

XVith INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CONFERENCE
LONDON 1938



SWEDISH RED CROSS

I. SWEDISH RED CROSS

AND ITS ACTIVITIES

1930—1937

STOCKHOLM 1938



His Majesty King Gustaf V of Sweden.
Patron of the Swedish Red Cross.



H. R. H. Prince Carl of Sweden.
President of the Swedish Red Cross.

Swedish Red Cross and its activities 1930—1937.

Organization etc.

New Regulations for the Swedish Red Cross have been approved by the King in Council, to apply as from Jan. 1st this year. According to these Regulations, a *President appointed by the King* shall be at the head of the Swedish Red Cross and also Chairman of the Central Council of the Society. At the same the King has also appointed a *Commissary General of the Volunteer Sanitary War Services*, who will take part in directing the activities of the Swedish Red Cross, more particularly with regard to its work as an auxiliary of the Medical Services of H. M. Forces and in connexion with civil air raid precautions. According to the previous Regulations, the *Royal Commissary of the Volunteer Sanitary War Services*, appointed by the King and responsible to him for his work, was also the President of the Swedish Red Cross Council. The new Regulations have thus divided the duties formerly incumbent on the Royal Commissary between two offices, viz. those of the President of the Swedish Red Cross, and of the Commissary General.

His Royal Highness Prince Carl of Sweden, who has been the Royal Commissary since 1906, is President of the Swedish Red Cross. The Commissary General is Lieutenant General Hultkrantz.

The members of the Council include a special representative of H. M. Forces, appointed by the King, and a representative of the Royal Medical Board of Sweden. The other members of the Council, numbering from 9 to 13, are elected by the Society for a period not exceeding three years at a time. The officers commanding the Medical Services of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, are entitled to attend the meetings of the Council, to take part in the discussions there, and to

make recommendations of matters relating to Swedish Red Cross cooperation in the sanitary war services.

According to its Regulations, the objects of the Swedish Red Cross are to act in time of war as an auxiliary to the Medical Services of H. M. Forces and in civil air raid precautions, preparing in time of peace for this work, and to assist in promoting national health.

The Council and the Red Cross Committees in the 24 districts and over 1 000 groups are composed with a view to promoting as far as possible cooperation between the Red Cross and the military and civil medical services, as well as with other authorities affected by the work of the Society. In all matters relating to Red Cross work in war, the Society has to cooperate with the authorities concerned, and follow the instructions issued by them. In any more important matters relating to the assistance given by the Swedish Red Cross in improving national health in Sweden, cooperation with the Royal Medical Board and the local health authorities is established.

The annual Government grants received by the Swedish Red Cross, and the cooperation with the Authorities prescribed in the Regulations sanctioned by the King, give to the Swedish Red Cross an official status as a permanent National Organization with social interests, aims, and responsibility, controlled by the State. This fact greatly facilitates its work.

An important and responsible task has now also been entrusted to the Swedish Red Cross in connexion with air raid precautions, viz. the training of nursing and ambulance staffs in the respective districts. For this purpose nurses, female samaritans to serve as their assistants, male nurses for hospital and ambulance work, and requisite reserves for these groups, have to be trained, in all over 15 000 persons. The object of this training is to prepare the staff for the work that must be done in air raids, viz. first aid in the local dressing stations to, and the transport of, gassed and wounded people. In the planning, establishment, and maintenance of this organization the Swedish Red Cross is intimately cooperating with the official air raid precaution organizations.

Activities.

The work of the Swedish Red Cross to promote national health has, especially in the last eight years, been marked by exceedingly rapid

and extensive progress in all branches, not least in the number of its members.

The membership, in particular, has practically doubled since 1930, and now amounts to no less than about 160 000, or about 2 ½ % of the total population of the country. This heavy increase in the membership is primarily due to the number of groups in the present 24 Red Cross districts having increased from 1930 to 1937 by no less than 440 to more than 1 000. The Red Cross is thus now gaining ground in large areas which had not previously been reached.

