

Romain Rolland and the Red Cross

Fifty years ago Romain Rolland wrote to Gustave Ador, then President of the ICRC, informing him of his donation to the International Prisoners of War Agency. The *International Review* recently published this letter of July 25, 1917, which is now in the International Committee's archives. It also reproduced Gustave Ador's letter of July 29 thanking the famous writer for his generous gift.¹ Mrs. Rolland, to whom this second letter belongs, gave permission to Professor Sven Stelling-Michaud of Geneva University to communicate it to the ICRC.

In 1914 and 1915 Romain Rolland worked most efficiently for the Agency, although he always continued to be moved by the humanitarian ideal and to serve it. An exhibition of great interest organized last year in Geneva on the theme " Romain Rolland and Switzerland " was ample proof of this.

A variety of documents, including the two letters we have published, were of real interest for the Red Cross world, as they showed how the generosity of the author of *Jean-Christophe* was borne out by the facts. Thus there was a request for hospitalization and one for the repatriation of civilians, as well as information cards. Also exhibited was his fine letter of gratitude which he sent on leaving the Agency to Dr. Frédéric Ferrière, in charge of the Civilians Section. To him he wrote in 1917 that the Red Cross had been " the Angel of Peace in those terrible years " and in 1925 he supported his posthumous application for the Nobel Peace Prize. Recalling the lasting friendships which Romain Rolland created for himself in Switzerland, amongst others with the Ferrière family, Professor Stelling-Michaud, one of the organizers of the exhibition, wrote: " In his solitude he found there friends of his own mettle ".²

¹ See *International Review*, June 1967.

² See Introduction to the Catalogue of " L'exposition Romain Rolland et la Suisse ", Geneva, November-December 1966.