

## THE ACTIVITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

The International Commission of the ITS (International Tracing Service), which consists of representatives of the Governments of Belgium, France, German Federal Republic, Great Britain, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands and the United States, held its 25th meeting on October 30, under the presidency of the Italian delegate, Mr. Paolucci. This meeting took place at the Italian National Institute of Cologne, in the presence of the Directors of the ITS, Mr. Nicolas Burckhardt and of a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Claude Pilloud, Assistant Director for General Affairs. It should be recalled that the International Tracing Service possesses immense archives and a great number of card-indexes concerning the fate of persons who had been deported, displaced or missing during the Second World War in Germany and in the countries then occupied by the German forces. Since 1955 the ICRC has been responsible for running this important information centre.

The Commission especially studied the ITS report for the period January 1 to June 30, 1961. From this it can be seen that the number of inquiries submitted to the ITS has, contrary to expectations, slightly increased. These chiefly concerned requests for certificates for the purpose of obtaining compensation.

In this connection, the report recalls that " the Government of the German Federal Republic has placed financial resources at the disposal of the United Nations High Commissioner's Office for Refugees for the purpose of granting compensation to refugees which are under its protection and which are not covered by German compensatory legislation for persecution which they have suffered during the war ".

Up to the present, the report notes, more than 2,000 requests submitted by refugees in this category have been received by the ITS through the Office of the High Commissioner. Several tens of thousands of requests of this nature can be expected.

## INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

On the other hand, the ITS receives an increasing number of requests for the obtaining of disability benefits. In this connection, the report states: " During the war foreign workers in Germany had, as one knows, to be insured against disability. The ITS often possesses information about these insurances, about the treatment given in a hospital or, at least, about the work carried out or the length of stay in a particular commune. These requests are more often than not made by benevolent societies on behalf of persons under treatment in homes or in hospitals, or by social insurance administrations of " Länder " to whom those concerned submit their claims due. The administration which deals with claims for allowances for Italian workers, for example, has itself alone forwarded nearly a thousand requests of this sort to the ITS. These concerned, moreover, cases which this particular administration was unable to settle in the normal way by other methods and which it considered to be " hopeless cases ". In spite of this, the ITS has been able to deal positively with more than a third of these cases.

In all the number of inquiries received during the period reviewed by the report exceeds 60,000. During the same half-year, the ITS has sent out 89,000 replies, thus making up for some of the delay between these and the number of inquiries made.

At present, there are 213 members on the staff of the ITS compared with 223 at the end of 1960.

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## HEADS OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES VISIT THE ICRC

On November 11, the President of the Red Cross of the Rumanian People's Republic, Mr. A. Moisescu, arrived in Geneva from Budapest, accompanied by Mr. P. Radu, Vice-President and Mrs. Gorunescu.