

The Augusta Fund

1890 - 1960

The Red Cross movement has been singularly fortunate in having been supported from the start by leading personalities of the day, who gave such effective service. Outstanding amongst these who devoted themselves to this great cause was the Empress and Queen of Germany, Augusta.

She was one of those persons of high rank whom Henry Dunant visited and convinced of the excellence of the proposals contained in his book, A Memory of Solferino. In most cases these ideas which were given immediate and unreserved support in such circles, and being freely discussed, contributed considerably towards launching the movement which brought the official delegates to Geneva in 1864. They remained loyal to this idea and the Empress Augusta in particular, who, until the hour of her death, was to show such unfailing interest in the work of the Red Cross.

We are pleased to publish the study written in her honour and of the fund which bears her name, by Madame MARTHE ICONOMOW, a member of the ICRC staff.

(Editor's note)

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1. *THE EMPRESS AUGUSTA*

Before her accession to the throne of a united Germany, Augusta was hereditary princess and regent, then Queen of Prussia.

Youngest daughter of the Grand-Duke Charles Frederick of Saxe-Weimar and maternal grand-daughter of Catherine of Russia, she was born in Weimar on September 30, 1811. Goethe, who had been entrusted with her education from her earliest days, was to develop her many natural qualities and to influence her character with his own markedly humanistic outlook.

When she had developed into a young person of accomplishment, he praised her for her beauty and her charm. "The princely and all the feminine qualities are so perfectly blended", he writes of Augusta, "that one feels the highest respect and sympathy as well as admiration for her". Another famous contemporary, Wilhelm von Humboldt, was also to praise her well-tempered nature and the independence of her judgment.

On June 11, 1890, the wedding festivities of Augusta and Prince William of Prussia took place at the Castle of Berlin.

Throughout her whole life Augusta knew how to surround herself with men of prominence who were to help her to carry her numerous plans into effect. One of these, one of her own creation, was the founding in Berlin, shortly after her marriage, of the "Society of Science". In the Prussian capital as formerly at the Weimar Court, she inspired general admiration, and could count on the devotion of the country's leading men. In addition to fulfilling her many public obligations, she also continued to develop her own natural talents by studying music and painting. Later, during the period of German unification, she also continued to interest herself in architecture and in works of art.

Augusta never hesitated, whenever an opportunity arose, to fight openly to induce her husband and Bismarck, the future Iron Chancellor, to act generously towards the defeated, notably when Napoleon III was a prisoner at Wilhelmshöhe. It was, however, inevitable that placed as she was in her position, always having to take the public interest into account, she often had to face much opposition. It was sufficient, however, for Bismarck to have once met with affliction for her to show him immediate sympathy.

Besides, she was too intelligent not to recognize in him a rising genius, whom William fully supported from the outset for his brilliance as a strategist, believing him to be Germany's future man of destiny.

The monarchy was to undergo a period of crisis before the summits were reached, since the insurrectionary movements of 1848 had also threatened the throne of Prussia, then occupied by Frederick-William IV. Although all the hereditary princes fled, taking refuge on the "Island of Peacocks", Augusta, who disliked inaction when danger threatened, boldly returned to Berlin where she made all the necessary preparations for her husband's return. She then gathered the chief antagonists around her with whom she discussed the most burning problems in an enlightened manner and to whom she proposed a succession of mutually acceptable compromises. Thanks chiefly to her soothing influence spirits were calmed and on June 6 the prince royal was greeted at Magdeburg by Augusta and her children before returning together to the now pacified capital.

The princess took particular trouble over the education of her son, the future Emperor Frederick III, carefully supervising the choice of his tutors and insisted that in addition to his receiving a thorough military grounding, he should have a wide general education. She thus ensured for him an excellent training for his future rôle as King and Emperor, a rôle which he was only destined to fulfil for 99 days. She was to lose both husband and a son in the same year. Augusta, who had always favoured closer ties with England, had been delighted by her eldest son's marriage with Princess Victoria at Balmoral. She had also been pleased by her daughter Louise's marriage with the Grand-Duke of Baden, which was later to strengthen the bonds between Prussia and South Germany.

