

Sir Edward Stewart

REPORT
OF
THE BRITISH RED CROSS
SOCIETY

For presentation at the 11th International Red Cross Conference
to be held at Geneva.

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R E P O R T
OF THE
B R I T I S H R E D C R O S S S O C I E T Y.
for presentation at the 11th International Red Cross Conference.

I.
WAR AND POST WAR ACTIVITIES.

As the activities of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England during the great war and their relations with the military authorities were fully described in the report presented at the 10th International Conference held in 1920 it is not proposed to do more than refer briefly to the continuance of this work in the present report.

(a). Voluntary Aid Detachments.

During the past two years the V.A.D. Department has continued its activities.

Military Nursing Members have been and are still employed in various Military hospitals at home and abroad.

General Service V.A.D. members also are still doing duty with the Armies of Occupation and in Military hospitals at home.

V.A.D. Nursing and General Service members have been working in Naval Hospitals and, during the industrial crisis in the spring and summer of 1921, 300 additional members were called up for this service to take the place of male hospital staffs who had been called away in connection with the mobilisation of the Royal Naval and Royal Fleet Reserve.

V.A.D. Nursing Members have been and are still employed in Ministry of Pensions hospitals, where they assist in the nursing of ex-service men requiring treatment in connection with disabilities incurred during the War.

V.A.D. members are working in numerous clinics which have been set up locally for the care of ex-service men, who are able to go to work but are still in need of treatment. These clinics give massage and electrical treatment to orthopaedic cases, and some include a section dealing

with tropical diseases.

V.A.D. members have given voluntary help in connection with Emergency Help Committees. These Committees administer grants made by the Joint War Committee, for the benefit of men who are still suffering from disability incurred in the War. These cases usually demand considerable investigation which is carried out by the members.

V.A.D. members have acted as escort to Officers proceeding to Switzerland for treatments.

In London many of the Civil hospitals call upon V.A.D. members for assistance during the probationers' holidays, or on lecture nights when the probationers are withdrawn from the wards.

Members also work in various London dispensaries where they are in attendance on the Doctors - such work being carried out gratuitously.

£ 50,000 was voted by the Joint War Committee for the provision of scholarships for V.A.D. members who had given particularly meritorious service: these scholarships were for training in connection with Health Services, for example, Medicine, Dentistry, Public Health, Social Science, Almoner, Domestic Science, Institutional Management, Midwifery, General Nursing, Nursery Nursing, Care of the Mentally Defective, etc. and about 550 members availed themselves of the privileges thus offered. It is gratifying to record that all those students who have completed their training are now in good appointments.

In conclusion there is a very flourishing Social Club for V.A.D. members in London, with a membership of just under 4,000.

(b) Emergency Help Committee.

This Committee was set up in December 1920 to administer grants for the relief of sick and disabled ex-service men in distress as a result of the Great War.

As the result of experience gained by an experimental Committee, and of the replies received to enquiries addressed to County Branches, it was ascertained that a widespread need existed for the relief of the sick and wounded ex-service man, chiefly attributable to certain gaps in the administration of the Ministry of Pensions Scheme. The question was

taken up with the Ministry who agreed that cases of hardship, which they were unable to relieve, existed amongst claimants to Pensions, and the Ministry welcomed the proposal to grant whatever relief might be possible from charitable funds.

(c). Auxiliary Hospitals for Officers.

A large proportion of the work of this department is in connection with the care and treatment of Tuberculous Officers at home and abroad. The work of sending officers suffering from tuberculosis and other chest complaints to Switzerland and San Remo is being continued. The journeys of all Officers sent abroad, with only a few exceptions, are arranged and paid for out of the funds

Another very necessary and important part of the work of the department has been the granting of temporary assistance to disabled ex-officers, who are awaiting the decision of the Ministry of Pensions or Officers' Appeal Tribunal to their Claim to disability retired pay and treatment allowances. Without such assistance, these cases would be thrown entirely on their own resources which are wholly inadequate to meet the heavy cost of institutional treatment.

