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SPEECH BY PRESIDENT SHEARES AT THE WORLD RED CROSS DAY DINNER
ON SATURDAY, 14TH MAY 1977 AT THE ISLAND BALLROOM,
SHANGRI-LA HOTEL AT 7.00 P.M.

21 MAY 1977
Acc. No. NARC
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The Red Cross movement was generated on account of the need to furnish assistance and relief to victims of war. The humanitarian principles which underlie its operations also continues in times of peace. Therefore it participates in disaster relief.

But this international movement and its complex organisation cannot remain idle waiting for a conflict or a natural disaster to occur. Rightly it is also dedicated to the improvement of health, prevention of diseases and the mitigation of suffering in the community in ordinary times.

It is a familiar sight to see members of the Society on parade in their smart uniforms. They are a welcome presence in sports meetings, parades and other large gatherings where their skill in first aid and nursing care may be needed occasionally.

The occasional assistance given in times of emergencies and during wars and strife or disasters have an element of heroism which catch the public eye. The mundane day-to-day chores of planning and organising for such responses, the voluntary work carried out by the rank and file, given faithfully especially if without fanfare are, however, difficult to sustain and enthuse about. Yet this mundane function is in my view critical and a test of the worthiness of the society.

It is this work carried out day-by-day and with little publicity that I wish to focus your attention. The Red Cross Home

for children /2.

for children is one. The other is the service given by the Red Cross members at various public functions and sporting events.

It would be appropriate at this point to refer to a sister organisation, namely the St John Ambulance Brigade. In many spheres of activities I see an identity of purpose of this organisation. A duplication of training and considerable overlap of function. Both could with collaboration harness their full potential by co-ordination and rationalization. Each would then together achieve greater efficiency in providing field medical and health services for our people.

There are still places for such volunteer bodies. Hospital care for the sick, the disabled and injured are provided by the hospital services. Treatment for the walking ill are provided by the outpatient services. Lately public attention has been drawn to the large numbers of persons who are house-bound or bedridden, who need some care or companionship. A beginning has been made in providing these needs through the domiciliary care services run by the outpatient services and by the Home Nursing Foundation. The Home Nursing Foundation is staffed by volunteer workers and mainly by nurses and public-spirited people from the Community Centres. The problem is much more extensive than can be undertaken by these limited number of persons. With the trend towards caring for the long-term ill and those aged sick in their homes, greater reliance is placed in voluntary organisations. It is therefore possible that organisations such as yours and the St John Ambulance Brigade will be able to contribute immensely to the support of these schemes.

I have since 1971 been associated with your Society as its patron and then as patron and president. Since then I have observed the hard work, dedication and selflessness of your volunteer members which has earned your Society prominence among the welfare organisations in our Republic. The wide range of welfare medical services provided and the successful efforts at fund-raising are achievements your members can justly be proud of. I should, however, consider it appropriate to caution the management that fund-raising must have an objective and funds collected should be put to good use and not

forever /3.

forever stored with pride in bank accounts and fixed deposits.

This function will be the last that I am attending as president of your Society. It is my belief that the new president, whom I shall appoint as soon as the necessary amendments to the legislation have been passed, will guide the management towards its higher aspirations and ensure that the present dynamism within your organisation is accentuated.

Finally, I wish your council members every success in all their future projects and endeavours.

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