

BOOKS AND REVIEWS

HENRY W. DUNNING:
"ELEMENTS FOR THE HISTORY OF THE LEAGUE OF RED CROSS
SOCIETIES"

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation, commemorated last year, the League entrusted Mr. Henry W. Dunning who, it may be recalled, was its Secretary General from 1958 to 1960 with the task of outlining the main events of its history. He has set them out, in lucid and vivid fashion, in a work so filled with precise and significant facts that it does not lend itself easily to an adequate review.

We shall therefore restrict ourselves here to the list of chapter-headings: I The Genesis of the League of Red Cross Societies. II Birth of the League of Red Cross Societies. III Changes in Leadership and Direction. IV Formation of the International Red Cross. V War Years. VI Rejuvenation. VII Expansion. VIII New Departure in the Relief Field. IX The League Branches Out.

Towards the end of the book, the author stresses the importance of the technical assistance programme adopted by the League Executive Committee in 1962, and gradually implemented in line with the priorities established. This programme comprised also the organization of study centres and seminars for leaders of future National Societies, the continuation of the programme of study visits and the despatch of material to Societies making such a request. Mr. Dunning recalls that much useful work was also achieved on the plane of ideas; the seven fundamental Principles of the Red Cross, drafted jointly by the League and the ICRC, were given the final seal of approval by the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross.

Further, the speeches delivered at the fiftieth anniversary in Geneva, an account of which had been given in the May issue of the *International Review*, displayed a steadfast faith in the future, notwithstanding the existing state of the world where appeals to humanity have so much difficulty in obtaining a hearing.

But, as Mr. Beer, Secretary General of the League, said at the time, "it is just such conditions which require the Red Cross to make a special effort, often doomed to failure, but which must be repeated again until at last success is obtained".

J.-G. L.

W. STEENSMA: "DE RADIO MEDISCHE DIENST VAN HET NEDERLANDSCHE ROODE KRUIS VOOR DE SCHEEPVAART"¹

The medical leader of the Radio Medical Service of the Netherlands Red Cross took his degree as a doctor of medicine with the defence of this thesis, based on daily experience for two years (1967/68). In the first chapter some regulations for the medical care of ships crews and passengers are quoted. It is clear that the development of communication has a great influence: the presence of a doctor on a ship is no longer a first necessity. Introduction of the Amver (Automated Merchant Vessel Report) for the Atlantic Ocean in 1958 and the Pacific in 1966 has proved very helpful. Two examples of medical advice by telephone or telegram give a clear picture of the course of things and it appears that the treatment so advised and applied may be optimal.

In chapter II the training of a ship's officer for medical service on board is discussed. Dr Steensma emphasizes the necessity of an interneeship in a hospital for at least three weeks. It is quite obvious that the smooth functioning of the radio medical service largely depends on the medical knowledge and skill of the man on board.

Nautical experience is a must for the physician in charge of the RMS. This is proved in chapter III describing the present working method of the Netherlands radio medical service, a

¹ Thesis Amsterdam, 1969.