

REVUE INTERNATIONALE
DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

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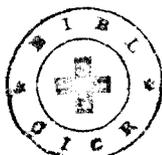
BULLETIN DES SOCIÉTÉS
DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

SUPPLEMENT

First Year, 1948

GENÈVE

1948



SUPPLEMENT

VOL. I

REVUE INTERNATIONALE
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April, 1948

No. 4

CONTENTS

	Page
The Presidency of the International Committee of the Red Cross	58
The Far Eastern Conflict (<i>Conclusion</i>)	61

Published by
Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, Genève
Editor: Louis Demolis

Circular Letter No 385.

*THE PRESIDENCY OF THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS*

Geneva, April 21, 1948.

TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEES OF NATIONAL RED CROSS
(RED CRESCENT, RED LION AND RED SUN) SOCIETIES

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In December 1944, M. Max Huber had expressed the wish to relinquish, in view of his age, the duties of President which he had fulfilled for the past sixteen years.

M. Carl J. Burckhardt, member of the International Committee since 1933, was unanimously elected as his successor; he had taken a major part in the work of the Committee since the outbreak of the second World War¹.

Shortly afterwards the Swiss Federal Council appointed M. Burckhardt Swiss Minister in Paris. He therefore retired from his office as President as from May 1945, and M. Max Huber agreed to resume his duties as Acting President, while M. Burckhardt took the style of President « en congé ». In 1947, M. Max Huber again urged that he be relieved of his responsibilities, which then fell to the undersigned Vice-Presidents.

M. Burckhardt, tied at present by the duties entrusted to him by the Swiss Federal Council, decided at the beginning of the year that he must give up the Presidency of the International Committee, without however relinquishing membership.

The Committee then with great regret accepted the decision of M. Burckhardt and took steps to elect his successor.

The Committee with one accord decided to invite M. Paul Ruegger to succeed him, since he had for long been deeply interested in the Red Cross movement, and in 1943 and 1944 had given the whole of his time and attention to the work which the Committee was then pursuing. The Swiss Federal Govern-

¹ See our Circular Letter No. 367, Dec. 12, 1944.



M. Paul RUEGGER
President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

ment then released him wholly from his diplomatic duties, as it has done again for this new office.

The President of the International Committee will take up his duties at the beginning of May 1948.

* * *

M. Paul Ruegger, who was born on August 14, 1897, is a native of Lucerne. He studied in the Universities of Lausanne and Munich and in 1917 became Doctor of Law at the University of Zurich. He entered the Swiss Political Department in 1918 and worked with M. Max Huber, who was then Legal Adviser to the Department. In that same year he was appointed Secretary of the Commission on International Law, which had been set up by the Federal Council to make a study of post-war problems and of the League of Nations.

A year later he was promoted Secretary of Legation, and as Secretary or Adviser, he acted as a member of the Swiss Delegation to the first six Assemblies of the League of Nations. He was also member of the Swiss Delegation to the International Economic Conference at Genoa in 1922, and to the Conference for the Control of Traffic in Arms and Munitions of 1925. In 1924 he received the rank of First Secretary of Legation.

From 1922 to 1924 he was Lecturer in International Law at the University of Geneva. He is the author a number of works on that subject.

The following year, M. Ruegger was elected Assistant Registrar and Deputy Secretary-General to the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague, and held that appointment until 1928. In 1927 he acted as representative of the Court at the Assembly of the League of Nations.

After returning to the Swiss Political Department in 1929, he was attached to the Swiss Legation in Rome, being promoted Counsellor of Legation in the following year. In 1931 he was recalled to the Division of Foreign Affairs and placed in charge of the Political Section of that Division. Then came his transfer to Paris in 1933 as Counsellor of Legation.

Later, in 1935, M. Ruegger was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Italy. He was in

charge of the Swiss Legation in Rome from that year until March 1942, when he returned to Switzerland as Minister « en congé », with special duties. He had been appointed member of the Permanent Commission of the International Institute of Agriculture and Chairman of the Finance Committee of that Institute.