On the death of Frederick-William IV, her husband and herself were crowned King and Queen of Prussia at Königsberg on October 18, 1861. By the victory in 1871 she was to become the first Empress of Germany. A rôle which she was to fulfil with great distinction since she placed herself entirely at the nation's service, making every effort to improve the conditions of her subjects. And that was to be her true vocation.

2. HER HUMANITARIAN RÔLE

Prussia at that time was undergoing a period of stress and strain. The unification of Germany was not to be achieved without much loss of life causing widespread suffering which Augusta made every effort to alleviate. Indeed, if decisions had rested with her alone, many conquests which entailed so many casualties and so much destruction, would have been abandoned. Bismarck was effectively aware of her attitude in this matter and keeping a jealous eye on his personal prerogatives, he battled constantly to prevent William I from falling under her influence. He would never allow his ambitious schemes, which were in fact shared by the King and by the whole Government, at any time to be jeopardized by the Queen's well-known sensitivity.

Augusta felt that it was only by devoting herself unceasingly to humanitarian work which had already been started, and to work which she was herself to promote, that she could reconcile submitting herself to the State's imperious demands. The King did, however, realise the extent of her sacrifice and gave her his support, notably of the " Prussian relief society for the wounded ", which they were both to encourage after reading Henry Dunant's book, *A Memory of Solferino*.

The people were inspired and encouraged by the example of the Queen and future Empress. From her earliest childhood she too had been inspired by the example of her mother, the Grand-Duchess Maria Pawlowna, who had devoted herself so selflessly and with such undeviating solicitude to the wounded and sick of previous wars. She it was who had instituted in 1813, the " Women's Patriotic Association " in Weimar to train and prepare its members for future grim eventualities.

It was quite natural for Augusta to take an interest and an active part in her mother's undertaking. This select group of women however set itself an even more ambitious programme of social education, pioneering work into which the future Queen and Empress was to throw herself whole-heartedly.

When she left Weimar she was thus eminently prepared to fulfil her humanitarian rôle as patron of all the poor and needy of her new capital. She could appreciate the labourer's hard grind and

show an understanding of the difficulties in the lives of workmen and artisans. By setting up relief funds for times of crisis she was to anticipate some of the suffering which she knew would have to be endured inevitably by the working-class section of the population.

Whilst still Queen of Prussia, Augusta had issued an invitation to the author of *A Memory of Solferino*. Ever since reading that disturbing book she kept thinking about the ideas which had been expressed at its end. Her mind, which had been formed by Goethe and which was so sympathetic to humanitarian ideas whatever their origin, was at once able to envisage possibilities of alleviating the sufferings of war on a national and more particularly on an international level.

When Henry Dunant was received by the royal couple in September 1866, the Queen greeted him with the words : " I have been so much looking forward to meeting you ! I want you to know that I have already proudly worn your armlet ! " Moreover, she wore the armlet at dinner the following day. She explained to her guest from Geneva quite simply how she had received his message. " One day I found your book *A Memory of Solferino* on my table. I understood at once what you meant and I was so impressed that I made the King read it too. When he had finished, he said : " We must make this work succeed ". That is why we took such a keen interest in your efforts to explain your ideas at the Statistical Convention in Berlin in 1863 . . . So you see, I have appreciated your work from the very beginning . . . In the early days of the war in 1866, I had personally to supervise every detail of its organization for relief . . ."¹ The Queen had in fact to deal with a most alarming situation, the plague having then broken out in the capital. She describes how once again she had to make use of the services of women to deal with this dreadful epidemic, nearly all the able-bodied men having gone to fight. She was at the same time also assisting in relief work for the wounded and sick returning from the front.

