



REVUE
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SUPPLEMENT

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THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS AND TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS

Prisoners of war, civilian internees and other war victims are entitled to correspond with their families and to send regular news. Circumstances may require limitations to be imposed on the number of letters sent but the right to correspond has been firmly established by the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

It is known that in most cases prisoners and civilian internees are without financial resources; the rate of pay allotted to prisoners of war is very low (the equivalent of 8 Swiss francs for private soldiers and 75 Swiss francs for general officers, per month). The rate of pay for work which the prisoners may be called upon to perform is also very low. The Convention stipulates that the amount shall not be less than the equivalent of one-fourth of one Swiss franc for a full working day. These sums are trifling and merely suffice, at the most, for prisoners to purchase at the canteen the small articles of everyday use they may require. Evidently, they can receive remittances from their families who are, however, seldom able to send funds; moreover, in most cases such transfers meet with currency difficulties. As regards civilian internees, their financial position is no better since, if they are in an enemy country, their personal property is in general sequestered and not at their disposal.

For these reasons, and rightly so, the Geneva Conventions provide for the complete exemption of postal charges for the correspondence of prisoners of war and civilian internees, and for letters and cards sent to them.

If, in time of war, postal communications were similar to those prevailing in time of peace, there would doubtless be no reason, apart from exceptional cases, for prisoners to have recourse to the telegraph service for their correspondence. Unfortunately, war often causes such disruption of means of communication that the transmission of mail suffers considerable delay and is sometimes impossible. Conclusive proof of this is to be found in the difficulties experienced during the Second World War. Whereas some prisoners of war were able to correspond regularly and without undue delay with their families, this was not the case for a great many. For instance, all captives in the hands of the Japanese forces had practically no means of sending news by post to their families, or receiving news from them. In other parts of the world, such as the Middle East, the mail service was very slow and letters took several months to arrive. This also occurred at certain times for correspondence between Europe and America.

The difficulties experienced in this field led the authors of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 to consider the possibility of giving prisoners of war and civilians internees the right to make use of the telegraph service. Articles 71 of the Third Convention and 107 of the Fourth Convention provide that prisoners of war and civilian internees who have been without news of their families for a long period or are unable to receive news from their next of kin or to give them news by the ordinary postal route, and those who are at a great distance from their homes, shall be permitted to send telegrams. In the same manner, prisoners' representatives and Internee Committees must be accorded all facilities for communication by telegraph with the detaining authorities, the Protecting Powers, the International Committee of the Red Cross and its delegates, the Mixed Medical Commissions and the bodies which give assistance to prisoners of war and internees.

In most cases these facilities accorded by the Conventions would serve no purpose if prisoners of war and civilian internees, who, as we have already said, are in most cases without financial resources, were obliged to pay the full rates for telegrams. It

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is recommended, therefore, in Articles 74 of the Third Convention and 110 of the Fourth Convention that the High Contracting Parties should reduce, so far as possible, the rates charged for telegrams sent by prisoners of war or civilian internees, or addressed to them.

During the Second World War the International Committee set up a telegraphic message system in behalf of the prisoners of war in Japan; 61,000 family messages were thus sent to prisoners of war, and 2,400 messages from prisoners were transmitted to their families. The system was only a partial success and very few prisoners were able to receive news by that means. In Europe and various other countries there was a fairly regular exchange of telegraphic correspondence between the Committee and the prisoners' representatives, mostly in connection with the sending of relief supplies. In many countries prisoners of war were able to correspond directly with their families by telegram, without having recourse to the services of the Central Prisoners of war Agency. These telegrams were forwarded by the telegraph services of the countries concerned which had recourse to the intermediary of the telegraph service of a neutral country for their transmission.

