

SIXTEENTH INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CONFERENCE

London, June 1938

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS
COMMITTEE
GENEVA

**Collaboration of National Societies with the
Authorities of their respective countries, with a view
to action in time of War.**

(Item 3 B of the Agenda)

CONTENTS

I. History. — II. Work of National Red Cross Societies: Staff (doctors, male and female nurses, voluntary aids), hospitals, stores. — III. Subsidiary work (information bureaux, social work, air-raid precautions). — IV. Cooperation with Authorities.

I. HISTORY.

The International Red Cross Committee, having been kindly asked to send a delegate to the Panamerican Conference of Red Crosses at Rio de Janeiro in 1935 and to introduce a subject, requested that the following item be placed on the agenda: "The work of National Red Cross Societies within the limits of the Geneva Convention; the Red Cross as auxiliary to Army Medical Services."

By requesting this addition the International Committee desired to lay stress on a question of vital concern to itself: the cooperation of Red Crosses and Army Medical Services, with a view to action in time of war.

This subject was, perhaps, not of immediate concern to the Red Crosses assembled at Rio de Janeiro, the majority of these National Societies being, by the nature of things, in a position to concentrate their efforts on health and social work.

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

Nevertheless, a sub-committee studied the report of the International Committee and proposed the following resolution which was adopted by the assembly:

RESOLUTION VII

Organisation and development of National Red Cross Societies.

Whereas the primary task of national Red Cross Societies in time of war is to help the Army Medical Corps, and in time of peace to cooperate with the public authorities in all that concerns the well-being of the population, and bearing in mind the favourable results obtained by certain Societies, thanks to the support of their respective Governments,

The Third Panamerican Red Cross Conference recommends the American National Societies to strengthen their contact with their respective governments by soliciting their support and the collaboration of corresponding official bodies to enable them to carry out their various activities, particularly with regard to first aid in case of disaster, the development of hygiene and of social work in the Junior Red Cross."

The political atmosphere of the world has not become clearer since the Panamerican Conference. Hopes of universal peace are far from realization. Armaments are piling up everywhere, and Governments are taking all necessary steps to enable them to withstand attack.

The Red Cross, which is certainly doing its utmost to prepare that universal peace so sorely needed by all nations, must however face the facts, and it is its duty to hold itself in readiness to perform its humanitarian work should the war, which on principle it condemns, break out.

It seems, therefore, particularly urgent to study closely in what ways the cooperation between National Societies and their respective Governments should be established, with a view to action in time of war.

It is well known, moreover, that in several countries side by side with the preparations of the General Staff,

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

the Red Crosses have been requested by their Government to improve their organization, and to be in readiness to deal with any circumstances that may suddenly arise.

If this subject figures on the programme of the XVth International Conference under another heading, it nevertheless remains the same, and it is not surprising if the report here presented differs but slightly from that drawn up for the Conference at Rio.

The present report has, however, been completed by information obtained during the last few years and taking into account the experiences gained in this respect during conflicts that have occurred since the Panamerican Conference. The International Committee has preferred not to issue a questionnaire to the National Societies, but to leave them the benefit of the reports that they will not fail to draw up for the International Conference.

The Red Cross is fundamentally the auxiliary of the Army Medical Corps. It is the latter that has the first right to use the emblem of the red cross on a white ground. The National Red Cross Societies have the benefit of the same privilege only because they are auxiliary to the Medical Services. When a National Red Cross Society is formed, its first step is to ensure its recognition by its Government as an auxiliary to the Army Medical Corps. This step is naturally followed by the insertion in its statutes of provisions defining the extent of cooperation between the Army Medical Corps of the country and the National Red Cross Society.

In its "Handbook of Texts relating to the Application of the Geneva Convention" the International Committee has gathered together all the legislative texts and the extracts from statutes bearing on such cooperation. The statutes of all Red Cross Societies contain clauses defining the conditions under which this cooperation is established between the responsible bodies — Army Medical Corps

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

of land, sea and air forces — and the National Red Cross Society.

