

The European Economic Community and the ICRC

The *International Review* has made frequent reference—and more specifically in last October's issue—to the generous donations of foodstuffs made by the European Economic Community (EEC), through the ICRC, to the victims of armed conflicts and natural disasters.

Since May 1969, eleven agreements—three of which concerned the relief work of the League of Red Cross Societies—have been signed by the ICRC and the EEC. These agreements, which provide for the supply of 107,138 metric tons of foodstuffs (powdered milk, cereals, enriched blended products) worth about 115 million Swiss francs, fall into two groups :

- (1) The EEC provides the ICRC with a given quantity of foodstuffs over a limited period. The ICRC is free to use such donations as it sees fit but must first make a request to make such use of the supplies. In emergencies, it may make immediate use of up to 100 tons of supplies but must make the request afterwards.
- (2) The EEC allocates a given quantity of foodstuffs to the victims of conflicts or natural disasters and expresses its desire to do so through the ICRC. In such a case, the ICRC acts as an agent.

Article 8 of all such agreements allows the ICRC to commission the League of Red Cross Societies to carry out the agreement in full or in part.

The development of the EEC, its growing power and the fact that it is moving towards a state of permanent community activity, when it comes to development aid, all go to make it an important source of supplies for the relief work of the Red Cross. The following figures prove the point.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

In October 1971, the European Parliament in Strasbourg set the total annual allocation to food aid at 1,035,000 metric tons, to be made according to the following progressive scale:

50% in 1971/72

60% in 1972/73

70% in 1973/74

In other words, the EEC is striving to increase the percentage of Community food aid, at the cost of bilateral aid by individual member countries to countries affected by war or natural disasters. As a result, the European Parliament recently adopted ¹ a resolution to the effect that a greater quantity than hitherto, which shall be established beforehand, shall be channelled through international bodies such as the WFP ² or the ICRC, provided that that can be done under conditions satisfactory to the Community. In the same resolution, it considered further that it would be advisable for the Community to adopt a less restrictive attitude with regard to meeting the cost of transporting supplies to their destination.

At meetings held from 7 to 11 February 1972, the European Parliament adopted a resolution,³ referring to a proposal made by the ICRC, in which it especially welcomed the proposal that adequate reserves be constituted for emergencies, especially reserves of processed foods such as soups and broths. The ICRC had submitted a proposal to that effect, concerning protein-rich foods, through the intermediary of the EEC in Brussels.

¹ See *Journal officiel des Communautés européennes*, Luxembourg, 11 November 1971.

² World Food Programme.

³ See *Journal officiel des Communautés européennes*, 28 February 1972.