The Diplomatic Conference which established the Geneva Conventions of 1949 understood the importance of this matter and finally adopted a resolution reading as follows :

Whereas Article 71 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of August 12, 1949, provides that prisoners of war who have been without news for a long period, or who are unable to receive news from their next of kin or to give them news by the ordinary postal route, as well as those who are at a great distance from their home, shall be permitted to send telegrams, the fees being charged against the prisoners of war's account with the Detaining Power or paid in the currency at their disposal, and that prisoners of war shall likewise benefit by these facilities in cases of urgency : and

whereas to reduce the cost, often prohibitive, of such telegrams or cables, it appears necessary that some method of grouping messages should be introduced whereby a series of short specimen messages concerning personal health, health of relatives at home, schooling, finance, etc., could be drawn up and numbered, for use by prisoners of war in the aforesaid circumstances,

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the Conference, therefore, requests the International Committee of the Red Cross to prepare a series of specimen messages covering these requirements and to submit them to the High Contracting Parties for their approval.

In compliance with the request of the Diplomatic Conference, the International Committee of the Red Cross has already prepared a series of specimen messages which it proposes to submit to the States parties to the Geneva Conventions in the near future.

* * *

The telegraph plays an important part in another field, i.e. the transmission of information concerning prisoners of war, the dead, and civilian internees. It is evident, as we said above, that if the postal system is working normally there is nothing to prevent this information being sent by post. Nowadays the airmail service enables the most remote area of the globe to be reached in less than a week. Here again, however, it was proved by experience during the last world conflict that postal services are subject to interruption and stoppage in time of war. From the outset of the conflict the Central Prisoners of War Agency found it necessary to have recourse to telegrams; thus, from 1939 onwards the names of airmen captured in Germany or in Great Britain were all telegraphed to Geneva and retransmitted by telegrams. On account of the loss of time involved and long distances the telegraphic communication of information became more and more general. From the summer of 1940, the names of Italian and German prisoners of war captured in the Middle East were notified to the International Committee by telegram, and the same procedure was followed by the Italian authorities for sending the names of British prisoners captured by their forces. From 1941 information concerning British prisoners of war was telegraphed from Geneva to all the Commonwealth countries. Information relative to American prisoners captured in Europe, Africa and Asia was notified from the beginning by telegram, and Washington sent information to Geneva on German and Italian prisoners captured

in Africa in the same manner. Throughout the whole period of hostilities telegrams were the only possible means of communication with Japan.

From September 1, 1939, to September 30, 1947, the International Committee of the Red Cross received 348,636 telegrams and sent 219,513. The cost amounted to six million Swiss francs and half this amount had to be borne by the International Committee. It would have been desirable to make still greater use of the telegraph but in view of the considerable expenditure which this means of transmitting information involved it had to be reduced as far as possible, especially when the prisoners country of origin was not in a position to support the cost. It may be mentioned in passing that the most lengthy telegram received as the Central Prisoners of War Agency, on December 27, 1943, consisted of 335 pages containing a total of 21,590 words and giving the names of 2,341 prisoners of war. It may also be recalled that in one single day (January 1941) the Central Agency received 120 telegrams which contained the names of over 10,000 prisoners.

The authors of the Conventions of 1949 were conscious of the need for the Central Agency and national Information Bureaux to make ample use of the telegraph for transmitting information concerning prisoners of war and civilian internees. For this reason Articles 124 of the Third Convention and 141 of the Fourth Convention provide that national Information Bureaux and the Central Agency shall enjoy, so far as possible, exemption from telegraph charges or, at least, greatly reduced rates.

The provisions of the Geneva Conventions concerning the sending of telegrams by prisoners of war or civilian internees, and by national Information Bureaux and the Central Agency, are quite clear. These provisions would serve no purpose, however, if practical means of application were not available. The exemption from postal charges was inserted in the Universal Postal Convention during the Brussels Conference in 1952. On the basis of the measures taken in connection with postal charges, the International Committee sought to obtain the insertion of

similar provisions in the Telegraph Regulations. Following the representations made to the Secretariat of the International Telecommunication Union and the Swiss Telegraph Service, the Plenipotentiary Conference held at Buenos Ayres in 1952 passed the following recommendation :

Considering

1. The provisions of Articles 74 and 124 of the Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War, dated 12 August 1949 and of Articles 110 and 141 of the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilians in Wartime, dated 12 August 1949;