Such cooperation naturally varies from one country to another.

Each Government and each National Society are free to organize their cooperation as they choose. It suffices that international conventions be respected in the letter and in the spirit.

Besides, one could not ask the different National Societies to conform to a strictly uniform rule. This cooperation depends largely, on the one hand, on the degree of organization and development of the National Red Cross, and on those of the Medical Services on the other. It may even be said that the greater the efficiency and organization of an Army Medical Corps, the more the activities of the Red Cross become accessory and social, and the more its work will be transferred to the base and even to the interior of the country.

When the Medical Service is backward, and still more if it proves inefficient, the Red Cross should be in readiness to carry its aid forward even up to the front. We were in a position to observe this fact in a conflict in which one of the belligerents depended entirely upon the Red Cross for collecting and nursing the wounded, whereas the other left only social activities to its Red Cross, except for a few hospitals behind the lines and distant transport service within the zone of operations.

In this respect it may be noted that several National Societies have modified their original statutes because their Government, while relieving them of certain obligations towards the Medical Service, had entrusted them with social activities, such as the organization of relief to soldiers' families, to prisoners of war etc. This modification in the task of National Societies is due to the perfecting and the development of the Medical Service.

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

The work of National Societies varies, therefore, according to the development of the national Medical Service.

Closer study allows us to judge what forms the cooperation between the National Societies and the Authorities should take; it will be found that such cooperation needs to be very close and active in time of peace, in order to prepare for the work of the National Societies in time of war.

It is most important also that Red Crosses should put themselves at the disposal of the authorities for work in time of peace, e.g. in case of national calamity or epidemics. The authorities will realize the help that the Red Cross can afford to sufferers, and the Red Cross will be kept up to the mark and encouraged to maintain its personnel and equipment always in a state of readiness.

In this peace work the Red Cross will probably meet with special activities for which it is particularly fitted and which the authorities will gladly hand over to it, if it comes forward.

In fact, National Societies obviously should not limit themselves to the performance of tasks imposed upon them by the authorities, but they have the right and the duty to take any initiative that may appear useful. It must be borne in mind, however, that such initiatives should always be submitted to the authorities in time of war.

II. ACTIVITIES OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES.

As auxiliaries to the Army Medical Corps, the Red Cross national Societies can and must assist the Army Medical Corps — or take their place if necessary — by providing them with personnel, hospitals and stores.

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

STAFF.

The personnel includes medical officers, male nurses and orderlies, female nurses and V.A.D.s.

Medical Officers.

National Red Cross Societies have generally no difficulty in obtaining the cooperation of doctors; the majority of these take great interest in the work of the Societies and put themselves wholeheartedly at their disposal.

Of the doctors who are members of the Red Cross, some are already liable to serve and would be drafted automatically into the Army Medical Corps; the others are free from any military obligation, because over age, or on account of their health. No doubt in the case of hostilities a certain number of the latter would be called up by the Army. The Red Cross would however still have at its disposal a large number of doctors who, though already old or not strong enough to stand the fatigue of a campaign, would be capable of doing useful work in the rear, especially in hospitals.

It is useful to assign beforehand posts and duties to the doctors upon whom the Red Cross can count. For this purpose individual capacity and specialization must be taken into account. It may seem ridiculous to stress such a self-evident proposition, yet we know the necessity of recalling it.

Every doctor enrolled in the Red Cross should know beforehand, in time of peace, where he will be stationed and what his duties will be. He will thus be able to make preparations, to get into touch with his co-workers, to supervise and encourage the technical training

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

of the men and women nurses appointed to work under him.¹

Well planned organization is necessary to the smooth working of any service, but it is also valuable from a psychological point of view. A doctor who knows his future task will clearly feel himself responsible for duties assigned him; he will be interested in them and set himself to fulfil them as well as he can.