In the years 1943 and 1944, he worked continuously with the International Committee of the Red Cross, when he gave most of his attention to the Committee's delegations. In that way he was able to make a close study of the various aspects of the work of the Committee.

Later still, in 1944 and until 1945, M. Ruegger served as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Swiss Confederation in Great Britain.

In 1946, M. Ruegger was member of the Swiss Delegation at the final Assembly of the League of Nations. He was also President of the Delegation appointed to discuss with a Commission of United Nations the question of transfer of the League of Nations buildings at Geneva to United Nations, and the statute governing delegations and officers of United Nations in Switzerland. In 1946 and 1947, he was the senior Vice-President of the plenary meetings in London of the International Committee on Refugees.

In enlisting the services of M. Paul Ruegger, the International Committee are wholly satisfied that they are confiding the office of President to a man well qualified by his career and by his wide and disinterested outlook to serve the cause of the Red Cross, and uphold the principles on which it rests. They consider it a matter for congratulations that M. Ruegger will be the chief spokesman of the Committee in the world-wide community of the Red Cross.

We beg to remain, Ladies and Gentleman,
Your obedient servants,

For the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Martin BODMER
Vice-President

Ernest GLOOR
Vice-President

THE FAR EASTERN CONFLICT (Conclusion) ¹

As soon as Japan came into the war, the ICRC tried to send some of its assistants to the Far East. The Japanese Government replied to every application from the ICRC that "the time was not yet come to contemplate the carrying out in practice of this scheme". On February 11, 1943, the ICRC insisted in the following terms :

Since the month of September 1939, the ICRC has sent to various countries special missions of a temporary character, in order to visit the national authorities and to make contact with the delegates which they have appointed on the spot without being able to get in personal touch with them. We do not think that there is any need to stress the value of such journeys, which are calculated to solve problems which concern Governments and the ICRC equally.

Japan has now been more than a year engaged in the present war, and the question we have to discuss with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Red Cross have become more and more numerous and complicated. At the same time, the duties entrusted to our delegate in Tokyo have been considerably extended. We are therefore certain that your Government will welcome the scheme that we have prepared.

The reply of the Japanese Government was that "the purpose of this mission would be better served if the departure were postponed to a later and more suitable date". In May 1943, the ICRC proposed the sending of a mission which could have travelled on one of the ships repatriating Japanese diplomatists.

The object of the mission would thus be more clearly defined, with the aim of making contact with the Imperial Authorities and the Japanese Red Cross. At the same time, the special mission would give the ICRC delegation in Tokyo all information necessary to enable it to carry out its duties in the manner regarded as the most effective by all concerned.

This proposal was renewed in the month of September. In November, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs cabled to the ICRC that "the material situation has not changed since our last communication" and that the despatch of a mission should be postponed to a more favourable date.

¹ See Supplement No. 3, *Revue*, March, 1948.

The Committee's delegate in Tokyo, a medical practitioner of Swiss nationality domiciled in Japan, was fully acquainted with the customs of the country, and had already represented the ICRC in Japan during the first World War. He died at his post in January 1944, and this loss was the more unfortunate for the ICRC, since it seemed impossible to bring the Japanese Government to consent that a mission should be sent from Geneva. This event furnished the ICRC with a reason for an urgent renewal of its previous applications. The Committee had just been informed by the Japanese Legation at Berne of the "emotion of the Japanese authorities", in view of certain statements in the American and British press concerning "atrocities" committed by Japanese troops on the persons of Allied PW. Geneva took this opportunity to reply that any intervention by the ICRC to establish the facts would carry very much more weight, if the Japanese Government found it possible to accept the request which it had been the duty of the ICRC to submit, that a special mission be sent. Furthermore, the ICRC attempted to influence the decision of the Japanese by the communication, in February 1944, of a reply received from Washington, stating that "all the United States Government services concerned were, for their part, prepared to receive at any time a special mission to the United States, and to give them all facilities for carrying out their task". This, however, did not change the attitude of Tokyo.