The Statistical Congress of Berlin in 1863, which the Queen had so appositely recalled, had indeed offered Dunant a providential

¹ Translation from the original French and extracted from Henry Dunant's notebooks in manuscript which can be consulted in the " Bibliothèque publique et universitaire de Genève ".

opportunity to militate on behalf of the cause of the "Comité des cinq",¹ and to go even further. The flattering reception which was accorded in Berlin to the protagonist of the Red Cross thus enabled him to gain a wide hearing in influential quarters throughout Europe.

The resolutions and the recommendations of the first International Conference of the Red Cross held in Geneva a month after his return, which did not as yet possess force of law, were however to be applied at William's own express insistence in a practical manner in the war between Prussia and Denmark in Schleswig-Holstein in 1864. Queen Augusta herself visited some of the more seriously wounded in a field-hospital after the battle of Duppel. The resolutions which had been passed at the Geneva International Conference in October 1863 and which were to form an integral part of the text of the Geneva Convention of August 22, 1864, were actually carried into effect for the first time, receiving so to speak their baptism of fire. It was then that the International Committee also accomplished its first mission by sending two delegates to act as neutral intermediaries on behalf of the wounded and sick of both belligerents.

The Central Committee of the Prussian relief society for the wounded was established in Berlin on February 6, 1864. Under the able direction of its President, Prince Henry of Reuss, who had represented Prussia at the first Conference held in Geneva in October 1863, the first steps in its formation were rapidly effected. The Government appointed three commissioners to act in an advisory capacity to enable the newly established society to supply the needs of the military administration as a private and independent auxiliary body. The Berlin Central Committee, therefore, associated itself as a matter of course with the efforts which this Commission made to recruit and train nurses in peace-time. The various local societies were exhorted to follow suit, either independently or in conjunction with the "Women's Patriotic Association", in which the Queen had grouped women and young girls who

¹ It should be noted that this Committee, which was founded in Geneva, was the originator of the Red Cross movement and was subsequently to become the International Committee.

rendered valuable service during the course of the hostilities. Another society under the Queen's patronage had also been formed, the "Berlin Nursing Society", which had the dual task of : a) supporting the military administration in time of war in assisting the wounded and sick with the formation of groups of voluntary workers and : b) establishing in peace-time an organization of voluntary and paid nurses to concern themselves generally in hospitals, to collate past experience and information regarding improvements which could be made in the organization and administration of field-hospitals and to build up a reserve of supplies which could be made immediately available on the outbreak of a conflict.

Thanks to these united efforts of goodwill, the Central Committee was able to realize its project of creating 140 reserve field-hospitals, whose location was decided upon by the federal administration, capable of holding 30,000 beds.

One of the first tasks which confronted the "Association of Patriotic Women" almost on its formation was to deal with the famine which ravaged large areas of East Prussia. The Queen organized a bazaar in the royal palace which alone collected 70,000 thalers, an example which seemed to have been contagious, since contributions poured in to the tune of nearly half a million. This fine outburst of generosity enabled the distribution of four million meals, of large quantities of fuel and clothing and of sufficient relief supplies to satisfy the needs of the sick.

The Second International Conference of the Red Cross took place in Berlin in 1869. Queen Augusta and her daughter, Princess Louise, with their radiant personalities endowed the inaugural meeting of the assembly with a particular lustre. They also attended several plenary sessions, accompanied by the prince royal. Shortly before her death, Augusta was to attend the Fourth International Conference of the Red Cross at Karlsruhe in 1887.

Bearing in mind the resolutions of the 1869 Conference, the King expressed in a letter of June 2 of the same year "the certainty of seeing the network of relief societies being extended throughout the monarchy and the successful fulfilment of their mission by all the committees."

The medical regulations applying to armies in the field which were authorized by the King on April 29, 1869, on the other hand gave an indication of the scope of voluntary aid in time of war and consequently of its preparatory activities in peace-time. Furthermore, the benevolent support of the military and civilian authorities was assured to the "German Association for aid to the wounded" which was under royal patronage.