As for the others, i. e. those who are members of the Army Medical Corps or who would be in case of hostilities, their role is also very important in the Red Cross sphere. They can be usefully engaged in all preparatory work. Their military training fits them particularly for the organization of voluntary aid detachments and for the training of a staff of male and female nurses. As a rule, they are best qualified to treat sick and wounded officers and men, since they understand their particular outlook. They are also most qualified to teach the staff the discipline it is often difficult to secure in base hospitals, where it is nevertheless indispensable.

In time of peace, therefore, all doctors can serve the Red Cross with a view to preparing for time of war. Those who are liable to mobilization, will be specially useful in organizing, and preparing the mobilization of the Red Cross and for training the personnel; the others should fit themselves for the special task awaiting them in the domain of the Red Cross.

We stress once more that National Red Cross Societies should organize their services in advance, so that each worker may know what he or she will have to do.

¹ It is advisable that all persons liable to active service in case of mobilization should already, in time of peace, be assigned to the particular branch of the service in which they will work, and that they should at once be acquainted with the duties they will have to perform. (International Conference, Geneva, 1884. See *Handbook*, 6th edition, p. 209.)

**Collaboration with Authorities
in time of war.**

Male Nurses.

The male personnel required by the National Societies includes

1. Professional nurses, masseurs etc., who for some reason — age, physical inaptitude, etc. — are not mobilized.

They will be principally occupied in hospitals, railway clearing stations, etc., where they will work under almost the same conditions as in civilian life. A certain number should be detailed to fill the gaps caused in the staff of civil hospitals by the departure for field units of mobilized female nurses.

2. "Samaritans," (voluntary orderlies) who may be compared to the V.A.D.s to whom we shall refer later on. These are men unfit for military service who have received more or less complete training in the care of the sick and wounded, and who are acquainted with stretcher-work and the unloading of ambulance lorries. During their training their individual aptitudes should be watched and noted, and they should qualify as assistant stretcher-bearers etc. They should be formed into squads, with a responsible leader, and have specified tasks: hospitals, railway clearing stations, hospital trains, etc.

Some Governments make grants to schools of nursing and to courses for male nurses managed by the Red Crosses, or recognized by them, on condition that there male and female nurses undertake to obey the mobilization orders issued by the Army Medical Service. Thus the Government, through the agency of the Army Medical Service, supervises the training of the "Samaritans" they may require. This system has been adopted in Switzerland, and we are able to say from personal knowledge that it gives equal satisfaction to both parties.

3. Voluntary Aids. — It is well known that in case of war Voluntary Aids come forward in great numbers

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

to enlist in the Red Cross. It would be of great advantage to decide beforehand what their duties shall be.

The Red Cross needs assistants of all kinds: managers and accountants for the hospitals and other units, warehousemen for receiving and forwarding stores, workmen for the business of cleaning and moving. These voluntary aids may be employed, in certain cases, in burying the dead and in clearing up a battlefield, as laid down in some army regulations. Lastly, the Red Cross needs a number of drivers for transporting the wounded and stores at the base.

All this organization means strenuous work on the part of the National Society and its local branches.¹

It means establishing a definite plan of mobilization, corresponding to that of the Army Medical Corps. Close collaboration between the two bodies is therefore indispensable.

*Female Nurses.*²

The Red Cross — like the Medical Service — must choose its nurses from among the best qualified in the country. It cannot, in time of war, manage emergency services like ordinary hospitals. Red Cross nurses will be called upon to assume heavy responsibilities and to face extra work. They must have been sufficiently well trained and selected, so as to furnish the necessary guarantees, not only of their professional knowledge but also of their physical and moral stamina.

In countries where the schools of nursing are managed

¹ Berlin 1869. Relief Societies shall draw up a complete and detailed programme of their work in war time. (International Conference, Berlin, 1869. See *Handbook*, p. 208.)

