

fulfil in connection with Civil Defence which is soon to be organized in Austria. The Austrian Red Cross, he stressed, must realize that it will have a leading rôle to play in protecting the civilian population. For this reason, and as a first step, the Minister decided to supply the Red Cross with the necessary equipment to ensure prompt action in time of need. Mr. Afritsch thanked the Austrian Red Cross and its helpers for the work they are accomplishing and urged them to continue their efforts and remain prepared to give assistance in all circumstances.

Dr. Lauda, in his turn, thanked the Minister for the aid given and the understanding attitude shown to the Society. The trailers and equipment were then handed over to the regional sections

Japan

The "Konju-Kai" Society, which was founded in Tokyo in 1960 for the purpose of developing the idea of the Red Cross with the Japanese public, decided to hold its first annual general meeting this year on April 10, on the Cherry-blossom Festival.

This Society consists of all those members of the Japanese Red Cross who have shown themselves to be particularly active and generous in Red Cross affairs and who are, as a result, entitled to wear the blue ribbon. The delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross on special mission in Japan was invited to speak on the Red Cross spirit. His speech which is published below, was translated simultaneously from the French into Japanese by Mr. Seibi Ota, liaison officer of the External Affairs Section of the Japanese Red Cross and was the subject of an article in the National Society's publication in English and in Japanese.

The celebrations also included an address by the President, Mr. Shigehisa Hagiwara, who expressed his satisfaction over the fact that the "Konju-Kai" Society had doubled its membership within a year and had contributed 33 million yen to the Japanese

Red Cross, thus enabling the completion of the Centre for the Fight against Cancer at the National Society's Omori Hospital.

The speeches and a reception at the Ueno Seiyoken Hotel were followed by a display of folk-dancing in honour of the Red Cross and of the Cherry-blossom Festival given by the Ayumi-kai pupils of the Nishizaki School of Japanese dancing ¹.

Some reflections on the Red Cross spirit

The meaning of the Red Cross spirit is the moral inspiration which at all times guides humanitarian activities according to Red Cross principles.

Whatever work is undertaken in the relief of suffering, whether it concerns important government decisions within the framework of the Geneva Conventions or whether relating to the daily tasks of individuals, it is based on that special code of honour which has become second nature to members of the Red Cross.

In Japan, the land of the Bushido, in which the traditions of honour have remained so alive, the Red Cross spirit naturally presides over the development of the social life of the community. One need only mention here Mr. Juji Enomoto's most interesting articles which were published in 1956 in the Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge. As a former professor of international law at the Staff College of the Japanese Navy, he wrote about the origins of humanitarian ideas in Japan and pointed out that "the Japanese ideal implies that the human spirit is essentially humanitarian in character."

Brief mention can now be made of what these Red Cross principles are and it will be recalled that Mr. Pictet made an admirable study of the subject ² which has been translated into Japanese by Mr. Inoue.

There are first of all four fundamental principles :

1) Humanity — *The Red Cross fights against suffering and death. It demands that man shall be treated humanely under all circumstances.*

¹ Plate.

² J. S. Pictet — *Red Cross Principles*. Geneva, 1955.

2) Impartiality — *The Red Cross is ready to come to the help of all those who suffer according to their needs and without any form of discrimination of race, ideas or social condition.*

3) Independence — *The Red Cross is independent of all authorities and free from every influence.*

4) Neutrality — *It must observe strict neutrality in the military, political and philosophical spheres, on the national and international level.*

To these four fundamental principles can be added organic principles which bring out the voluntary, disinterested, democratic and universal character of the Red Cross. They also lay down rules of action for the national and international organs of the Red Cross and for their representatives, delegates and for various persons who give their co-operation, to be ready at all times to work in accordance with these principles, above all where aid is most required, to co-operate with those who act for similar ends and in all circumstances to respect the name and the emblem of the Red Cross in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Conventions.

Such are the ideas from which the work of the Red Cross is derived throughout the world.

Consequently, it is evident that the Red Cross spirit is one of peace. Although it started on the battlefield of Solferino a hundred years ago and has always shown itself to be ready to come to the aid of war victims, the Red Cross however does not prepare men for war: it prepares them to act in time of war as in peace according to its own principles. In other words, it trains them to remain humane whatever happens.

Historically the Red Cross spirit has first of all contributed towards humanizing certain consequences of war.

It is in this spirit and on the basis of proposals which were made by the International Committee of the Red Cross that the Geneva Conventions were drawn up, which have successively afforded protection to various categories of war victims, the sick and wounded of the armed forces on land or at sea, prisoners of war, interned civilians and the non-combatant population. This protection has since been extended to victims of civil wars and internal disturbances. Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, in fact ensures

that a minimum standard of humane treatment is guaranteed to them. This in itself is a very interesting extension of the law of Geneva, which, in keeping with the classical ideas on international law, had hitherto made no mention of the relationship between States and their own nationals. However, from a strictly human point of view, if one wishes to mitigate suffering and respect human dignity in accordance with the Red Cross spirit, these relationships are dependent on the same moral requirements. This was so much the case that the International Committee, then the International Conference of the Red Cross, —the deliberative body of the International Red Cross,—had for a long time made a study of this problem and recognized the fact that all victims of civil war or internal disturbances without exception had the right to be given assistance in accordance with general Red Cross principles¹.

In Japan the National Red Cross Society was founded in precisely this spirit in 1877, at a time of civil war. After a particularly bloody battle, Senator Tsunetami Sano (who had become aware of the Red Cross when he visited the World Exhibition in Paris) obtained, thanks to the support of Prince Arisugawa, the Commander-in-chief, authorisation from the Imperial Government to create a philanthropic Society empowered to care for the rebel wounded. As everyone knows, this Society was to become the Japanese Red Cross.

