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COMMUNIST ATTACK ON THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS COMMITTEE.

There have been recently combined attacks by the Communist Press, both here and abroad, against the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva. In this country the "Daily Worker" has excelled in tirade against past and present members of the Committee.

On the occasion of the International Red Cross Conference, which took place in Toronto early last month, Dr. Victor Nef, Swiss Minister to Canada, told the plenary session, that no other body could have fulfilled the committee's task in a better way.

Dr. Nef said the International Red Cross Committee was fully independent of the Swiss Government, and that there was not the slightest administrative or political correlation between the two. But he added: "On the other hand, the proximity of Geneva (headquarters of the International Red Cross Committee) to the capital of Switzerland, no doubt allows us to better observe its activity and thus pass judgement on it."

Dr. Nef said, although the committee was composed of 25 Swiss members, the very discussion of the conference proved that a committee composed of delegates from 25 different nations could not have done a better task.

If the committee was composed of 25 nationalities "it would become a political organization, with political considerations guiding or at least influencing it." The committee would become ineffective, would lose its independence, and this would completely nullify its endeavours to do its work in the interests of humanity.

Giving a short summary of Switzerland's history as a neutral nation, Dr. Nef said his country still offered "the best guarantee for impartiality." It was, therefore, not a coincidence that the whole movement of the Red Cross had sprung up in Switzerland. The neutrality of the International Red Cross Committee was closely linked with its location in Geneva, which was the cradle of the whole movement, said Dr. Nef.

Speaking of the committee's work, Dr. Nef said its report spoke for itself. He added: "If, here and there, it has fallen down to some extent on its program, it is neither due to the composition of the committee, nor its location, nor to its honest endeavours, but to factors which are beyond its control, and I am afraid, beyond the control of any organization in existence."

This was no uncertain slap at several Communist countries which have repeatedly hampered the work of the International Red Cross Committee.

In a clear, concise statement, Dr. Nef rebuffed the Red charges, explained the International Committee's neutrality and international status, and also its relations with the Swiss government.

Dr. Nef, who said he was speaking as the Swiss Government delegate to the Red Cross meetings, was answering Gen. Nikolai Slavin, leader of Russia's Red Cross delegation.

Gen. Slavin had called the International Red Cross Committee "an absurdity which infringes the rights

of the League of Red Cross Societies as it puts the committee above the League." He launched criticism of the International Red Cross Committee during discussion on a motion to adopt the amended statutes of the International Red Cross. These had previously been approved in the legal sub-commission, the general commission and by the council of delegates and board of governors.

In each case Russia and other Communist delegations opposed them, but the West had outvoted the Communists every time. The attack by Gen. Slavin and several of his associates from Red China and Rumania, was probably the Communists' final token onslaught against the International Red Cross Committee at the Toronto conference.

(The Swiss delegation were composed as follows: Delegation of the Bundesrat: Dr. Victor Nef, Chairman; Oberstbrigadier H. Meuli, Oberfeldarzt; Roy Hunziker, Legationsrat; Isidor Sembinelli, Konsul; Delegation of the Swiss Red Cross: Dr. G. A. Bohny, president of the Swiss Red Cross.)

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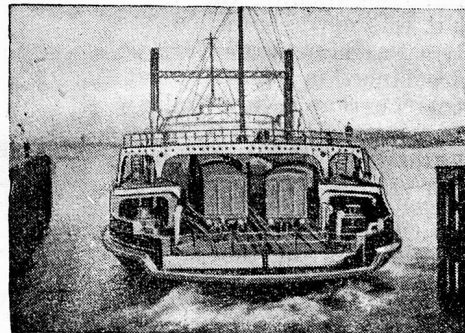
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