



The Rev. Rene Gaudin and Kenosha Richard Barnes

Priest grateful for relief aid

By NANCY CURTIS
Staff Writer

The fieldworkers of the Bahamas toil for a maximum of \$1 per hour for only three months out of the year harvesting crops.

"They have to support a family year 'round on what they earn in that period," explains the Rev. Rene Gaudin of Sts. Mary and Andrew Church, Abaco, Bahamas.

"It's simply impossible."

Gaudin returned to Kenosha this week to bring interested residents up-to-date on the progress of his relief work in the Bahamas. Gaudin visited the city last year at this time when he met with businessmen, church members and the Kiwanis Club to tell them about his project in the Bahamas. As part of his work he collects food, vitamins, medicines, school supplies and clothes for the poverty-stricken natives.

"I'VE COME BACK to thank the people of Kenosha," says Gaudin. "Things are still getting started and I think we're going in the right direction. But it's slow."

Gaudin found the greatest support in the St. Paul and Cincinnati areas where eight semi-truckloads of books, clothing, supplies and medicines were collected. The response in Kenosha was not as great.

The project he directs is not a Catholic project. Rather, people of all faiths have been contributing what they can to help the Bahamians.

"Tourism is the biggest trade in the area. For the rest of the Bahamians,

there's only one growing season because of the hot weather. For nine months out of the year many families have no income," he says.

FOOD IS SCARCE and diets consist mainly of potatoes. At times the weather is cold and children have little more to wear than cotton shirts and shorts. Housing conditions are miserable, with up to a dozen people sharing an uninsulated room the size of a small garage, furnished as sparsely, according to Gaudin.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Barnes, 3500 Fourth St., are coordinating the relief work locally. The Barnes witnessed the poor conditions while visiting the Bahamas and decided to bring news of the conditions to Kenosha and to encourage support from local residents.

"We're not asking a lot from anyone. A little bit from many can add up to a tremendous amount for our project," says Gaudin. "With no great sacrifice to anyone."

Those persons interested in helping the Bahamians by contributing money, vitamins, clothes, blankets, books or school supplies are encouraged to contact Richard Barnes.