Finally, in the autumn of 1944, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the first time gave a favourable reply. Unfortunately, for reasons beyond the control of the ICRC, the departure of the mission was delayed. The practical preparation of the journey (planning of the route, issue of travel permits, difficulties of transport in countries at war, etc.) lasted several months, and it was only in June 1945 that the new head of the delegation, accompanied by a woman assistant, who was thoroughly familiar with the work of the Central PW Agency, was able to leave Switzerland for Tokyo, where they arrived on August 11, at a moment when the second atomic bomb had just fallen on Nagasaki.

4. *Visits to camps*

The difficulties encountered by the ICRC in accrediting its delegates to the Japanese authorities inevitably made problems for them in carrying out their duties. The suspicion with which they were regarded, and the ill-will of the Japanese authorities responsible for the administration of prisoners of war, meant that they were only able, for instance, to visit 42 camps out of the 102 known to exist in Japan, in Formosa, in Korea and in Manchuria, at the time of capitulation.

Furthermore, these visits, during which they had to avoid quoting humanitarian conventions (mere mention of these texts annoyed Japanese military authorities), did not produce all the results that might have been expected from them. In Japan itself, the delegates found 34,000 Allied prisoners of war after the surrender of the Japanese forces, whereas only 27,000 names were known at Geneva. Also, more than anywhere else, many practical obstacles were put in the way of visits to camps. Permits, which had to be renewed in the case of each visit, were particularly difficult to obtain. The delegates, again, did not always receive the necessary travel permits. Lastly, when they went to fortified zones in which prison camps were situated, they had to supply photographs and make up an individual file for each application. Often the delegates did not know till the last moment whether the permit granted was a general one, or limited strictly to a single delegate. The duration of the visit of the camps was generally restricted to two hours, made up of one for conversation with the camp commandant, thirty minutes for visiting quarters, and thirty minutes for an interview, in the presence of the Japanese officers of the camp, with a camp leader appointed by them. No communication with the other prisoners was authorized, and negotiations undertaken with the object of altering this state of things were not successful. The camp commandants frequently refused to reply to questions put to them, on the score that they had not received authority to give information.

Visits to civilian internment camps were not so difficult. Nevertheless, after the autumn of 1944, the task of the delegates

in this field was much complicated by the Japanese police authorities. No communication with the camp leaders or with the internees could take place, unless it was in the presence of representatives of the detaining Power. The authorities found all kinds of reasons to delay or put off visits of delegates. The representatives of the ICRC noted that almost always their visits to the camps occurred several days before or after the visits of the representatives of the Protecting Power.

At the end of 1944, the Japanese Government, in reply to many requests from the ICRC, at last did allow certain camps to be visited, on condition that these visits should not interfere with military operations, that persons carrying them out should be chosen on the spot and should act as temporary representatives of the Tokyo delegation. Reciprocity, too, was to be guaranteed by the Allied Governments, particularly in New Caledonia and in the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Guam. The ICRC accepted the first three conditions, and with all haste succeeded in obtaining assurances of reciprocity from the Allied Governments concerned. The Committee then requested that the agents, which it already regarded as its delegates, at Singapore, in Siam, and in the Philippines, should be appointed to carry out these visits. The delegate at Singapore was refused approbation, and the Japanese authorities suggested the appointment of a person entirely unknown to the ICRC. The Committee held to its request for official recognition of its representative, but it was never possible to come to an agreement with the Japanese authorities (although the candidate suggested by the Japanese authorities would have been accepted by the ICRC, but only for visits of camps).

This is the place to pay a just tribute to the activities of the delegates chosen on the spot by the ICRC. In spite of the difficulties, they brought all their intelligence and their courage to the work which was demanded of them. Most of them worked without remuneration, in full agreement with their employers (generally Swiss firms).

5. Correspondence

The Pacific War, which spread over thousands of square miles, inevitably put serious obstacles in the way of correspondence. These were still further increased by the strictest censorship imposed as a result of a mistrust even greater than it was elsewhere.

The forwarding of the correspondence of prisoners of war or civil internees to their families was never satisfactory. It was nearly impossible in the southern territories occupied by Japanese forces, Siam, Malaya, Netherlands Indies and Melanesia. The negotiations undertaken by the ICRC had, however, led, on April 17, 1942, to a declaration of principle, according to which the Japanese Government "was ready to allow prisoners of war and civil internees to correspond freely with their families in foreign countries". Measures were then taken to send a first instalment of mail on the first ship for exchange of diplomatic personnel repatriated to Japan. Further instalments of mail were to be sent through Siberia.

