

Canadian Relief for Morocco

ON FEBRUARY 29 an urgent appeal was broadcast by Morocco for international assistance in the wake of violent earthquakes which had rocked the coastal city of Agadir. News reports flashed round the world that the tremors had claimed thousands of lives and had rendered at least half of the population of 40,000 homeless; the city was virtually destroyed overnight. Within a few hours, the League of Red Cross Societies had responded to this urgent appeal — the second in a few months from Morocco — and had begun its operations to elicit and co-ordinate contributions from various member countries which could provide assistance.

The Canadian Red Cross was naturally approached and it, in turn, sought the concurrence of the Department of External Affairs in the expenditure of \$20,000 from the International Relief Fund to provide assistance to the victims of the disaster. Within four days an RCAF plane, which was made available at short notice by the Department of National Defence, was flying to Morocco with medical supplies and a Canadian medical team, comprising a doctor and six nurses, to work at the scene of the disaster. The Moroccan appeal and the response to it serve to emphasize the usefulness of the International Relief Fund in alleviating suffering abroad.

The history of the co-operative relation between the Canadian Red Cross and the Government in international relief activity goes back to the winter of 1953, the year of the disastrous floods in Great Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands. The Canadian people reacted quickly to the hardships endured by the countries of Western Europe and within a few days an organization, headed by Governor-General Vincent Massey, was created for the purpose of soliciting funds for relief. The response was magnificent. From all over the country came contributions from private individuals totalling more than \$1,782,000.

Provincial governments supplemented these private donations with substantial grants that brought the total to more than \$2,100,000. The Prime Minister, who had given an impetus to the creation of the fund, asked Parliament for, and received, a vote of \$1 million. The Canadian National European Flood Relief Fund contained more than \$3 million from the three sources, and this sum proved to be more than sufficient for the task involved. Administration of the fund was vested by Mr. Massey's committee in the Canadian Red Cross, which was experienced in aid work of this kind. Goods purchased with the Fund's resources were quickly dispatched through the co-operation of the Royal Canadian Air Force, commercial airlines and steamship companies, and were gratefully received in Europe.

Naturally enough, in the urgent moments of the flood crisis, every possible eventuality in the operation of the Fund could not be foreseen, and when the