

## IN GENEVA

**Death of Mr. Pierre Boissier, member of the ICRC**

It was with shocked dismay that the International Committee learned that Mr. Pierre Boissier was killed in an accident on 26 April 1974. Mr. Boissier, who devoted his life to the ICRC since 1946, had been elected a member last year.

Mr. Boissier was the very personification of the Red Cross spirit. In Cyprus (1964), Israel (1967), Lebanon (1971), India (1972), and elsewhere, he carried out many missions, often difficult, with intelligence, humanity and exemplary courage.

Both in the field and in his daily life, it was his philosophy that man should strive always to surpass himself, and this noble concept of practical action led him to give of himself more than his fragile health should have borne. A few years ago, he returned to Geneva from a distant mission, exhausted by his efforts in the defence of prisoners and civilian victims of war. His courage came from his faith and his will to serve in the most efficient way the Red Cross, which he saw as one of the few institutions still motivated today by humanitarian feelings.

Not only in action did he put his ideals into practice: he was a thinker, a perceptive writer, a historian whose work was based on a profound knowledge of historical events. After his appointment as an ICRC delegate in 1946, he first devoted himself to the legal protection of prisoners of war, and it was that experience which he condensed in *L'épée et la balance*, which was published in 1953. He then became the historian of the ICRC which wished to publish a book covering the century of its existence. The first volume, *De Solférino à Tsouchima*, well documented and written in vivid style, appeared in 1963. He was the author also of studies on law and history published in various reviews, particularly in

*International Review*, to which he frequently contributed essays on the early years of the Red Cross, legal assistance and, more recently, Florence Nightingale and Henry Dunant.

There was also a third aspect to his activity; he was a lively inspirer, with an open mind. He adopted as his own the Henry Dunant Institute which, during the Centenary Congress, the International Committee, the League and the Swiss Red Cross decided to found jointly, and of which he was appointed Director in 1966. He launched himself with enthusiasm into the venture, working out study programmes, promoting collection drives, making plans for the new offices which the Institute moved into last month. It was as the Director of the Institute that Mr. Boissier had for several years been in charge of ICRC delegate training, in which he proved himself to be a leader capable of infusing a humanitarian vocation in men.

How great a loss for the Red Cross as a whole is Pierre Boissier's death, and how faithfully and gratefully will the International Committee remember his remarkable personality and his work !

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