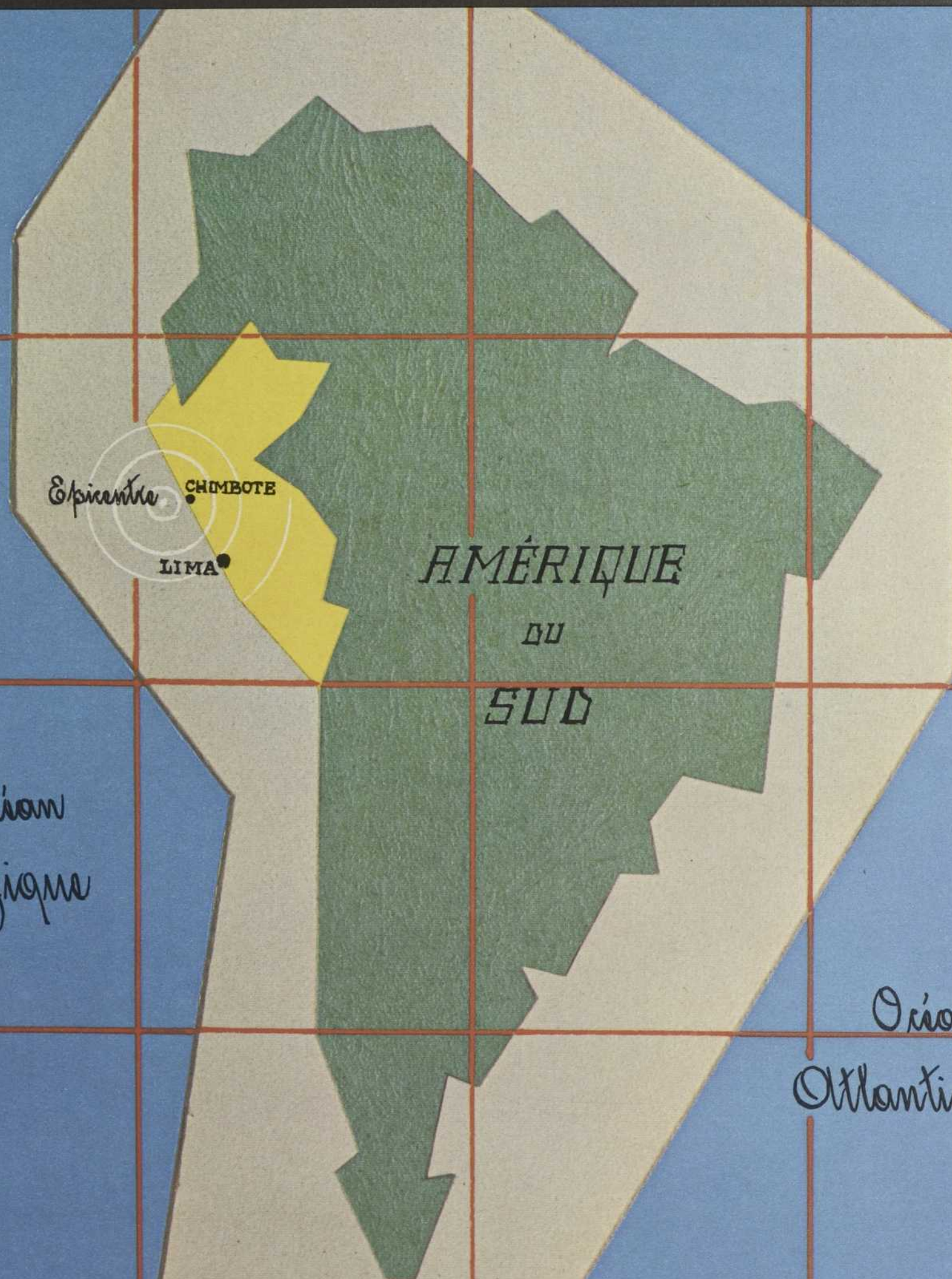




THE PRECURSOR

May-June, 1971, Ville de Laval—Vol. XXIX—No. 9



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THE PRECURSOR

No. 9—May-June 1971—Vol. XXIX



Huaraz, situated at an altitude of 3,000 m., is the capital of the Ancash department. Of its population of 50,000 inhabitants only 20,000 survived the cataclysm.

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TERREMOTO!

"The earth shook and the rocks parted asunder. . ." (Mt. 27: 51). After 2,000 years tremors of the first Good Friday were re-enacted in Peru, on May 31, 1970, at 3:20 p.m.

In this destructive catastrophe 70,000 Peruvians perished. Hardly had the ground stopped heaving, when the dreaded roar of a landslide was heard. Millions of tons of rock, ice, and mud

MOMENTS OF OVERWHELMING HORROR

destroyed several towns and villages in a few moments of overwhelming horror.

Thanks to the collaboration of Suzanne Longtin, M.I.C., Dolores St-Cyr, M.I.C., and Agnes Bouchard, M.I.C. *The Precursor* has compiled articles relating to these awful moments which transformed the department of Ancash into a pile of rubble.

Photos: Swiss-Foto; Cortesia;
Canadian missionaries—Lima



"EL HUASCARAN"
TECHO DEL PERU VISTO DESDE
LA PLAZA DE ARMAS DE YUNGAY 6768 MTS.
SOBRE EL NIVEL DEL MAR

Mt. Huascarán, the Executioner, Peru's highest peak.

"Will the Executioner strike again?" Many Peruvians asked themselves this question after the menacing giant, Navado Huascarán, made 3,500 victims in the great avalanche of June 10, 1962. But, no matter what danger lurks, people tend to mass together in the same places. Thus it happened that, shortly after the 1962 tragedy, several groups of Indians resettled Ancash's beautiful Callejon de Huaylas valley, hidden between two cordilleras.

In this region, South America's lost paradise, one can enjoy grandiose and enchanting panoramas. Two

ANCASH PRIOR TO THE

LA LIBERTAD

ANCASH

Cap.: HUARAZ



lordly valleys run parallel to the Pacific coast on each side of the Cordillera Blanca: the Santa and the Marañon.

Chimbote, one of the world's largest fishing ports and a thriving centre of steel and iron industry, is situated in the Ancash department. Its lovely and far-reaching beaches may eventually become centres of touristic attraction.

Within six hours of travel, without ever losing sight of the sea, one can reach the interior of Ancash where totally different landscapes unfold. In the east, the Cordillera Blanca beckons alpinists, skiers, poets, painters; in the west the Cordillera Negra provides the Indians with fertile lands to till and lush pastures for their livestock to graze. On the valley floor, regal palm trees contrast vividly with awesome glaciers above. Magnificent peaks in this region rear their snow-crowned summits a full mile higher than Switzerland's Matterhorn and Mont Blanc.

From the glaciers of the Cordillera Blanca 160 lakes have been formed. Overhead, a vision of splendour, Mount Huascaran vaults 22,205 feet into the sky. No one can guess when the mountain will send tons of ice and snow crashing into the valley at its base, making thousands of victims.

Towards the north, flow the quiet waters of the Santa River bordered by picturesque pueblos. Wedged in between the Cordillera Blanca and the Cordillera Negra, at the heart of Ancash, lies the valley called Callejon de Huaylas (corridor of greenery), one of the loveliest spots on earth. Here, over 3,000 years ago, from the north coast to the eastern highlands, flourished the Chavin culture, Peru's dominant culture. Nestling at the end of the "corridor of greenery" stands Huaraz, capital of the Ancash department. Yungay, the "Switzerland of Peru", lives up to its name. Carhuas, a modest pueblo, has nothing much to boast about, unless it be the friendliness of its people.

History

The history of Ancash goes back to pre-Incaic times. About 7,000 years ago, according to certain archeologists, an aboriginal tribe inhabited the region bordering the Marañon River. These mountaineers were expert craftsmen. We are now aware that their artistic creations and their sense of the human surpassed in splendour those of the short Incaic period.

Marvels of artistic invention — pottery, jewelry, weaving, architectural monuments — were created by the long forgotten cultures of Chavin, Paracas, Nazca, Mochicas, Tihuanaco, and Chimu.

