



SUPPLEMENT

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REVUE INTERNATIONALE
DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

ET

BULLETIN INTERNATIONAL
DES SOCIÉTÉS
DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ICRC

Five years ago sixty-one States signed in Geneva the four Conventions for the protection of war victims. Following a generous impulse, the drafts proposed by the International Committee of the Red Cross were accepted by Governments representing every political opinion. There was hope therefore that all non-combatants would at last be assured of the protection which universal humanitarian sentiment demands.

The procedure of ratification of these Conventions is, however, too slow, especially in the case of the greatest Powers. The founder organization of the universal movement of the Red Cross considers that it must impress upon the Powers the importance of ratifying these treaties, of endorsing the obligations which they incurred when endeavouring to give a wider scope to the Geneva Conventions. Thus they will give the world a further proof of their desire for peace, whilst at the same time assuring their citizens that, as far as individual protection promised by treaty can be assured, in case of war, this will be done.

It must be hoped that, in the same spirit they will also make progress towards finding a solution to the great problem of the protection of civilian populations against weapons of massive and indiscriminate destruction—a problem, towards the solution of which the International Committee in Geneva has never ceased to devote its undivided attention and the study of which it will continue to pursue in the hope of a better future.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Re-uniting of families. — Over 80,000 persons have so far benefited from the efforts which have been made for several years past by the International Committee of the Red Cross, with a view to re-uniting members of families who were dispersed throughout various countries as a result of the war or post-war circumstances. The credit for this successful issue is also due—it should be emphasised—to numerous governmental agencies and National Red Cross Societies, of both East and West European countries, whose co-operation and understanding attitude were necessary for carrying out work of this nature. This co-operation is still essential, for the re-uniting of families is by no means terminated, and many tens of thousands of unfortunate people are still waiting for authority to join their families or to receive them.

Apart from the role of negotiator which it was its duty to assume, the International Committee had to give material assistance to many necessitous evacuated persons. Its relief action has been particularly effective in the transit camps, where it has already distributed clothing, underwear, etc. worth over 100,000 Swiss francs; and even greater sums were spent on supplying artificial limbs for the mutilated, in order to help them to take their place in the economic life of countries willing to receive them.

In this field, as unfortunately in many others, its means fall far short of the actual needs.

Mention has not yet been made in these columns of the representations which the International Committee began to make some two years ago, in order that a start might be made in bringing together those persons of German ethnical origin ("Volksdeutsche")—of whom some were in Austria and some in Germany—who wished to join their families in either country. For some time this action was beset with many difficulties; today it is however taking shape.

On the initiative of the International Committee of the Red Cross, meetings took place at Salzburg in May 1952, which were attended by representatives of the German Federal

Republic, the Austrian Minister for Internal Affairs, and two Delegates of the International Committee. These discussions led to a general agreement for exchanges to be made on the basis of equal numbers.

The lists exchanged by the two Governments showed that 450 persons wished to go from Germany to Austria. For their part the German authorities stated that they were willing to accept an equal number of "Volksdeutsche" from Austria, together with a further 450 persons, to count against future transports, in view of the fact that the "Volksdeutsche" wishing to enter Germany were greatly in excess of persons in the same category requesting their transfer to Austria.

In consequence, the Austrian Minister for Internal Affairs gave instructions to Austrian consular agents in Germany to grant entry visas to the persons who were to be included in these transfers. It was also decided that no difficulty would be made about giving these persons permanent residence permits as soon as they reached their destination.

Thus, the initiative of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the kind interest of the German and Austrian authorities, have for the time being enabled 1,350 "Volksdeutsche" to join their families.

Sundry relief actions. — At the close of the year, particularly for Christmas, the International Committee sent off several relief consignments.

In response to an appeal launched by a group of journalists on behalf of a holiday centre at Vercors for children of combatants who fell in the Resistance movement, the Committee presented this institution with 15 divan beds, together with sheets and blankets, to a total value of 3,200 Swiss francs.

