

# Sundry news

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knows how many men, how many women and what kinds of equipment it must supply; it knows its resources. It is to a large extent able to organize and train its relief units according to a definite plan, so that they may identify themselves with the army, which knows beforehand that they will become its auxiliaries. For the International Committee of the Red Cross, the position is quite different. Except with regard to the Agency, no practical preparation can be made. This is not only because it has no financial resources, but because it does not know for what to prepare. Where will war break out? Between which States? In which fields will it be right and possible for the International Committee to intervene? The steps that it is permitted to take in the name of human charity will be determined by events, and even then it will still be necessary to obtain the consent of the belligerents. It is quite impossible to ask permission beforehand to take measures of which the nature, urgency and scope, and therefore of course, the ways and means, are all unknown. That is the difficulty of the International Committee of the Red Cross; what is required of it is improvisation - the very thing which the Red Cross originally set out to prevent! Even in the case of the Prisoners of War Agency, practical preparation can only be sketched out, for no-one knows even where the work is to be done; everything will depend on the centre of gravity of the war and on the possibility of communication. "A Central Agency of information regarding prisoners of war shall be established in a neutral country," says Article 79 of the 1929 Convention. "The International Committee of the Red Cross shall, if they consider it necessary, propose to the Powers concerned the organization of such an agency."

The International Committee "shall propose." All it can do, is not to delay matters by proposing and awaiting consent; as soon as war breaks out, it must establish the Agency. That is what it decided to do, and for that it prepared. Some of its members and staff had belonged to the 1914-1918 Agency. Their memories and experiences were useful. In May 1938, they set to work; devised a system, evolved a plan. They decided on the form of the index-cards; and on the wording; they secured premises and assistants; they prepared beforehand the text of the notifications. In short, they constructed a "shadow" agency.

Then war broke out. On the first of September, 1939, Poland was invaded. On the third of September, Great Britain and France went to war with Germany. That very day, four notifications left Geneva, informing the belligerents that the International Committee of the Red Cross was ensuring the establishment of the agency contemplated in Article 79 of the Prisoners of War Convention.

The Committee waited only to take possession of the premises put at its disposal by the Genevese authorities, to make the necessary arrangements there, to collect equipment and furniture, to call together and train the staff, and then, on September 14th, the "Central Agency for Prisoners of War" was officially opened.

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#### SUNDRY NEWS.

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The Annual Seismological Report concerning Swiss earthquakes during 1945 has been compiled by Dr. E. Wanner of Zurich. Seismographs are installed at the Swiss Observatories of Zurich, Chur, Neuchâtel, Basel and Brig, and during the year 85 near earthquakes and 189 strong distant earthquakes were registered. There were ten earth tremors with epicentres in Switzerland which were felt by people during the year. None of these had a greater intensity than V on the Rossi-Forel Scale, so that none reached destructive intensity. The greatest three tremors were (1) May 13th at Freiburg, (2) October 13th, at Engadine and (3) November 10th, at Wildhorn.

The oldest inhabitant in Pfaffikon (Zurich) has died at the age of 93 in the person of David Furrer. The deceased, was from 1902 - 1934 "Feldkommissar" of the 4th Division. He was for many years a director of the "Volksbank Wetsikon." (A.T.S.)

A railway man returning home from his work in the early hours of the morning was attacked in the Stampfenbachstrasse in Zurich by a woman, who hit him on the head with a small axe. The man collapsed and the woman tried to extract his wallet. On shouting for help the woman disappeared without the wallet. The attacker, an Austrian subject, was later on arrested when trying to pass the frontier at Diepoldsau. (A.T.S.)

The electors of Soubey in the Clos du Doubs district have elected Charles Streuillet, as President of the community. Streuillet, who is 21 years old, is the youngest President of a community in Switzerland. (A.T.S.)

A donor at Leubringen, near Bienne, has offered her property, including several acres of land, estimated to be worth 123,000.-frs. to the town of Bienne. (A.T.S.)

The administrators of the Marcel Benoist Foundation have awarded the Marcel Benoist prize, amounting to 20,000.-frs., to Dr. Alexander von Muralt, Professor at the University of Berne, for his work on "Die Signalübermittlung im Nerven system." (A.T.S.)

"Alpar" (Schweiz. Luftverkehrs A.G.) in Berne have gone into liquidation. (A.T.S.)

The senior partner of the well-known firm Hasler, A.G., in Berne, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. (A.T.S.)

The late Alois Harder from Niederbüren (Berne) has left an amount of 20,000.-frs. to the community of Niederbüren for charitable purposes. (A.T.S.)

The late Mlle Hélène Dinichert, the sister of the former Swiss Minister in Stockholm has left an amount of 10,000.-frs., to the "District du Lac" in Murten, and 1,000.-frs. to the Swiss Red Cross. (A.T.S.)

Pater Fridolin Utz, a member of the Dominican order, has been appointed Professor of Theology at the University of Fribourg. Dr. Vincent Kiper has been nominated Professor of Philosophy. (A.T.S.)

Professor T. Reichstein, Professor in ordinary for organic chemistry at the University of Basle, has received the title of doc honoris causa of the Sorbonne in Paris. Dr. F. Jaeger, Professor of Geography at the University of Basle, has been dismissed from his post for activities against the security of the State. (A.T.S.)

A woman employee of the "Gemeindekasse" in Wilchingen (Schaffhausen), has been arrested for embezzlement. The amount in question is reported to be 20,000.-frs. (A.T.S.)

Professor Elouard Bauer has been appointed rector of the University of Neuchâtel. (A.T.S.)

The death is reported from Geneva of Léon Martin, a well-known solicitor and former President of the Swiss Lawyers Association, at the age of 73. (A.T.S.)

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#### NOTICE TO MEMBERS.

Our Secretary has left Auckland for a trip to Switzerland, and the Committee appointed Mr. A. Moosberger as Acting-Secretary until the end of our financial year. Please forward your Subscriptions or Correspondence to:-

Mr. A. Moosberger,  
129 Crummer Road,  
AUCKLAND. W.2.

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