

THE RED CROSS WHAT-HOW-WAY

By Charles Lee Bryson



AS NOW constituted, the American Red Cross is but 12 years old. It was chartered by congress in 1905, and is protected by various laws passed since that date. But it owes its existence to the convention of Geneva, held in 1863, and the treaty—often called the Red Cross treaty—of 1864, at which a number of civilized nations agreed that each should form an organization for the relief of the wounded in war, and that this organization of each should be respected by all the others.

The most powerful immediate force making for this treaty was a little paper written by Henri Dunant, a Swiss, describing the horrors of the battlefield of Solferino. He visited that battlefield after the French, Italian and Austrian armies had fought over it and had left 30,000 wounded to die unaided for, and he told so much of it that he was able to get the leading nations to send delegates to the Geneva convention, and so started the movement which has now developed into the Red Cross. A fine account of this achievement was in the Red Cross Magazine of May, 1917.

Though now acclaimed a leader in humanitarian work, the United States was then so little interested in the Red Cross that the treaty was not signed until 1882. But in 1905 the government awoke, at least in part, to the opportunity, and chartered the American Red Cross as it is today. The president of the United States is the active head of the Red Cross, and presides at its meetings. But so little influence has politics in this work of mercy that former President Taft is chairman of the central committee, by appointment of President Wilson. And the present writer wishes to say that, though he has been connected more or less closely with headquarters of the central division for two and a half years, he actually does not know the politics of another officer of either national or local organization. Like snakes in Ireland, politics in the Red Cross is not.

The government of the American Red Cross is vested in a central committee of eighteen members, six appointed by the president of the United States, the others elected by representatives of the members. And since the president himself is chosen by the people, the policy of the entire Red Cross is united very closely alike to the government and to the people. Since a central committee of eighteen is too unwieldy to transact routine business with dispatch, power is further concentrated in an executive committee of seven members, of whom five constitute a quorum. The chairman of the executive committee must, by law, be the chairman of the central committee.

How closely the Red Cross is identified with the government is shown by tracing, briefly, the positions held by its officers. As has been said, the president of the United States is president, and he appoints the chairman of the central committee and six of its members. The chairman of the central committee is also chairman of the executive committee of seven. The treasurer of the Red Cross is John Skelton Williams, comptroller of the currency of the United States, and the counselor of the Red Cross is John W. Davis, United States solicitor general.

Under former President Taft on the central committee are such men as Brig. Gen. Charles Bird of the United States Army; Rear Admiral William C. Bratsted, surgeon general of the United States navy; Maj. Gen. William C. Gorgas, surgeon general of the United States army; Robert Lansing, United States secretary of state; Franklin K. Lane, secretary of the interior, and Judge W. W. Morrow.

The work of the national organization is carried on under three great departments: One for military relief; one for civilian relief, and one for chapters. The composition of each will be briefly outlined.

The department of military relief is under Col. Jefferson Randolph Kean, United States army medical corps, a grandson of Thomas Jefferson. Under him are the medical bureau, in charge of the medical personnel of base hospitals, the first-aid instruction; the nursing bureau, in charge of nurses and nurses' aids for base hospitals, and women's classes in training; the service units to care for soldiers and sailors—ambulance companies, base hospitals, nurse detachments, sanitary detachments and general hospitals; and the Red Cross supply service, for the buying, storing and shipping of all kinds of supplies.

The department of civilian relief is under Ernest P. Bicknell, director general, with a long record of personal service in disaster relief. His department controls all relief work at domestic and foreign disasters of fire, flood and pestilence; the Relief of noncombatants in war, both here and abroad; the care of the families of soldiers and sailors; the town and country nursing service; and the sale of Christmas seals for the stamping out of tuberculosis.

The department of chapters is under E. H. Wells, director of chapters. It deals, through the directors of the nine territorial divisions, with the organization of new chapters, and the membership campaigns in those already formed.

The Red Cross Magazine, at first little more than a monthly bulletin which told, briefly, the doings of the organization, has now grown into a splendid publication (valued recently at \$1,000,000), which tells by clear pictures and vivid stories the history of the Red Cross for each month all over the world.

Each member of the Red Cross above the one-dollar class gets the Red Cross Magazine free, part of the dues going to the publication. The circulation, which was only 25,000 three years ago, is now about 200,000, and growing by leaps of 50,000 at a time. It has been predicted by men in the position to know best that within a few years it will be making \$250,000 a year clear profit for the Red Cross, instead of costing \$10,000 a month, as it did until a short time ago.