The Christmas consignments were in general intended for refugees. Thus, 12,000 packets of 20 cigarettes were sent to Piding Camp where "Volksdeutsche" from Jugoslavia are assembled at the Austro-Bavarian frontier. The refugee camp in Fraschette di Alatri, Italy, received footwear, clothing and also sports equipment (sent at the request of the International Social Service of the Italian Red Cross). Parcels were also

despatched for Rumanian refugees in Germany, Austria, Italy and Jugoslavia. In response to various requests, the International Committee also sent cases of clothing to a number of refugee institutions in Germany (Ungarischer Hilfsdienst, Munich; Verband polnischer Flüchtlinge, Brunswick, Russisches Komitee, Landshut, Bavaria; Litauischer Jugendheim, Diepholz).

The ICRC Delegation in Paris also presented social workers visiting prisons with small sums for detained refugees who receive no help from their families.

Disabled. — In November the International Committee sent 75 pairs of crutches to the German Red Cross in Berlin, and to the Jugoslav Red Cross a number of Braille repeater watches, donated by Swiss manufacturers. These watches are intended for the war-blinded who have suffered arm amputations.

In December the International Committee sent 50 Braille watches to Germany, 50 to Jugoslavia and 300 to the blind in Korea.

In addition, the action on behalf of disabled "Volksdeutsche" refugees in camps in Germany has been continued by the supplying of artificial limbs and surgical boots. Similar help is being given to persons under detention in Greece.

The International Committee also provided large quantities of Isoniazide for tubercular military disabled in Indochina.

Indochina. — The Delegate of the International Committee in Indochina visited in July and August four prisoner of war camps in South Vietnam. He also had the opportunity of visiting several prisons in this region. In addition, twelve camps situated in Central Vietnam were visited in October and November.

Mutilated Children. — One of the dramatic and less well-known consequences of the last war is the number of victims still being made by explosions of military appliances left lying in the ground, which have caused the mutilation of numerous children. In Italy the average number of these tragic accidents amounts to about 1,600 every year.

The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, M. Paul Ruegger, being deeply concerned for these innocent victims of the consequences of war, concluded an agreement with Professor Longhena, President of the Italian Red Cross, whereby some of the children, who are in particularly distressing circumstances (and who would be chosen by the ICRC Doctor-Delegates and Italian doctors) will be admitted to suitable orthopaedic establishments in Switzerland.

The funds necessary for this have been provided from an amount placed at the International Committee's disposal by the Swiss Confederation for some measure to help Italy, which the Committee was left free to decide. The amount in question, 100,000 francs, was drawn from the funds handed over to the Swiss Confederation by the International Centre for Relief to Civilian Populations (Geneva) when it was closed down. The International Committee decided to make use of this amount for relief to persons directly affected by the events of war—in the present instance, mutilated children.

This work comes within the International Committee's general activities on behalf of Italy, which concern in particular prisoners of war, tuberculosis sufferers and refugees.

*PRESIDENT PAUL RUEGGER'S
VISIT TO THE IRISH RED CROSS*

The Irish Red Cross Society, founded in July 1939, and recognised on the international level as from November 1939 by the International Committee of the Red Cross, held from the 12th to the 14th of November 1953 its first General Meeting in Dublin, which will be convened every three years in the future. Over 200 district delegates of this young but very active Society took part in the four days' meetings. On the invitation of the Irish Red Cross Society, the President of the International Committee and Mme Paul Ruegger were guests of honour at this most important manifestation.

One of the principal problems which the Convention examined was the need for more new members. This was stressed by several speakers since it is a principle of the Red Cross movement in the world that each country's national organisation should be self-supporting. This factor is of course conditioned by the number of their contributing members. In Ireland the position has not yet been reached where members' contributions entirely cover expenditure. Each year's deficit has been covered up to date by a substantial Government grant. A larger membership would provide more workers and enable the Society to end the need to call on funds other than those it has itself collected. It is however interesting to note that though the Irish Red Cross Society only comprised 746 members in 1949, their number is today over 2000.