² *Cf.* Document No. 1.

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

by the Red Cross, the latter prepares them for their duties by an extension of theoretical and practical courses in first aid. In the countries where schools of nursing are neither managed nor supervised by the Red Cross, nurses in Red Cross Services should be chosen among the graduates of the best schools. It is interesting to note that at the Conference of Experts held in Paris in January 1937, the Chief Matrons of Red Cross nursing in several countries advocated the organization of additional teaching for certificated nurses both from State and private schools; such courses to include further teaching of the history of the Red Cross and better knowledge of the organization of Red Cross Services. This instruction should be completed by theoretical and practical courses in first aid, so that professional nurses may be better prepared for the special duties that will be thrown upon them in war time services.

In a large number of countries the nursing profession is subject to State regulation or State control. Countries that have not yet adopted such control may usefully recall Resolution 13 of the Geneva Conference of 1921. This control enables the Red Cross to feel certain of the professional qualification of the nurses it engages; but their enrolment should be subject to the approval of the State Services and of the National Nursing Associations.

In all countries a general scheme for the mobilization of nurses should be adopted in peace time. This plan should provide for a judicious distribution of the hospital staff, allowing all the services, those of the civilian and military hospitals as well as those of the Red Cross, to run normally in time of war, in spite of the creation of numerous temporary hospitals on account of the large numbers of wounded and of the overcrowding in all units.

We must remember, too, that air-raid precautions

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

call for a large number of nurses for its ambulance service, which is extended to all buildings likely to be bombarded by an air force. This latter service, which is both exceptional and of short duration, might be entrusted to nurses who, on account of their age, for family or for physical reasons, are unable to undertake permanent work.

This general scheme for the mobilization of nurses must be studied in detail. It can be carried out only in connexion with the scheme for the voluntary aids and the medical and hospital staffs.

Its study therefore necessitates close cooperation between the Army Medical Corps, the Red Cross, the Governing Bodies of civilian hospitals and the National Association of Nurses. Once introduced, this scheme should be constantly revised and brought up to date, taking into account the special aptitudes of each individual nurse.

Although it may prove very difficult, in time of war, to regulate the work of nurses in the Red Cross emergency services, it is necessary to call the attention of National Societies to the importance of clearly defining the position and the conditions of work of nurses in these services.

Many Red Crosses enroll unpaid workers only. But the number of nurses able to work without salaries is becoming smaller every year. There are many who have relatives to support, or who cannot provide for themselves entirely. In such cases, the Red Cross should examine whether and to what extent it can grant them allowances permitting them to enroll in the emergency services. Furthermore, since the nurses in these services are obviously exposed to exceptional risks, provision must be made for insurance against illness or accident, guaranteeing proper care till complete recovery, or a pension in the case of partial or complete disablement.

**Collaboration with Authorities
in time of war.**

Voluntary Aids.

Few countries have trained nurses for the Red Cross, but nearly all National Red Cross Societies train Voluntary Aids, and this is one of their foremost duties.

In time of war, when nurses are overwhelmed with work, the Red Cross should assist the victims of war by providing auxiliary hospital personnel, able to help the nurses and relieve them of part of their burden. To do such service, the personnel must be well trained and disciplined.

To ensure this training, the Red Cross will often seek the aid of the State.

The existence of a large group of voluntary aids is of advantage to the State. Such auxiliaries daily render valuable service during normal times and by their unremunerated health propaganda help to raise the public standard in this respect. The help that the State can furnish the Red Cross with a view to training such personnel varies considerably. It may, for instance, put school buildings at the disposal of the Red Cross for the instruction of pupils and for evening classes; again, it may appoint aids as temporary unpaid assistants in State hospitals.

The closer the collaboration between the State and the Red Cross, the higher will be the standard of the auxiliary services. Up to now, most National Societies have rightly given importance to the teaching of first-aid, which is indispensable; but it is equally necessary to give more thorough instruction in the daily attentions in the care of the sick. It is in this domain that the V.A.D.s, whose duty it is to assist the nurses, will render the greatest services in war time. It is, therefore, an item of particular importance in their training.