The Department has further continued to assist Officers and ex-officers with the cost of massage and other kinds of treatment prescribed and, in a few cases, grants have been made to enable officers to meet the expenses of special operations.

(d). Hospitals.

The following are a few only of the hospitals throughout the Country to which the Society has afforded financial support for the benefit of the ex-service officers and men.

(i). The Auxiliary Hospitals for Officers at Brighton Bournemouth, Bath and elsewhere, established during the War by the Joint Societies, and receiving a Government grant per patient, were a most important feature of Red Cross work.

The Hospital at Brighton with accomodation for upwards of one hundred patients is now mainly for surgical cases and those requiring electrical treatment in bracing surroundings.

4.

Numerous operations are performed and the Institution must continue its career of usefulness for some time to come. During the past year the hospital and homes at Bournemouth, which were chiefly occupied by medical cases, and the hospital at Bath where rheumatic and neuralgic affections were treated, were closed.

(ii). The "Star & Garter" Home at Richmond for paralysed sailors and soldiers is an institution which was commenced early in the War and premises having been presented through Her Majesty the Queen to the British Red Cross Society to serve as a permanent home for the disabled.

The building which was originally equipped for upwards of sixty paraplegics, in order to meet the necessity of the case, is now being re-erected on the same site, and when finished will, with its annex at the seaside, accommodate two hundred patients, suffering from some form of paralysis or maimed in the War. The present inmates are in receipt of the highest rate of pension and no charge is made to any patient in the Home.

In aid of the building fund the Joint Societies made a large grant, but no Government assistance whatever has been received.

(iii). Queen Mary's Convalescent Auxiliary Hospital at Roehampton is another institution which, though originally organized by a separate committee, with the approval and co-operation of the Naval and Military authorities, and now controlled by the Ministry of Pensions, has received very large financial aid from the Red Cross.

Its object is to serve as a centre for the fitting of artificial limbs, the cost of which is borne by the State.

During the War nine hundred beds were occupied, but the numbers have necessarily decreased.

In this connection reference must be made to another useful activity, namely the supply of provisional limbs which were

made at special depots set up and managed by the societies in various parts of the country.

Here a man received a plaster of fibre pylon which was of considerable advantage to him while waiting until his stump was ready for the more permanent limb.

(iv). The Home at Frognaal for Facial Injuries received most munificent support from the Joint Societies, which continue their benefactions as may be required by the diminishing number of patients. The accommodation at one time reached a thousand beds, and the average period of residence was from eight to ten months. The hospital was a military one, and the surgical staff was specially selected by the War Office and reinforced by a number of most capable dental mechanics.

(v). When the British Red Cross Hospital at Netley which had such a history of usefulness during the War, was no longer required for its original purposes, a large number of the buildings were handed over to the Army Medical Authorities, while others were lent to the Ministry of Pensions.

(vi). In addition to the grants, financial and otherwise which have been made to various civil hospitals, mention must be made of the assistance many of these institutions receive from the funds subscribed on "Our Day" the occasion of the annual collection made all over the country for Red Cross purposes. This is a popular method of public appeal, and the major portion of the receipts are authorised to be retained for local needs in the county or neighbourhood.

(e). Clinics.

Orthopaedic clinics for ex-soldiers have been established in several counties by the local Branch of the British Red Cross Society. To give a single example; at the request of the Ministry

of Pensions the County of London Branch undertook this work.

Fourteen of these clinics were working in 1920, and five of them had a department dealing with Tropical diseases. The number of officers and men attending was large and over two hundred thousand treatments were administered.

The Ministry of Pensions provide Doctors and make a capitation grant per case, which however as a rule is inadequate for the establishment and maintenance of the clinics, as the expenses connected with ^{the} provision and up-keep of the electrical apparatus are heavy.

Fully qualified Masseuses are employed at government rates and paid by the Red Cross which also provides the necessary premises, furniture, heating, etc., as well as the clerical staff, while the Ministry make themselves responsible for the appointment and payment of consultants and the cost of prescriptions.