The oldest of these civilizations, the Chavin, is revealed to us only by certain vestiges left in the Sierra and on Peru's central coast.

According to experts, Chavin was a religious centre as well as the chief focus of the culture that bears its name. Apparently, the religious organization rather than the political exerted a predominant influence on this people.

Chavin art is generally symbolistic and conventional. Its central motifs consist in representations of jungle beasts, great cats, serpents . . .

The facade of the Castillo temple, for instance, reveals heavy columns, round or square, and extremely original stelae. One of these is decorated with a frieze representing a mysterious dragon, half-feline half-bird. The carvings are exquisitely done.

Finally, Chavin sculptures show surprising originality. They cannot be compared to any other in the world although they do reveal, in a few instances, archaic Mexican or proto-Chinese influence.

The pottery is delicate and well baked, generally black, but in some cases red or brown.

Despite what was held to be true 50 years ago, Peru was far from being a land of primitives, devoid of skill and knowledge, before the inception of the Inca empire.

At the period of the conquest, the Spaniards were drawn to the Callejon valley chiefly because of silver deposits found in the vicinity. In their insatiable greed for silver and gold, the invaders ruthlessly destroyed aboriginal civilizations.

Economy and agriculture

At present, in spite of the difficulties of communication and the bad roads, no touristic excursion should be planned without including this beautiful "corridor of greenery", the Callejon de Huaylas.

Four important industries exist in the department of Ancash: fishing, mining, metallurgy of iron and steel, and tourism.

The farmers, who live a frugal life, raise potatoes, sugar, maize. Adequate technical assistance would ensure a notable increase on the level of production as well as on that of exportation. Moreover, such assistance might well eliminate the arduous efforts necessitated by the cultivation of such rugged mountainous slopes as those of Cordillera Negra.

Until May 1970, the principal problems Ancash had to wrestle with were the lack of communications, a feudal mechanization, the scarcity of credit and of technical assistance. The Ancash department often ignored by the government of Peru will no doubt come into its own now that the extent of its natural, human, and spiritual resources have been known. It took the great disaster of May 31, 1970, to open the eyes of many.

Agnes Bouchard, M.I.C.

Pucallpa, Peru, June 18, 1970

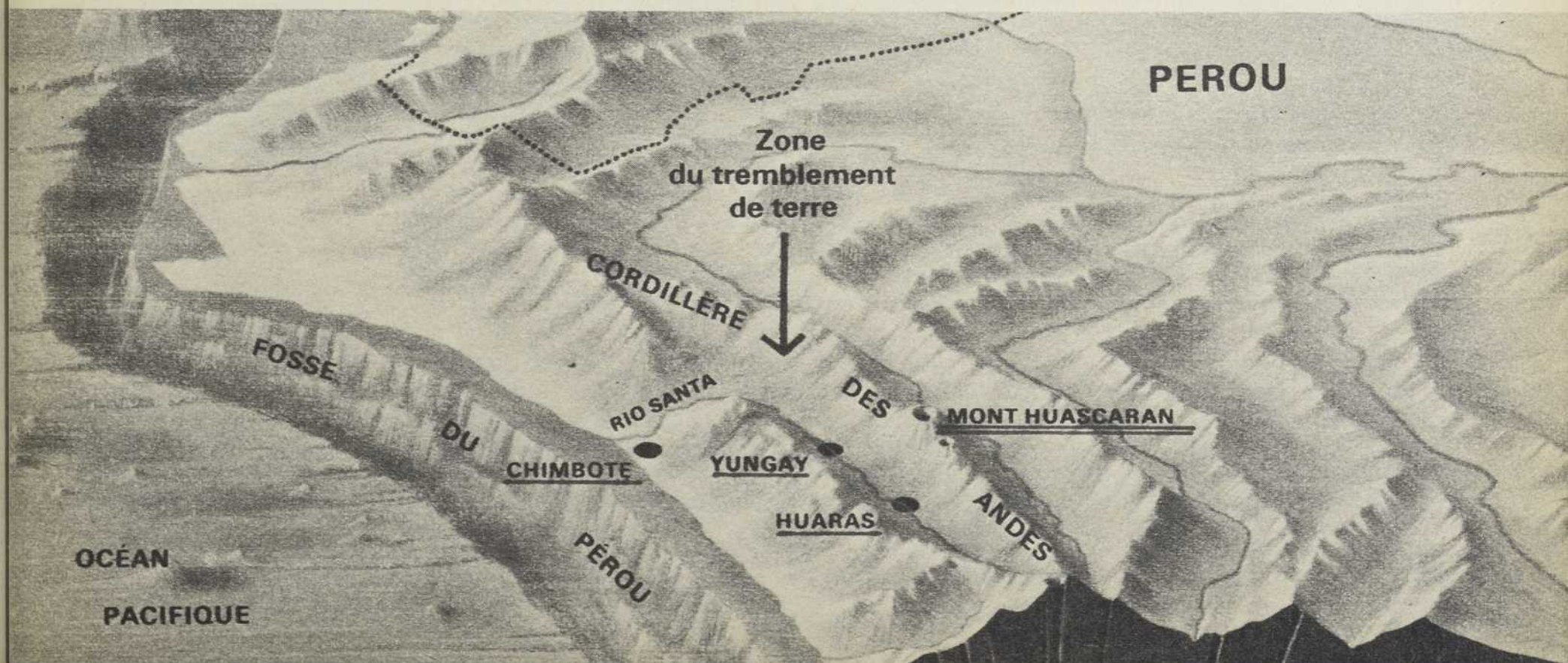
Dear friends of mine,

Here I am to give you some information with regard to the ordeal through which Peru is passing. The earthquake of last May 31st struck with unimaginable fury, snuffing out the lives of 50,000 inhabitants. While we mourn those who have perished we must not forget the survivors whose homes are rubble, whose crops and livestock are gone, whose loved ones are buried or maimed.

The earthquake — the most destructive in this hemisphere — spread over an area equal to that of Belgium and Holland. Roads were fissured and blocked by debris, and the Callejon valley, remote and isolated even in normal times, was almost completely cut off from the rest of the land. Treacherous air currents in the high Sierras render flying at all times difficult. To make matters worse, a cloud of dust from the rubble combined with seasonal fog rose some 18,000 feet over the valley, making rescue and supply extremely difficult.

Fortunately, a flight of huge U.S.A. helicopters flew in over the site of the disaster with badly needed supplies of food, medicine, clothing, etc. The stricken population were without water (wells and aqueducts had been blocked), without shelter (their homes were destroyed), without food and medicine. Those spared by the earthquake were in danger of dying of hunger and exposure. "Flying bridges" were organized to bring in supplies and to carry to safety the more seriously injured.

Whoever does not know the complicated topography of the site (villages clinging to steep cliffs or lying on the valley floor) can hardly imagine the difficulty entailed in bringing assistance. It took 24 hours before full impact of the tragedy reached Lima and the world.



At present, the work of reconstruction is on the way. Bridges are being built. The army has undertaken to clear away the debris. From all over, ships and planes are arriving to provide assistance but the ravaged area remains difficult of access.

The psychological shock was such that survivors still live in a state of panic. All about them are the dead, the maimed, the homeless. Slight tremors continue to add to their terror. Hour by hour radios announce new tragedies, heroic rescues. A Sister perished as she shielded with her body a little girl who was found alive. Groups of peasants walked two days on end without meeting a living soul. Courageous pilots risked their lives flying in tricky Andean mountain passes. Many are the heroic actions of assistance and rescue that will never be recorded in history. Pathetic photographs, which speak for themselves, fill newspapers and magazines. One of these photos shows a section of the city that suffered most, although it was not entirely buried by tides of mud and rubble. Underneath runs the caption: "Hiroshima 1945? Not so. Huaraz 1970!" All of Peru is united in bringing help to 1,000,000 brother Peruvians, victims of the seism.