2. The provisions of Article 35 of the International Telecommunication Convention, Buenos Aires, 1952;

recommends the next International Telegraph and Telephone Conference

1. To consider sympathetically whether, and to what extent, the telegraph franking privileges and the reductions in telegraph charges envisaged in the Geneva Conventions mentioned above could be accorded;

2. To make any necessary modifications to the International Telegraph Regulations.

The object in view was the insertion of provisions to this effect in the Telegraph Regulations, since the convention which binds the members of the International Telecommunication Union merely concerns the organisation of the Union; it contains no provisions relating to any particular means of telecommunication.

Having been informed that the Administrative Telegraph and Telephone Conference (for the revision inter alia of the telegraph regulations) would be held in Geneva in 1958, the International Committee took steps for the recommendation passed at Buenos Ayres to be given consideration. In the first place, it was necessary to persuade one of the bodies taking part in the Conference to submit a draft provision for insertion in the Telegraph Regulations. In view of the active co-operation of the Swiss Telegraph Service throughout the Second World War, the International Committee requested it to lend its offices

in submitting the draft of a new article. The text, after being discussed with the International Committee was submitted on October 16, 1958, by the Swiss telegraph authorities to the Conference which had opened in Geneva on September 29.

The draft resumed the essential points of the provisions of the Geneva Conventions, with one exception. In view of the possibility of abuses and the difficulty of efficient checking, it did not seem possible to grant a reduction of charges for telegrams sent direct by families to prisoners of war or civilian internees. According to the terms of the draft, this reduction could only be granted for telegrams sent through a duly recognised relief society. Moreover, the draft submitted did not specify the complete exemption of charges for telegrams sent by national Information Bureaux and the Central Agency. In the memorandum annexed to the draft the Swiss telegraph authorities suggested that a reduction of 75% should be made in telegraph charges and stated its readiness to accept such a reduction.

The International Committee had, at the same time, approached various National Societies, informing them of the submitting of the draft article and requesting them to intervene in order that it might be supported by the delegations of their countries. On November 5, 1958, the new article was brought up for discussion by the Commission for the establishing of telegraph rates. After a statement by a representative of the International Committee, explaining the reasons for submitting the draft, several speakers expressed their approval. Other delegates, however, stated that although their countries highly approved of the Geneva Conventions and of special measures in behalf of prisoners of war and civilian internees, they were of the opinion that the insertion of provisions in the Telegraph Regulations was not the best solution of the matter. They considered it preferable for reductions in charges to be the object, when required, of special agreements between the telegraph services concerned. Finally, some delegates declared that it would not be fitting to insert provisions in the Telegraph Regulations in reference to a state of war since all countries wished to keep a state of peace.

Finally a roll-call vote was taken on the principle of the insertion of an article in the Telegraph Regulations; 29 delegations were in favour, 24 voted against and there were 4 abstentions. A small amendment on points of detail was made in the text of the draft which was then adopted by a majority. No objection was raised at the Plenary Session of the Conference and the article was adopted without opposition or discussion. It has therefore been inserted in the Telegraph Regulations, as Article 64, reading as follows :

Article 64

**Telegrams concerning persons protected in time of war
by the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949**

1. *The following telegrams shall bear the paid service indication =RCT= placed before the address :*

- (a) *telegrams addressed to prisoners of war, civilian internees or their representatives (prisoners' representatives, internee committees) by recognized relief societies assisting war victims¹ ;*
- (b) *telegrams which prisoners of war and civilian internees are permitted to send or those sent by their representatives (prisoners' representatives, internee committees) in the course of their duties under the Convention¹ ;*
- (c) *telegrams sent in the course of their duties under the Conventions by the national Information Bureau or the Central Information Agency for which provision is made in the Geneva Conventions, or by delegations of such Bureau or Agency, concerning prisoners or war, civilians who are interned or whose liberty is restricted or the death of military personnel or civilians in the course of hostilities² ;*

2. (1) *In telegrams bearing the paid service indication =RCT=*

¹ *Art. 71, para. 2 ; Art. 74, para. 5 and Art. 81, para. 4 of the Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949 relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War ; Art. 104, para. 3 ; Art. 107, para. 2 and Art. 110, para. 5 of the Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949, relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in time of war.*

² *Art. 122, 123 and 124 of the Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949 relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, Art. 136, 140 and 141, of the Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in time of war.*

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the only special services which shall be admitted are the following: urgent telegrams, prepaid reply, notification of delivery (if such services are recognized by the country of origin and destination).

