either in the Swiss economy, or in Swiss political or civil life. The International Committee is thus in no sense international in its composition, an important point to remember.

The Committee, like the League, is a "voluntary" organization. As will be seen, it is recognized by most governments but is neither a governmental nor an inter-governmental body. Unlike the League, the Committee functions chiefly in time of war; it exists because war persists. It was created to mitigate the hardships caused by war and especially to help those suffering from the immediate effects of fighting. In particular, it has successfully sponsored international treaties for the protection of the sick and wounded, of prisoners of war, and, most recently, of civilians overrun by the fighting. These treaties, taken collectively, are commonly spoken of as the "Geneva Conventions". Most countries of the world are, in greater or less degree, now bound by some or all of these covenants. Further, particular functions are assigned to the International Committee itself in the carrying out of some of these treaties. For example in Canada, during the Second World War, a representative of the ICRC (a Swiss) constantly visited enemy prisoners of war and internment camps and performed for the inmates such acts of mercy as were stipulated in the Geneva Conventions or otherwise agreed upon with the enemy. Similarly, representatives of the ICRC (also Swiss) visited Canadian prisoners of war and internees in German hands. The ICRC assisted in the exchange of prisoners, the delivery of letters, news and parcels, and many other activities.

Thus, while the International Committee is a non-governmental agency, and in fact fiercely defends its independence, its usefulness depends nevertheless upon its recognition by governments and their willingness to allow it to exercise behind and across battle-lines the privileges and duties which the treaties envisage. Without the support, or at least the tolerance, of governments, the Committee cannot function, and, without the Committee or some adequate substitute, the hardships of war may be increased for millions of combatants and non-combatants and will be immensely intensified for many thousands of the most unfortunate. It is this Committee which, with very fair success in the South and with no success in the North, is now trying to do its job in Korea.

## Same Humanitarian Aim

How do such different bodies as the League and the Committee manage to work together? The basic answer is, of course, that, as they have the same great humanitarian aim, there is a good deal of give and take between them. The constitutional answers are that the executive organs and the secretariats of the two bodies are interlocked at various levels and that they have a common "supreme governing body" called the International Red Cross Conference — the body which has just completed its eighteenth session. In the intervals between the quadrennial sessions of the Conference there exists a Standing Commission of the Conference and, in practice, a good deal of Red Cross policy-making is in the hands of the "three presidents" — the executive heads respectively of the Standing Commission, the International Committee, and the League.

Another matter requiring explanation is the presence of governments at the sessions of the supreme governing body of a non-governmental organization. It is only at the quadrennial Conferences that governments participate in the activities of the International Red Cross. The Statutes of the Conference call for invitations to all those governments (or the *heirs* of those governments) which have *signed* (not necessarily ratified) *any* (not necessarily the most recent) of the Geneva Conventions (the first of which dates back to 1864). This broad rule lets in pretty nearly anybody, the more readily since the traditions and spirit of the Red Cross movement are universal and hospitable. Thus, there was no doubt of the admissibility to the Toronto Conference of the Cominform nations and other Communist states, or, to cite an