The Swedish Red Cross staff for *Social-hygienic and Nursing Services* in war and peace, now consists of:

Red Cross Nurses	2 010
also, on mobilization, nurses from other	
Nursing Institutions	900
Auxiliary War Nurses (V. A. D.)	490
Female Medical Gymnasts	590
District and other nurses in Red Cross employ	40
Female Samaritans in the Wilds	25
Visiting Housekeepers	86
Voluntary ambulance staff, male, for service	
on mobilization and in case of accidents	3 020

The Swedish Red Cross now controls

- 1 *Hostel* for 400 Red Cross Probationers and Nurses,
- 1 *Red Cross Nursing Home*, in which about 1 200 patients are treated annually, aggregating in 1937 20 000 days of treatment, with 1 800 operations performed,
- 1 *Large Cottage Hospital* with a maternity ward for 20 patients,
- 9 *Casual Wards*, in charge of District Nurses, with 4 to 6 beds in each, in the wilds of the far north and in the island districts. Number of treatment-days per annum 8 000—9 000,
- 25 *Maternity Homes* in remote areas with poor communications, far from any hospital,
- 14 *Children's Homes and Convalescent Homes* for children, mothers with children, and for Red Cross Nurses and Probationers,
- 34 *Summer Colonies* in the country, where city children can spend part of the summer,

- 70 *Public and Vapour Baths,*
- 210 *Red Cross First Aid Stations* along the main roads
- 19 *Child Welfare Institutions,* for prophylactic treatment of mothers and children,
- 4 *Refuges for the care of shipwrecked people,*
- 12 *Information Bureaux for Sailors* of all nationalities,
- 20 *Auxiliary Aid Stations on bathing beaches,*
- 270 *Ambulance and other cars,* belonging to the Red Cross or made available for Red Cross sick transports by contract,
- 2 *Completely equipped Dental Busses.*

In the cause of child welfare, the Swedish Red Cross has during the last twenty years arranged extensive *dental treatment* for school children in rural districts. Special arrangements have been made in 750 different places in the country, by which in 1937 alone nearly 51 300 school children had their teeth rationally treated by specially engaged dentists, who at the same time advised and instructed the parents and teachers present on the treatment of teeth.

These efforts of the Red Cross in behalf of national health have since 1928 been supplemented in 16 of the 24 districts by the *medical examination* of school children. In 1937 alone no less than 26 800 children in 400 schools were carefully examined by doctors, who at the same time advised and instructed the parents and teachers present how the children should be treated. Predisposition to serious disease, and physical defects, among the children have in this way been discovered in time, and special care provided for the children when needed.

In the north of Sweden, far from existing railways and the as yet very few roads, large areas are entirely cut off from the rest of the country for a great part of the year. The Swedish Red Cross has therefore provided *ambulance planes* and arranged *aerial transport* to carry injured persons rapidly to the hospitals, which are generally situated in the coast districts.

This aerial *ambulance service*, started on the initiative of the Swedish Red Cross in 1924, has now been taken over by the State, but the Red Cross planes are still also used. Experiments in the adaptation of civilian air craft to ambulance work are now also initiated.

The Red Cross has also done yeoman service in the transport of sick and injured in other parts of the country, and has provided *ambulance and other motor transport* for the conveyance of patients. At the present moment, more than 250 such vehicles are at the disposal of the Red Cross.

In many ways the Swedish Red Cross tries to give instruction and training in simple domestic hygiene and nursing, and in first aid in accidents and sudden illnesses. From 1916 to 1937 inclusive, 6 400 *instructional courses* in simple hygiene and nursing have been held, attended by over 130 000 people. In connexion with these courses, »health hours» have been arranged for school children by Red Cross teachers — 7 890 in 1937 alone —, to give the children simple and easily understood instruction on everyday hygiene, and to teach them suitable sanitary habits, by means of rules of health and conduct issued to them, richly illustrated health precepts inscribed on wall charts, etc.