But why so many dead? Try to imagine flotilla-sized masses of ice and rock, weighing millions of tons, thundering down the slopes into the bottomlands, crushing everything and everybody in their path. . . Yungay, a town of 20,000 inhabitants was instantaneously wiped out as several million tons of ice shot down the mountain slopes. During earthquakes, when the ground heaves and rocks, one instinctively rushes outside so as not to be crushed under falling beams. But the streets became monstrous graveyards. At first, the dead were numbered at 30,000. This number soon rose to over 50,000. To those who have died in the cataclysm, add the homeless, the injured, the orphans — all victims of the disaster — and you will soon reach the 1,000,000 mark.

In the fertile Callejon valley, 30,000 square miles of farm lands, seeded crops were entirely destroyed. Sugar refineries were partly devastated. This spells a serious loss as our economy largely rests on sugar production. According to approximate computation, reconstruction is going to cost twice the normal yearly national budget. This means that heavy debts will have to be incurred. However this may be, the Peruvian nation faces its awesome task with undaunted courage.

The city of Lima is filled with the injured. Several institutions, churches, convents, clubs, have been turned into makeshift hospitals. A committee of public service endeavouring to find homes for 500 orphans has already received 5,000 offers. As usual in such cases, the children suffered most from the horrors of the catastrophe and its aftermath. While we are on the subject of the young, a group of young people from Yungay escaped with their lives as they were watching a circus on top of a neighbouring hill. They are orphans now, for their relatives lie buried under the debris of Yungay. In another town, several persons escaped being buried alive by taking refuge in a graveyard.

This terrible ordeal plunges all of Peru into sorrowful mourning. The tremendous movement of solidarity from all nations has deeply touched the people in their trial. Pucallpa has done its share. A committee of assistance (of which I am president) has rapidly been formed and its dynamism reflects the greatheartedness of our townspeople. Every single family, even the poorest, took it to heart to contribute something. One of my closest friends who has suffered considerable losses, confided: "We will emerge from this trial stronger than we were. The shock has spurred lagging wills and has closely united all minds. Never have I felt so close to all my compatriots."

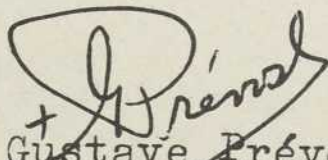
Dear friends of mine, I would like through this letter to effect a practical *rapprochement* between you and people who endure in silence as the humble do; people who could easily succumb to despair but who are bravely preparing a resurrection. Moreover, I would like to make you *feel*, somehow, our anxiety, share in our anguish. The future is bleak. Chimbote, a large fishing port, is dumping into the sea 100,000 tons of rubble to clear the way for eventual reconstruction. This is our people's Good Fri-





day. But, in the not too distant future, we hope to see the dawn of a happy Easter. Building up again will be a long arduous task. Please keep in prayerful remembrance those who died so unexpectedly. Also please remember the survivors so that their hope may be like a little flickering light in a devastated temple.

Yours as ever,

MGR  +
Gustave Prévost,
vic. ap.



Colonel Pastor Jeri Cazzoria, General Coordinator,

Junta de Asistencia

granted Sister Dolores St. Cyr, M.I.C., an interview
on Thursday August 27, 1970.

— Would you be so kind as to explain the aims and norms of JAN?

— Jan (Junta de Asistencia Nacional) is a social assistance organization. Its two great objectives are: succor in want and distress and social promotion. Organized with these twin aims in view, JAN is a permanent service. As a stable organization it evolves according to the development of the land and its social needs.

— Was the earthquake, which occurred last May 31, the first violent one experienced since the foundation of JAN?

— Our organization was really not prepared to cope with such a situation. When the tragedy took place, we had to increase greatly the number of our personnel. Volunteers, the State, the Army, and several other Ministries came to our assistance.

— Prior to the Ancash earthquake, other seisms had occurred in the Arequipa region. Were you in a position to extend any assistance on these occasions?

— In Peru the danger of earthquakes is nearly always present. JAN responds to the call in

every emergency. Usually, problems can be solved within a period of from 8 to 15 days. But, the last emergency period lasted much longer, its impact being felt throughout the land.

— Is your programme similar to that followed before the earthquake?

— Yes. On the level of social promotion, we have several programmes which cannot be discontinued referring as they do to other districts such as Lima, for instance, where needs are pressing. These programmes require elaboration which tax the working capacity of part of our personnel. At present, the eight-hour-day is often stretched to a twenty-hour-day.

— Does any coordination exist between the activities of JAN, those of the Health Ministry, and the Centre of Social Promotion?

— We form part of the Ministry of Health although our work is decentralized. All our activity is coordinated with that of the Ministry of Health. When emergency situations arise, a certain coordination exists with organizations interested in actual problems so as to avoid surplus activities and maintain close collaboration.

— What role did JAN play in the work of assistance to the victims of May 31st?

— JAN immediately set to work on the very day the catastrophe occurred. During the night of May 31, we sent auxiliary teams into the coastal area more easily accessible to helicopters, planes, and boats. Lack of communications hindered us from reaching Casma and Huarney sooner. It took us over four days to reach Callejon de Huaylas, the region most seriously affected. During the first few days, assistance consisted in food, clothing, and first aid. Then began the evacuation of survivors. A small camping site was chosen where we put up 500 tents.

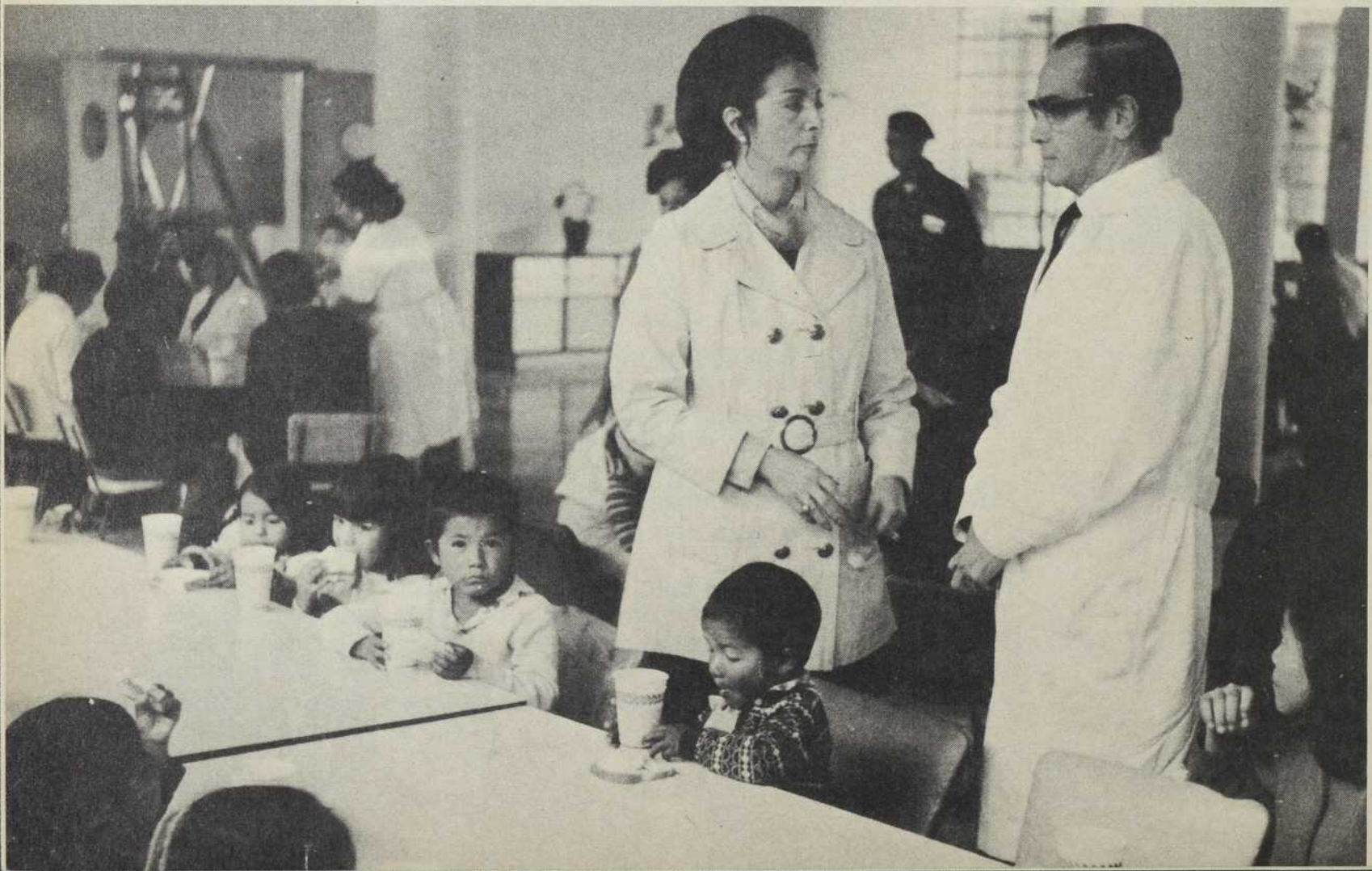
— Is JAN's operation centre located in Chimbote or in Huaraz?

