

## Switzerland

### Motor coach for Invalids

When the Junior Red Cross makes proposals for activities to be undertaken by its members it should never forget its two essential functions, namely *humanitarian action* and *humanitarian education*. In other words the activities suggested should always be both *useful* and *instructive*. They should be understandable to youth, i.e. they should have tangible, specific and immediate effect. For instance, if first-aid instruction is given to a junior member it should be of such a kind that it will be really practical, at least in a not too distant future if not immediately. It should of course include artificial respiration methods, even if the junior should never be called upon to put them into practice. But besides that, he should be taught to take care of the daily cuts and bruises so that he, or she, will see the obvious and immediate proof of how useful such instruction is.

In addition, if the junior is given the opportunity to take part in a relief campaign it will be essential to assign action suited to him so that he may readily observe the effects of his contribution.

This is obvious, although it is frequently very difficult for those responsible for promoting the Red Cross spirit and principles among youth to apply it. On the other hand, it is often not so obvious to those whose main concern is effectiveness and who sometimes tend to "use" juniors in actions designed for adults.

This was the idea behind the suggestion made in 1963 to Swiss school children—in the course of several school programmes on the radio—to find the necessary means for the construction of a motor coach for the disabled, to be handed over to the Swiss Red Cross for operation, on the occasion of its Centenary celebration.

As a consequence, the pupils of some 5,000 classrooms in our country contrived to find the necessary funds. Individually and

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collectively our school children summoned their imagination and redoubled their efforts and enterprise.

It was not just a question of asking their parents for money, but of earning money themselves. As a result, 600,000 francs was collected and enabled a fine powerful motor coach not only to be built according to special plans for the conveyance of invalids, but also to ensure operation for several years.

In the actual construction work on the vehicle, the technical service of the postal authorities gave its advice and, on behalf of the Swiss Red Cross, negotiated with the manufacturers. But assistance from the postal authorities was not restricted to the construction phase. For the operation of the coach it has made available the facilities of its garages and regional technical services. Garaging, maintenance or repair work can thus be provided wherever the coach may be.

Passengers unable to board the coach themselves are lifted aboard by special gear at the back of the vehicle. Depending on whether the passengers are recumbent or sitting, the coach can take from 15 to 25 specially designed wheel-chairs, made fast in a rack on the floor. The coach is fitted with special shock-absorbers for the maximum comfort of the passengers. The windows are wide and high to enable even recumbent passengers to have a good view. The coach has a wash-basin and a stewardess looks after the passengers.

The coach operates nine months out of twelve and goes from region to region according to the demand from regional sections of the Swiss Red Cross which offer their services to homes for the disabled and the aged, for whom the coach provides an opportunity to relieve their confinement which sometimes lasts for years. This prospect alone gives enormous pleasure, apart from the joy of the excursion itself, which does not necessarily have to be very long: it is sufficient that it provide a change of scene, the opportunity to return to familiar places and also the possibility of meeting companions in misfortune. But it also furnishes the opportunity—and this is where the Junior Red Cross<sup>1</sup> comes in again—of being welcomed on the trip by school children who have organized shows, snacks, and all sorts of kind gestures, in co-operation with teachers,

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<sup>1</sup> *Plate.* Swiss Junior Red Cross: vehicle for the handicapped.



**Junior Red Cross in Switzerland:** Coach for disabled passengers.

Photo Hans Schlegel,

**Junior Red Crescent in Turkey:** Games at the Çamkoru youth camp.



or who merely line the route to wave a friendly greeting to the passengers.

This is a salutary experience for our junior members. They see the suffering but they also see the joy and gratitude in faces worn by age or in the eyes of a boy or girl of their own age who is a prisoner of a wheel-chair. They see what can be accomplished with " their " motor coach. They realize then that their efforts have not been in vain, not become indistinguishable in the mass of Red Cross work; their efforts have taken form, tangible, visible and beneficent. They realize that their action is in keeping with the byword of the Junior Red Cross: Service.

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of the Swiss Red Cross

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## Turkey

*The XXth International Conference of the Red Cross, as we know, gratefully accepted the invitation of the Turkish Red Crescent to hold the next International Conference in its country. This will take place in Istanbul in 1969. With this in view we therefore have pleasure in publishing this article kindly sent us by Mr. Nihat Asar. It will complete the information which the International Review recently published on the varied and most effective work carried out in Turkey by the National Society.<sup>1</sup>*

The Turkish Red Crescent has been in the service of humanity for over a century. Symbol of social assistance and humanitarian mutual aid, it has not ceased since its foundation to help, in time of peace and in war, the victims of disasters and all who suffer.

It was founded in 1868 under the name of " The Ottoman Society of Aid to the Wounded " by Dr. Abdullah Bey, Dr. Kirimli

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<sup>1</sup> See *International Review*, April 1966.