The war of 1870-71 between France and Prussia was to put the national relief societies of both countries to the test. The King sent a royal commissioner and military inspector to France to act as "the directing centre for all relief work for the duration of the war"¹. The Queen on her part did not spare herself in leading the various services which the associations had established for the relief of the wounded and sick. These societies between them collected a sum of 56 million marks, which was immediately employed in the purchase of equipment for general hospitals and field-hospitals and of relief supplies and medicaments. The balance of this sum was employed on behalf of the sick and to enable some of the wounded to undergo cures in sanatoria and in thermal establishments. These combined efforts resulted in an unprecedented decrease in the mortality rate amongst the war victims. The plight of some of these war-disabled so touched the imperial couple² that a fund of four million marks was transferred from the Relief Society and allocated to the "Emperor William Fund" on behalf of this category of war victims. For this reason the army and the official medical services were later to admit publicly that they would not in future be able to dispense with the Red Cross, which had proved itself so valuable an auxiliary.

The Empress who had carried the views of the Geneva Committee into effect on a national level, was perfectly aware of the fact that the task of the Red Cross was by no means terminated with the relief of the wounded and sick in time of war. Had not Henry Dunant said in "A Memory of Solferino" that action should be taken in peace-time and that the benefits of the Geneva Convention should be extended over other fields? The Empress accord-

¹ *Bulletin international des Sociétés de secours aux militaires blessés*, October 1870.

² The King of Prussia assumed the Imperial Crown of Germany in 1871.

ingly encouraged the German societies to continue their work in the social field, since she felt that it was in this way that the objects could best and most clearly be defined with a consequent increase in their power and efficiency. These hopes were indeed soon to be realised. A few days before her death, she had the satisfaction of signing the act of constitution of the 715th Ladies' Committee.

From Nancy, the Emperor made public recognition of her work during the Franco-Prussian war, in a letter which he addressed to the " Central Committee of German relief societies for the wounded and sick in armies in the field ". " I wish to offer many congratulations to Your Majesty and to express how deeply touched I was by all the affectionate solicitude which was shown by the entire German nation, under Your Majesty's direction and patronage, in our army, and of all the help which it received throughout the campaign . . . This the army and the nation will always remember with feelings of profound gratitude ; I can do no more by way of demonstrating my own feelings of gratitude than by asking Your Majesty to express them herself in my name to the Central Committee of relief societies ".

Realizing the difficulties which faced young girls who were without parental support, the Empress also founded an institution for the daughters of deceased officers. Until her death she was to watch with maternal solicitude over the upbringing and education of her protégées.

Unfortunately, all these efforts and the shadows which darkened her life were to contribute in undermining her health, until finally her doctors advised her to take greater care of herself. Instead of which she redoubled her efforts to extend and to propagate the principles of Red Cross institutions on a national as well as an international level. She aroused the interest of ruling circles by offering prizes on a competitive basis for the best specialized literary compositions on the subject.

At the World Exhibition held in Vienna in 1873, at which exhibits of the work of the Red Cross were displayed, the Empress placed considerable sums at the disposal of the organizers and offered a prize of five thousand thalers to be awarded to the best

literary compositions on a) the Geneva Convention of 1864 and on b) surgical techniques in time of war.

In 1880 she offered a further sum of three thousand marks for a prize to be awarded to a handbook making the greatest contribution to the development of the work of the Red Cross in Germany. This was awarded to the President of the Saxony Section of the German Red Cross Society, Friedrich von Criegern, for his book *Das Rote Kreuz in Deutschland*¹.

The Empress even succeeded in gaining Bismarck's support of the cause which she had so much at heart, when she recommended Criegern's work to him: ". . . the public must become increasingly certain that the work of the Red Cross is assured the full support of the authorities: in this way all will be able to take an ever more enthusiastic part in our work".