In spite of this relatively small number of members however, the Irish Red Cross has nevertheless been able since its foundation to give most appreciable help to various countries victims of wars or acts of God, such as India, France, Turkey, Holland, Britain, Germany, Greece and Italy for instance. It is also interesting to remember that Ireland initiated a new method of providing relief, not by gifts of money, which was the generally accepted procedure, but by gifts of goods, food, clothing, bedding, medical aids of every kind, including a fully-equipped

hospital. Since Ireland showed the way, many other countries have adopted this form of help and it is coming to be recognised as the more useful and acceptable form. Thus the Irish Red Cross was so to speak a pioneer in this particular field.

At home the Society is playing an ever-increasing part in such services as mass radiography, antitubercular activities and blood transfusion. In many places its members attend sports fixtures, public meetings, parades, etc., such as the Dublin Horse Show for example, which is now universally recognised as the most important manifestation of its kind in the world today, where they are able to give skilful first-aid. An important and characteristic activity of the Irish Red Cross Society is the Junior Red Cross which is growing every year.

Mrs. Tom Barry, the very active and dynamic President of the Irish Red Cross underlined in her opening speech in which she introduced the President of the International Committee, how very attached the Irish people are to the founder organisation of the Red Cross in Geneva as well as to the universal Red Cross movement. She added that in her capacity as Chairman she was especially happy in presiding at the opening of the first National Convention of the Society, to welcome in Dublin delegates from all over Ireland.

Mrs. Barry further said

“ Though the Irish Red Cross is almost the infant of this world-wide movement, it maintained, all through the 1939-1945 emergency, units of trained personnel for service, and a complete voluntary ambulance service. In the post-war period refugee children were taken in, made healthy, educated, and even adopted here, an Irish Red Cross Hospital was opened in devastated Normandy, hundreds of Baltic refugees were given refuge and to all calls for help to those in other countries who suffered from floodings and earthquake, the Society gave immediate attention. ... Our relations with every department of our Government are on the most co-operative of terms, and in our external affiliations, the International Committee of the Red Cross will always have our first allegiance.”

Mrs. Barry concluded by saying

“ Our country with its long history of missionary work will always be a shining light in any movement of voluntary effort for the common good, and our guarantee of Red Cross survival here lies in the fact that we see in the emblem of the organisation, the Cross, Redemption, and in each person succoured under its aegis, we see not only a suffering human being, but the image and likeness of our Creator.”

We give hereunder the full text of M. Paul Ruegger's opening speech which he made before the delegates on the occasion of the first plenary meeting of the Convention, on November 12th in the presence of members of the Government and the diplomatic corps in Dublin. He particularly underlined the more than generous aid given by the Irish Red Cross since its foundation to the victims of the second world war and its direct consequences.

SPEECH OF H. E. PAUL RUEGGER, PRESIDENT,
INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS, GENEVA,
TO THE FIRST NATIONAL RED CROSS CONVENTION,
12TH-13TH NOVEMBER, 1953

Madam President,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

There could be no greater honour and pleasure for me than to bring personally to this magnificent and active assembly on this happy, auspicious, and no doubt memorable occasion of the First Convention of the Red Cross of Ireland, the sincerest, most heartfelt greetings and wishes of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The International Committee in Geneva, as you know, is the founder organisation of the Red Cross movement which we all serve, a movement which, in less than a century, has peacefully conquered—or rather convinced and rallied to its

aims—the intellect, the feelings, the emotions of those who previously had instinctively been aware that, according chiefly to the Christian doctrine, the help to the defenceless, the wounded, the wounded in warfare, but also the wounded and maimed on the everlasting and often so cruel battlefield of daily life, —was not only an individual humane duty, but a duty the fulfilment of which had to be *organised*; organised, beginning from the most evident and palpable cases of active warfare with all the hardship this entails, gradually extended to civil war, to strife; furthermore, to fighting human suffering in all forms, in epidemics, in the terrible cases of natural catastrophes which we witness yearly in all continents. Organised, but organised always keeping in view what is and what *must* ever be the foundations of a human welfare action; the respect of the human personality, of the individual human being as created of God.

