

## Morocco

It will be recalled that the town of Agadir in Morocco was destroyed in 1960 by an earthquake which caused several thousand deaths. The League of Red Cross Societies then launched an appeal achieving excellent results. In order to express its gratitude to the donors, it inaugurated a commemorative inscription on 27 September 1969 at the new Hassan II Hospital in Agadir.<sup>1</sup> It should be pointed out that this hospital was built, to a large extent, thanks to the donations in cash and kind of many National Societies of the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun and that it consists of a number of hutments spread out over a wide area and constructed, like the whole new town of Agadir, in accordance with the latest anti-seismic methods.

The Moroccan Red Crescent had sent out invitations to the ceremony to ICRC and League representatives as well as to those of some fifteen National Societies selected from amongst the large numbers of Societies having taken part in the relief action. An address on behalf of the Moroccan Government was delivered by Dr. Omar Boucetta, Minister for Youth, Sport and Social Affairs, in which he paid tribute not only to the energy and perseverance of the Moroccan people which enabled the town of Agadir to be rebuilt, but also to the spirit of fellowship of which relief work by the movement of the Red Cross, the Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun had given ample proof. "I would ask you", he concluded, "to express our gratitude to your respective National Societies and if words are unable to express the gratitude of all those inhabitants, a verse in the Koran says: "Whoever does even a particle of good will certainly be repaid".

Mr. H. Beer, Secretary-General of the League of Red Cross Societies, then recalled in what conditions and in how exemplary a manner the aid action developed so rapidly, inspired as it was by a spirit of service which knows no frontier. "In all, 61 National

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<sup>1</sup> *Plate: Agadir*: Inauguration of a commemorative plaque at the Hassan II hospital.

Societies provided 10 surgeons, 48 nurses, 3 disaster relief experts and donations both in cash and in kind estimated at 7.5 million dirhams. This number of sixty-one donor Societies so far remains the highest ever recorded by the League, which is a good indication of the effect the disaster had on world opinion."

Speaking in the name of the ICRC, Mr. P. Gaillard, Assistant Director, brought out the lesson of the grievous events of Agadir. They have taken on moral significance by the very fact that they created a splendid movement of generosity amongst those who deeply felt "the new responsibility assumed by each one towards suffering wherever it may occur".

This ceremony and the words spoken, like the warm welcome given by the Moroccan Red Crescent, were proof of the energy animating the National Society. This was also reflected that same evening in the speeches made by Dr. Hadj Ahmed Djebli-Elaydouni, President delegate, and Mr. Bouacherine, First Vice-Chairman, and also in the second issue of the *Croissant-Rouge marocain*, review which mentioned the international effort made on behalf of Agadir and gives the texts of these addresses.

Since July 1969, this National Society has in fact been producing a review in French and Arabic. Copiously illustrated and with excellent presentation, it gives a complete and lively account every two months of its activities and of its provincial committees, together with news of the ICRC and the League and articles on the Geneva Conventions, first-aid and other subjects of a humanitarian character. As Mr. Gaillard observed when he visited Rabat and Fez, the Red Crescent now works in Morocco with much effectiveness in various fields, and especially with the youth of the country. This applies also to information, as can be seen in the recent creation of a periodical to which we wish all the success it deserves.