

NEWS OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES

We are very grateful that the Japanese Red Cross Society also, making untiring efforts in co-operation with Red Cross Societies of other countries, firmly established its foundation and its programs have developed year by year.

We hope that all the personnel concerned will co-operate more than ever and fulfil their mission of humanitarian duty with the assistance of the people, and endeavour to contribute for the peace of the world and the welfare of humanity.

Mr. H. C. Angst, honorary ICRC delegate in Japan, read an address from the International Committee which was translated simultaneously into Japanese. He brought the warm congratulations of the founder institution and pointed out that Henry Dunant's gesture had found a very live echo in Japan, where the National Society is carrying out magnificent work for the continuation of which the International Committee sends its best wishes in this year, in which all eyes are turned towards the humanitarian task being accomplished day after day by millions of Red Cross workers.

Switzerland

The National Red Cross has been given new statutes and we are pleased to publish the following article on the meaning and implications of a revision of great importance for the future work of the Society. The co-operation of the Swiss Red Cross in protective measures for the population and the new form of membership provided for in the new statutes will be particularly remarked upon.

The delegates of the Swiss Red Cross met recently in Berne in extraordinary assembly and after examining the statutes in use, decided to revise them. They had received the draft of the new statutes as drawn up by the Managing Committee of the Swiss Red Cross on October 25, 1962, the draft being based on a preliminary

draft presented by the Central Committee which resulted from the preparatory work of the Secretariat General and a Drafting Committee. In fact, the central organs of the National Society had been intending a general revision of the statutes for some years and, thanks to a detailed preparation, the assembly of delegates only made slight alterations to the draft, which was then adopted unanimously.

One of the principal reasons motivating a revision of the statutes of the Swiss Red Cross was the necessity to enable the latter to take an active part in the measures of protection for the civilian population scheduled in the event of war. The terms of the old statutes would have made such participation very difficult, if not impossible in certain circumstances. In fact, article 8 stipulated that "on the outset of active service, the Swiss Red Cross keeps Red Cross teams and its other resources in personnel and equipment at the disposal of the Army Medical Corps". In these conditions, it would only have been possible for the Swiss Red Cross to carry out activities on behalf of the civilian population if the Army Medical Corps itself had assigned the teams and resources in personnel and equipment which our institution keeps at its disposal, to help the civilian population or if it had released them for the same purpose. At all events, it would have been for the Army Command to decide if, and in what measure, the means of the Swiss Red Cross should be deployed in aid to the civilian population. It can be presumed that this authority, in accordance with its duty, would, in the first place, have taken into account the needs of the army.

After the adoption by the people and the cantons, in May 1959, of a constitutional article on civil defence and the decree by the Federal Chambers, in March 1962, of a federal law on civil defence (which came into operation on January 1, 1963), bases were available from which to adapt the statutes of the Swiss Red Cross to the needs of the protection of the civilian population. This adaptation was to confer on the Swiss Red Cross the right and the duty to support, in time of peace as in the event of active service, both the civil defence bodies, particularly its health service, and the civilian hospitals, by making available personnel and equipment

(including the blood transfusion service). This right and duty were to be given to the Swiss Red Cross, over and above the task incumbent upon it to support the Army Medical Corps, a task which remains as vital today as yesterday, and which the Swiss Red Cross is required to assume, in its capacity as a National Red Cross Society recognized in accordance with the Federal Decree of June 13, 1951, concerning the Swiss Red Cross.

The chapter of the new statutes devoted to peacetime work states, under the heading *Protection of the civilian population in anticipation of war* that "the Swiss Red Cross co-operates in informing the population of the dangers which it may run and the possibilities of protection, that it instructs personnel, and holds it at the disposal of the civil defence medical service and the civilian hospitals in particular, and that it deals with the preparation of equipment". In accordance with article 61 of the federal law on civil defence, the training of personnel can be done on behalf of the authorities. In this case, the personnel instructed will be under the obligation to serve in civil defence and incorporated in an organization of protection. However, the Swiss Red Cross can also, on its own initiative, instruct and reserve for its own use personnel, in anticipation particularly of assignments to civilian hospitals. With this in mind, the Swiss Red Cross began training Red Cross hospital auxiliaries some years ago.