Once trained and enrolled in the Red Cross emergency

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

services, the Voluntary Red Cross Aids should, in normal times, be subject to the control of the Society. The Red Cross will see to it that these helpers, while broadening the knowledge acquired in theoretical and practical Red Cross courses, do not overstep the limits of their role as voluntary aids and in no way, in time of peace, take upon themselves nursing duties which go beyond their sphere.

In war time the Red Cross emergency services can quite well include work other than giving nursing care to sufferers; administrative and social work of very different kinds could be handed over to the aids.

In cooperation with the Government, the Red Cross can without much outlay train a personnel capable of completing or substituting that of the public services which cannot be thrown out of gear with impunity, and which, on the contrary in certain cases of war or of disaster, must be reinforced.

The Red Cross may thus be called upon to undertake important social work. Foresight is needed in this respect, and the Red Cross must have at its disposal a personnel on whom it can rely in case of need.

HOSPITALS.

Nearly all the Red Crosses possess one or more hospitals — model hospitals used for the training of male and female nurses and voluntary aids. These establishments are of great value in time of peace, but in war time they will not be of much utility as regards the assistance that the Red Cross should afford the Army Medical Corps. However, in almost every country, the Medical Corps, in accordance with the statutes of the National Societies, should be able to rely upon the Red Cross for the establishment of temporary hospitals at a greater or lesser distance from the front; as a matter of fact, they would only exceptionally

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war

be situated in the forward zone; we may take it that they will not be situated further than the bases, and even that they will be confined to the interior.

The Army Medical Service, or the responsible Ministry, will decide upon their location. In the majority of cases, this will be chosen in time of peace for each military zone and can be definitely communicated to the Red Crosses, without in any way revealing the secrets of the mobilization scheme.

The Red Crosses, or their delegates, should study beforehand their establishment in the buildings assigned to them, foresee the necessary changes in the supply of water and electricity and in the heating arrangements, which are indispensable when a school or any other building is transformed into a hospital. Even hotels, which lend themselves most easily to such changes, need certain alterations in their inside arrangements.

This preliminary study will be of great value, particularly if undertaken by the persons who are appointed to run the hospital in war time. An organization that is well planned from the outset, greatly facilitates the working of a unit, and involves a great economy of labour, time and money.

We have spoken above of the personnel of such hospitals; we shall therefore not refer to the matter again. On the other hand, the equipment to be used in these hospitals needs careful study.

Hospital equipment and stores include the following:

1. Bedding. — Beds, mattresses, sheets, blankets, bed-rests, pillows (horse-hair, bran, etc.).
2. Utensils. — All utensils needed for the toilet of the sick and wounded; kitchen utensils, and those required for scrubbing and cleaning the premises.

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

3. Surgical instruments for the operating theatre, dressings and treatment in the wards. X-ray apparatus, laboratory, etc.

After a preliminary estimate, it is useful to collect the stores in quantities, each sufficient for 100 or 200 beds, and to warehouse them. When the moment comes for opening a hospital, everything will thus be ready to hand. If later the unit has to be suddenly enlarged, a new lot of stores will be ready for delivery. As a general rule, a given number of beds requires a given number of utensils and instruments. Hospital for special treatment — gassed or infectious cases, etc. — are an exception to this rule. The initial equipment for such hospitals remains the same, but must be completed by preparing stores corresponding to their particular needs.

In certain countries and districts, the important centres are so widely scattered that it will be often necessary to establish hospitals under canvas, or in moveable hutments.

The Red Cross should, therefore, have such stores in reserve, as they cannot be procured at the last moment. Tents and hutments should be of a uniform design, in order to facilitate their erection and equipment.

