

## **INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE**

### **MEETING OF EXPERTS CONVENED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE**

In order to follow up the wish expressed by the International Red Cross at its Centenary Conference in 1963, the International Committee of the Red Cross recently convened a meeting of legal experts and specialists in civil defence.<sup>1</sup> The opening session took place in Geneva on October 27, 1964.

Assembling some forty experts and observers appointed by Governments or Red Cross Societies from a dozen countries, this meeting, of a preliminary and private nature, was convened to examine the possibility of strengthening in international humanitarian law the guarantees and facilities to be granted to personnel of the civil defence services. It was, in fact, a question of conferring on these bodies a status enabling them, in the case of armed conflict, to carry out their humanitarian tasks in all circumstances, in the interest of the civilian population stricken by hostilities.

The meeting appointed its officers as follows: Chairman, Mr. F. Siordet, member of the International Committee; Vice-Chairman, Mrs. T. Barry, Chairman of the Irish Red Cross; Rapporteurs, Mr. I. Müller, Deputy Director-General of Swedish Civil Defence and Mr. H. Haug, Secretary-General of the Swiss Red Cross.

In his opening address, after having stated the objects of the meeting, Mr. Gonard, President of the ICRC, underlined how much the participants shared the desire of mankind to see disputes between communities resolved by peaceful methods, which would, in case of need, enable these civil defence bodies increasingly to place

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<sup>1</sup> *Plate.*

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their experience and resources at the service of the victims of disaster in time of peace.

After holding fifteen sessions, the meeting finished its work on November 6.

Thorough discussions in a spirit of co-operation and understanding enabled the experts to convey useful opinions and recommendations to the International Committee. The outcome of the proceedings, which will be submitted to governments and National Red Cross Societies, provided the essential basis for drawing up a future set of regulations within the framework of international law.

The *International Review* will have occasion to revert to this subject at greater length in a future issue.