The Japanese authorities laid down certain conditions concerning the wording and distribution of messages for the Far East, conditions which the ICRC was able to define in the following manner in a letter to the Belgian Red Cross in 1943 :

The regulations issued by the Japanese authorities limit to 25 words the length of the letters that prisoners of war and civil internees in the Far East may receive, and require that these letters should either be typed or written in capitals. These restrictions are enforced for correspondence addressed to all prisoners, either in Japan itself, or in Japanese overseas territories (Korea, South Sea Islands), or in territories occupied by Japan. In the case of civil internees, only letters for those who are in territories occupied by the Japanese forces are subject to these restrictions. For prisoners of war and civil internees presumed to be detained by Japan, but whose names had not yet been communicated, letters may be sent through the ICRC, to the Japanese Red Cross. In those cases where the names are known but the address of their camp is not known, the official information bureau on prisoners of war (*Huryojohokyoku*) is responsible for sending such mail through us.

Far from improving, the situation only became worse until towards the end of 1944, when the Japanese Government accepted the following proposals :

a) Exchange of cable messages (Telegraphic Message Scheme) enabling prisoners of war and civil internees in the Far East to send and receive every year a message of ten words, not including address and signature. All these messages were forwarded by the Central Agency at Geneva. The system was inaugurated at the beginning of 1945 ; six months later 65,823 messages had been forwarded to Tokyo, and 2,126 had been received from Japan.

b) Exchange of correspondence enabling civilians at liberty residing in the Netherlands Indies, the Philippines, Burma, and Malaya to give and receive news by means of a form with set phrases for information and queries which the sender could fill in simply. This system was also to be put in practice between these territories and the other countries under the Tokyo Government.

At the beginning of the war, the ICRC could only get in touch with its representatives by telegram, since no correspondence by letter was possible. It was difficult to transmit by telegram, with the necessary degree of accuracy, instructions, reports or special requests for information. Furthermore, in order to meet the requirements of the censorship, telegrams to the Southern occupied territories had to be sent in the Japanese language. Correspondence in these circumstances, between Tokyo, Shanghai, Bangkok and Geneva, was very uncertain and with the southern regions it was almost impossible, reaching the point where certain representatives could not get any message through, either to Geneva or to Tokyo, and in 1945 the ICRC had reason to wonder if they were still alive. It should be noted however, that the Committee's representative at Singapore was able to communicate with Geneva by cable, at the beginning of the war, thanks to the help of a Japanese official responsive to humanitarian ideals. He also managed to get through to Geneva a bundle of correspondence by the hand of the Vice-President of the Japanese Red Cross, who being in Singapore on a mission, took this packet to Tokyo.

Letter-mail, which was later authorized subject to Japanese censorship, was so slow that the ICRC often gave up using it

for communication with its representatives. The Committee's correspondence, too, with its delegates, either by letter or by telegram, was subject to censorship under conditions which seriously hampered it. Thus in March 1944, a telegram from a delegate giving an account of his visit to Fukushima prisoners camp, was considerably amended by the Military Authorities, who were unwilling that the delegate should report the unsatisfactory details that he had noted concerning the rations, sanitary conditions, and discipline of the Allied soldiers detained in this camp. The ICRC and the Allied Authorities, to whom these reports were forwarded, were aware of the difficult position of the delegates, and had to guess at what the messages meant as best they could. It should be noted that as an exceptional measure, and in a few cases which were indeed very rare, the ICRC was authorized to telephone first in German, and then in English, to its delegation at Tokyo.

6. *Relief*

Immediately after Japan's entry into the war, the question was considered of sending relief to Allied nationals who had fallen into the hands of the Japanese. The difficulties in the way of conveying relief supplies by sea over such great distances, in war zones, access to which was forbidden by the Japanese to any neutral ship, were considerable. The Committee was unsuccessful in its attempts to obtain a permit to bring to the Far East Red Cross ships with the relief stores urgently needed by Allied prisoners and civil internees.