Under the national organization at Washington, the territory of the United States is divided into seven great divisions, each under the supervision of a division director, responsible to Washington, and standing between the national officers and the state and local organizations.

The unit of the Red Cross system is the chapter. This always covers some definite territory, usually

Very briefly stated, the American Red Cross is an organization to relieve human suffering, and its aim is to prepare, in time of peace and quiet, for its relief work in war, disaster or pestilence.

It works under the protection and with the aid of the government, and, being international in its scope, is recognized by and works in harmony with similar organizations in all civilized countries. But its strength comes from the people directly, who give of their time, their money and their lives to it.

Its reason for being is the same that has called into existence our hospitals, our asylums, our charity organizations—even our physicians—because it stands for a work which must be done and which cannot be done except by preparation in advance. Until the Red Cross was organized, the wounded on the battlefield and the victims of civil disaster alike had to go without care until amateur relief could be organized after the need had become imperative.

a large city or a county—sometimes several counties.

The chapter is governed, on a smaller scale, very much as the Red Cross as a whole is governed. It has its chairman and other officers, its board of directors and its executive committee. In whose hands the active work is carried on. In large chapters an executive secretary usually does most of the active work of the executive committee.

Each chapter is divided into a section for military relief and a section for civilian relief, much as the national organization is divided. And each section has its committees to carry out the various activities.

The section for military relief has its committees on: Red Cross; instruction; hospital supplies; warehousing and shipping; supplies for fighting men, and special committees for such work as organizing hospital companies, sanitary detachments, surgical sections and supply depots.

The section for civilian relief has its committees on: Care of families of soldiers and sailors; relief for noncombatants; care of discharged soldiers and sailors; training in volunteer civilian relief, and special committees as needed on local disaster, care of refugees and other kindred subjects.

How the Red Cross operates is perhaps best told by citing some of the concrete examples of its work. To begin with, two of the most recent instances of civilian disaster relief, take the tornadoes which devastated Newcastle and New Albany, Ind., at intervals of about two weeks.

When Newcastle was laid in ruins with the loss of a score of lives, and several hundred persons made homeless and thrown out of work, the present writer, learning the situation through telegraph and long distance telephone messages to the press, notified Division Director John J. O'Connor of Chicago. Within ten minutes Mr. O'Connor was calling for Red Cross nurses, surgeons, trained investigators, and arranging with Washington for whatever funds might be needed to start the work of rescuing the survivors, feeding and housing them, getting them back to work, and collecting, identifying and burying the dead. All night long, from his room in Chicago, he was putting this, that and the other agency to work at the end of a wire, and the dawn of the next day saw order coming out of chaos.

Then, and not before, Mr. O'Connor took train for the scene, and when he arrived, found his orders being carried out. He took personal charge, aided by the chairman and committees of the Indianapolis and other nearby chapters, and the work of rehabilitation went swiftly forward.

While the director was still at Newcastle he received a message that an even worse disaster had befallen New Albany. Again sending orders by wire for surgeons, nurses, investigators and supplies, he took train for the scene of the latest calamity, and again he arrived to find the system already at work. The living were cared for and work found for them, the dead buried, and all with the least possible delay and disorganization of the daily life of the community.

The June number of the Red Cross Magazine contains a succinct account of the splendid relief work accomplished.

The work of organizing base hospitals illustrates the forehanded methods of the Red Cross.

With a clarity of vision for which the country now blesses him, Colonel Kean called last autumn for the Red Cross to organize for the army and navy with the least possible delay 36 base hospital units. He did not want hospital buildings—what he wanted was 36 units of surgeons, dentists, apothecaries, orderlies, nurses and assistants, with all the cots, mattresses, bedding, laboratory apparatus, bandages, splints, surgical shirts, bed gowns, and the thousands of things that must be had before a single wounded man can be properly cared for. Each of these 36 base hospital units was to be enrolled and trained, all their permanent equipment bought, and all their consumable supplies bought or made, boxed, labeled and stored, so that the whole could be shipped by train or steamer on notice of a day or two.

