland. A number of Swiss compositions have been and will be performed in Czechoslovakia this season, especially music by Honegger. Czechoslovakia will be Guest of Honour at the Comptoir Suisse.

. . . in the Middle East

The Red Cross is still engaged in repatriating Palestinians and Egyptians, 143 is the latest batch. The Swiss Israelites have begged the Federal Council for assistance in the sad plight of the Jews in Irak. The sale of oranges in aid of the Swiss Agricultural College "Nachlat Jehuda" in Israel resulted in nearly 87,000 francs.

30 tons of pre-fabricated houses have been sent to Teheran for victims made homeless in the earthquake last autumn.

. . . in Asia

More Tibetans have been sent to Switzerland, mostly people who already have relatives settled there. The Federal Council has granted further financial assistance to the Red Cross, especially to look after the Tibetan children's centres in India; about 50,000 refugees live there, partly in great misery. The Red Cross has a number of medical men and women in Vietnam, and the "Terre des Hommes" organisation continues to take orphaned and sick children to Switzerland. Swiss children between 6 and 16 put up drawings and paintings for sale at an exhibition in Lausanne; the money went to "Terre des Hommes". At the wish of the Washington Postmaster-General, the Swiss PTT have agreed to transport hundreds of air mail parcels for American servicemen imprisoned in North Vietnam and North Korea.

. . . in Africa

The Archbishop of Algiers thanked the Swiss "Caritas" Organisation for their help in his country when he gave a Press Conference in Berne.

The most difficult and biggest aid campaign is the one the International Red Cross has been undertaking in Nigeria and Biafra. Dr. G. Schuerch who was in charge in Nigeria, and Dr. G. Pidermann who selected the wounded to be transported to Europe, returned at the end of December and gave information which testified to the difficulties and to the wonderful work the Red Cross are

doing. 32 million francs is needed for adequate help by the Red Cross. The Federal Council has given another half-million francs to help with the airlift to Biafra. Money is being collected by private and public organisations in Switzerland, from schoolchildren to the Migros Co-operative who had collected nearly a million francs by Christmas.

The new head of the delegation of the International Red Cross in Nigeria, in succession to Dr. Schuerch, is PTT Departmental Chief M. Egli. Ambassador A. Lindt, Red Cross High Commissioner for West Africa, gave a report to a plenary meeting of the Committee in Geneva (all its members are Swiss, although it is called "international"). So far, 1½ million women and children have been saved by concerted relief action in the two countries.

Dr. Lindt asked the Swiss Government to put Lieut.-Col. Hans Schaedler, Berne, at the disposal of the Red Cross; he is a transport officer and is in charge of operations in Nigeria/Biafra.

Towards the end of January, a Press conference was organised by the Swiss Red Cross at which its President, Prof. Dr. H. Haug, gave the main address. The conference was boycotted by a number of parliamentary correspondents who disagree with the information policy of the Swiss Red Cross.

The Schaffhausen Government has appointed the Biafran gynaecologist Dr. Godwin Nwebube, who speaks excellent German, as *Oberarzt* at the Cantonal Hospital.

[A.T.S.]

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