— The operation centre is in Lima, our teams going out from this city into affected areas. Just now, our chief working team is operating in Huaraz. At the start, our activities chiefly consisted in trying to provide assistance to all devastated regions, even to the remotest villages: Casma, Huarney, Huaraz, Carhuaz, Huaylas, Caras, Palasca, Coronga. . . The eastern provinces, even the most difficult of access, were also succored. To reach the latter, team members rode donkeys. This first stage of the operation covered all the zones.

— How long did this stage last?

— The emergency period lasted for about 40 days due to great distances between towns and villages. For instance, it took one week of donkey riding to reach Huaraz. There were no other

Nacional





PERU'S FIRST LADY, PRESIDENT OF JAN, COMFORTS SURVIVORS

means of communication. Unfortunately, many accidents occurred along the way.

Helicopters headed towards other devastated regions were wrecked before reaching their objectives because of the difficulties of access.

— What kind of work was accomplished during this first stage?

— As had already been said, our initial work consisted in distributing clothes, food, tents, medicine, etc. Then, our personnel reorganized the assistance which was to be carried on in a more extensive manner by plane. The chief centre of our activity was the Callejon de Huaylas through whose interior we reached Huaraz, Yungay, Caraz and, in a more northerly direction, Coronga and Yanac. To the south, we brought succor to Recuay, and to the east, to Huari.

Having organized first aid stations in the regions of Huari and Coronga, our working teams passed on to another zone: Caraz, Yungay, Ranrahirca, Huaylas. In each of these regions a restricted number of personnel, sufficient for local needs, was left in charge. Others were directed elsewhere so that as many survivors as possible might be helped.

— How many persons are at present on the staff of JAN?

— About 135. This number is apt to vary. Volunteers join our ranks, others leave for divers reasons: sickness, family affairs, need for rest, etc. Nearly all (70%) are auxiliaries.

— What about the second stage of JAN's operation?

— The second stage has as immediate objective to help ensure the social promotion of survivors rather than to solve their problems. We try to obtain housing in their favour, to provide for their urgent needs, to give them tools in order to enable them to work. Besides, we organize associations of mothers of families and a few day nurseries in temporary shelters. JAN realizes all this in collaboration with *Caritas*, the Ministry of Health, the Ministries of Transportation and of Construction, the National Emergency Committee at Government House.

We receive a good deal of outside help which we are careful to distribute in such a way that it will benefit the needy. For instance, what would be likely to happen if we gave them the flour directly? They would probably get tired of eating tortillas at every meal. . . . To avoid this mishap, we entrust the flour to bakers who use it to make bread which is then distributed to the families in need of assistance. Likewise, barbers, carpenters, etc., are entrusted with jobs that will bring assistance where it is most needed. Work is thus provided for everyone and social welfare promoted.

At times, we have trouble getting these people to work, to pull themselves out of the depressive mood into which they have sunk. It is only normal that they should behave in this manner. They have lost all incentive to work, their whole families having been wiped out.

This task of rehabilitation is a very difficult one to assume. Those in charge must see that distributions are checked and that everyone receives a fair portion, according to his situation.

Likewise, at this stage when all are supposed to have been provided with the indispensable, investigations must be conducted whenever a surplus is required.

— Have you any housing projects in view?

— The first practical thing to be done was to provide tents, which we did; the latter, however, are useless during the rainy season. We are, at present trying to ensure construction material to build houses. This task really devolves upon the Ministry of Construction. We have received generous stocks of material, but we need powerful vehicles in order to move them to destination. For instance, OEA has donated a great quantity of sheet metal which we carry to affected areas, a little at a time. This material will prove useful to about 15,000 families.

— What about the solidarity manifested on the occasion of the earthquake?

— Our recent tragedy has enabled us to discover the spirit of solidarity and of brotherhood existing among all Peruvians, as well as that manifested by other countries. We are deeply grateful for their kindness. A rapprochement has been achieved among Peruvians on this occasion. Forgetting their political problems and others of the same kind, they have drawn closer together in the common task of bringing relief to the stricken. All have shared in this great sorrow and all are intent on restoration of ravaged territories.

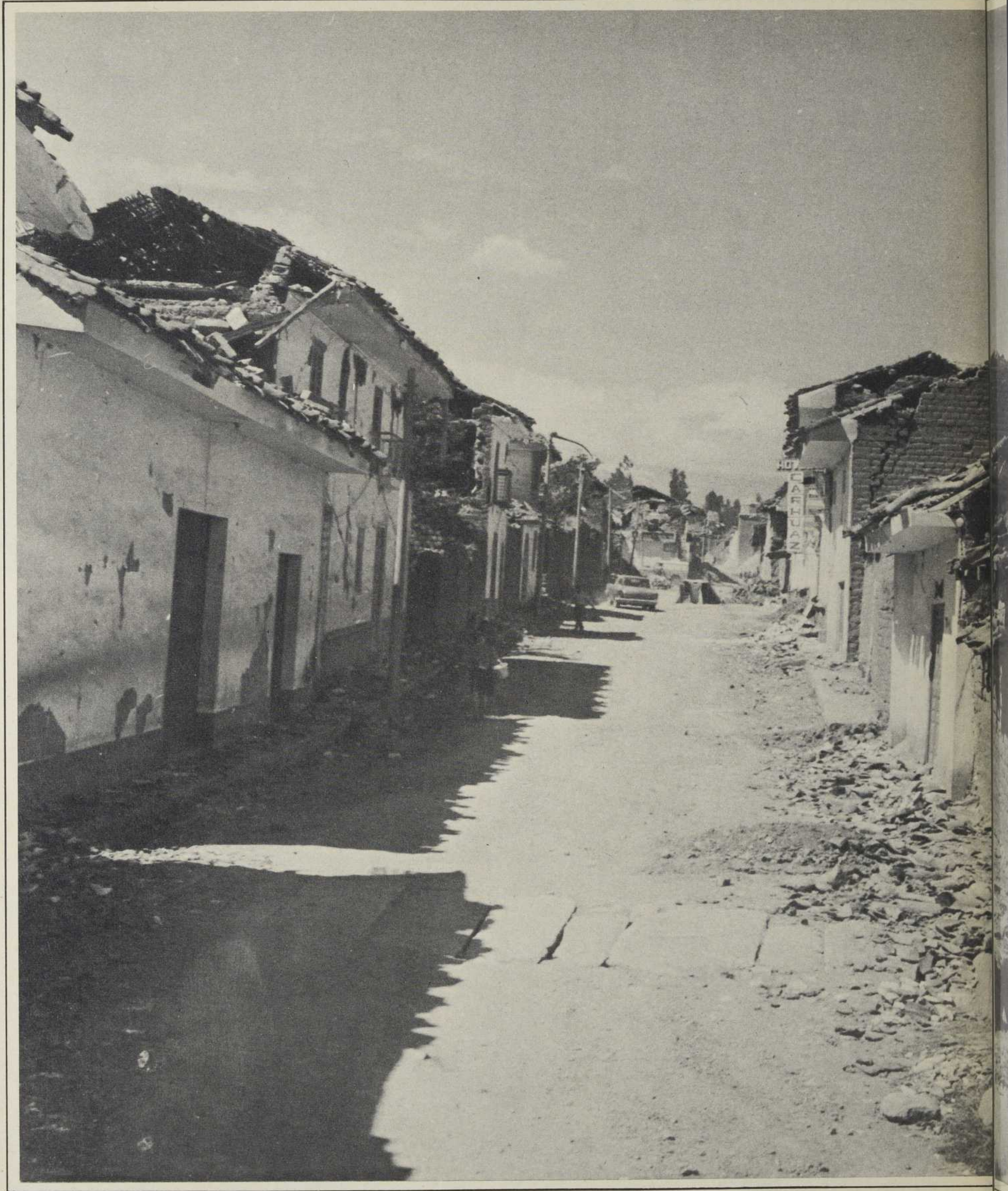
— Do you still receive help from the outside?

