

The Helping Hand at Pueblo

By JOHN ALDEN

In spite of the fact that no definite quotas were solicited from Rotary Clubs thru International Headquarters, following the recent flood disasters at Pueblo very generous contributions of time and money were made by a large number of Rotarians, many of them members of Clubs far distant from Pueblo.



THE first week in June this year, while delegates were on the sea en route to the Twelfth Convention at Edinburgh, the city of Pueblo, Colorado, was suddenly visited by an unexpected and most disastrous flood. The morning after the beginning of the flood when it became evident that the situation was serious enough to require Rotary's aid, Vice-President Raymond M. Havens of Kansas City, the only International Director not en route to the convention at Edinburgh, addressed a letter to all Rotary Clubs outlining the situation and making an appeal for funds.

AS the first installment of Rotary's contribution, there was sent \$1,000.00 from the relief funds of the Association. With the exception of the clubs in the vicinity of Pueblo, which went into action immediately, the club of Dayton, Ohio, was the first to give financial assistance.

They sent a message of sympathy and \$500.00 on the first day of the flood.

Immediately following this, contributions poured into Headquarters by the score every day.

District Governors and Acting Deputy District Governors in practically all Districts supplemented Ray Havens' appeal by letter and bulletin.

All money sent in either to International Headquarters or directly to the Pueblo Club was turned over to the relief fund of the Red Cross, which was in charge of all relief work in the devastated district.

UNDER date of June 13th W. Frank Persons, Vice-Chairman of the National Headquarters of the American Red Cross at Washington, advised International Headquarters in Chicago as follows:

"As I told you in my telegram of June 9th, the American Red Cross appreciates the substantial help which the Rotary Clubs are sending to Pueblo on account of the disaster which has befallen that city." ". . . I need not add that you will have the closest possible cooperation of the Red Cross organization at Pueblo."

On June 20th the following letter was received from President F. E. Parks relative to the first installment of funds transmitted to Pueblo thru International Headquarters.

"The Pueblo Rotary Club appreciates very much the action of the International Association and the assistance that Rotary has given us in this matter.

"A great many immediate duties have been on hand to make necessary the postponement of some letter writing. We are now coming into the period of our disaster where we are realizing more and more every day the vast amount

of work and expenditure that will be necessary before our town will be restored.

"Yesterday, we finished a preliminary survey of the homes destroyed and the total is 510 homes entirely gone; 98 wrecked and 61 off their foundations. In my own company (The Colorado Fuel & Iron Company) we have just completed a survey of our employes who were affected by this, and we find 421, representing, with their families, about 1,225 people made homeless by the flood of June 3. So that the housing problem is a very serious one and especially the financing of the housing problem, and our Rotary Club will doubtless use considerable of the contributions that are coming in to them along the line of housing. And you can see that it is going to take a considerable amount of money in this work. . . .

"We appreciate, as I said before, very much the kind expression that we get from so many Rotary Clubs and it has been impossible to attend to the immediate duties and keep up with the acknowledgment of all the kind expressions that have come to us, and we trust that this delay is going to be interpreted in the Rotary spirit that it should be."

BY the middle of July, in spite of the tremendous damage done in the Pueblo district, thru the wonderful co-operation of all relief agencies united with the surrounding Rotary Clubs and financial contributions from all over the North American Continent, the Pueblo situation began to return to normal and the city was well started on its return to usual activities.

Only one member of the Pueblo Rotary Club lost his life. This was Ernest Withers, who was accidentally shot by a sentry while on an errand of mercy. His death under such circumstances is as much a matter of pride as it is of sorrow to all Rotary.

Rotarian Asbury White and Rotarian Bert Scribner. (Governor of the 21st District of Rotary), who were en route to the Convention, received a wireless on board the steamship "Cameronia" advising them that their places of business had been swept away.

Some thirty Rotarians suffered serious financial loss. Many of them had their stocks completely destroyed, and others had their places of business entirely washed away. Final figures on the disaster are as follows:

Homes totally destroyed, 700.

People made homeless, 7,200.

Financial requirements over and above moneys taken in by Red Cross from special contributions, \$250,000.00.

Every cent of money provided by Rotary to the Pueblo Relief Fund went to relief of the flood victims, all overhead expenses being borne by the American Red Cross.