(2) *The corresponding paid service indications (=Urgent=), (=RPx=), (=PC=), shall be charged at the same rate as the telegrams to which they refer.*

3. (1) *The terminal rates and transit rates applicable to ordinary telegrams bearing the paid service indication =RCT= shall be those of ordinary private telegrams reduced by 75 per cent.*

(2) *The charge per word to be collected for a telegram bearing the paid service indication =urgent=RCT= shall be the same as that for an ordinary private telegram over the same route.*

4. *The minimum number of chargeable words for telegrams bearing the paid service indication =RCT= shall be the same as for private telegrams (ordinary or urgent, as the case may be).*

5. *According to their category (ordinary or urgent), telegrams bearing the paid service indication =RCT shall take rank with ordinary or urgent private telegrams for purpose of transmission and delivery.*

6. (1) *Telegrams sent by prisoners of war, civilian internees or their representatives shall bear the official stamp of the camp or the signature of the camp commander or one of his deputies.*

(2) *Telegrams sent by the national Information Bureau and the Central Information Agency for which provision is made in the Geneva Conventions, or by delegations thereof, as well as telegrams sent by recognized relief societies assisting war victims, shall bear the official stamp of the Bureau, Agency, delegation or society which sends them.*

Although the objections raised during the discussions of the Conference may be readily understood, they do not seem to be of very great importance. The conclusion of agreements between belligerents in time of war cannot be done in haste. Experience has shown that the drawing up of such agreements between enemy countries involves great effort and a considerable loss of time; the International Committee's experience in this connection is, in fact, absolutely conclusive. Further, it stands to reason—as the International Committee made a point of stressing when addressing the Conference—that in taking all possible measures for the faithful application of the Geneva Conventions, all men of goodwill earnestly hope that they will never need to be applied.

The new article of the Telegraph Regulations which will come into force on January 1, 1960 is undoubtedly of interest to National Red Cross Societies. It will be seen from the text that recognised relief societies may benefit by the reduced rates when sending telegrams to prisoners of war or civilian internees. These societies are responsible for centralising and transmitting telegraphic messages from families to prisoners of war. National Red Cross Societies are, by nature, the recognised relief societies of their countries; as a general rule, the organic law of the country, the Society's Statutes or the Charter concerning their appointment specify the part they have to play in behalf of prisoners of war. The enormous amount of work accomplished in this field by many National Societies during the Second World War is well known. Moreover, National Societies in several countries have been appointed by their Governments to perform the duties of the national Information Bureau for prisoners of war and civilian internees.

The considerable reduction of rates granted by the Telegraph Conference will certainly be highly appreciated; they will enable families to be informed more rapidly of the fate of their near relatives and will in many cases assuage anxiety and distress. Their liberal nature shows that the delegates who took part in the Conference of the International Telecommunication Union were fully aware of the humanitarian interest attached to all these problems. It should, however, be borne in mind that, whenever possible, the postal service should be used in preference to the telegraph which is usually overloaded in times of war. The new facilities should therefore be used with moderation, otherwise the liberal system established, not without difficulty, could be endangered.

For its part the International Committee of the Red Cross welcomes with gratitude these new provisions which give practical effect to an important chapter of the Geneva Conventions.

