

Panama

It is not too late for us to mention a very interesting initiative taken by the Panamanian Red Cross Society. It was, to our knowledge, the first experiment by a Latin American National Society. *Operation Survival* was organized along the lines of the instructions of the Tropical Survival School.

This operation, which took place last year, involved three five-day exercises in which three groups of three to five members of the Junior Red Cross took part.¹ The first two days of each exercise were devoted to theoretical preparation and the last three days to practical exercises. On the third day, the volunteers, whose main equipment was a radio, first-aid kits and the Mae Wests which they were wearing, were left to their own devices in the middle of a river. After reaching one of the banks in bush country, the team had to fend for themselves for three days. They had to build a shelter, with a fire, seek and prepare their own food, protect themselves from dangerous animals, set up a radio station and make preparations to send out distress signals if need be.

Each team had a leader and at certain times was in radio contact with the base. On the fifth day, the most important test was to find their way home.

It will be realized that such an exercise demands decision-making ability and understanding of mutual assistance. The young people of the Panamanian Red Cross showed that they possessed those qualities and knew how to put them into practice in the exceptional circumstances we have just described.

¹ *Plate.*