

Sweden

The Centenary Celebrations of the Swedish Red Cross took place in Stockholm from October 20-23, 1965. They marked the culmination of a number of events which were held in the course of the year with the object of focusing attention to the work of the National Society throughout the whole country. The ICRC was represented by Mr. Frédéric Siordet, Vice-President, and the League by Mr. William E. Stevenson, Vice-President and Mr. Henrik Beer, Secretary-General and a number of National Societies had delegated several of their officers to attend this Centenary.

At the House of the Nobility on the evening of October 20, a reception was offered by the Swedish Red Cross to its guests from abroad and to the leaders of the Swedish Red Cross.

The following morning was devoted to a display of some of the Stockholm district Society's activities, such as first-aid, the collection of blood from donors and also a special field of activity, namely the voluntary hostess service for hospital patients. In the evening an official dinner offered by the Swedish Government was attended by the guests.

On October 22 there was a large meeting at the Stockholm Town Hall.¹ This official ceremony was presided over by Her Royal Highness Princess Sibylla, Honorary Chairman of the Swedish Red Cross. In the course of the ceremony, medals were bestowed on various members of the Red Cross, and several foreign guests, in turn, paid tribute to the successful work carried out in Sweden under our common emblem. In the name of the ICRC, Mr. Siordet delivered the following address :

As the senior institution of the Red Cross, the International Committee is pleased to have this opportunity to express to your Royal Highness and the Swedish Red Cross as a whole, its congratulations, its admiration and its good wishes.

The Swedish Red Cross may well be proud of its achievements in this country. But it has not contented itself with attaining a leading position among humanitarian institutions within the country. It has acquired a place

¹ *Plate:* Official ceremony at the Stockholm Town Hall.

of importance in the world by reaching out beyond the frontiers and the seas to bring to bear its solicitude for all suffering humanity wherever it calls for help. Swedish Red Cross achievements for the benefit of the victims of the two world wars, under the leadership of Prince Charles and Count Bernadotte, will never be forgotten. And it would be difficult to give an adequate account of relief actions of all sorts in which it has taken part since that time, and is still doing in one form or another, for appeals to its humanitarian spirit are never in vain. It is therefore right that on this day of commemoration one and all should pay a tribute of gratitude.

Such a full past and present are a pledge for the future. It is therefore much more than good wishes that the ICRC can express on this occasion : it can declare its firm belief that the next century of Swedish Red Cross activity will be ever more fruitful and glorious for the greater benefit of suffering humanity and for the advent of friendship and peace among men and nations.

On October 23, at the Saint-Erik's Hall, the afternoon began with the main Centenary events, presided over by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Bertil and Princess Sibylla, in the presence of 3400 delegates from all districts. Mr. E. von Hofsten first greeted the dignitaries present and expressed the joy and pride, on this magnificent anniversary day, of the Society of which he is President. Mr. O. Stroh, Secretary-General, then introduced the foreign guests and Mr. Siordet addressed the gathering in the name of all the Red Cross institutions present. He recalled the important part played by the Swedish Red Cross in the development of the movement and he stressed how that Society had exemplified the principle of universality.

The next speaker was Mr. S. Aspling, Minister for Social Affairs ; he paid tribute to the National Red Cross and described the depth and lasting nature of the Society's roots among the Swedish people. He quoted examples of what the 600,000 members of the Society are accomplishing in a number of fields. He concluded by expressing the Government's thanks for the large-scale and important activities both within and without the country and he extended the Government's good wishes for the movement's ever greater success.

Mr. Henrik Beer, Secretary-General of the League and former Secretary-General of the Swedish Red Cross, then delivered an

appropriate address on "The future of the Red Cross". He gave an over-all picture of Red Cross operations in the whole world, describing how, little by little, in practice and by intervening in ever more distant countries, the Red Cross became universal. He concluded by saying :

We can express our gratitude by assuming responsibility in an active manner. Each and every one of us has something to contribute and can also induce others to do the same. If we agree to assume our proper share of responsibility, putting enough enthusiasm and imagination into our efforts, there is no reason to recoil from our future important tasks. We have the human resources ; if we can use them properly, here in Sweden and in the rest of the world, we can with composure and joy start the second century.

After Mr. C. Kjellberg, Chairman of the Stockholm district Red Cross, had spoken about Red Cross Week, which was inaugurated on the occasion of the Centenary, a performance of "The Words that Remain" was given. This was a moving illustration — in mime, dance and commentary — of the Red Cross spirit and it was concluded with a parade of flags.¹

A dinner in the evening was presided over by His Royal Highness Prince Bertil, Prince Regent ; this was attended by several thousand people in the St. Erik's Hall ; it was the conclusion in a popular manner of the enthusiastically acclaimed ceremonies, all of which were impressive for their distinction, the confidence they inspired and for their organization which was both impeccable and liberal.

¹ *Plate:* A parade of flags concludes the event demonstrating the Red Cross spirit.