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

Medicaments for Hungary. — *Since the events in Hungary, the ICRC has received requests for medicaments from a number of residents of that country. As it is impossible to study each case separately, the ICRC (as customary when dealing with requests of this nature) has asked the Hungarian Red Cross to collect and classify the applications.*

Thus for some months past the Hungarian Red Cross has been sending periodical lists of the medicaments required to the ICRC, giving the names and addresses of the applicants, together with a medical certificate in each case.

The ICRC sends to Budapest collective consignments of the medicaments listed (mainly patent medicines of vital need) which are handed over by the Hungarian Red Cross to the persons concerned.

This method gives satisfaction to the applicants and will be continued for a few months by means of contributions received from the British and Swiss Red Cross Societies.

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Distribution of relief supplies to refugees. — *At Christmas the ICRC sent relief parcels to refugee families of Rumanian origin in Germany. Clothing parcels were also sent to displaced persons in Farfa Sabina and Fraschette Camps (Italy), cigarettes to persons*

of various nationalities in Asten Camp (Austria) and food parcels to Volksdeutsche recently arrived from Jugoslavia who are living in Pidding Camp (Austria).

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Assistance to war-disabled. — *The ICRC has contributed towards the relief action on behalf of disabled Volksdeutsche and various German refugees by making a gift of invalid chairs.*

In the course of this relief action, started in 1956 and carried on in close co-operation with the Red Cross of the German Federal Republic, about 100 invalid chairs have been distributed.

The ICRC has also assisted Algerian war-disabled resident in Morocco, by sending to the Lousteau Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre at Oujda 72 artificial eyes, 20 pairs of crutches and 2 invalid chairs. In addition the ICRC has provided some fifteen persons who had suffered amputations with artificial legs made by orthopaedic manufacturers in Casablanca; this assistance is being continued.

As part of the relief action in behalf of Italian children and youths whose eyesight is lost or seriously impaired, in 1958 about twenty were admitted to the Geneva eye hospital for operations or treatment.

Forty Italian children and youths (all from poor families) have so far been assisted in this manner.

Through its Vienna delegation the ICRC continues to assist disabled Austrian children and young people¹.

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Relief work in Japan. — *At Christmas the delegate of the ICRC in Japan, Mr. Harry Angst, distributed presents (cigarettes, sports requisites, confectionery and towels) to Korean internees in Omura Immigration Centre and Chinese internees in Kawasaki Immigration Centre.*

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¹ See English Supplement of the *Revue internationale de la Croix Rouge*, September 1958.

Registration of former prisoners of war. — *In connection with the registration of former prisoners of war in Japanese hands who are eligible for compensation under Article 16 of the Peace Treaty with Japan, the registration by the Philippine Red Cross of former members of the Philippine regular armed forces was continued during the past months with the assistance of the ICRC delegation. The work is now finished and the lists established will be transcribed on perforated IBM cards to enable the final distribution to be made.*

* * *

Visit to political detainees in Greece. — *A further mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross composed of Mr. Charles Ammann and Mr. Jean-Jacques Muralti, was sent to Greece in December last to visit several places of detention.*

The delegates visited the camp for exiles at Aghios Efstratios and several prisons and prison-hospitals (sanatoria) where they distributed clothing and medicaments valued at 150,000 Swiss francs to political detainees.

After the visits the delegates informed the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Justice of the points noted by them; reports were sent later, as customary, to the Greek Government.

The understanding attitude of the authorities and the co-operation of the Greek Red Cross enabled this mission to be carried out in the best conditions.

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Repatriation of former legionaries. — *During the past months a number of former legionaries of Italian nationality in the territory of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam were repatriated through the good offices of the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam in co-operation with the ICRC.*

* * *

Mission of the ICRC in Cuba. — *In January, Mr. Pierre Jequier, delegate of the ICRC, accompanied by the President of the Cuban Red Cross, was received by the new President of the Republic, Dr. Urrutia. The Head of State indicated that he would encourage the work of the Red Cross, and stated his intention to observe the provisions of the Geneva Conventions in regard to military prisoners.*

The delegate of the ICRC has thus already been able to visit the Columbia military Camp where several hundred officers and men are held. He also made the necessary arrangements for handing over 2,000 blankets to the Cuban Red Cross, donated by the ICRC as first emergency relief to the civilian victims of the military operations.