— We do. Not a day passes without our receiving gifts from far and near. We are grateful to the nations who keep on helping us.



Mrs. Consuelo G. de Velasco, wife of the President of the Republic inspects ruins after the quake.







Jottings from My Diary



Streets in Carhuaz. I saw with my own eyes the town's almost total destruction.

I am sending you a few more jottings from my diary, dear young friends of mine. You probably have not much time to read; for my part, I have not much time to write. As a student in social service I have to put in 20 hours of courses and 14 hours of practice a week. But, I feel so happy over here that I just have to take the time to tell you about it. Recently, I was privileged to work for a fortnight at Carhuaz, one of the numerous regions devastated by the recent earthquake. Here are a few details.

Sunday, June 21

. . . Spent the afternoon in preparations for the trip. Everything has to be provided for: sleeping bags, blankets, winter clothing, food, drugs of all kinds to ward off epidemics — the aftermath of the catastrophe — and the effects of high altitude . . .

Monday, June 22, 1:00 p.m.

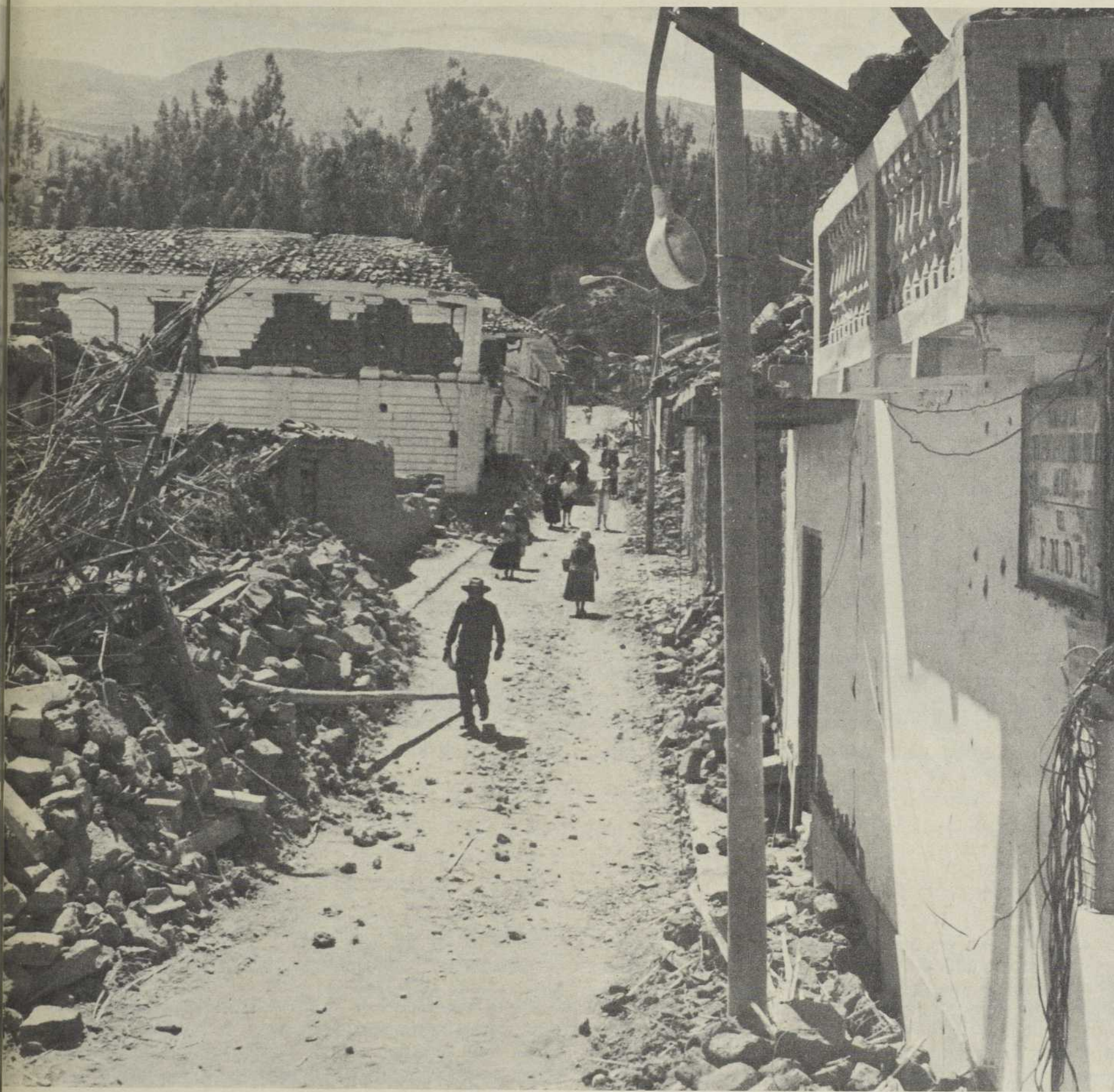
Together with a small group of social service students, I board a bus of ancient vintage, "Lima-Huaraz". We are all happy to do our small share although we know our service can only be a drop of water in a sea of misery. True, we will be missing a number of courses and this will not help us succeed in our exams. But, we feel it our duty to do our tiny bit.



Survivors' faces mirror grief. . .
Their world crumbled at a moment's notice.



Beautiful but treacherous Huas-
caran.



A street in Carbuaz. In this pueblo, during a fortnight, I helped volunteers distribute clothing, shoes, food. . . My heart went out to this lovable people whom I will always keep in prayerful remembrance.



"In the world you will have tribulations; but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." (John 16:33).

By 7:00 p.m., we are on the last leg of our journey — the most difficult. Up we climb dizzy Andean heights where the cold is bitter, and the *soroche* (headache from shortness of breath) lurks at every turn. Until 10:00 p.m. we chat gaily. Then heads begin to nod as the sandman makes his rounds. . . Although wearing a heavy sweater and overcoat, I wrap up in a warm blanket and manage to doze. Suddenly, the silence is shattered by excited cries and comments. What can be the matter? I soon learn the cause of the excitement. Our antiquated vehicle has come face to face with a large truck in a curve of the narrow highway. Our driver has to run backwards, no easy thing so close to the chasm. . . Thanks to clever operations, however, the truck finally passes. You can well imagine that we could not sleep a wink the rest of the night.

Tuesday, June 23, 1:00 a.m.

We shiver in the intense cold of the altiplano and suffer from distressing headache and nausea. The *soroche* has caught up with us! Coramine and alcohol are passed around to counteract its effects.

At 6:00 a.m. we reach Huaraz littered with debris of all sorts. Over these ruins the sun shines brightly, as if nothing had happened.

At headquarters, we are given our plan of action. Team 31 of which I am a member finds itself assigned to Carhuaz. We reach the place towards 4:30 p.m. While other members of the team go out in search of the pastor, I stay inside the bus. Soon the vehicle is surrounded by survivors of the earthquake, eager to get acquainted. The first thing to do, they advise, is to pitch our tents, for the cold will grow still more severe during the night. Sleeping bags are pulled out and

distributed. As they were made to order for Peruvian stature, mine is almost one foot short. . .

Wednesday, June 24

I hardly slept all night because of the cold and of the rough terrain. Moreover, three or four tremors kept me on the alert. The *soroche* has me in its clutch. My pulse is racing and my feet and legs are badly swollen. The team leader orders me back to my sleeping bag. Thanks to medication, I sleep through the forenoon. When I wake up, around 11:00 a.m., the heat is suffocating. As I emerge from the tent, I can admire Carhuaz flooded with blinding sunshine. Above, the sky is incredibly blue. On one side rises the Cordillera Blanca with its twin snow-capped peaks, Huascaran and Huandoy; on the other side the Cordillera Negra. Zones of cultivation rise almost to the very top, for these slopes are inhabited. Feeling better, I set out for the centre where chaos reigns supreme. . .