Instantly, all over the country, the division directors passed the word to their chapters, and the various committees took up the work of forming base hospital units. Under the supervision of Washington itself the surgeons and nurses were chosen and enrolled. Purchasing agents bought at the lowest possible price the equipment. Under each chapter engaged in the work a committee on hospital supplies got standard patterns and specifications from the war department, and set hundreds and thousands of women to sewing on the bandages, wound dressings and hospital garments.

All that was long before the United States

gave up hope of peace. When, finally, the nation declared war, the 36 base hospitals were completely organized, equipped and supplied, and back of them was a great body of men and women trained to the work of keeping them supplied.

That is how the Red Cross works in all its manifold activities. The heads of the organization—and that means the heads of the nation—determine what is needed, and through the division directors to the chapters goes the word of what Washington wants—and instantly the people, on whom rests the Red Cross, begin to supply it.

Belgium was violated, and ten millions of helpless civilians left starving and freezing. The Red Cross to the rescue, and at President Wilson's call money and supplies were raised and sent over, to be there distributed by Red Cross agents.

Serbia was crushed, and stricken with typhus fever. There went the American Red Cross, with strong and capable surgeons and skilled nurses, backed by money and medicines and supplies furnished by the Red Cross. It cost the lives of some of the finest of the Red Cross workers, but typhus was stamped out and thousands upon thousands saved.

There was an earthquake at Messina, Italy. The American Red Cross was there with surgeons and nurses, food and clothing—yes, even with portable frame houses "made in America" to house the victims until they could rebuild their homes.

There was a great famine in China. There, too, was the American Red Cross, not only helping feed the starving, but with a commission of some of the most famous engineers of the war department, to whom China entrusted the task of spending \$50,000,000 on a system of works to prevent the overflow of the great river which yearly destroyed crops and caused famine.

That is how the Red Cross works. Why the work is done by the Red Cross is easiest of all to explain, though perhaps least understood by the public. It is because the work of preparing beforehand to meet unforeseen emergencies, and of alleviating human suffering, has never been undertaken by any other agency. In the words of the old saw, "everybody's business is nobody's business."

It seems almost incredible, but after all the centuries of war and agony, no nation in history ever went to war with an organization capable of caring for the men wounded on the battlefield, to say nothing of the victims of rapine, disease, famine and pestilence that stalked across the land after the armies.

Never, until this present year of grace, has there ever been a base hospital organized, in time of peace, to care for the wounded after a battle. There is a small medical corps with the army, yes; but it can merely pass the wounded back to field and evacuation hospitals, giving only a temporary dressing—often not even that. There are always home hospitals, too. But the gap between them, now filled by base hospital organizations, has never heretofore been filled until thousands lay on the field dying of thirst and fever and loss of blood for lack of that very thing.

After the battle of the Marne, in the present war, the Red Cross facilities were so limited that men lay in the scorching sun on the battlefield for two, three, four, and even five, days with not even a drop of water, nor a bandage on their wounds. It cost thousands of arms and legs that could have been saved, cost many a life needlessly spent, and the anguish endured can never be voiced.

That is why the Red Cross is here. It may be said that the governments of the various countries should have met the need. True—but they never did. All governments are more or less bound down by precedent, constitutional and legislative limitations, politics and short-sightedness. And it has now been found that the Red Cross, protected and encouraged by the government, can do quickly and well many things which the government could not do for itself.

Speaking locally and selfishly, there are strong personal reasons why every American should help the Red Cross. In this war, it may be you or me, your brother or mine, whose life is saved by the bandages the Red Cross is making. Here at home, it may be your house or mine blown up or storm-wrecked or flood-swept; your family or mine left destitute by any one of a score of disasters. And in that case we ourselves would benefit by the ministrations of the Red Cross.

From the standpoint of the business man, a strong and active Red Cross is an insurance policy. When disaster comes, it is always the business man who is called from his office or store to take up the unfamiliar task of raising funds, investigating cases of destitution, overseeing the purchase of supplies and their distribution, and getting the survivors back to where they can earn their living again. But with a trained Red Cross the disturbance of normal life is at a minimum. Almost before a citizen's committee could be called together, capable and experienced men, directed by the head of a division, himself under orders from Washington, lays a firm and steady hand on affairs, and relief is given surely, swiftly, justly, and the business man does not have to spend valuable days and weeks at work for which he has no training.

Nationally and locally, the Red Cross is the best accident insurance any people can have.

ISN'T THIS SILLY?