Various alterations, made necessary by the introduction of the new tasks incumbent upon our Society in the sphere of civil defence, have been made to the chapter devoted to *the work of the Swiss Red Cross while the army is on active service*. It is pointed out that the Swiss Red Cross has to deal with the transport of the wounded and sick, nursing of the wounded and sick, and the blood transfusion service as "measures complementing those of the Army Medical Corps and in co-operation with civil defence and the civilian hospitals". As a result, the only obligation which the Swiss Red Cross still has with regard to the Army Medical Corps is to make available to the latter the military teams of the Red Cross service and the reserves of equipment set up for military use, in agreement with the Chief Medical Doctor of the army. The reserves of personnel and equipment scheduled for the army's needs can also be used to help the civilian population if the Army

Command does not promulgate restrictive instructions on this subject. Furthermore, the Swiss Red Cross is required, under the terms of an agreement concluded with the authorities concerned, to place personnel and equipment at the disposal of the civil defence bodies set up, as well as at the disposal of civilian hospitals. The new statutes, like the old, stipulate that the Swiss Red Cross is authorized to continue its peacetime work during a period of active service, in so far as the accomplishment of these activities does not prevent it from giving the necessary aid to the Army Medical Corps and from taking part in civil defence measures. Practically speaking, this eventuality will only arise in a state of neutrality.

A second factor necessitated the revision of the old statutes in relation to the intensive recruitment of members and staff which the Swiss Red Cross will be carrying out in March and April, 1963, on the occasion of the commemoration of the Red Cross Centenary. During the preparation of this action, there was a general awareness that it is of vital importance for the Swiss Red Cross and its sections, to be able to count, apart from paid members, on the support of *voluntary workers* willing to put their knowledge, their time and their strength, in the service of the Red Cross. This point of view has given rise to the desire to statutorily fix the legal bases which will allow sections to accept voluntary workers as members, it being understood that the latter will not have to provide contributions in cash, but to supply a certain work. It is obvious that these members must expressly declare their desire to adhere to the Red Cross and that they will, thus, undertake to participate in the work of a section as hospital auxiliary, voluntary assistant, blood donor, need of a class or group affiliated to the Junior Red Cross, member of a Committee or Commission or in any other manner.

As only a minority of sections desired the introduction of this new category of member, it was decided not to introduce an obligatory clause on this subject in the central statutes. Thus, according to the new statutes, the sections are not obliged, but merely authorized, "to accept as individual members any private person making himself available for long duration to a section, in order to co-operate in a Red Cross task or as a blood donor". The sections are free to specify the modalities of this form of member-

ship in their statutes, while observing in this respect the directives drawn up by the Managing Council of the Swiss Red Cross.

Furthermore, a total revision of the statutes always gives a possibility of making formal improvements or material changes of slight importance. Among these improvements and changes should be quoted the new version of article 2 defining the aim of the Swiss Red Cross, the drafting of which was kept as general as possible (" The aim of the Swiss Red Cross is to carry out, in time of peace and in time of war, humanitarian tasks in the spirit of the Red Cross "). Article 3, which describes the idea of the Red Cross, enumerates the Red Cross principles as unanimously adopted in 1961 by the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross (humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality). Moreover, the peacetime tasks have, in part, been newly formulated ; in particular, account has been taken of the development of nursing, first-aid, Junior Red Cross, the participation of the Swiss Red Cross in assistance to old people, the chronically ill and invalids.

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that the new statutes contain a special chapter devoted to the *Blood Transfusion Service Central Laboratory*, which has developed its activities considerably since 1949. The Central Laboratory is defined as an institute which " carries out within the framework of the Swiss Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service, tasks arising from organization, manufacture, examination and scientific research ".

The new statutes, which have been submitted to the Federal Council for approval, constitute a wide and solid basis for the future work and development of the Swiss Red Cross. Provided these activities and development are not only effective, but bear the imprint of the true Red Cross spirit, definite benefits will result.

HANS HAUG

Secretary General of
the Swiss Red Cross