

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE LEAGUE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies held an extraordinary meeting last month in Geneva solely to revise the League Constitution. The ICRC was represented with observer status.

Some articles of the new Constitution refer to co-operation between the ICRC and the League; others to matters which are of concern to the ICRC. For that reason the draft articles drawn up by the Constitution Revision Commission — appointed in November 1973 at Teheran — were submitted to the ICRC. The ICRC had made a number of comments and suggestions on articles relating to matters within its purview, and these were taken into account by the Commission. The result of this co-operation was the almost unanimous adoption of the articles in question. We give the gist of those articles below ¹.

In article 3, dealing with tasks devolving on the League, there are two subparagraphs, (g) and (h), of concern to the ICRC and specifying some League tasks:

- (g) To bring help to victims of armed conflicts within the framework of the agreed functions of the League as a member of the International Red Cross and in accordance with the Agreements concluded with the ICRC.
- (h) Assist the ICRC in the promotion and development of international humanitarian law, and collaborate with it in the dissemination of this law and of the Red Cross Principles to the National Societies.

Action in the field

Subparagraph (g), concerning relief actions, confirms ideas contained in the 1969 Agreement defining the respective fields of activity of each institution. By the Agreement, the League and the ICRC sought to co-ordinate their activities, particularly when their delegates are required to work in the same place simultaneously.

Such situations can occur when, for example, a country ravaged by a natural disaster has called in the League and subsequently is involved in civil war, which calls for action by the ICRC.

Then again, when an emergency phase of an armed conflict has passed, ICRC operations for the benefit of victims may be taken over by the League. In co-operation with the National Society of the country in question the League would be able to tackle the job of reconstruction,

¹ The texts of the Constitution of the League published herewith are not final in form.

revive the public health services and provide the population with the assistance necessary to overcome the disruption caused by the conflict.

Humanitarian Law

Subparagraph (h) of the same article concerns a task which is carried out mainly in time of peace, that is to say, the development of and the dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law. The co-operation between the League and the ICRC is in this way given the sanction of the law. The support of the National Society federation in this huge field will contribute to the wider dissemination of knowledge of humanitarian law.

Admission of new Societies

This is dealt with in article 4. After discussion, the status quo was maintained:

The ICRC will continue to grant official recognition to new National Red Cross Societies, thereby conferring on them membership of the International Red Cross and the right to vote at International Red Cross Conferences. On the other hand, admission to the League is a matter for the League alone. The procedure for recognition and that for admission to the League being akin they are carried out jointly by the League and the ICRC.

General co-operation

Article 30 on general co-operation between the League and the ICRC reads as follows:

1. The League shall maintain close relations with the International Committee of the Red Cross in order to coordinate and to harmonize their respective activities laid down by the statutes of their respective Institutions, the Statutes of the International Red Cross, and the decisions adopted by the International Conferences of the Red Cross.
2. The League shall conclude with the ICRC the agreements required to ensure a harmonious development of their respective activities.
3. The cooperation between the League and the ICRC shall be ensured *inter alia* by meetings at least once a month of representatives of the two organizations.

Here again, official sanction is given to the relations between the two institutions. The article also makes provision for the conclusion of other agreements similar to that of 1969 relating to relief. The revised Constitution will come into force in the course of the next ordinary session of the Board of Governors, when the League's bye-laws will also be examined.