The establishment of the Tropical Diseases clinic is a recent development and to each of these institutions organised by the Red Cross a government grant is given.

The work done in the clinics is as useful as varied, and the increasing official assistance is a proof of the excellence of the work accomplished.

It may be added that much of the treatment is carried out at hours which permit the men to do their day's work and visit the clinic in the evening.

ACTIVITIES AMONG THE GREEK REFUGEES

In January last the British Red Cross took over the medical administration of the refugee hospitals and camps at Stringos and Klonrides, situated a few miles from Athens, where refugees suffering from typhus, smallpox and pneumonia were being treated. Special attention was given to the sanitation of these camps which hitherto had been in a very bad state. The hospitals were put under the charge of British medical personnel and the necessary hospital equipment and medicines supplied. Typhus and smallpox were prevalent when the British Red Cross took over the medical administration, but since the Society has been in charge of the work there has been a radical change for the better, and the health of the camps has very greatly improved. It is hoped that the efforts now being made by the British Red Cross will bring about a marked reduction if not an entire eradication of infectious diseases at this centre. Other diseases are however still prevalent, such as enteritis, pneumonia, dysentery and general debility.

There has been a considerable increase of dysentery among the refugees concentrated in this area during the recent hot weather. The approximate number of in-patients weekly in the Stringos Hospital is 135 and out-patients 220.

In April last the British Red Cross opened a hospital of 120 beds at Drama, in which district a large number of refugees have been concentrated, a number of whom have suffered from infectious diseases. The hospital has been established in three buildings, which were recently completed, and intended for an orphanage, but were graciously placed at the disposal of the Society by the Greek Government. The buildings are in every way most suitable for a hospital, being situated on high ground on the outskirts of the town, where there is an ample supply of water. This hospital has been fully equipped to deal with medical and surgical cases. The hospital is under the charge of British medical personnel, and in a recent report received from the Society's Chief Medical Adviser, Sir Patrick Hehir, he states that without exaggeration the installation of the British Red Cross Hospital at Drama may be described as the best of all efforts that have been made in the direction of medical relief for the Greek refugees.

This Hospital is the only one in the district where surgical cases can be treated; there is also no other infectious diseases hospital in this area. It has been found necessary lately to increase the number of beds as the hospital has been continually full since its inauguration. The weekly number of in-patients is approximately 300 and the weekly number of out-patients 400. The chief diseases in the Drama District are malaria, tuberculosis, infantile enteritis, dysentery and typhoid fever. There has recently been a marked increase in the number of malaria cases, and in a telegram just received from our Chief Medical Adviser, he states that there is certain to be a severe epidemic of malaria in the early Autumn. Large quantities of quinine have recently been despatched to our hospital at Drama.

The British Red Cross took over the administration of Lady Rumbold's Hospital, situated at Palazli in Western Thrace in the centre of the area which has been allotted by the Greek Government for colonisation purposes. Numerous colonies have now been established, and a large number of refugees are being

employed on the land. His hospital has received additional equipment and medical supplies and is being maintained in an efficient state to cope with the medical requirements of the district.

Dispensaries have been established in every colony and each has been equipped with field medical and surgical panniers, complete in every detail. Serious cases which cannot be dealt with at the dispensaries are conveyed by motor ambulance to the main hospital at Palazli. The Society have also provided tents, blankets and clothing for the refugee colonies. The number of in-patients treated weekly at this hospital is approximately 135 and out-patients 260; this does not include the numbers treated at the dispensaries in the out-lying colonies.

Apart from the maintenance of the three hospitals referred to above, the British Red Cross is supplying vaccines and medical requirements to other refugee centres, where infectious and other diseases are prevalent. Tents and clothing have also been supplied.

The death rate among the refugees is still high and many deaths are occurring from enteritis, pneumonia, dysentery and general debility, due chiefly to the comparatively limited recuperative power of these unfortunate people.

The monthly cost of maintaining and supplying the hospitals above referred to is £ 2,000 per month; unless this sum is forthcoming by the end of July the British Red Cross will hand their hospitals over to the Authorities in Greece who state that they are unable to maintain them without outside assistance.