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Measures in behalf of missing Spanish nationals. — *It will be recalled that the ICRC made representations some time ago concerning Spanish civilians and military personnel missing since the events at Ifni and in the Sahara at the end of 1957. As these representations have not so far led to a satisfactory result, the International Committee again approached the Moroccan authorities at the end of December 1958.*

In mid-January the Moroccan authorities informed the ICRC that they had decided to take all practical measures for the direct and final settlement of the matter of Spanish nationals missing after the events at Ifni.

The ICRC immediately informed the Spanish authorities and the Spanish Red Cross of the decision of the Moroccan Government, and requested its delegate in Morocco, Mr. C. Vautier, to collect from the Moroccan authorities any information available concerning these missing persons.

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Mission of the ICRC in Cyprus. — *During his visit to Cyprus in the second fortnight in December, 1958, Mr. D. de Traz, General-Delegate for the Near East, visited several camps for political detainees. The points noted by our delegate during his visits and the detainees' spoken or written comments were submitted to the*

British authorities. Mr. de Traz took advantage of his visit to the island to have talks with various leading figures.

At the end of December Mr. de Traz visited Israel. While he was there he was received by Mr. Ben Zvi, President of the Republic. He had the opportunity of visiting some political detainees, in particular Ali Ahmed Osman who took part in the riot at Shatta Prison in August 1958.

After leaving Geneva on November 18, Mr. de Traz broke his journey at Cairo where he stayed for about ten days.

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Broadcasting. — *On Monday, December 22, in connection with the series " Genève vous informe " and under the title " Table ronde des institutions internationales ", at the Radio-Genève studio Mr. Marcel Suès interviewed three representatives of the ICRC, namely Mr. H. Coursier of the Legal Department, Mr. J.-P. Maunoir of the Executive Division and Mr. R. Du Pasquier, Head of the Information Service. The speakers gave a general and brief survey of the work of the ICRC during 1958 and the significance of the celebration of the centenary of Solferino in 1959.*

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Visits to the ICRC. — *Some members of the French Delegation to the Conference on prevention of surprise attacks took advantage of their presence in Geneva to visit, on December 3, 1958, the various sections of the International Committee and in particular the Central Prisoners of War Agency.*

On December 8, The Hon. Henry S. Villard, United States Permanent Representative to the international organisations in Geneva, accompanied by Mrs. Villard, paid another visit to our headquarters and made a thorough tour of the various ICRC sections.

The International Committee also had a visit on December 9 from the Emir Mohamed Homad El Harithi, representing the Sultan of Oman and Dr. Ibrahim Moukhtar El Wakil, Vice-Delegate of the Arab League in Geneva.

Mrs Freyre de Andrade, representing the Cuban revolutionary movement, visited our headquarters and talked with the directorate of the ICRC.

The members of the Red Cross movement and various Red Cross Societies who paid visits to the ICRC during their stay in Switzerland in December and January included Dr. Chaloe Puranananda, Director of the Science Division of the Thai Red Cross and Director of the Pasteur Institute in Bangkok, Mrs. G. Bowman Jackson, Honorary-Secretary of the Ceylon Red Cross, Mrs. E.A.G. Claassen de Wijs, Librarian of the Netherlands Red Cross, Mr. Gordon Bolton of the British Red Cross on a study-visit to the League, Miss Nadine Chastouny, Head of the Voluntary Auxiliary Medical Personnel of the Lebanese Red Cross and Mrs. James, Member of the New York Committee of the American Red Cross.

About thirty students of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey near Geneva, accompanied by the Director, Professor Hans Heinrich Wolf, made a study of the work of the ICRC.