Stores should be frequently overhauled, for such articles need careful upkeep. Here again, cooperation between the Medical Service and the Red Cross will prove necessary in order to decide where this cumbrous and not readily moveable equipment shall be kept, in order to avoid loss of time at the moment of mobilization.

Moveable hospitals, either under canvas or in huts, will be found useful even in districts where there is no lack of towns or of buildings capable of accommodating hospitals. Such hospitals are valuable, in so far as they can be erected at a distance from industrial centres and

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

military objectives, ammunition depots, electric power-houses or large factories. Their establishments can thus be more easily and effectively protected by the emblem of the Red Cross.

STORES.

One of the important tasks of the Red Crosses is to collect and warehouse the stores they will need to equip their own units and to supplement the requirements of the Medical Service.

When the Red Cross was founded, and for many years after, the National Societies did much in this line,¹ but little by little, other activities having taxed their resources, purchases of equipment have greatly diminished.

If hostilities broke out suddenly, many Red Cross Societies would find themselves at a serious loss, perhaps. It is not in time of war that stores can be procured. Purchases must be made therefore in time of peace, in agreement with the Medical Service, which should make known its probable needs.

It is of course preferable to have standard equipment, and when buying it Red Crosses may usefully profit by the experiences of the Medical Services, who have experts to advise them.

In most countries the Minister of War enjoys the right of supervision; in our opinion, this control should not be looked upon as sufficient. Stores should be purchased only after consultation with the Medical Service. It is the only way of providing really efficient equipment and of avoiding duplication in buying. Besides this, the

¹ Cf. International Red Cross Conferences: Geneva 1863; Berlin 1869 (tents and huts, hospitals). These measures should tend particularly to the preparing and holding in readiness of the most effective means of help. All this should be done in time of peace, taking needs and possibilities into account. — Geneva 1884; London 1907; Washington 1912. (See *Handbook*, p. 213.)

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

personnel of the Red Cross should be familiar with the equipment they will have to use in war time. Consequently, the Commission of Experts which met in Paris in January 1937, after having heard a report on the instruction to be given to male and female nurses and to voluntary aids concerning the equipment used by the Army and Navy Medical Corps, declared that this training was of far greater importance than was generally supposed. In order to obtain the best results, instruction should be given in the form of practical exercises. It is also recommended that if the Red Cross does not possess equipment similar to that of the Army Medical Corps, the latter should put at the disposal of the National Society a number of sets sufficient to meet the needs of this instruction.

We know that in certain countries this method is either already carried out, or provided for.

During the last ten years the International Commission for the standardization of Ambulance Equipment¹ has drawn up resolutions which have been adopted by the International Conferences. It is obvious that the Red Crosses should use only equipment that is in agreement with these resolutions. Three years ago this Commission became the Permanent Commission for the Study of Ambulance Equipment. Its task is to answer the demands it may receive through Governments for information on specified points. The National Societies can therefore apply to this Commission — whose members are mostly experts in ambulance equipment — through the intermediary of their Government, in practice through that of the Army Medical Corps.

With the support of Governments, the International Committee has created an International Institute for the

¹ Geneva 1921; Geneva 1925; The Hague 1928; Brussels 1930. (See *Handbook*, p. 214 sqq.)

**Collaboration with Authorities
in time of war.**

study of Ambulance Equipment, which is a real museum in this domain. It is housed in suitable premises in Geneva, not far from the Villa Moynier. These collections increase year by year, thanks to the generosity of certain National Red Crosses and Governments. It is at the disposal of all who are interested in this question or who wish to study it.

The equipment is divided into two categories:

1. Durable articles: means of transport, bedding, kitchen utensils, instruments and apparatus. If properly stored, these need only periodical overhauling.
2. Perishable articles which deteriorate in time, in spite of careful preservation: firstly, serums and vaccines, most drugs, dressings and all indiarubber articles.