III

PEACE WORK

The various spheres of work undertaken under this heading have been carried out by the Joint Council of the Order of St. John and the British Red Cross Society, bodies which in co-operation performed such valuable services during the late war and which, while continuing their activities with ex-service men, have, since the armistice, been engaged on a peace programme on the broadest lines.

A. Public Health Activities

(1) Health Lectures. In 1921 an interesting experiment was carried out in several counties in conjunction with the Federation of Womens Institutes. Arrangements were made for the giving of Health Lectures to women in rural areas and a syllabus was drawn up which extended to seven lectures dealing with such subjects as: - General Physiology, the Digestive System, the Skin, Hygiene of the Home and the Village, Personal Health of the Family, the Child, the Schoolboy and girl, the Father and Mother. This experiment was so much appreciated that in the Winter of 1921-22 these lectures were held in over 50 counties and it is hoped that the coming Winter will see Red Cross Health Lectures instituted generally throughout England.

(2) Medical Supply Depots. Another Branch of work which is proving successful is that carried out by the Medical Supply Depots which have been set up to supply sick room requisities on loan to poor people who cannot afford to buy them. A house or room is obtained and stocked with a large variety of articles needed in the sick room and many of which are costly to purchase. Local doctors, village nurses, health visitors, etc, make a written request that a certain sick person should be provided on loan with certain articles, for example, water bed, air pillow or bath chair. The charge made for hire is on the lowest scale.

(3) Cancer Appeal. In May 1923 a body of men distinguished in medicine and science inaugurated a movement called the British Empire Cancer Campaign and approached the British Red Cross Society to assist them in appealing to the public for funds for their object. The Council of this campaign made it quite clear from the outset that it had no intention of interfering with the research work already being carried out. Individuals and Institutions now working on the Cancer problem will be helped and encouraged and, where practicable, financially assisted. In this way investigations can be carried out simultaneously along many lines and the results of their enquiries will be brought into the common stock of knowledge. A discovery in any one branch will be made known to all, and may lead to discoveries in other branches.

The British Red Cross Society has willingly placed its organisation and machinery at the disposal of the Council of the Campaign.

B. General Activities

1. Home Service Ambulance Committee. The Home Service Ambulance Committee was formed to establish a Motor Ambulance Service in England, Ireland and Wales which would afford means for rapidly and easily conveying sick and disabled (especially those in rural areas) to the place where curative treatment could be most efficiently obtained.

At the date of the Armistice in 1918, the Joint Societies were in possession of a great fleet of motor ambulances provided during the War for the transport of the wounded, of these the best were selected for use in country districts, and were placed approximately thirty miles apart.

At the end of March 1922, over 300 vehicles were engaged in this service and nearly 54,000 patients had been carried.

The local Red Cross authorities receive the ambulances on

loan from the Committee at Headquarters in London, and are responsible for the entire cost of maintenance.

To meet the requirements of this service a lighter type of ambulance is being constructed which will decrease the running expenses while equally ensuring the comfort of the patient. The charges made for the use of the vehicle are most moderate, and in necessitous cases are frequently remitted.

It may be added that large numbers of Thomas' splints were sent to the ambulance centres throughout the country. These have proved a boon in cases of grave accident at a distance from a hospital.

2.- Hospital Library The Library was organised by the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John in the first place for the supply of literature to the men of our Navy and Army in hospitals. So greatly was this supply of books and periodicals appreciated by the hospital authorities that it was decided to extend the benefits for men, women and children in civilian hospitals and in 1920 the British Red Cross and Order of St. John War Library was reorganised and the title changed to the British Red Cross and Order of St. John Hospital Library. It is the only organisation in Great Britain for providing hospitals with a constant supply of books and magazines.