As early as December 30, 1941, the British Red Cross asked the ICRC to organize in the Pacific a line similar to that which was to connect the United States with Europe across the Atlantic. The Australian Red Cross, for its part, expressed its readiness to provide for the first relief supplies from the South, if it could have a neutral ship with an escort and marked with the distinctive emblem of the ICRC.

The Japanese Legation at Berne, when approached on this matter, informed the Committee that the Tokyo Government would not object to a neutral ship being used. When the

Japanese stated that they were ready to give relief to prisoners of war and civil internees, in accordance with the provisions of the 1929 Convention, the ICRC asked the Japanese Red Cross if it had in mind the bringing up of relief stores on Red Cross ships. The reply, however, was long in coming. A little later, when the British Government proposed to send to the Far East a ship with relief stores for its nationals taken prisoner at Singapore, the Committee put the same question to the Japanese Government and requested them to agree in principle to the carrying of relief stores by Red Cross ships. Pending an official reply, and on the basis of the declarations made at Berne, the Committee set about finding a neutral ship¹. In this spirit, the American Red Cross planned to put on the Pacific service a ship transferred to the Swiss flag, and to the ownership of a corporation with Swiss nationality. It further offered to bear the expense involved. It requested the Committee to ask the belligerent Powers for a safe-conduct for the *Vasaland*, moored in the port of Gothenburg. This ship was to run on the route Seattle-Kobé-Shanghai-Hongkong-Manila. On its return, it would be sent to a United States port indicated by Japan, with relief stores on board for Japan's own nationals.

As it knew that the Japanese, for military reasons, would oppose any traffic in the Yellow Sea and the China Sea, which were war zones, the ICRC thought that it would be easier to secure an agreement for the establishment of a direct line from the United States to Japan, i.e. Seattle-Yokohama, or a line linking the United States with the neutral port of Macao.

Therefore, when making its request for consent by the Tokyo Government in June 1942, the Committee mentioned the route suggested by the American Red Cross and left it to the Japanese Authorities to choose a port, at the same time suggesting that of Macao. The ICRC meanwhile endeavoured to find a ship which might have been bought by the Foundation and employed in the Pacific. The French Government offered the *Wisconsin*, which was detained in the U.S.A. This ship, however, was no longer under French control, since it was being used by the

¹ At this time the ICRC was taking steps to set up a "Foundation for the Organization of Red Cross Transports".

Americans. There was then some thought of using the *Indiana*, another ship under French control in the United States.

The German Authorities at the outset refused to allow the *Vasaland* to leave the Baltic, so that the American Red Cross had to decide to charter the *Kanangoora*, another Swedish ship detained in the United States.

At the same time (in August 1942) the Japanese Government announced that it would not allow any neutral ships to enter Japanese waters, nor the waters surrounding territories occupied by Japan. It also refused to allow the establishment of a regular service, but permitted relief to be sent by ships used for the exchange of diplomatists and civilians between Japan and the Allied Powers. On this refusal, the Committee insisted on the creation of a half-way house at Macao, where ships might unload their cargoes. This port, being situated in Portuguese territories, and therefore neutral, was to play in the Far East a part similar to that of Lisbon for the Atlantic. At the end of September, the Committee learnt that the Japanese Red Cross had hinted that "the chances of arriving at an agreement would perhaps be greater if the Red Cross ships had a Japanese crew". The ICRC then contemplated creating a regular line, with a half-way house at Lourenço-Marquez. In October 1942, they submitted the scheme to the Japanese Authorities, and discussed it with the representatives of the American Red Cross. The ICRC, which had already obtained the agreement of the French and German Authorities for the transfer to the Foundation of the Belgian ship *Carlrier*, had thought of using this vessel between the United States and South Africa.

For the journey between South Africa and the Far East, it proposed to employ, with a Japanese crew, the French ship *Ville de Verdun*, which was interned in Japan. The occupation of North Africa by the Allies in November 1942 upset the scheme for the purchase of the *Carlrier* and, when a month had passed, the Tokyo Government informed the Committee that it did not see any possibility of organizing a transport service between Japan and Lourenço-Marquez.