Thursday, June 25

. . . Spent the forenoon at the Chucchun camp helping groups of women reorganize at least a semblance of normal living. In the afternoon, I take part in discussions with other teammates.

Friday, June 26

. . . Supper at 9:00 p.m. We wear caps, sweaters, and overcoats for it is again very cold. Our dining room consists of a tin roof set over four poles. Burlap bags serve as walls. Two candles light up the rough deal table. Our fare is scanty, but we are all in a cheerful mood. It is good to feel so closely united like the members of one big family. During supper, we chat about the events of the day and discuss plans for tomorrow.

Sunday, June 28

I hear Mass in Quechua at one of the small Indian camps located on the mountain slopes. . .

Monday, June 29

We visit the Yanamarca and Pueblo de Toma camps. The latter is made up of tents pitched in a large field. Very few people in these camps understand Spanish. Nearly all speak Quechua. One of the women serves as interpreter.

Tuesday, June 30

Meeting of teams with pastor, district prefect, members of the municipality, soldiers, and members of emergency committee. We are happy at being asked to help in the distribution of clothes, food, medicine, etc.

Friday, July 3

Accompanied by a group of soldiers, we distribute bags of bread in the various camps. People crouch outside their tents. It is early evening, but shadows are already lengthening, turning the chaotic landscape into a nightmarish scene. These people have lost many of their dear ones and are homeless. A bleak future

stares them in the face. They sit so pathetically patient, that my heart goes out to them in their tribulations.

Saturday, July 4

Distribution of food is over by 2:30 p.m. A poor woman offers me some fruit. . . What a thoughtful people these Peruvians are! The soldiers who work along with our team are like real brothers to us.

Sunday, July 5

Tomorrow we will be leaving and my heart feels heavy. It seems such a loss of time to pursue studies when so many people need our help. . . We have Mass in Quechua. The bulk of the faithful are mountain Indians. One of the women invites me for dinner.

The South African geologists and physicians come to our camp to say goodbye. Around our camp fire, people from eight nationalities are gathered, all united in deep friendship, all eager to assist the victims of this great cataclysm. Father Ames, a South African priest, speaks French which makes it easier to converse. We sing *Alouette* and everybody joins in the chorus. Then, other songs are sung in Italian, Peruvian, and Spanish.

Monday, July 6

Departure . . . We leave for the Anta base where a bimotored plane is waiting to take us back. The return trip will be shorter and the dreaded *soroche* will thus be avoided. My mind is filled with enriching memories and my eyes are filled with the Carhuaz landscape. This is merely an aurevoir. I intend to come back here for my five months of regular practice next year. Our congregation may open a house in this region. . . How wonderful an opportunity that would be from the pastoral as well as from the social point of view!

Carhuaz has fascinated me. I will keep it in prayerful remembrance for the rest of my life.

Agnès Bouchard, M.I.C.

OPERATION: HUM

The tragedy of last May 31 which in a few seconds wrecked an important part of the coast department north of Lima, has left in its wake hunger, suffering, horror, and even despair. About 60,000 Peruvians have been killed, and 158 towns and villages have been destroyed. The total amount of victims can be estimated at 1,000,000.

When news of the disaster reached even the remotest parts of Peru, all were united in a gigantic effort to ease the trials and anguish of the sufferers. Emergency organizations were set up to gather supplies. People of all classes vied in generosity. Operation Solidarity was launched.

Students of our college *El Liceo Naval* of Lima transformed all available quarters into storerooms where supplies of food, medicine, and clothing were stocked prior to sending them north. Every morning, our students came to school with armfuls of bulky bags or cartons. Even the kindergarten tots lugged parcels larger than themselves.

Then began the work of coordination. We contacted *Junta de Asistencia Nacional*, an organization reaching out to every part of the land to ask for gifts of food, medicine, clothing, etc., in favour of the disaster victims. Lack of sufficient personnel, however, did not allow them to act fast enough.

Faced with this problem which could not immediately be solved, we opted for an organization of our own. Somehow, we would find a practical solution. But first we had to secure permits from the Ministry of Health and of Public Relations. Besides, as a very real danger of spreading epidemics existed in the stricken zone, we first had to be vaccinated before going north.

Already, two university students who had ventured into the Ancash region, had caught typhoid fever. Hundreds of homeless people were wandering, dazed and exhausted, in search of missing relatives or friends. Sanitary measures were nonexistent and no antibiotics were available.

We gave the students of our college three days off. Meanwhile, the teachers organized a convoy. A team made up of those who would not be able to travel sorted out parcels or made the rounds of the city of



HUMAN SOLIDARITY



Lima to buy woolen blankets and various necessities.

Because of the scarcity and rationing of certain products, they had to trudge from shop to shop and market to market.

Meantime, two teachers passed from one ministerial office to another to secure permits to travel. After three hours they finally obtained passes for the journey.

To the rescue

The violence of the quake had wrecked bridges, and fissured and blocked roads in several places. For weeks on end, no vehicle could penetrate into the zones which had suffered most. With our two buses, therefore, we were able to reach only the less devastated areas.

Our expedition's first stop was at the little town of Casma, bordering the highroad, 300 miles from Lima. There took place our initiation into the disastrous effects of the quake. The town was all but completely destroyed. Its dead numbered 70.

We alighted at the medical centre and makeshift tent hospital of 50 beds. Numerous doctors, nurses, and Red Cross volunteers being in charge of the patients, we left them the selected medicine brought from our own Lima hospital.

Our next task was to distribute personally food and clothing in order to avoid the mishap of letting supplies run to waste. We were deeply distressed to find that tons of food piled up in open fields were being spoiled because there was nobody available to distribute the parcels. Meantime, thousands of people in the mountains were in want.

Thanks to census lists, we undertook to distribute what we had brought from hand to hand. No easy task as roads were practically nonexistent. Finally, after almost superhuman efforts, we reached the towns which had been pointed out as needing urgent assistance: Yautan and Cachipampa.

When evening shadows fell

It was 5:30 p.m. when we arrived. We ate a hasty supper then improvised bedding out of bales of clothing on the Cachipampa plaza. The real work would

ASSISTANCE TO THE

start the following morning. A local system of communication had been organized: messengers riding donkeys would carry food and clothes to distances of 2, 5, and 10 miles in the mountains.

Before taking our rest, we unloaded the numerous boxes and cartons we had brought. Then we lay down

on our improvised bedding. The night air was warm and the sky above an azure canopy studded with dazzling stars.

Reveille

I woke up with a start and glanced at my watch.



President Velasco sympathises with earthquake victims.

VICTIMS OF MAY 1970

Five o'clock. In the hazy morning light, I discovered that the plaza was surrounded by the silent figures of mountaineers, patiently waiting for us to wake up and begin the distribution of much needed food. While we, Lima folks, had been sleeping, they had been trudging along impossible trails. I never felt so ashamed in my life. . . How could I ever forget this dignified attitude of patient waiting on the part of the descendants of the proud Incas?

Meantime, men and women were gathering in ever increasing number. Boxes and bags were piled up in a circle. Then the public crier took his stand, calling by name heads of families or their representatives. For hours on end, the people filed past, in perfect order, each receiving a share of fruit, vegetables, cereals, dry goods, canned foods, etc. On their gaunt faces a smile of gratitude flitted like a ray of sunshine on a bleak landscape.

More than once during this interminable day, I confess that I yielded to the temptation of surreptitiously adding extra portions of food, especially when I was told that hungry little children, too famished to walk, had been left behind.

It was well past noon when we called a halt. In spite of the paper hats fashioned by Indian women to protect us against the burning rays of the sun, we were soaked to the skin and bone weary. The few remaining cases of clothes were drawn by lot.

Makeshift restaurant

A kind woman invited us to refresh ourselves at a neighbouring brook and to eat some rice and maize in her *esteras* (straw-shack). Another brought us a live hen. (Indians dislike killing animals.)

