

NEW YEAR MESSAGE

As in previous years, the annual message by Mr. L. Boissier, President of the ICRC, has been recorded by the ICRC Broadcasting and Television Office and sent to fifty-one national broadcasting systems all over the world, in six different languages, for broadcasting at the close of 1961.

It has also been sent in French in the following countries : Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Japan, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey, USSR and Yugoslavia. The text is as follows :

The year which is now drawing to a close has been darkened by much menace. The spectre of war has everywhere spread its threatening wings over the nations both great and small. The armaments race has continued at an ever-increasing speed, bringing no security.

Then one can hear the Red Cross message of hope. For this autumn in Prague, the representatives of the International Committee, of the League and of the National Societies unanimously agreed on a draft declaration of principles which will act as their guide in future. What did this declaration then say? : " The purpose of the Red Cross is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, co-operation and lasting peace amongst all peoples ".

These are not just mere words. The International Committee of Geneva for its part has worked in all countries in which men face each other in violence. In all places it has shown that understanding and mutual help can take the place of force, that confidence can succeed hatred.

There can be no peace without goodwill between men. Following the example of the Red Cross, which acts in its own sphere with such enthusiasm and resolution, each one of you should understand that you should also work for peace in your family, in your work and in your own country.

I am profoundly convinced that, by thus placing you in front of your own personal responsibility I can ask you to hope.