The latter should not be stored in large quantities; contracts should be made with manufacturers for an abundant supply to National Societies in time of need. The support of the authorities may prove most useful in drawing up these contracts.

To obviate these difficulties in some degree, the Red Cross Societies should furnish their dispensaries and hospitals with perishable articles drawn from their reserves. Stores disposed of in this way should be replaced by corresponding purchases, to keep the stocks fresh. In certain cases, Governments might be induced to allow State or municipal hospitals to renew their stocks from the stores accumulated by the National Societies.

Finally, we may recall the fact that the National Societies should consult the proper authorities with a view to securing free transport of stores intended for the Red Cross, and to secure their exemption from customs duty.

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

Such applications to the authorities are often protracted and sometimes difficult. They should be made beforehand, so that every facility may be granted to the Red Cross from the moment it comes into action.¹

III. SUBSIDIARY ACTIVITIES.

Besides the assistance given by the Red Cross to the Medical Service, it must be ready to relieve prisoners. This task is indeed an essential matter; it is a domain in which the true Red Cross spirit can be manifested.

Sick or wounded prisoners, especially, will surely feel their captivity less in a Red Cross hospital than in a military establishment, even if the care they receive is no greater, nor more devoted. We would recommend that the authorities should entrust to the Red Cross the task of caring for sick and wounded prisoners in special hospitals, as well as in the sick wards of concentration camps.

In such camps the Red Cross, working in agreement with the commanding officer, will be able to exercise a beneficial influence in many ways. All these activities give the Red Cross and its members a splendid opportunity of exercising their charity.

However, as we saw during the Great War, there are not only prisoners of war, but also the civilians in enemy territory and in occupied districts. The fate of these unfortunate people, generally separated from their relatives, is indeed pitiable. Although the Geneva Convention and the Prisoners Code of 1929 do not mention them, it is the duty of the Red Cross to care for them and to try to alleviate their lot.

Interned civilians are subject to the Ministry of Justice or to the Home Office, and it is with these authorities

¹ See Final Act of the Geneva Convention of 1929, Recommendation No. 5.

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

that the National Societies will have eventually to cooperate.

The International Committee, which has devoted special attention to this question, is happy to announce that the Swiss Government intends to summon, as soon as may be convenient, a diplomatic Conference for the purpose of drawing up a third Convention, as a corollary to the two Conventions of 1929. The object will be to adopt formally the Draft Convention concerning the status and the protection of enemy civilians in territory occupied by, or belonging to, a belligerent, as adopted by the XVth International Conference at Tokio.

Information Bureaus.

In recent conflicts, the International Committee, was, practically speaking, the only medium through which scattered families could obtain news and information of their relatives in enemy territory.

Everyone has heard of the vast amount of work done by the Prisoners' of War Bureau from 1914 to 1918. In the Spanish war, similar activities, though on a smaller scale, have been not less efficacious.

The number of expressions of gratitude received by the International Committee show how highly its services have been appreciated.

Without the slightest doubt, in the event of a war the International Committee would do its utmost to organize a similar office. If it is to succeed, however, the Committee must be able to rely on the help of specialized services, under the guidance of trained social workers. The suggestion of the President of the Italian Red Cross, advocating the organization within the National Red Crosses of private enquiry agencies, answered this purpose among others.

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

The Societies should thus provide for the organization of such specialized services, either within the limits of their own activities, or within those of some other institution able to undertake such work. They must assure themselves of the indispensable cooperation of the Government, in order to obtain the desired information concerning the dead and the wounded from the Medical Service, and concerning civilian and military prisoners from the Ministry of Justice or from the Home Office.

Social Work.

During a war, and even after its cessation, the Red Cross Societies will be faced by numerous duties for which they should prepare in advance.

Thanks to the experience gained by their social services in time of peace, the National Societies will be better fitted than anyone to fulfil duties of a social kind towards mobilized men and their families, as also towards many people affected by the war. If a Red Cross is not powerful enough to undertake everything itself, it must at least see that this most valuable work is done by somebody.

