

Section 4.—The Canadian Red Cross Society

The Canadian Red Cross Society in both its wartime and peacetime work is closely allied in a voluntary capacity with the Dominion and Provincial Governments. The Society was founded in 1896 and incorporated in 1909, its purpose being to furnish volunteer aid to the sick and wounded of armies in time of war and, in time of peace or war, to carry on and assist in work for the improvement of health, the prevention of disease and the mitigation of suffering throughout the world. Organization includes National and Overseas Offices, Provincial Divisions and 2,500 Branches. The Society has a senior and junior membership of over 2,500,000 in Canada.

The year 1945 saw the end of the War and the liberation of populations and prisoners of war in Europe and the Far East. This meant the re-directing of Red Cross work into new channels, not only in connection with its war work but also in the peacetime field. Surveys of the needs of liberated peoples in Europe and Asia were made and large shipments of relief supplies sent to these countries. Food, clothing and release kits were distributed to liberated prisoners of war and internees in both Europe and the Far East. In the sphere of peacetime endeavour, a wide and comprehensive program of peacetime work was drawn up and is now underway in all the provinces.

Peacetime Services.—The aims of the Red Cross Society in peace are the same as in war—to relieve suffering and need anywhere and everywhere in Canada to the full extent of its resources.

Veterans Aid.—Assistance to war veterans will always remain the first task of the Red Cross. Sick and disabled veterans in hospitals overseas and in Canada are receiving all possible care and kindness through the ministrations of Red Cross visitors, handicraft workers and library attendants. For the comfort and recreation of these men and their relatives, 8 Red Cross Lodges have been built or are under construction in connection with the large military hospitals in Canada. Assistance to needy veterans and dependents take many forms, such as medical, optical and dental assistance, clothing, food, etc.

Outpost Hospital Service.—At the end of 1945, a chain of 44 Red Cross outpost hospitals and nursing stations were in operation in the frontier districts of the Dominion, bringing medical science within reach of these isolated communities. A number of new Outposts are planned and should be in operation during 1946. Living under pioneer conditions, the outpost nurses save many lives for Canada and, in their service in rural schools and settlers' homes, bring health and security to these people.

Blood Transfusion Service.—Many Canadian hospitals are without adequate stocks of blood serum or blood transfusion facilities. It is proposed to establish a National Blood Transfusion Service which will fill all such needs throughout the country free of charge. This service will open in 1946.

Junior Red Cross.—This organization, devoted to the principles of health, good citizenship and international friendliness, has helped over 25,000 crippled children since its inception. At the end of 1945, it had a membership of 876,277 pupils in 30,861 branches in Canada and Newfoundland. These Juniors have given magnificent war service in providing relief for child war victims throughout the world, supplying ambulances and other mobile equipment, as well as maintaining a number of war nurseries in Great Britain.