

International Red Cross Meetings in The Hague

COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

The 29th session of the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies took place at The Hague from September 5-9, 1967. This is dealt with in a separate article elsewhere in this issue.

The Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross met at the same time. This Council, which is quite separate from the Board of Governors, meets according to rules of procedure every four years on the day preceding the International Conference of the Red Cross and may also hold meetings between conferences at the same time as the Board of Governors. Its two previous meetings were held in 1961 at Prague and in 1963 in Geneva. It is comprised of representatives from the International Red Cross, i.e. the International Committee, the League and the National Societies¹.

The Hague meeting of the Council was opened on September 6, by Lady Limerick, the Chairman of the Standing Commission. It was presided over by Mr. S. A. Gonard, President of the International Committee.

The Council of Delegates provides the International Committee with an opportunity to report to National Societies on its activities. On this occasion its President and its Director-General, Mr. R. Gallopin, gave accounts of the Committee's present important work in the Near East and other regions. We shall not dwell on this here, as it was the subject of articles in earlier issues.

Apart from the ICRC's report, and the League's on its relief operations in the Near East and elsewhere, delegates from the Red

¹ *Plate.* — Council of Delegates: Representatives of International Red Cross organisations.

Crescent Societies of Jordan and Syria addressed the meeting on the refugee situation in their countries.

Another item on the agenda was the follow-up to two resolutions adopted by the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross at Vienna in 1965, namely resolution No. XXVIII (protection of civilian population against the dangers of indiscriminate warfare) and No. X (the Red Cross as a factor in world peace).

The first of these two problems was restated by Mr. F. Siordet, ICRC Vice-President, in a report which will appear in our next issue.

In addition, Mr. J. Pictet, ICRC Director-General, reported to the Council of Delegates on the Round Table meeting which had been held a few days earlier in The Hague for an exchange of views on the theme "The Red Cross as a Factor in World Peace". In view of the importance of the subject and the participation in discussion by some of the leading personalities in our movement, we have given on an earlier page the full text of Mr. Pictet's report.

The last item on the agenda for study by the Council was the structure, organization and procedure of International Red Cross conferences. It was the Countess of Limerick, Chairman of the Standing Commission, who conveyed the Standing Commission's conclusions based on the work of a study group and had advocated the setting up of this group, which comprised ICRC and League representatives. We shall have more to say about this in a forthcoming issue of our Review.

These various papers engendered interesting discussions. The following two resolutions were adopted by the Council of Delegates:

Resolution No. I

The Council of Delegates,

Noting the suffering caused by the armed conflicts which have occurred since the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross in Vienna in 1965,

Referring to previous resolutions, especially those adopted by the Conference regarding human rights and particularly the protection of civilians during conflicts,

*Deeply concerned by the refugee problem in the Near East,
Requests the authorities concerned to fulfil their humanitarian obligations by facilitating the return of the people to their homes and their reintegration into their communities,
Appeals to all authorities to apply the Geneva Conventions and to respect humanitarian rules, and
Appeals in particular to the authorities concerned to allow enough time to those refugees who wish to do so to return to the West bank of the Jordan.*

Resolution No. II

The Council of Delegates,

Considering the important changes during the two last decades in the conditions for international Red Cross work,

Referring to the increasingly recognised and respected need to accelerate the development of Red Cross activities and their co-ordination,

Requests the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League to consider a revision of the Agreement of December 8th, 1951, in order to obtain a fully co-ordinated effect of the knowledge and capabilities of both organizations in the different situations where Red Cross action is required.

LEAGUE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Over 200 delegates from 75 member Societies took part in the 29th Session of the League Board of Governors¹, held in The Hague, The Netherlands, 5-9 September 1967. Meetings took place by courtesy of the Dutch government in the 13th century Ridderzaal, or Knights' Hall, scene of the annual opening of the Dutch Parliament.

In a brief opening ceremony League Chairman José Barroso told delegates: "Not only must we plan the League's future development; we must grapple with the problems facing mankind today, such as war and the scourges... it engenders."

¹ *Plate.* — League Board of Governors, Opening Session.

The board was welcomed by the President of the Netherlands Council of Ministers, Mr. Pieter J. S. de Jong, Mr. H.A.M.T. Kolfshoten, Burgomaster of The Hague, and Netherlands Red Cross President Jhr. G. Kraijenhoff. Prince Saddrudin Aga Khan, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, conveyed greetings from UN Secretary General U Thant and the UN family.