During the year 1922, 1318 Hospitals, Sanatoria, Convalescent Homes, Infirmarys, etc, in Great Britain have been supplied with libraries. An increase of 644 over the previous year. Large parcels of books and magazines have been sent to Overseas Naval & Military Hospitals in Malta, San Remo, Cologne, Constantinople, Egypt, Palestine; to the British Hospitals in Lisbon and Huelva and to Hospital Ships proceeding to the East. Demands from Hospitals are increasing daily and as many as 15,000 books are being sent out monthly.

JUNIOR SECTION

The Junior Section of the British Red Cross Society was inaugurated in June 1921 and its total strength at June 1923 was approximately 102 Units, consisting of 2,000 members. A paid Director was appointed in January 1923, and a small Junior publication was commenced in April 1923, in the form of a supplement to the senior Journal.

At its inception the objects of the Junior Section were defined in accordance with the recommendations of the League of Red Cross Societies; the methods to be followed were indicated only in general terms, except that the formation of Units and the adoption of uniform were recommended; development was, perforce, left to the care of the County and City branches of the Society.

The Junior Section has, therefore, developed principally as a Cadet movement "Mothered" by the V.A. Detachments, which are such an essential feature in the Red Cross Organisation in Great Britain. Help to others is a necessary part of the Junior Programme, but the movement has not developed primarily as an aid to education in Health or Citizenship, as it has done in other countries.

As now constituted, its objects and methods are much the same as those of a dozen or so older juvenile organisations and, consequently, while its growth could doubtless be accelerated by vigorous methods, it is apparent that it would still be limited, and that the process would be open to a certain amount of reasonable criticism from the supporters of existing organisations, both within and without the Society.

This being the case, we have endeavoured to explore fully the possibilities of reorganising the movement in Great Britain as a School Movement with the teachers taking an active interest in it. It appears that, if this can be attained, not only will

there be a very much wider scope for the movement than is possible under its present organisation, but it should be practicable so to organise it that members of other juvenile organisations may yet belong to their School branch of the Junior Red Cross.

Without desire to dwell unduly on the difficulties, it is permissible to state that in Great Britain, with its system of decentralized authorities for Elementary and State-aided schools, and with its methods of tradition in the higher Secondary and Public Schools, the introduction of a new movement into the Schools is not without its complications, and that the only method which can hope for success is one of gradual experiment in selected districts.

The indications are that, in Elementary and State-aided Schools, a movement which can prove its value as an ally of the official health teaching, may obtain the support of the authorities, which is essential; but these authorities are disinclined to admit to the schools a movement on the grounds of the aid it may afford to education in Citizenship. They are, generally speaking, inclined to say that they prefer to educate in Citizenship in the Schools in their own way, and that the place for juvenile organisations whose object is Civic training is outside the schools.

If, therefore, Junior Red Cross is to succeed in Elementary and State-aided Schools in Great Britain, it appears that it must place Health first among its objects, and that a programme to arouse and stimulate in the children interest in Health, must be framed in such a way as to commend itself to the authorities. As to the teachers in these Schools, the general ideals of the Junior Red Cross are likely to appeal to many among them.

In the higher Secondary Schools, and especially in Girls,

Schools, there is a possibility of a future for the movement principally because of the opportunity which it affords for organised help to others, though, here again, there are in Great Britain societies which already work through Schools with this purpose.

Whatever the demerits of the existing organisation of the Junior Red Cross, it does provide for a direct, though a small, flow of recruits for the V.A. Detachments. Recruits in time of peace for the V.A. Detachments are essential to enable the Society to fulfil adequately its basic purpose of the care of the sick and wounded in time of war; but it may be that these recruits can be obtained in larger numbers through co-operation with suitable juvenile organisations already existing. With this object, an attempt is being made to place the resources of the Society at the disposal of juvenile organisations, such as Scouts and Guides, for instruction and examination in First-Aid and allied subjects, with a view to interesting their members in this work and encouraging them to join, at a later date, the V.A. Detachments.

We feel that to spread among the younger generation, whether by assistance to existing organisations in technical instruction, or by the evolution of a form of the Junior Red Cross movement suitable to our schools, the knowledge of what the Red Cross is and hopes to do, is the surest way to strengthen its numbers and to aid its work, of whatever nature that may be.