

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 8, 1989

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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[*English*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty to inform the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker.

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### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

#### INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS DAY

**Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations):** Mr. Speaker: today, on the eighth of May, I rise in the House to draw your attention to International Red Cross Day and to pay tribute to the thousands of Canadians and millions of people all over the world who have dedicated their lives to promoting the humanitarian principles of the International Red Cross movement.

In 1988 and 1989, the International Red Cross is celebrating its 125th anniversary. As part of the celebrations, the International Red Cross Committee and the national associations have asked the governments of all countries to commemorate International Red Cross Day.

The Government of Canada, with its unflinching dedication to the ideals and principles of the Red Cross movement, wishes to make this day a special occasion.

[*English*]

Many Members will have noticed a special display outside the Parliament buildings containing the distinctive Red Cross flag. That flag was first flown in Canada by the founder of the Canadian Red Cross, Surgeon Major George Sterling Ryerson, during the North West Rebellion in 1885.

The Canadian Red Cross Society was later given official recognition in 1909 with the adoption by Parliament of the Canadian Red Cross Society Act. Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada believes that one of

the most important functions of the Red Cross movement is the humanitarian assistance it provides to persons suffering the ravages of war. In an ideal world where armed conflict would be but a sad memory, such assistance would not be necessary. However, we are all tragically reminded on a daily basis of the utter havoc such conflicts can wreak and how we must strive to relieve the sufferings of the victims of those unfortunate events.

[*Translation*]

The Canadian Government, through the Canadian International Development Agency, has worked closely with the International Committee and the Canadian Red Cross to provide international assistance to those regions where armed conflicts are taking place.

Today, the Government wishes to announce that a contribution of \$150,000 is being made through CIDA so that a Canadian medical and hospital team can be sent to Pakistan this August.

The team will be located in Peshawar, in Pakistan, where it will provide Afghan refugees with badly needed medical and hospital services.

Canada is also pleased to announce its participation in an independent international telecommunications network established by the Red Cross. The Canadian Government, through the Department of Communications, has granted permission to the Canadian Red Cross for establishing and operating a radio station that will be used to transmit and receive urgent messages.

By extending this telecommunications network to Canadian territory, the Red Cross will be able to organize relief operations more quickly and more lives will be saved.

• (1110)

[*English*]

One of the most important developments that occurred 125 years ago was the adoption of the first Geneva Convention for the protection of the victims of armed conflict. Since the adoption of that instrument, international humanitarian law has progressed, culminating in the adoption of the four 1949 Geneva Conventions, and the two additional Protocols of 1977.