We may recall to-day that the banner of the Red Cross, which had been raised just ninety years ago, has to its credit already achievements which are just short of a miracle. This shows, I believe, that providence helps and furthers our efforts and the endeavours of valiant Red Cross Societies, as of the International Red Cross organisations, that we may put our trust in the future, providing that humbly, but energetically, we pursue that task which has been assigned to us.

I feel sure that this first Convention of the Irish Red Cross Society is, and will be considered in future, an occasion of which your National Organisation can be justly proud. In the measure in which the Red Cross idea is spreading and striking always deeper roots, this pride will be justly shared by the generous people of Ireland, who have spontaneously shown themselves always anxious to participate, on a large scale, in the crusade against human suffering in wartime and in the sometimes almost more tragic periods of a generalized suffering which, in many regions of Europe and other continents, were temporarily even more acute after the war than during open hostilities, in periods when swift action and rapid help were so obviously important for saving many lives, for assisting the helpless, children, women and aged people.

May I, in this connection, recall one great instance of this instinctive generosity of Ireland :—the gift of the Irish people to war victims which was authorised by the Irish Parliament in 1945 and the total amount of which attained the magnificent figure of 12 million pounds. This gift, which similar to the “ Don Suisse ” of 210 million Swiss francs, gave a shining proof of the thankfulness of a people who had the privilege of seeing their soil spared from the horrors of warfare—the Irish people and Parliament, the Swiss people and Parliament—that they were anxious to take their share in relief to famine-stricken regions, in help for the homeless and the sick. The distribution of more than half of this splendid gift of the Irish people¹ was entrusted to a special organisation of the International Red Cross, the so-called “ Mixed Commission ” which our International Committee in Geneva, together with the League of Red Cross Societies, had taken the initiative of creating in wartime. Thus I may be entitled to recall to-day and here in this assembly of the Irish Red Cross Society the truly great and lasting achievements the world owes, in the field of Red Cross charity, to your gallant country. Indeed the “ Blue Book ” relating to the gifts of the Irish people, sent in 1945, remains an outstanding testimonial of human solidarity. Also, in later years the contributions of Ireland, through the Red Cross, to various necessary welfare activities in the international field, has been of the greatest avail. It is my privilege to express to Ireland, in this respect too, the gratitude of the International Committee of the Red Cross for the most valuable assistance given, for instance, to our endeavours on behalf of prisoners of war who were retained, for some time after hostilities had ceased, in France and in the Benelux countries and, perhaps chiefly, for the relief put at the disposal of our Geneva Committee in critical post-war years, for assistance to aged people and children in Germany, chiefly in Berlin,—but also to hospitals and children in Eastern Germany, at a time when our Com-

¹ See *Blue Book* on the Irish Gift, International Centre for Relief to Civilian Populations, Geneva, 1949, and Final Report of the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross, Geneva, 1948.

THE IRISH RED CROSS



I. First National Convention of the Irish Red Cross Society

(from left to right) Colonel MacKinney, Director; Madame Ruegger; Mrs. Hackett, Vice-Chairman; Monsieur Ruegger, President ICRC; Mrs. T. Barry, Chairman Irish Red Cross; Mr. Traynor, Minister for Defence; M. de Burg, Swiss Minister to Ireland; Lord Killanin, Hon. Secretary; Mr. J. Moran, Hon. Treasurer and Mr. A. N. O'Brien, General Secretary.

THE IRISH RED CROSS



2. M. Paul Ruegger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, delivering a speech.

mittee was the only organisation from outside permitted to distribute relief in the latter regions.