In spite of this set-back, the question was taken up again. On February 24, 1943, the ICRC submitted to the Japanese

Red Cross a proposal of the American Red Cross for the establishment of a service between the United States and Japan, with a half-way house in the Pacific. By this plan an American ship would have unloaded the goods at a place to be determined, and they would have been distributed at various points in the Far East by a Japanese vessel. In the same way, the American ship would have unloaded in the United States the relief stores coming from Japan for Japanese prisoners and internees. The United States would even have agreed that the American ship should do the whole trip, the American crew being replaced at the half-way house by a Japanese crew for the Far Eastern part of the journey.

Likewise, on February 26, 1943, the Committee advised its delegation in Japan to resume negotiations with regard to the Lourenço-Marquez-Japan service by a Red Cross ship flying the Swiss flag, and carrying only relief stores for prisoners of war and civil internees of the two belligerent parties. In April 1943, the Japanese Red Cross, in reply to the American proposals, stated that the Japanese Government had no objection in principle to the sending of relief, but that it could not yet change its resolve not to permit the entry of neutral vessels into zones of military operations. Nevertheless, if the American Government were to send relief stores by a Soviet vessel to Vladivostock, Japan would be ready to consider the granting of facilities for the forwarding of such relief supplies. In fact, soon after this, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs notified Switzerland, in its capacity as Protecting Power, that Japan would send one Japanese ship monthly to Vladivostock, on condition that its passage was guaranteed by safe-conducts issued by the Powers concerned. This news was communicated to the ICRC by the United States Legation in June 1944. In November, a Japanese ship, the *Hakusan Maru*, was sent to the Siberian port of Nakhodka, to take on there part of the cargo of relief supplies that the United States had sent to that port on a Russian ship. The *Hakusan Maru* loaded at Nakhodka 2000 tons of goods delivered at Vladivostock by the American authorities. This consignment included a total of 74,364 parcels.

At the beginning of the year 1945, the Committee thought that negotiations for the establishment of a regular service, if resumed, would have some chance of success. Two lines could have been established; one linking Europe to Sumatra, for the supply of the Sunda Islands, the other between the United States and Japan for food supplies to Japan and China. The *Mangalore* and the *Travancore*, Swedish ships which were then in service on the Atlantic line, seemed suitable to be put on to these new routes. From Sumatra, failing neutral cargo vessels, they could use ships of the Japanese coasting trade, which would provide a shuttle service. There were discussions to this end with the Japanese Legation at Berne in 1945.

The cargo loaded at Vladivostock, as has been seen above, seemed at last to give hopes of the establishment of regularity in the dispatch of relief supplies. Unfortunately, the *Awa Maru*, one of the ships responsible for distributing the relief supplies brought by the *Hakusan Maru* in the Southern occupied territories, was torpedoed on its return voyage on April 1, 1945, by an American submarine. From that time the Japanese Government refused to entertain any plans for Red Cross ships to ply in the Far East. The Japanese Authorities persisted in this attitude up to the capitulation, and the negotiations, which had been carried on for nearly four years with a view to establishing Red Cross transport services in this part of the world, in the end had no success. In this field, as in others, the fact that the efforts of the ICRC were fruitless was not through neglect of any feasible plan, even the boldest, or because there was failure to urge such a plan upon the Japanese Authorities on every possible occasion.

With the exception of the *Hakusan Maru*, it was only in the ships used for the exchange between Japan and the Allied States of persons in the diplomatic service and civilians, that medical stores, food and correspondence, could reach the Far East by sea.