Budget and Bareme. — In a radical attempt to pull League finances out of the red, the Board of Governors voted a budget for 1968 of Sw. Fr. 3,545,000.— an 11.5 per cent increase over last year's—and raised quotas for member Societies on an average by 35 per cent.

League Secretary General Henrik Beer told delegates that the substantial increase sprang from the fact that “ we are now paying for the easy decisions of the last two years ”—in which the League operated on deficit budgets—plus rising costs and the growing demand for services from the federation. Despite the increase, he went on, few if any international organisations worked, as did the League, on a budget of less than a million dollars. He presented a new-style budget, setting out plans for the coming year and the cost of each service of the Secretariat. It was given unanimous approval, with the proviso that the Secretary General do all within his power to effect economies.

League now counts 108 members. — Two new National Societies, of Kenya and Zambia, were admitted to League membership by the Board. The League now counts 108 member Societies with a total membership of over 210 millions. The Kenya Red Cross was represented by Mrs. Rachel J. Mzera, Director, and Mrs. F. G. Taylor, Welfare Officer.

The Board exceptionally authorized the Committee of Chairman and Vice-Chairman to accept provisionally would-be members recognized by the ICRC in the two years before its next meeting. First to benefit from this ruling will probably be Mali, recognized by the ICRC on 14 September.

The Red Cross and Peace. — With a unanimous voice the League Board of Governors called urgently on countries engaged in armed conflict to cease “ these useless and destructive wars ” and establish

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

a stable peace. Stating its concern at the large number of conflicts at present taking place "in our so-called civilized world", the Board commended efforts to reduce the danger of indiscriminate war by agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. It called on all National Societies to intervene with their governments to conclude such an agreement, take steps to end existing conflicts and establish stable peace.

Aid to developing areas. — A strongly worded appeal to all National Societies to give much greater support in cash, personnel and material to the League's Red Cross Development Programme was voted in with the 1968 Plan of Action of the Programme by the Board of Governors. Next years' Plan calls for a minimum budget of Sw. Fr. 863,200.

The report of the Development Programme Advisory Panel adopted by the Board drew extensively on the results of regional meetings grouping beneficiary Societies under the Programme. The four regional groups—Africa, Middle East and North Africa, Asia and Latin America—met prior to the Board, to study achievements to date of development aid and to review the proposed Plan of Action for 1968.

Auxiliary Nursing. — Basic guidelines on auxiliary nursing personnel—now being trained and employed by an increasing number of National Societies—were applauded by the Board, when presented by the Nursing Advisory Committee. The Board also voted to consider an increased role for nursing in aid to developing Societies and to encourage the inclusion of social sciences in nurse's training, to prepare them for disaster nursing in different conditions and cultures.

Disaster Relief Rules. — A set of rules for Red Cross disaster relief actions was given an all but final stamp of approval by the Disaster Relief Advisory Committee, which met in The Hague before the Board of Governors. The rules, condensing basic principles and practical experience, will be presented to the League Executive Committee next year. The Committee also proposed



League Board of Governors, The Hague, Opening session on September 5, 1967 :

Photo R. Collette, Schiedam



Council of Delegates, The Hague, September 6, 1967: Representatives of International Red Cross organizations.

training programmes for League and National Society staff, to overcome the increasing shortage of disaster personnel, and launched an enquiry into co-operation with radio amateurs to overcome post-disaster communications problems. The Board approved the Committee's report, and a report from the Yugoslav Red Cross on the international Conference on prevention and elimination of effects of disasters, which it held in Skopje, October 1966.

STANDING COMMISSION

Mention must also be made of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross which also met at The Hague. The Commission members are The Countess of Limerick, Chairman; Dr. H. von Lauda, Vice-Chairman; General J. Collins; Professor G. A. Miterev; Dr. G. Newman-Morris; Mr. S. A. Gonard and Mr. F. Sjordet ICRC representatives; and Mr. J. Barroso-Chavez and Mr. A. F. Issa-el-Khoury for the League.

This Commission was concerned with the organization of future International Conferences of the Red Cross, the next of which, the XXIst, will be held in 1969 in Istanbul. The next Board of Governors and Council of Delegates meetings will be held at the same time.

Other committees availed themselves of the presence of the many Red Cross delegates in the Netherlands to hold sessions of their own.

*

A word must be said on the warm welcome extended to the delegates. They had the great privilege of being received by H. M. the Queen of the Netherlands and by H. R. H. Princess Margriet.

The Netherlands Red Cross and authorities spared no pains to ensure the success of these meetings of the International Red Cross. They certainly accomplished this and deserved the gratitude of all participants.