May I recall here one personal experience? Towards the end of 1948 I had the opportunity, during the blockade of Berlin when it fell to the airlift system to ensure the communications between that capital city and the West, of visiting some of the more than a hundred distribution centres organised by the International Committee of the Red Cross in all four sectors of occupied Berlin and of making also, naturally, a personal contact with the representatives of all four occupying Powers. In all these distribution centres which together ensured a hot meal a day to one hundred thousand aged people¹, there were, together with the universal Red Cross symbol which unites us all, the emblems of the donors whose generous help made this action possible. In each of these centres I saw the emblem of Ireland.

Truly, there cannot be a more convincing, more impelling, more uplifting form of international activity than that of carrying abroad the national colours together with the emblem of help to defenceless fellow creatures.

I should like to add one word more in this connection relating a fact which was, for evident reasons, not disclosed at that period, but which is significant for the force of the Red Cross idea. Whilst Berlin was blockaded, one wedge was tolerated in this blockade. Whilst all ground traffic from the West to Berlin was interrupted, there was one exception. The relief trains with the emblems of the ICRC in Geneva wound, slowly but surely, their way—this even to the surprise of some of the highest Western Representatives. And these Red Cross trains from Basle, the arrival of one of which I witnessed, carried relief—foodstuffs, medicines—owing to gifts from several small but generous countries, including, of course, Ireland.

For this precious help to war victims and of victims of the consequences of war, which was evident since before the days when in Spring, 1944, a splendid Irish hospital team of the

¹ See Summary Report on the Work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (1st July 1947-31st December 1951), Geneva, 1952, pages 42-43.

Irish Red Cross Society landed promptly in Normandy, to bring assistance to the wounded of all countries in St. Lô —for all this the Red Cross world owes your country and your Society sincerest gratitude.

Our thanks go to His Excellency the President of Ireland, Mr. Seán T. O'Kelly, the President of your Society, who so rightly wishes national and international Red Cross organisations to be always ready in every way for the tasks which suddenly may be theirs, to the Taoiseach, His Excellency Éamon de Valera, whose constant, active and most encouraging interest in matters of the International Red Cross we so much appreciate, as well as that of his Government, to the Chairman of the Central Council, Mrs. Barry, to the Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Hackett, whom we also know well so in Geneva, to Mr. Seán Moran, your Honorary Treasurer, as well as Lord Killanin, your Honorary Secretary, who but recently we had the great pleasure of seeing at meetings at our Headquarters, and to your General Secretary, Mr. A. N. O'Brien.

The International Committee remembers, likewise gratefully, Colonel McKinney, who took an active part in International Red Cross Conferences, Mr. McNamara, the former Secretary-General of the Society, whose all too sudden departure we deplore, and all the members of the Irish Government Delegation to the Diplomatic Geneva Conference of 1949 on whose friendly support in all fundamental matters we could always rely. I can mention here only too few names of those men and women who, on behalf of Ireland were, and are, active for the Red Cross in the international field.

Since July, 1939, the day on which the Irish Red Cross Society came into being, since November, 1939, when the International Committee of the Red Cross was happy to notify, under its statute, to the Red Cross world as a whole the birth and the recognition of what was to become a most active and splendid member, many Irishmen and Irishwomen could lay claim to high distinction in the Red Cross. Let me but recall the memory of Mrs. Linda Kearns MacWhinney, on whom the ICRC bestowed on her death-bed the Florence Nightingale medal for exceptional devotion to duty.

But let us not forget either the many less known Red Cross workers, men and women, throughout the land upon whose sense of duty and of sacrifice so much always depends. These are indeed the "invisible legions" who carry our banner, without whose steady, selfless endeavour and achievements everywhere our Red Cross movement as a whole could not have risen to its present heights.