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International Tracing Service. — *The International Commission of the ITS held its eighteenth meeting at Bad Godesberg on December 9, presided over by the representative of the Italian Government. As customary the ICRC was represented by Mr. R. Gallopin, Executive Director.*

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ICRC Delegations. — *Mr. Heinrich Pfrunder, Mr. Werner Salzmann and Mr. André Leuenberger, representatives of the ICRC in Singapore, Thailand and the Republic of Viet Nam respectively, recently returned to their posts after a stay in Switzerland during which they visited the ICRC and gave reports on their various activities.*

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Visit to the Swiss Red Cross. — *In response to a kind invitation from the Swiss Red Cross, the Heads of Sections of the ICRC visited Berne in two groups on December 2 and 9, 1958. The*

first group was headed by Mr. R. Gallopin, Executive Director, and the second by Mr. J. S. Pictet, Director for General Affairs.

The object of these visits was to inform the members of the ICRC staff of the numerous activities of the Swiss Red Cross.

Dr. H. Haug, Secretary-General of the Swiss Red Cross, and leading members of this National Society gave the visitors a cordial welcome at the headquarters of the Central Secretariat, and most interesting talks were given on the work of the Swiss Red Cross, such as blood transfusion, training of professional and auxiliary medical personnel, improvement of working conditions for nurses, child welfare, assistance to refugees, national and international mutual aid, the dissemination of Red Cross principles among young people, etc.

The information meeting in the morning was followed in the afternoon by a long visit to the Central Laboratory of the Blood Transfusion Section where the Director, Dr. Alfred Hassig, a well known blood specialist gave a talk on the organisation of the Centre, the collection of blood in Switzerland and the scientific research work of the Berne Laboratory which was interesting and instructive.

Before returning to Geneva the Heads of Section of the ICRC visited the local branch of the Swiss Red Cross at Berne-Mittelland where they were cordially received by the President, Dr. P. Lauener, who described the work of the branch.

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Dissemination of the Geneva Conventions. — As stated in News Items (December), Miss Barbara Coke, Director of the British Junior Red Cross, and Mr. G. Fehr, Director of the Junior Red Cross of the German Federal Republic, were in Geneva from November 2 to 12. During their stay in Geneva, Miss Coke and Mr. Fehr had several meetings with the representatives of the League and the International Committee, during which the experts of the British and German Red Cross gave their opinion as to the best means of giving effect to Resolutions XXIX and XXX of the New Delhi Conference, particularly in connection with the spreading of knowledge of the Geneva Conventions among young people. A

plan was established following this exchange of views and is now being studied by the International Committee and the League.

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Gift of a cinematograph projector. — *The firm Siemens & Halske S. A., Munich, has presented the ICRC with a cinematograph projector "2000" 16 mm. and various accessories including a loudspeaker and a microphone. This apparatus will greatly improve the showing of films at the ICRC headquarters where some two hundred are shown each year to groups of visitors. One of the advantages of this new projector is that sound effects can be added by optical or magnetic process. The latter enables sound effects to be added, independent of the picture, and the film can thus be accompanied by an appropriate soundtrack in the language required.*

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The ICRC and the Swiss National Exhibition. — *Mr. M. Bodmer, Member of the ICRC, and Mr. R. Du Pasquier, Head of the Information Service, accompanied by one of his assistants, Mr. R. Melley, visited Lausanne on December 23 in order to represent our institution at the meeting arranged by the organising Committee of the Swiss National Exhibition. The object of their visit was to discuss the participation of the ICRC in this exhibition which will be held in Lausanne in 1964.*

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The Geneva Conventions in Pictures. — *As stated in the Revue internationale (January 1957) with a view to participating in the National Societies' efforts for a wider dissemination of the Geneva Conventions, particularly among young people, the ICRC published a small booklet prepared by Dr. Stedler of Oldenburg, whose recent death is deeply regretted. The booklet contains a set of attractive illustrations symbolic of the essential principles of the Conventions with captions in nine languages. The pictures and*

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captions were chosen with a view to making them intelligible to young readers and at the same time, interesting for adults.

The booklet has met with a warm response from the National Societies from which large orders have been received for further supplies. Before bringing out a new edition the ICRC is studying the possibility of adding further languages to the nine adopted for the first issue.