In any case, and for all these branches of social activity, an organization must be provided. This task can be undertaken only after agreement with the authorities and with their consent and cooperation.

Air-raid Precautions.

The International Committee has made so many efforts to prevent, or at least to limit, chemical warfare, that it is not without deep regret that we are obliged to mention this branch of Red Cross work.

In most countries, the authorities responsible for air-

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

raid precautions apply to the Red Cross to provide for the care of victims of air bombardments.

Mere common sense and elementary humanity oblige the Red Cross to assist all victims of war. It cannot therefore refuse help to civilian populations suffering from the consequences of air-raids.

The Red Crosses therefore can render invaluable service in the help afforded to victims of chemical warfare. The National Societies can act only under precise orders from the authorities responsible for air-raid precautions. It is obvious that these responsible authorities must act in agreement with the Ministries of National Defence, before claiming the aid of the National Societies; and the latter, before taking any engagement, must be authorized to do so by the Army Medical Service.

IV. RELATIONS WITH THE AUTHORITIES.

Having seen what tasks and activities may fall to the Red Cross, we must now study the relations that exist, or that should exist, between the authorities and the National Societies.

If the Red Cross is to give really efficient support to the Medical Service, close cooperation between the two bodies must be established. The best equipped and the best organized Red Cross will find itself paralysed, or will secure but unsatisfactory results, if it does not receive precise instructions from the authorities.

The Medical Services and the Ministries responsible must define clearly the help they expect from the National Societies and should indicate the precise form it shall take.

They will need voluntary stretcher-bearers for the front, perhaps ambulance transport further in the rear, stretcher-bearers and workmen for the hospitals, at other

Collaboration with Authorities in time of war.

points detachments of nurses. Moreover, the National Red Crosses must be exactly informed how many nurses they must furnish and where these must be mobilized.

In certain countries the chief task of the Red Cross is to prepare and establish temporary hospitals and to ensure their functioning. As we have already said, the buildings in which these hospitals will be located should be indicated beforehand; in many cases this can be done, and the Medical Service will than reserve other buildings for its own use.

The Medical Service, or the competent Ministry, can alone give this information. Lastly, similar understanding should prevail between the Home Office, the Ministry of Health and the Red Cross as regards social and health activities.

All these problems must be studied in advance and conjointly by the Government authorities, who state their needs, and the Red Cross, which knows its possibilities and its resources.

In order to ensure this cooperation, it is not enough, in our opinion, that a few Government delegates be members of the Central Committee of the National Red Cross. To our mind, the most practical way of making this cooperation really effective, is to send as delegate to the Ministries concerned, more particularly to the heads of the Army Medical Service, a really qualified member of the Central Red Cross Committee.

This delegate should be nominated in agreement of the authorities, and should be, if possible, a member of the General Staff of the Army Medical Corps. He becomes, in fact, Chief Medical Officer of the Red Cross, and has to ensure the proper organization of the services the latter is requested to furnish. He will directly supervise the purchasing of stores, the training of the personnel and so on.

The Chief Medical Officer will be responsible to the

**Collaboration with Authorities
in time of war.**

Army Medical Service for keeping the aid of the Red Cross in a state of constant readiness.

Obviously, according to the size of the country, or other circumstances, further Medical Officers or Red Cross districts will be appointed to assist him. These assistants should also keep in close contact with the Army Medical Service of their districts.

As we have already remarked at the outset of this report, — and we think it necessary to repeat our opinion at its close — the organizations that are most perfect on paper are of no use. Practical organization alone is of value; and can be of value only if prepared in time of peace. It is the outcome of protracted effort demanding much thought and a great deal of time. It cannot be carried out at the moment of mobilization, when the entire life of a country is in confusion.

It is the plain duty of Red Cross Societies to be ready to respond to their country's call and to fulfil the task for which they were created.

And in this duty they must not fail.