Bismarck's reply on February 10, 1883 afforded her considerable satisfaction. Amongst other things he wrote, "Those who think only of the author's idea concerning the State's action towards the sick and wounded in time of war must realize that this is applicable not only to the past but also to the future. And this will always be the case where human lives are concerned. The gap which exists between what the State is capable of putting into effect and the duties which one owes to one's neighbour can only be filled by the efforts of voluntary workers coming to the aid of the wounded and sick. Under Your Majesty's direction these voluntary workers have shown an unprecedented devotion to this task."

In 1884, the Empress addressed the following letter to the President of the International Committee, which, read out at the Third International Conference of the Red Cross held in September of that year in Geneva, was received with profound gratitude:

En rendant hommage à la Croix-Rouge, je félicite ses représentants de la belle tâche qui leur est confiée, car la Croix-Rouge est le symbole d'une assistance mutuelle entre les nations. Il ne lui suffit pas de prévenir et de secourir les maux de la guerre, elle protège de même tous les intérêts humanitaires de la paix. Ces intérêts charitables étant confiés en tout

¹ This handbook was published in 1883 with the sub-title: "Handbuch der freiwilligen Krankenpflege für die Kriegs- und vorbereitende Friedens-tätigkeit".

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pays aux associations patriotiques des femmes portent l'empreinte d'une cause bénie entre toutes.

Permettez-moi de mettre à la disposition de la conférence, par l'entremise du Comité international, un prix de cinq mille francs destiné à servir au développement de l'œuvre de la Croix-Rouge et dont une commission spéciale se chargerait de préciser l'emploi.¹

Coblence, le 20 juillet 1884.

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The President made the following concluding remarks : " The warm applause which this letter has received will show Her Majesty how deeply touched the Conference has been by the sentiments which she has expressed and by her most generous gift ". Six months later, the International Committee made its decision known in its 57th circular letter addressed to the central relief committees in all countries : " The International Committee has decided that the amount of five thousand francs and a gold medal which H.M. the Empress of Germany and Queen of Prussia has been graciously pleased to place at its disposal, shall be offered as prizes on a competitive basis and awarded to the best designs of mobile ambulance shelters ".

At the Fourth International Conference of the Red Cross, at Karlsruhe, in September 1887, the Empress made yet another generous gesture. The first item on the agenda referred to the study of the disposal of a new and even more important sum than before. The President stated : " Her Majesty the Empress of Germany has been graciously pleased to place at the disposal of the Conference of Karlsruhe a sum of six thousand marks and three gold and silver medals embossed with her effigy, for the purpose of promoting Red Cross interests on an international level with particular regard to

¹ Translation of the original French text as follows : " In paying tribute to the Red Cross, I wish to congratulate its representatives on the noble task which is entrusted to them, since the Red Cross is the symbol of mutual aid between nations. Not only does it make provision and render aid in time of war, but it also gives protection to all kinds of humanitarian action in peacetime. This charitable action, which is carried out by the women's patriotic associations, bears the imprint of a cause which is universally respected.

Allow me to place at the disposal of the Conference, through the good offices of the International Committee, a prize of five thousand francs, with the object of helping to develop the work of the Red Cross, the conditions for which will be decided upon by a special commission."

Koblencz, July 20, 1884.

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the creation of a scheme in connection with the care of the wounded "...

A special commission met for this purpose and decided "to offer by competition a design of the interior equipment of a mobile ambulance, in other words to determine the selection and the best methods of procurement of the appropriate material for equipping and utilizing a mobile ambulance, capable of holding a fixed number of wounded or sick".

The Empress, accompanied by members of her Court, was present at the third meeting of the Conference, whilst her daughter and son-in-law, sovereigns of the Grand-Duchy of Baden, attended the inaugural session.

3. THE AUGUSTA FUND

The Empress died on January 7, 1890, at the end of a long eventful life. Her customary letter of good wishes written on January 2, in an enfeebled hand, was the last one she was ever to write to her beloved Red Cross Society. In this she expressed her delight over the recent vigorous activity shown during the past year by the National Society.

