

Re-appraisal of the Role of the Red Cross

Initial exchange of views on the Tansley Report Recommendations

In response to the desire expressed by many National Societies, the first general discussion of the final report on the re-appraisal of the role of the Red Cross took place on 30 October under the chairmanship of Mr. A. Hay, President of the ICRC.

This informal and lively discussion enabled some forty National Societies to exchange views on this important subject. The conclusions which may be drawn are summarized below:

About thirty National Societies replied to the League-ICRC questionnaire on the Tansley Report; those which have not replied are requested to do so before the end of the year.

Although some National Societies are of the opinion that the Tansley Report does not justify the cost entailed, most of them consider the report has filled a need.

Almost all the National Societies which took the floor said they were prepared to discuss the Tansley Report in detail, first within the Red Cross—i.e. during the meeting of the Council of Delegates at Bucharest in October 1977—and second, with governments during the Twenty-third International Conference of the Red Cross.

The main comments concerned the fundamental role of the Red Cross which, according to Tansley, is to provide emergency relief, unconditionally and impartially whenever and wherever there is need for protection and assistance as a result of natural disaster or conflict. Most of those who took the floor felt that this did not give sufficient weight to community service which National Societies give daily in normal times.