

**GIFT FROM THE SWISS CONFEDERATION
ON THE OCCASION OF THE RED CROSS CENTENARY**

The International Committee of the Red Cross learnt with satisfaction and gratitude of the unanimous decision of both Chambers of the Federal Parliament to grant it the sum of 8.8 million Swiss francs for the construction of a building to house the Central Tracing Agency and the Henry Dunant Institute, the latter to be run jointly by the League of Red Cross Societies and the Swiss Red Cross.

In a message concerning the Swiss Confederation's gift to the founder institution of the Red Cross, Federal Councillor Wahlen, Head of the Political Department, told the National Council :

The whole world participated in the Centenary celebrations of the Red Cross. Everywhere the Red Cross has become symbolic of aid without any conditions attached ; the personification of the idea of the Good Samaritan. Those who have put themselves at the service of the Red Cross do not let themselves be influenced by considerations of rank, race or colour, no more than they are concerned to know whether the men to be given relief are friends or enemies, guilty or innocent. Their sole criteria are the distress calling for relief, the wounds to be dressed, the lives to be saved. Although by fortunate destiny we have been able in the course of the hundred years of the existence of the Red Cross to avoid having recourse to its assistance on the battlefield, no nation has greater cause than we Swiss to celebrate the Centenary Year with so much enthusiasm. We may say with pride that it was our compatriots who planted the seed and husbanded the sapling which grew and multiplied to become a forest affording shelter to millions of men all over the world. Although as an international organization it is entirely independent of the Confederation, the Red Cross does display some typically Swiss features. I have spoken elsewhere of the common origin of the institution and the Confederation, of the same principles

inspiring them, of the neutrality of Switzerland, home of the Red Cross and of the International Committee, as well as of this organization's impartiality, which is a pre-requisite both for its independence and its proper functioning. It is therefore fitting that on the occasion of the Centenary Year the Swiss people should erect a memorial to this great work, not a memorial in the usual sense of the term, but in a form which will enable this benevolent activity to be carried on, that is in the form of the building of which the design and purpose have been explained to you in the message and addresses of the two rapporteurs of the Commission.

It is a particularly fine idea for the Swiss Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies to participate with the International Committee of the Red Cross in this project. But in the last resort the beneficiaries of this donation by the Swiss people will be the millions of men who will have need of the Red Cross in the future as a result of man-made strife or natural disasters. This is the reason why you will—I do not doubt it for a moment—give your unanimous approval to the proposal by your Federal Council and your Commission.