The following tribute from *Le Temps*, one of the leading newspapers of a former enemy State, to the generous-hearted Empress was highly significant: "Aucun Français n'omettra de penser à elle avec une sympathie pleine de considération. L'on n'a qu'à se rappeler avec quel dévouement elle se voua aux blessés français dans les années 1870-71. Elle se consacra inlassablement, comme reine et plus tard comme impératrice, à ses sujets au cours des guerres, avec une sollicitude maternelle, depuis 1864. L'âme de cette femme héroïque était dominée par un sentiment encore plus haut lorsqu'elle se trouva en face de la mort où elle ne fit aucune distinction entre vainqueurs et vaincus."¹

¹ Translation from the original French text as follows: "No Frenchman can think of her without feelings of the deepest sympathy and respect. It is only necessary to recall how devotedly she cared for the French wounded during the years 1870-71. She devoted herself whole-heartedly first as Queen, then as Empress, with maternal solicitude to her subjects throughout the years of war from 1864. This heroic woman showed even higher qualities when she encountered death and showed no distinction between conquerors and the vanquished."

By her death the Red Cross, as we have seen, lost one of its most powerful and effective supporters. For this very reason the International Committee has not been content merely to pay a fitting tribute, but has sought to perpetuate the memory of her work by an action of which she would have approved.

In its 76th circular letter of January 27, 1890, addressed to all Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee explained the arrangements it had made for establishing an "Augusta Fund" and drew particular attention to the special way in which the late Empress had fulfilled her rôle "with rare delicacy and with indefatigable zeal". It stated¹:

When the International Committee learned recently of the death of H.M. the Empress of Germany it duly forwarded to the proper quarters its expressions of sympathy with sorrow and regret; when directing its thoughts towards the Red Cross Societies, it asked itself whether the loss of this much loved and admired personality would not create new tasks for them.

Since the late Empress had fulfilled a special rôle in the Red Cross with such rare delicacy and with indefatigable zeal, one might well ask how one was to find people of the same quality who could ever begin to replace her.

Her Majesty showed not only by her example what each person should do for the defenders of his own country and how in time of war each person, without necessarily being present on the field of battle, can put into practice the charitable provisions of the Geneva Convention. In her solicitude for humanity extended over a wide sphere, she greatly contributed towards a strengthening of the essential bonds of solidarity between all the National Red Cross Societies and it is precisely in this last point that we see the possibility of our work being harmed unless the void created by her absence is not adequately filled.

We all know how the Empress worked of her own accord to achieve her aims. Always looking for favourable opportunities, she distributed on every possible occasion large sums for some praiseworthy object which would eventually benefit the wounded in the armies of all countries. Through her the fine work, for example, of Esmarch in the field of war surgery and of Lueder on the Geneva Convention were made possible, as was more recently the setting up of competitive awards for designs for the construction and equipment of mobile ambulances.

These recollections, which are still vivid in our minds, have given us the idea of a scheme whereby the Red Cross would not only receive new benefits which would support that same cause, valued so highly by the late

¹ Translation from the original French text.

Sovereign whom we so greatly lament, but would also prove a constant reminder of the name and the qualities of that gracious person.

If we are following up this project of ours without first consulting the central committees, it is because we believe that our appeal will have more chances of success if it is made after the shortest possible interval following that sad event, the motive in fact of our proposed action. Furthermore, the decision which we have taken does not commit anyone. As will be seen later, we are merely placing ourselves at the disposal of societies and individuals wishing to demonstrate their feelings of gratitude towards the Empress by participating in the creation of a durable memorial. In this way, we offer them the opportunity of being free to make whatever contribution they may think appropriate.¹

The International Committee drew up regulations for the administration of this fund which were adopted at its meeting of January 27, 1890. On that day the definite constitution of the fund was formulated by six Articles². At the same time a special Com-

¹ See *Bulletin international des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge*, April 1890.

² 1. To commemorate the eminent services rendered to the Red Cross by her late Majesty, the German Empress and Queen of Prussia, an International Fund, to be called "The Augusta Fund", has been established to be employed in the general interests of the Red Cross.

