

unconcerned about the misfortunes of another. When a national disaster strikes one nation, the others go immediately to its aid.

The Red Cross (Red Crescent, Red Lion and Sun) Societies have been particularly active in this field. The Red Cross Idea was originally directed only towards the care of wounded and sick on the battle-fields, but with the development of these Societies it has been extended much farther afield. The Centenary of the Red Cross Idea was in fact celebrated two years ago. The Idea was born on the battle-field of Solferino in 1859.

The ideal which guides our movement has, however, always been upheld by the Icelandic people and it can be traced back to the ancient sagas. Thus the Saga of Viga-Glums relates the part played by his wife during the Battle of Hrisateig (about 1000 AD) in calling women to her aid to dress the wounds of the survivors of either side. One man's shoulder was hewn off and exposed his lung ; this Saga says that Halldora dressed the wound and remained with him until the end of the battle.

The Red Cross may be looked upon as the first example of an international organisation for mutual aid in time of danger. It is comforting, for instance, to know that during January ten milk distribution centres were opened under the auspices of the Icelandic Red Cross for refugee children in Morocco and that this Society sent a contribution towards the building of a new hospital in Agadir to replace the one destroyed by the earthquake.

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## Italy

The provincial Committee of the Milan branch of the Italian Red Cross has recently made an innovation which would seem to be unique in the Red Cross world. A 24-hour emergency medical service has been set up to which requests can be made to visit people in their own homes. An ambulance with a doctor or a surgeon in attendance can be made immediately available to the required address merely by dialling a number. The ambulance contains

everything necessary for medical or surgical treatment, including a blood transfusion unit and up-to-date equipment for treatment by oxygen and resuscitation. If required, an oxygen-bottle can be left with the sick person.

The Milan Committee possesses six ambulances of this type which are posted in different parts of the town. They have radio-telephonic links with each other and can furthermore transport sick persons throughout Italy and even abroad. The service is free for members of the Red Cross.

The inestimable benefits of such a service in a large town can be readily imagined and the Milan Committee of the Italian Red Cross is to be congratulated for its enterprise.

We have recently received figures indicating, for each type of illness, the number of requests made to the emergency medical service to visit people in their homes between June and December, 1960. That these calls totalled 539 during that period conclusively proves the usefulness and effectiveness of this new activity.

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## **Pakistan**

From Karachi the ICRC has received news concerning the joint annual General Meeting of the Pakistan Red Cross and the St. John Ambulance Association, which was held some time ago, attended by a large audience. The meeting was presided over by Field Marshal Ayub Khan, President of Pakistan, who is also the President of these two institutions. After welcoming the delegates, the President reminded his listeners of the threat, which now hangs over the world, of a war, and expressed his hope in the Red Cross, whose humanitarian work represents such an important and calming element for the maintenance of peace.

The President then went on to speak of the work carried out by the Pakistan Red Cross, the St. John Ambulance Association