But if the Red Cross spirit has thus led to the protection of victims of conflict by insisting in some degree on the rudiments of peaceful behaviour under war conditions, it was also logical a fortiori that it should contribute to the elimination of suffering in peace time. In 1919, at the end of the First World War, when the plenipotentiaries of the Powers were engaged in establishing machinery for peace which would eliminate war for ever, they chose Geneva, the town in which the Red Cross spirit prevailed, for the headquarters of the League of Nations.

It is not therefore without good reasons that Article 25 of the Covenant of the League of Nations makes explicit mention of the Red Cross. This article, which solemnly consecrates both the institution and its principles, states: "The members of the League agree to encourage and promote the establishment and co-operation of duly

¹ See especially the Xth Conference, Geneva, 1921, Resolution XIV.

authorized voluntary National Red Cross organizations having as purposes the improvement of health, the prevention of disease and the mitigation of suffering throughout the world."

This text was to foreshadow the way in which the Red Cross movement was to develop for, without even waiting for this official approval to be given, the National Red Cross Societies of Japan, United States, Great Britain, France and Italy came to an agreement to found the international federation which was to become known as the League of Red Cross Societies. Today the League, like the International Committee (the founder body of the Red Cross movement), the National Societies and the governments party to the Geneva Conventions are solidly united in their humanitarian action by the Red Cross spirit.

What are the chief manifestations in peace-time of the Red Cross spirit ?

In the relationship between men of different nationalities, this can be seen in the development of mutual aid on an international scale and in the relationship between nationals of the same country, and thus identifying itself with progress in the social services.

The administering of international mutual aid in the event of natural disasters is part of the functions of the National Societies. No year goes by without some calamity which shows these Societies hurrying to the aid of some fellow Society to deal with the events. As an example of this, one can mention the great floods of 1953 in the Netherlands, when as a result of breaches in the sea-dykes, entire communities were ruined and even deprived of their land, since cultivation was found to be impossible long after reclamation, in view of its impregnation with salt. This misfortune resulted in a great movement of generosity and the Netherlands Red Cross received relief from no less than thirty-nine National Societies.

A relief fund set up in 1912 by the Empress of Japan, known as the Empress Shōken Fund, is administered in Geneva by the International Committee and the League. Its object is to give annual support to National Red Cross Societies in their relief to victims of natural disasters. In addition to large-scale relief actions during conflicts or major calamities, it is a good thing, in fact, that international aid operates in a continuous fashion, even in the undertaking of more modest tasks, but this symbolizes to a certain extent the con-

tinuity which exists in international fellowship. In this way, the spirit of the Red Cross appears to us to be a veritable spirit of human brotherhood in keeping with its origins when the Piedmontese women who had been called upon by Dunant, treated not only their own compatriots but also the enemy wounded, saying that they were all brothers : Tutti fratelli.

On scrutinizing the inner workings of various countries, one can see that the Red Cross spirit considerably favours the development of social welfare schemes. Nursing schools in particular, are for example administered in many countries exclusively by the National Red Cross Society. In Japan notably, and this is a matter for congratulation, that Society controls thirty-six nursing schools which produce six hundred trained nurses each year.

It is not by any means surprising that the National Societies should give their attention primarily to the training of nurses, thus following the magnificent example of Florence Nightingale who, together with Dunant, inspired the first Red Cross action. It is however typical of present-day trends that these Societies showed themselves also to be pioneers, then to assume ever greater responsibility in the sphere of the social services.

Special mention must be made of the work of the Belgian René Sand, a former Secretary-General of the League, Elsa Brandström in Sweden and Eglantyne Jebb in Great Britain, whose names are closely associated, notably with the first attempts to assist unhappy children.

In some countries the State has itself taken over the organization of the social services from the National Societies, which has enabled these to give more attention to first-aid and to relief in cases of natural disasters. In spite of this, however, they are very much concerned in the development of the social services, since they continue to assist the authorities in this sphere.

Finally, the Red Cross spirit is showing itself more and more in evidence, particularly in such a well-balanced and active organization as the Junior Red Cross.

This is a matter for great satisfaction to the adult Red Cross and to all who understand the full meaning of this movement. In fact, the Junior Red Cross gives children and young people numerous opportunities of learning to become good citizens by practising the

civic virtues. In this way they are giving their services to the community in the furtherance of social progress.

The result of all these activities has been to make of the Red Cross a veritable public service upon which the authorities tend to rely more and more. This does not however mean that the directors and the instructors of the National Societies have become State officials. Since they are bound to act in all circumstances in accordance with Red Cross principles and since they have bonds of fellowship which unite them on the international level, their co-operation with the State ensures the giving of disinterested service which thus makes a valuable contribution, at least so far as the development of human relationships is concerned, towards a certain amount of international understanding. This therefore demonstrates the essence of the Red Cross spirit, which is its universality.

It is indeed a pleasant thing to be able to evoke the Red Cross code of honour, which brings so many benefits to every country and to the international community as a whole.

The Cherry-blossom Festival, a festival of youth and Spring, celebrated in Japan from time immemorial, is known throughout the world as a symbol of the gracefulness and vitality of a country which nature has so richly blessed.

The white flag of the Red Cross, emblem of human brotherhood, is rightly associated with all the joyfulness of this festival. At the foot of Fuji Yama and its pure untrodden snows, that delectable mountain, which is known throughout the world and is so dear to all Japanese hearts, this flag flies joyfully today, surrounded by nurses in their white blouses, amidst the honours of the festival : for here is life, youth, fellowship and hope amongst the flowering petals, the fragrant snows of Spring.