"Arch," she of the high arches and arched eyebrows said, archly, "do you love me?"
"Why, of course, why shouldn't I, Gladys? You've got the Gladys rags in this town and when I know you're my own little Glad, I'm Gladys I can be."

PROMINENT PEOPLE

PROMINENT IN Y. M. C. A. WORK



Credit for the successful \$4,000,000 war fund campaign recently made is given to John R. Mott, general secretary of the international committee of the Y. M. C. A. Just before he was appointed with Ellhu Root on the American mission to Russia, Mr. Mott had mapped out the general scheme and was preparing to put all of his energy into the work. President Wilson, by selective draft, placed a heavy strain on the association by taking him on the Russian commission. Mr. Mott was so thoroughly acquainted with Russian conditions, as a result of his student talks and other association activities there in the last 18 years, that it was believed he could represent the United States in the present crisis better even by going to Russia than by working here.

Mr. Mott has given practically his whole time to the relief and comfort of the men on the battlefields of Europe during the last three years. Among his friends he is known as the creative genius of the work in prison camps. It was he who recognized the need of doing something to remove the misery of idleness, with its tendency toward viciousness, among the prisoners. He went to Germany in the fall of 1914 and succeeded, after some difficulty, in getting permission to send American Y. M. C. A. secretaries to the prison camps, where all sorts of organizations were effected to keep the men physically and morally sound.

BOER SOLDIER AND STATESMAN

Gen. Jan Christian Smuts, the minister of finance and defense of the South African Union government, who is now in England and aroused great enthusiasm there by a recent speech in support of the empire, has achieved reputation along many different lines of expression and activity. In the first place, he made a name for himself as a soldier in the Boer war, where he took up arms under his friend General Botha and became known as one of the most capable and dashing cavalry leaders in that wonderfully resourceful army that held the British squares so long at bay, fighting them after the American fashion in the days of Concord and Lexington.



Then, after the war was over, he was the one man who dared to stand up before his fellow countrymen and speak in praise of Cecil Rhodes, the empire builder, who was the worst executed man in Boer land, and to place him alongside of Oom Paul as a man who had the best interests of the South African people at heart.

He is looked upon as the logical successor of Botha in the position of premier, and he stands today as the distinctive connecting link between the old Boers and those striving for democracy of the Rand and the champion of those who put the welfare of the Transvaal before the interests of cosmopolitan finance. Stanch and true to the traditions of the old order, he is regarded by the English government as a progressive leader and a safe and loyal representative of the new dispensation.

WOMAN IN HIGH FEDERAL POSITION



Mrs. Frances C. Axtell was on January 1 appointed by the president to serve upon an executive commission—the first woman to be chosen for such a post.

Mrs. Axtell is a Western woman, coming from Washington, which gives women the privilege of equal rights with men, and she has served her state in many public capacities. For her, therefore, it was no new thing to be called upon to take an important position upon a national board.

The position which Mrs. Axtell was called to fill is that of United States employees' compensation commissioner and the commission, which has its headquarters in Washington, began active work this year. The United States employees' compensation commission is a new division of the federal service. It is composed of three commissioners, appointed by the president. These commissioners are B. M. Little, Mrs. Frances C. Axtell and John J. Keegan. Mrs. Axtell brings trained experience to her new federal post. She has sat in state legislature and served on state boards for the past ten years. As a member of the Washington state legislature in 1910 she was conspicuous for efforts which resulted in the passage of a law establishing a minimum wage for women in that state.

RECOGNIZED AERONAUTIC EXPERT

Gen. George O. Squier is a man who achieves things. While in the signal corps as a colonel he was placed in charge of aeronautics and with but a limited amount of money to expend he started out to develop this service for the United States army.

His idea was to specialize in the various branches of this arm of the service and to put the members of his corps through a most intensive training. The result was that when congress finally awakened to a true realization of what aeronautics meant to an army and increased his appropriation, General Squier found himself in a position to expend this appropriation judiciously. The result is that the American flier today ranks foremost among the fliers of the world.

United States being the last great nation to adopt airplanes for war, General Squier was confronted in the present conflict with the realization that American manufacturers were not prepared to turn out air machines fast enough. He immediately perfected arrangements whereby the machines for this purpose will be procured in France. All of the machines for the training of aviators will be American-made.

General Squier is regarded as a brilliant scientist and is credited with several modern-day inventions in telegraphy and other means of transmission.