The Red Cross Central Council has published numerous richly illustrated, popularly written *pamphlets* on hygiene and nursing, child welfare, dental care, etc., e. g. »Hälsan är allt» (Health is everything), »Allt för barnet» (Everything for the child), »Tandvård och folkhälsa» (Dental care and National Health), »Vår föda och folkhälsan» (Our Food and the National Health), »Kännetecken på några vanliga kirurgiska sjukdomar, som sakkunnigt och i tid behandlade oftast gå till hälsa» (Symptoms of some common surgical diseases which, if treated properly and in time, can generally be cured), »Råd rörande val av föda, som kan hålla skolbarn friska året runt» (Advice on the choice food to keep school children in good health all the year round), and a richly illustrated leaflet describing the social-hygienic activities of the Swedish Red Cross. More than 1 mill. copies in all of these have been distributed in the last ten years.

A number of *text books* have also been published, e. g. »Handledning vid olycksfall och sjukvård» (Guide to First Aid in Accidents and Home Nursing), »Första hjälpen vid olycksfall och hastigt insjuknande» (First Aid in Accidents and sudden Illness), »Anvisningar rörande första hjälpen vid olycksfall» (Instructions on First Aid in Accidents), »Medicinsk Uppslagsbok» (Medical Dictionary), »Hälsa och Friluftsliv» (Health and the Open-Air Life), »Mor och Barn» (Mother and Child), »Civilbefolkningens luftskydd» (Public Air Raid Precautions), »Ut-

bildning i gassjukvårdstjänst» (Training in Anti-Gas Treatment); more than 200 000 copies in all have been distributed.

During the recent severe depression, the Swedish Red Cross organized extensive relief work in all parts of the country, came to the aid of the youngsters by specially arranging *meals for children*, and also by providing clothing for those who needed such. In 1933 alone, more than 600 000 kronor¹ were collected for this purpose, besides nearly 500 tons of provisions and over 300 tons of clothing. Part of this money has afterwards also been used to render assistance in those parts of the country where unemployment has continued, so as to prevent malnutrition of the children.

The Junior Red Cross has always with great zeal taken part in the Red Cross work, procuring by their own efforts not only the requisite equipment, but also money for its own activities, for the care of sick children, and for sending delicate children into the country during the summer months.

During this eight-year period the Swedish Red Cross has by tombolas, bazaars, lotteries, gala performances, etc. and by bequests, gifts, etc. collected more than 4 million kronor, without which its social and hygienic activities could not have been as extensive as they have actually been.

In case of war the Swedish Red Cross will put at the disposal of the military medical authorities a large number of permanent and ambulatory hospitals and dressing stations, fully equipped and staffed, in all nearly 300 establishments of varying sizes, with 20 000 beds.

In case of epidemics or big accidents, the Red Cross will establish its own provisional hospitals, and will supply the civil medical authorities with nursing staffs and materials. For the equipment of such provisional hospitals, and for large scale lending to private homes or to summer colonies etc., the Red Cross keeps a stock of nursing materials (including beds and bedding), special nursing appliances, etc., to a total value of over 2½ million kronor. In addition, there is a special store of war service material worth several million kronor.

The *financial position* of the Swedish Red Cross is good. The organization has nearly 10 million kronor at call (bonds, etc.), real estate to a value of over 4 million kronor, and nursing materials and equip-

¹ 1 000 kronor is approximately £ 50.

ment worth nearly 5 millions, in all more than 18½ million kronor. An average amount of one million kronor has in recent years been spent annually by the Swedish Red Cross on social and hygienic work.

On various occasions the Swedish Red Cross has submitted proposals for the promotion of peace and good understanding between peoples and nations, and for humanizing war, e. g. for the abolition of gas attacks and the amelioration of war blockades, though so far unfortunately without any tangible results.



Emil Kihlströms Tryckeri A.-B.
Stockholm 1938

7618

527. 4. 38. 500.