During our *al fresco* lunch, a village chief ran in to tell us that 70 families in his mountain village had been without assistance of any sort for 10 days. "They are literally dying of cold and hunger," he added. Alas, we had absolutely nothing left to offer him. . . .

Return

As we drove back to Lima, we could not erase from

our mind the memory of all the misery we had seen. At least, we had been able to lend assistance to 500 heads of families. Through them we had reached over 2,500 persons in urgent need.

The parents of our students were the first to congratulate us on the practical means taken to succor earthquake victims: *hand-to-hand distribution to our brothers in need*.

On the following day, as I was passing one of the school corridors, I met a charwoman, a native of the devastated region. She stopped me to say, "Thank you, Brother, for what you did for my people. I'm deeply touched to see a *stranger* helping us in our trouble". She turned away with tear-filled eyes and kept on with her work.

**Raymond Gaudet,
Brother of St. Gabriel,
Lima, Peru**

YUNGAY

CITY OF THE PAST



All that is left of the Yungay cathedral.



That fateful Sunday, last May 31, was quiet and pleasant, and gave no foreboding of an impending catastrophe. At 3:23, however, a violent up-and-down movement occurred and the world came tumbling down. A mighty peak, beautiful but treacherous Mount Huascarán, split in two, spewing down millions of tons of rock, mud, and ice into the valley below. Buildings swayed, cracked, collapsed. . .

Like a huge sinister wall, a landslide slumped on towns, fields, and roads, snuffing out the life of man



The great white Christ in the Yungay cemetery.

Lima's auxiliary team.

and beast. Huge rivers of mud spilt over Peru's loveliest valley — Callejon de Huaylas. When these awful moments had passed only two categories of men were left — the dead and the survivors — 70,000 dead, 1,000,000 survivors, maimed, deprived of food, medicine, and shelter. During several hours, only the survivors of the devastated area could measure the extent of the cataclysm.

According to a report by the Regional Centre of Seismology for Latin America, the epicentre of the

seism was localized off Chimbote, about 30 miles to the southwest, at a depth of 18 miles below the Pacific Ocean floor. The energy sparked by the earthquake was equal to 500 atomic bombs like the one which destroyed Hiroshima.

At the start, tremors were mild, but in a few seconds the noise rose to a dreadful roar. Panic-stricken people ran madly in all directions. The earth heaved and throbbed from left to right. In pasture lands, animals were violently thrown to the ground and so

were the herders. They scrambled to their feet only to be thrown off balance again. A huge cloud of dust rose so high that it made flying risky even at 5,000 feet. Breathing became laboured. Darkness fell. Here and there, great crevices opened underfoot. On the Pan American highway, fissures measured up to several miles in length. Bridges collapsed. In certain areas, the land sank four feet below sea level; in others it heaved and rose above surface level. Water oozed out of the earth, flooding part of the towns of Chimbote and Casma. In this latter town mineral oil rose in wells.

A mammoth landslide, unbelievable in the amount of material which flowed and in the extent of ground covered, shot down from lofty Huascarán, a leap of 13,000 feet into the bottomlands. The mountain displayed a rift about two miles wide. An avalanche of snow, ice, rocks, and clay, engulfed the towns of Yungay (30,000 inhabitants) and Ranrahirca (6,000). Two other villages were also buried. Neighbouring mountains showed long and wide fissures. At Cajacay, a mountain was split on a width of one mile. Thousands of other avalanches took place, some only 15 miles from Lima along the road leading into the interior. In all, about 300 towns and villages were almost completely obliterated.

LIMA AND THE EARTHQUAKE

Meantime, what was happening in Lima? At 3:25 p.m., we were suddenly startled by a deafening roar. We ran out into the garden. Window panes rattled, the earth trembled and rolled, people screamed in terror. Haggard with anxiety, they asked themselves whether the earth would not open beneath their feet. Shouting "Dios mio" (My God!), a neighbour ran home to his children. The quake lasted only one minute which seemed like an eternity.

Outside, on the streets, people were yelling and running helter-skelter. We re-entered the house thinking about the poor whose shacks had doubtless crumpled into masses of debris. In the hours that followed, the earth kept on shuddering, each time renewing our anxiety.

Monday, June 1

Only today did we learn the full extent of the cataclysm.

Radio networks continuously broadcast news of the tragedy. Hour by hour, the estimate of the dead rises. The quake has pulverized whole towns and villages.

Tuesday, June 2

Worry gnaws at the hearts of our pupils whose relatives lived in the regions affected by the catastrophe. Never have we felt so close to our dear Peruvian people as in this tragic hour.

News media keep on announcing a mounting number of dead and injured. At present, we are told,

History manual found in the rubble.





The avalanche spared only four palm trees and a cross.

A telegraph pole emerges from the sea of rocks and clay which flooded Yungay.



Where are the glories of the past? This (right) is all that remains of Yungay.

30,000 have been reported as dead and nearly 1,000,000 as homeless. Nine countries have already provided assistance: money, medicine, food, medical personnel, etc.

Towns like Casma, Huaraz, Yungay cannot be reached, means of communication being completely severed. Roads are blocked by rubble or deeply fissured. A few helicopters have been able to fly over the area. They carried supplies and the pilots were able to ascertain the desperate situation of stranded survivors.

After the quake, the heavy cloud of dust hovering over the region brought death to four Argentinian officers and to one Peruvian whose plane struck boulders.

Wednesday, June 3

Many among the survivors have had nothing to eat since Sunday. Fear and tension mount as the earth continues to shudder.

Deep solidarity is felt among all Peruvians. The injured are brought into Lima. Many families have welcomed them into their homes, hospitals being filled to capacity. In the San Pablo sector, parochial halls are being transformed into wards. All the parishioners are wholeheartedly collaborating. Sister Bernatchez, M.I.C., principal of our school, calls upon our students to do their share.

Thursday, June 4

Our students and their families have responded to the call with admirable generosity. They have brought parcels of food, clothing, medicine, etc. To these gifts, we have added our own.

We learn with heartfelt pride that our Canadian homeland has donated \$35,000.00 and 5 planes to carry the injured.

This national and international solidarity will certainly help the survivors pick up the strands of their shattered lives. In these tragic times, Peru and nearly all the nations of the world are penning one of the most touching pages of their history.

Assistance comes from everywhere. All want to do their part. Armed forces have been mobilized. Thousands of civilians, among whom a good number of students, are helping in the work of reconstruction. For this generous assistance on the national as well as on the international level, Peru manifests its profound gratitude. General Juan Velasco Alvarado has noted: "Chile, the United States, the Equador, Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia, the Vatican, Japan, Canada, Argentina have mobilized all their forces to come to our aid in this tragic circumstance. SOLIDARITY is the word which best resumes the reaction of the whole world in regard to this catastrophe."

Great Disasters of the XXth Century

The following is a list of the most destructive catastrophes which occurred during the XXth century:

- * 30,000 dead in Martinique (earthquake), in 1902
- * 50,000 dead in San Francisco (earthquake), in 1904
- * 20,000 dead in Chile (earthquake), in 1906
- * 100,000 dead in Messina (earthquake), Dec. 29, 1908
- * 29,000 dead in Avezzano, Italy (earthquake), Jan. 10, 1915
- * 10,000 soldiers dead on the Austro-Italian border, (avalanche), Dec. 13, 1916
- * 180,000 dead in Kan Sou, China (earthquake), in 1920
- * 150,000 dead in Yokohama and Tokyo (earthquake), in 1923

- * 60,000 dead in Quetta, India (earthquake), in 1935
- * 23,000 dead in Erzincan, Turkey (earthquake), in 1939
- * 30,000 dead in Chile (earthquake), in 1939
- * 12,000 dead in Agadir, Morocco (earthquake), in 1960
- * 70,000 dead in Peru (earthquake), May 31, 1970
- * 300,000 dead in East Pakistan (cyclone), Nov. 12, 1970

In the course of history, the most disastrous earthquake occurred in Chen-Si, China, in 1551 when 830,000 people were killed.