A suggestion for these consignments was made for the first time in March 1942 by the Committee's delegation in Japan. Food and medical stores would be distributed to the consignees by the Japanese Red Cross. The exchange would take place

in the following manner : American or British ships would be sent to Lourenço-Marquez or any other port, to which Japanese ships on their side would also proceed. There would be a representative of the Protecting Power on board, who would at the same time work as the agent of the ICRC. A delegate of the ICRC would supervise the unloading of the goods, if necessary their storage, and their reloading on to another vessel. A first exchange took place in July 1942. The ship *Asama Maru* went to Lourenço Marquez to meet the *Gripsholm*. It brought 6,993 parcels back to Japan or to the occupied territories. A second exchange ship, the *Tatura Maru*, carried relief supplies from Lourenço-Marquez in September 1942. With regard to this, the delegate at Tokyo wrote as follows :

All the goods, including 48,818 parcels, 360 of which seem to have arrived in a bad condition, were unloaded at Singapore. The delegation in Japan asked the Huryojohokyoku to take the necessary steps, so that 60% of the cargo be divided among the prisoners of war and civil internees camps of the Singapore sector, and the remaining 40% between the prisoners of war and the civil internee camps in the Netherlands Indies.

In October 1944, according to the reports of the delegate at Tokyo, the *Kamakura Maru* carried a cargo of 47,210 parcels, 32,940 of which were unloaded at Hongkong. Lastly, the *Teia Maru*, going to meet the *Gripsholm*, took on board a number of parcels intended for Allied nationals detained in the Far East. On this subject, the Committee's delegate reported as follows :

Out of a total of 48,760 parcels dispatched 48,581 parcels have been distributed in the Far East. The allocation of these parcels and the collection of reports on them, as well as receipts, when included to the total despatch of 48,760 parcels, should be regarded as a satisfactory achievement in time of war.

The Committee's delegates were never able to exercise complete supervision of the unloading or the issue of these relief supplies. In most cases the Japanese Authorities took on this work, both in Japan and in the occupied territories. It was only very seldom that the delegates were able to be present at these operations. A certain check on distribution might, however, have been carried out through the individual receipts

in each parcel, but it was very difficult to get hold of these documents. The first receipt received was a general receipt, signed only by Japanese officers ; it contained no details as to distribution, and thus did not give the guarantees implicit in receipts signed by the consignees. (It should be noted that a fairly large number of individual receipts reached the ICRC after the end of hostilities, and among these there were those signed by Generals Percival and Wainwright, and by Governor-General van Starckenborg.)

These was an extensive correspondence with the Japanese authorities about the allocation of these relief supplies. During the war only a few replies came from the Prisoners of War Bureau and from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the information received was seldom very satisfactory. The delegates tried gradually to obtain proofs that all relief supplies which were delivered had, in actual fact, been distributed to the addressees, but they only managed to do this in certain cases and after persistent discussion.

Parcels were distributed to Allied prisoners and civil internees, without distinction of nationality, since the American, British and Netherlands Government had decided to pool these relief supplies. To sum up, on these four ships more than 150,000 parcels were despatched, and this number reached their destination. If that number be added to the consignment on the *Hakusan Maru*, a total of 225,000 parcels were divided between the prisoners of war and Allied internees in the Far East. The unfortunate torpedoing of the *Awa Maru* was the reason brought forward by the Japanese authorities for not allowing any further consignments. Thus, no relief supplies reached Japan or the occupied territories after those which had been brought by the *Hakusan Maru* in November 1944.

In these circumstances, local purchase of supplies, a course which should have been taken only to supplement relief arrangements, became essential in practice. We shall confine ourselves here to mention of the general methods and total figures of these purchases.

The necessary funds came from the Allied Governments, from the Allied Red Cross Societies and other relief organizations.

At first they were transferable at pleasure, but as from 1944 they had to be sent to Tokyo. Transfer of funds in territories outside Japan was subject to a special permit. Owing to the rate of exchange imposed by the Japanese Government, these funds lost a part, often a large one, of their purchasing power. Lastly, funds intended for certain destination, had to be converted once or several times into different currencies at a rate fixed by the Japanese authorities themselves. It should further be borne in mind that the activities of certain delegates in these parts never had the sanction of the Central Authorities and local commandants.

About 21 million Swiss francs were transferred to the Far East through Geneva. The various delegations were able to use more than 16 millions. Five millions never reached their destination, since it had not been possible to obtain the "re-transfer" permit.