2. The Fund comprises :

- a) such sums as the National Red Cross Societies may allocate to it ;
- b) individual subscriptions and gifts from whatever source ;
- c) interest on the capital so constituted.

3. The cash and securities forming the Fund shall be paid to the International Committee of the Red Cross, which shall put them on deposit in a public banking institution offering all requisite guarantees of solvency.

4. An account of the situation of the Fund shall be drawn up each year as at January 7, being the anniversary of the death of Her Majesty the Empress, and shall be published in the *Bulletin international des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge*.

5. The International Conferences of Red Cross Societies, meeting every five years, in accordance with a recommendation passed at Karlsruhe in 1897, shall decide upon the allocation of the available amount or of the income, in accordance with the spirit of practical and universal charity which had inspired H.M. the Empress.

6. Should unforeseen circumstances justify the making of an earlier decision, the International Committee will meet to study this question with the delegates of the central committees of the six great military powers (Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Russia) after having given—in so far as the degree of urgency will permit—previous notice to all the central committees.

This Conference, consisting of a limited number of delegates, shall accordingly be empowered to allocate all or a portion of the fund for purposes which it considers to be the most appropriate.

mission was set up whose task it was to examine carefully all requests which were addressed to the International Committee.

At the International Conferences of the Red Cross held in Rome in 1892 and in Vienna in 1897, it was decided that the fund should be declared inalienable until the total of a hundred thousand Swiss francs was reached. Since by this time the total had nearly been reached, the interest could shortly be distributed by means of grants. The International Committee to whom the Fund's administration had been entrusted thereupon requested the central committees to address their applications for grants, which should be renewed before November 1 of each year, for specific objects of practical utility. The International Committee made its decision known on January 7, 1902, the anniversary of the death of Her Majesty the Empress Augusta, at the International Conference of the Red Cross held at St. Petersburg in that year. It was then decided that requests for grants which had not yet been accorded should be renewed annually. On the other hand, the International Committee proposed to submit reports on grants which had been accorded, to each successive International Conference.

After 1903, the distribution of the interest on the Fund was made in accordance with the regulations which had been laid down, but which were later to undergo slight modifications at the International Conference of the Red Cross held in Washington in 1912. Until 1914 the National Societies of a large number of countries were thus able to carry out some of their more urgent programmes.

Unfortunately, the First World War was seriously to undermine the "Augusta Fund", decreasing its monetary value by two thirds. The International Committee accordingly made every effort to remedy this state of affairs without delay and started a campaign for this purpose. At the International Conference of the Red Cross in 1921 it was given the opportunity to explain its plan for re-establishing the inalienable capital of a hundred thousand francs. The assembly further decided that requests for grants should be addressed henceforth to the ICRC every five years.

At the Thirteenth International Conference, held in The Hague in 1928, the International Committee was able to announce to the satisfaction of all present the improvement in the Fund's state of affairs, which made it possible henceforth to distribute the interest

every four years. In 1930, the Brussels assembly learned with pleasure that six National Societies were named to whom grants had been made. Double the number of such grants were made at the Fifteenth International Conference of the Red Cross in Tokyo in 1934.

The outbreak of the Second World War once more interrupted the distribution of income. It was not until 1947 and 1948 that grants could again be accorded by which thirteen National Societies were enabled to carry out some of their objects. At the last distribution in 1956, eleven National Societies were accorded grants totalling thirty-four thousand Swiss francs.

At various International Conferences of the Red Cross, delegates of different countries made a point of paying tribute to the way in which the International Committee of the Red Cross had administered the Fund in times of greatest difficulty. The rapporteur so aptly remarked: "We have listened most attentively to the list being read out of beneficiaries of the "Augusta Fund", whose income is distributed by the ICRC. But if a long list of figures tends to become monotonous, one should always realize that this ultimately represents real happiness to those receiving such generous gifts." We should rejoice to know that this happiness has been given in memory of that noble and generous personality, the Empress Augusta.