You may wish, Ladies and Gentlemen, to hear now a few words on some of the problems with which the ICRC, as founder organisation of the Red Cross and as the institution bound to fight for the observation and the development of the Red Cross principles, is faced to-day. The task is heavy, though by the grace of God it does not at present entail, as during the two world wars, a supreme exertion in practically every field. The task is, however, yet of such dimensions that the small central body in Geneva can hope to master it only by keeping constantly in closest touch (as is our ardent desire) with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies that are anxious to preserve Henri Dunant's heritage and give their moral support and, frequently, their inspiration to our endeavours.

In a very short outline I should like to mention, in the first place, the duties of the International Committee of the Red Cross in as far as the constant reaffirmation and development of Red Cross principles is concerned; thereafter, and also most summarily, we can dwell on some of our present activities in the field.

In time of war the Red Cross acts—in the words of my great predecessor, President Max Huber—as trustee between belligerents. As a trustee it pleads the cause of humanity and advocates help for prisoners of war of every class, and for the civilian population of any occupied country. The first Geneva Convention of 1864, promoted by the International Committee, inaugurated a new era in the history of international laws.

By laying down the legal rule that, if sick or wounded on the battlefield, friend or foe should be treated alike, warfare, as an institution of international law, was for the first time restricted; a platform was also laid for the later Hague Convention. Step by step the Red Cross function in wartime was

extended. In 1929 the first Convention for the protection of prisoners of war, also drafted by the Geneva Committee, was ready for signature by the Governments.

At the International Red Cross Conference which met in Tokyo in 1934 the Committee produced a draft on the problem of the civilian population in war-time. Though accepted by the Red Cross Societies, this draft did not then become a treaty as the examination by the Governments of the problems involved was not sufficiently advanced before the second World War broke out. I do not need to recall the tragic fate of so many civilians to whom under the existing Conventions help could not be brought.

Immediately after the war the efforts were renewed ; Red Cross representatives and then Government experts met in Geneva. A new draft was worked out, submitted to the Stockholm Conference in 1948, finally to the Geneva Diplomatic Conference of 1949 and signed by practically all Governments. It provided that every endeavour would be made to ensure a general ratification of this vitally important (4th) Geneva Convention, as well as of the other Conventions revised in 1949.

It is, unfortunately, true that the Conventions were not sufficiently observed during the Korean War. The ICRC could fulfil its traditional task in South Korea only, its delegates were not admitted to the North nor was any other neutral intermediary in action there. Furthermore, there was no " Protecting Power ", neither in the North nor in the South and another main instrument of control for the benefit of war victims was, therefore, lacking.

The inobservance of the law, in a particular case, may not however affect the law itself. The ratification of the universally signed Conventions is all the more necessary, to give more force to the generally accepted principles and Rules.

It appears evident that new Conventions in the humanitarian field can hardly be worked out before the existing Conventions receive the fullest and most general endorsement.

Nevertheless the development of International Law in the humanitarian field is a " continual creation " and must be

unceasingly pursued at least along the lines of preparatory work which can lead to the establishment of international custom. In this respect I can mention the following :

In June last year a commission of experts, composed of eminent jurists of various countries met at the Committee's Headquarters in Geneva and prepared a valuable report on the question of assistance to political detainees¹. The mere fact of the publication of this report has already had favourable results in various quarters.

A further problem to be shortly dealt with in co-operation with interested Red Cross Societies is that of greater protection of the civilian population in case of bombardments. Finally I should like to mention our circular letter to Red Cross Societies and Governments asking for observations on the subject of Hospital and safety zones. The possibility of establishing such zones is contemplated in the 4th Geneva Convention. Indeed the experiences of the Committee in Jerusalem were conclusive. Zones were established there in 1948 during the war of Palestine and have saved several thousands of lives. The practical side of the question must, however, be gone into further with the help of the Red Cross world.

In general, the furthering of humanitarian law in the international field is a problem of greatest import. This has been recently underlined in the noble message sent by His Holiness Pope Pius XII—whose benevolent interest in the endeavours of our Committee is so encouraging for us—at the Congress of International Penal Law held in Rome last month².