It was in August 1945, after the Japanese capitulation, that the activities of the ICRC in the Far East were at last able to have scope. For it was on that date that the delegates in the Southern occupied territories were recognized by the Japanese authorities, and that they were able to visit the ex-prisoners of war and civil internees who were still in the camps, and to give them help. Certain delegations, either direct or through Geneva, forwarded to the Allied commands a list of urgently needed relief supplies, to be dropped by parachute in camps indicated to pilots by large national flags or Red Cross flags. This work of the delegations was taken over, as soon as they arrived, by the Allied organizations responsible for repatriation of ex-prisoners of war and civil internees.

Appeals to public generosity made by certain delegates, particularly at the moment of the capitulation of Japan, made it possible to collect on the spot considerable gifts in kind of great variety, and funds which may be estimated as equivalent to about 1,200,000 Swiss francs.

The following table gives a general outline of the use of the funds :

	Funds supplied by Governments and Red Cross Societies	Funds collected on the spot	Total
Drugs, surgical apparatus, dental treatment	953,032.46	38,568.25	991,600.71
Soap, washing and toilet, disinfection	289,894.03	6,859.10	296,753.13
Food	8,784,470.04	547,737.33	9,332,207.37
Clothing, footwear, thread, buttons	601,196.26	89,197.07	690,393.33
Toilet articles ; tooth brushes, tooth powder, razors, blades, combs, brushes, etc.	134,809.15	2,440.35	137,249.50
Books, games, sports equipment, musical instruments	44,060.30	28,354.40	72,414.70
Beds, mattresses, blankets, sheets, towels	126,899.67	37,359.60	164,259.27
Household utensils, brooms, toilet paper	104,476.50	5,024.42	109,500.92
Office fittings, stationery, pencils, etc.	37,213.47	74.40	37,287.87
Allowances (to civilians)	831,644.73	—,—	831,644.73
Pocket money (prisoners of war and civilians)	1,518,161.47	50,080.14	1,568,241.61
Relief packages	371,161.70	—,—	371,161.70
Tobacco, cigarettes, articles for smokers	486,265.89	177,307.13	663,573.02
Officers' mess (Shanghai)	18,281.15	—,—	18,281.15
Rent, telephone, electricity, heating, repairs to building, furniture, kitchen fittings, wages (800,000 frs. of which was for the "Rosary Hill Red Cross Home" Hong- kong)	899,099.86	44,891.95	943,991.81
Miscellaneous, including carriage of goods, transports, cable charges	913,338.40	155,512.74	1,068,851.14
GENERAL TOTAL Swiss francs	16,114,005.08	1,183,406.88	17,297,411.96

More detailed tables giving the names of the various donors, the use to which these funds were put in local money and the equivalent in Swiss currency, will be found in the annex to Vol. III, which deals with institutions from which gifts were received.

Lastly, mention should be made of the fact that very large sums reached the Far East through the Protecting Powers. The delegates collaborated closely with their representatives, particularly at Shanghai and at Bangkok.

7. *Repatriation*

Although Japan was not a party to the 1929 Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war, the ICRC, in its memorandum of February 15, 1944, submitted to the Japanese Government, as to the other Governments concerned, the question of the repatriation of wounded and sick prisoners of war and civilian internees. No reply was given. The Committee returned to the problem in the month of June of the same year and telegraphed to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, proposing the acceptance by the Imperial Government of a reciprocal agreement between the parties concerned for the repatriation of wounded and sick, particularly those whose state of health might become worse as a result of the climate. Pending the conclusion of such an agreement, the Committee asked, as a preliminary measure, that the prisoners should be transferred to districts where the climate was better ; it even offered to supply all the medical relief necessary for the help of these men.

The reply was received in October 1944 ; it stated that practical difficulties were involved in the repatriation of wounded and sick, but, even so, the Japanese Government was giving the question of the transfer of these persons the required attention and it went on to point out that the authorities as far as they could, were distributing the necessary medical relief, whilst the proposal of the ICRC to supply such relief remained still under consideration.

On March 28, 1945, a note on the same subject was sent again to the Japanese Government. In June 1945, when the Geneva mission set out, this question had not yet been solved ; it was to form the subject of negotiations by the delegates on their arrival. The Japanese capitulation occurred soon afterwards.