LA PRESSE, Nov. 16, 1970

MISSIONARY INTENTION May 1971

PREACHING THE GOSPEL, CHIEF MISSIONARY INITIATIVE

When Christ first came into the world, the angels proclaimed the "good news (gospel) of great joy". If we ponder the Gospels with this angle in view, we find that Christ's whole life, his every action and word were concerned in some manner with his preaching.

Not only did Christ preach the word and action, but he commanded us to preach several times, more especially towards the end of his life on earth. The remarkable thing about this is that most of these commands he by no means limited to the apostles. If the first and greatest command is love, there surely is no better way of showing our love than by introducing others to the all lovable — the Saviour.

We who know Christ are bound to make him known to others. There are some Christians who believe that the burden of coming to the Truth is on the unbeliever who ought to overcome his ignorance. The contrary is true — the burden is on the believer. If one possesses a deep well in a season of drought, one has the burden of sharing the water with those who are parched. Likewise the burden of charity and understanding towards the unbelievers falls on believers, on those who enjoy the fulness of faith.

But, how are we to preach the Gospel, we who are not priests or missionaries in mission lands afar? No need to look for an unusual vocation. Someone has remarked that the best way to preach the Gospel is to live it. There is some truth to this saying. We must preach the Gospel not only by words, but with our whole lives. True preaching must be imbued with concern for the persons around us, with humble awareness that we are preaching Someone much greater than ourselves, with patience — patience with others, patience with ourselves and our feelings, patience with God who will achieve his will in his own time, in his own way.

Another point is not to get disheartened by defeatist theories. When Saint Paul first started preaching the Gospel, he had the following odds against him: the peoples of his time were 51 per cent for Jove; 30 per cent for Zeus; 9 per cent for Mithra; a mere 1 per cent for Christ. Fortunately there were not any defeatist sociologists then! Saint Paul forged ahead with his preaching, and in less than a thousand years all of Europe was Christian.

Mass media of diffusion is another great means provided by the Lord nowadays so as to enable all men to "hear and see" (Jn 10:4). There is, however, a tremendous disproportion between the thousands of reviews, the thousands and thousands of broadcasts that penetrate all homes, spreading the spirit of the world, and the meagre means which, in this age of technique, are in the service of the "Spirit of Truth" (Jn 14:17). There is reason to believe that if we did more to encourage the use of mass media of diffusion in the spreading of the Message, the "community of faith" would soon become a beautiful reality.

The time has come to manifest with facts that we really believe what Pope Paul VI expressed in these terms: "to be apostles as the Church asks all of us, it is necessary to have a passionate love for Christ Jesus".

THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT MAY QUICKEN DYNAMIC MISSIONARY THINKING

"Come, Holy Ghost, send down those beams,
Which sweetly flow in silent streams
From Thy bright throne above.

O, come, Thou Father of the poor,
O, come, Thou source of all our store,
Come fill our hearts with love."

It was under the action of the Holy Spirit that Christ's disciples inaugurated their dynamic apostolate. In the Acts of the Apostles we read that "they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to preach the word of God with confidence" (4:31).

The Holy Spirit descended upon Cornelius and his household: "While Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit came upon all those who were listening to his message" (Acts 10:44). When Paul came to Ephesus, on his third missionary journey, he found a group of disciples from whom he inquired whether they had received the Holy Spirit. Upon their negative answer, he "laid his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came upon them" (Acts 19:6). Accompanied by Silas on his second missionary journey, Paul travelled through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the Church. When they would have carried the word to the province of Asia, however, "they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit" to do so (Acts 16:6). About to leave for Jerusalem, Paul declared that he went "compelled by the Spirit" (Acts 20:22).

What can be inferred from these texts if not that the Holy Spirit was the guiding force of the apostles in the evangelization of the world? Everything in the economy of salvation, from the most distant preparations to the nearest, everything that associates the baptized to the cause of salvation is still the work of the Holy Spirit.

To Him, then, we must constantly turn in our works of apostolate. He alone can tell us what to do, how to proceed; He alone can quicken our zeal. In each emergency that arises, He has the solution.

He is the Spirit of Wisdom and Truth and Knowledge discovering to all men of good will the mysteries of faith. During this month, more particularly, our Holy Father invites us to invoke this Spirit so that we may become witnesses to the truth, "pipelines" of grace for men of all races and countries. With Saint Augustine let us sing, "You are the true light and the divine fire, O Master of souls, and as the Spirit of truth you teach us all truth through your communications".

Copacabana — Bolivia's Spiritual Lighthouse

One of the most famous of Marian shrines in Latin America is that of Copacabana situated in the region of Lake Titicaca, the sacred lake of the Incas, at the tip of a great peninsula girdled all around by the Cordilleras of the Andes.

In the heyday of the Inca empire, a splendid temple of the sun rose here, according to ancient relations. After the Spanish conquest, the conquistadors built on the same lofty plateau several churches and chapels, bestowing on them magnificent statues of Christ, of Our Lady, and of the Saints, imported from Spain.

Documents attest the fact that Copacabana had its Lady chapel as early as 1552. An interesting story is told about the statue which was enthroned in what was eventually to become Bolivia's national Marian shrine. No gorgeously decorated representation sent from Spain, this, but a simple statue lovingly fashioned by a descendant of the Incas, Francisco Tito Yupanqui.

On the day of his baptism, Francisco had made a vow to carve a statue of the Mother of God in order to obtain the reconciliation of two rival Indian tribes of this region: the Urinsayas and the Aransayas. How could Mary turn a deaf ear to the prayers of this fervent neophyte?

The Indian, however, was at a loss to know how he would fulfill his promise, being neither an artist nor a sculptor. In his naive confidence in Mary, Succour of Christians, he daily prayed that she would inspire him the means of accomplishing his task. It is further related, that in her gracious mercy, Our Lady appeared to Francisco, dressed like the Indian women of the countryside, carrying her divine Son on her left arm, and holding a lighted candle in the other.

Highly elated, Francisco Yupanqui set to work at once fashioning a four-foot statue out of maguey, wood, and stucco. He gave the features a distinctly Indian slant and a golden brown complexion. His work was blessed from the start, for no sooner had the chiefs of the rival tribes seen the statue, than they were reconciled. They forthwith carried it in procession to Copacabana, their most important village.

Some years later, on February 8, 1583, the *Mamita* or Little Mamma as the Indians fondly called her was solemnly enthroned as Queen and Sovereign of the village of Copacabana. From this historic spot, Mary extended her protection to the entire nation.

During succeeding centuries, the simple Indian garments of the statue were replaced by costly robes of silk and rich mantles adorned with precious stones. On the occasion of its canonical coronation, August 2, 1925, a crown of solid gold was placed on its head.

Augustinian friars were the first to minister at the pilgrimage shrine, a post they held for over two centuries. The present sanctuary begun in 1668, inaugurated in 1678, and completed in 1805, was raised to the rank of a basilica in 1940.

Whoever has seen the Indians gathered at the feet of the brown Virgin, begging favours aloud and with tears while they never stop sending her kisses, understand why Copacabana is the spiritual lighthouse of the Bolivian nation. In spite of the prolonged absence of pastors, the Bolivian people persevered in Catholic faith because they clung to the mantle of their *Mamita*.

(Adapted from the Spanish account of the *Miracle of Copacabana*, by Claudio Cortez)

TO OUR DEAR READERS

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Rev. Jean-Charles Valin
February 9, 1971

To communicate with the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

ASIA: *Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan*, Provincial House, 125 Waterloo Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

CANADA: *The Generalate*, 314 St. Catherine Road, Montreal 153

CENTRAL AFRICA: *Malawi and Zambia*, Regional House, P.O. Box 47, Mzimba, Malawi.

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MADAGASCAR: Regional House, Tsaramasay, Tananarive.

PHILIPPINES: P.O. 3400, D-404, Manila.

UNITED STATES: 207 Pleasant Street, 01752 Marlboro, Mass.

WEST INDIES: *Haiti*, Regional House, Novitiate, Cité no 2, C.P. 1085, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.
Cuba: Apartado 21, Colon (Matanzas), Cuba.

The sound of the Quena, a sort of high pitched flute, recalls the mournful sound of the winds that blow through the desolate *puna*, and the awesome grandeur of the Andes.