As to the " field activities " of the International Committee of the Red Cross, they are at present, of course, restricted compared to several years ago and we pray God that they remain so : that some of the present " danger spots " throughout the world shall not develop into a situation which would call upon our institution to muster again all its, chiefly voluntary, reserves. But we are in duty bound to endeavour to be ready for every emergency.

¹ See *Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, June 1953, page 440 and English supplement, page 107.

² See *Osservatore Romano*, No. 230, 4th October 1953.

What can be done in such emergency is shown by a few figures relating to the Committee's work during the second world war¹: 120 million letters received and despatched; 36 million index cards; more than 11,000 camp visits, 24 million civilian messages forwarded, 450,000 tons of relief supplies valued at three thousand million Swiss Francs carried overseas by a fleet of at one time forty vessels flying the ensign of the ICRC.

As regards the present moment—as I am afraid I have already strained your patience—I can merely mention now some headlines: the activities of our delegations in South Korea, in Indochina, in Greece. The work in Central Europe which had led to the reunion of dispersed members of some 100,000 families². In the last years the rather large action following riots in Bengal³, the assistance to victims of hostilities in Indonesia. Just in these days the endeavours to give shelter in Switzerland to sick members of the refugee group in Trieste.

Now finally, I mention shortly that the ICRC has undertaken on principle the mandate offered it under Article 16 of the Peace Treaty of Japan to ensure the equitable distribution of some Japanese assets, voluntarily conceded by Japan to former prisoners of war in Japanese hands or to their relatives.

By this very summary outline you have seen, Ladies and Gentlemen, that our present task is—alas—by no means limited to “Stand By Activities”. The call on a neutral intermediary is frequent, I may say, more frequent than it appears from published reports.

In our Red Cross world of to-day much can be achieved by multilateral discussions and agreements in an international organisation representing Red Cross Societies from every Continent. Herein lie splendid possibilities of realisation and constructive Red Cross work in the peace-time activities which are entrusted to the great federation of the national Red Cross

¹ See General Report in 3 volumes of the International Committee of the Red Cross on its activities during World War II (1st September 1939-30th June 1947).

² See Summary Report on the Work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (1st July 1947-31st December 1951), pages 27/29.

³ See *idem*, pages 58/62.

organisations, the League of Red Cross Societies, a federation which was most earnestly called for—this fact is, I believe, not sufficiently known—by the International Committee itself, already during Conferences held in early stages of our movement, as early as the eighties of the last century, hardly twenty years after the Red Cross was born.

But apart from the vast and glamorous future of the Red Cross in its daily endeavours in peace-time, there are fields which appear to need permanently the services, in the spirit of Henri Dunant, of our old founder organisation of the Red Cross. For defence of the Red Cross principles the development of international humanitarian law, and, chiefly, on behalf of those who suffer, the rapid initiative in times of war and conflicts, above all the role of a neutral and impartial intermediary. These heavy duties, the Geneva Committee, as a homogeneous body—international in its outlook, although Swiss as regards the nationality of its members—will continue to fulfil to the best of its powers.

It can only fulfil these duties, however, in closest contact with the national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies who share its ideals, who support our Committee, by their advice, their help and their inspiration.

The Irish Red Cross Society, already so brilliantly active on the international field since its creation in 1939, is for us, in this and in every respect, a source of rejoicing.

My wife and I were happy to come to join you in your First and memorable Convention. In the name of the International Committee, I have the privilege, not only of expressing all best wishes for your debates and the progress of your Society, but also to offer you the tribute of our sincere gratitude”.

Finally, Mr. Oscar Traynor, Minister for Defence, spoke in the following terms :

“ I would like to say how much I appreciate the invitation extended to me to be present here today at this Convention of the Irish Red Cross Society and I am glad to have this opportunity of saying a few words to such a very representative gathering from practically all parts of the country. Since the

establishment of the Society in 1939, a very close relationship has existed between the State and the Society. This relationship was expressly symbolized in the Red Cross Act of 1944 when it was provided that by virtue of his office the President of Ireland was also the President of the Society. As a member of the Government and particularly as Minister for Defence, I naturally have a deep interest in the Society which I am very gratified to see is a strong, virile, growing organisation. So, on behalf of the Government, I would like to express our gratitude to the organisation, to the Council of the Red Cross Society, for the excellent work which they are doing, especially in the international field. I would also like to pay a special tribute to the members of the Central Council who manage its affairs so competently and particularly to the Chairman, Mrs. Barry."

The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Mme Ruegger were received during their visit by the President of Ireland, who is also President of the Irish Red Cross, as well as by the Prime Minister Mr. Eamon de Valera, whose unflinching and positive interest in Red Cross work is well known, and also by Mr. Aiken, Minister for External Affairs. Before leaving Ireland, M. Ruegger spoke of the International Committee's work and duties as well as of Red Cross activities in general with the Cardinal Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of Ireland, and with the protestant and catholic Archbishops of Dublin.

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS

HANDBOOK OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS

The 10th Edition of the Handbook of the International Red Cross, compiled by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies, has just been published. Like the previous edition, it is published in French, English and Spanish.

It may be recalled that this work was first brought out in 1889. It was published by the International Committee of the Red Cross in the form of a booklet of twenty-two pages, containing the essential resolutions of the first International Red Cross Conferences.

Increasing in size with each successive issue, it became, as from 1930, the Handbook of the International Red Cross, a joint publication of the International Committee and the League of Red Cross Societies. The plan then adopted was continued through subsequent editions. Part I contained the Geneva Conventions and several others with a bearing on Red Cross work ; Part II gave the Statutes and Rules of Procedure of the international agencies of the Red Cross ; Part III was devoted to the main Resolutions of the International Conference of the Red Cross and of the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies.

Several items of general interest were added to the Handbook in the course of time. For 1951 the 9th Edition marked an important further stage by the addition of the four Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949. The Resolutions of the Diplomatic Conference of Geneva (April 21-August 12, 1949), and the Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on the subject of the Red Cross were also included in the Handbook, as well as several new Regulations of the League of Red Cross Societies and the Deed of Establishment of the Foundation for the Organisation of Red Cross Transports.

Anticipating alterations to several important texts, in particular as a result of the XVIIIth International Red Cross Conference, the publishers of the Handbook had in any case planned to complete the 9th Edition in due course. The present publication therefore includes, in their most recent form, the Statutes of the International Red Cross, the Rules of Procedure of the International Red Cross Conference, the Statutes of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Regulations of the Health Advisory Committee of the League, the Regulations of the Standing International Commission for the Study of Medical Equipment, the Regulations for the Florence Nightingale Medal, and those for the Augusta Fund.

The Resolutions voted by the XVIIIth International Red Cross Conference and by the XXIIInd Session of the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies have been inserted in Part III, in accordance with the order adopted for the previous edition. The Resolutions of the International Red Cross Conference are easily distinguished as they are in italics. The Agreement concluded on December 8, 1951, between the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies, for the purpose of defining their respective competence in certain fields, is also included in the Annexes to the new edition.

This work, revised and up-to-date, and in a convenient form, should prove most useful.

PRESS RELEASE

*PROTECTION OF CIVILIAN POPULATIONS
IN TIME OF WAR*

Geneva, January 11, 1954.

A press release from Tokyo states that a conference would appear to have been convened by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva in order to "outlaw atom bombs and hydrogen bombs as well as other types of bombing from the air". In order to avoid all possible misunderstandings the International Committee of the Red Cross wishes to say that this text does not altogether correspond with the facts.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has been concerned for a long time now with the problem of the protection of civilian populations against the dangers of aerial warfare. Within this framework it hopes to be able, with the assistance of certain National Red Cross Societies, to gather together in some months time a number of experts invited exclusively in their personal and private capacities in order to consider if and how far it is possible to clarify and to develop the current legal rules in this sphere.
