

THE ICRC IN ALGERIA

Mr. Pierre Gaillard, delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, carried out a mission in Algeria during the first fortnight in May, in order to prepare the ICRC's future action. Together with Mr. Roger Vust, permanent delegate of the ICRC, he was received at Rocher-Noir by the French High Commissioner, Mr. Christian Fouchet.

The representatives of the International Committee also had talks with Mr. Abderrahman Farès, head of the Algerian provisional Executive, and with Dr. Hamidou, delegate for social affairs.

During these discussions, the ICRC delegates studied ways of resolving the most urgent humanitarian problems raised in the large towns in Algeria. These in particular include aid to prisoners, tracing missing persons, medical matters, the supplying of children, chiefly with milk, and relief to the regrouped population.

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As we have indicated, the International Committee of the Red Cross recently instructed one of its delegates, Mr. Pierre Gaillard, to make an on-the-spot study of the chief humanitarian problems raised by the recent events in Algeria. Following on the observations made by its representative, it decided to send two doctor-delegates, Dr. Jean-Louis de Chastonay and Dr. Aurelio Foletti, to Algeria, in order to reinforce its permanent delegation directed by Mr. Roger Vust. Dr. Foletti, surgeon, has worked since May 26 at the hospital at Relizane. Furthermore, an ICRC medical team consisting of a surgeon, Dr. Robert-André Egli, a serologist, Dr. Urs Denzler, and a male nurse, left on May 30 for Oran, where it was installed in the Moslem quarter by Dr. de Chastonay, chief medical officer of the ICRC in Algeria.

Considerable consignments of medicaments, blood plasma and blood transfusion equipment were despatched as a matter of

urgency by the ICRC. Included in this relief were two large consignments of blood plasma, donated by the Swedish Red Cross.

Thus the humanitarian problems which the ICRC has to face are becoming daily more and more acute : relief to the resettled population and the supplying of children, medical assistance in the towns, the search for missing persons, aid to prisoners.

A large amount of foodstuffs of American origin has just been placed at the disposal of the ICRC to supply the resettled population, that is to say, persons displaced in the interior of Algeria as a result of the events, amongst whom there are many children. A first consignment of more than 5,000 tons of wheat, flour, oil, beans and milk is shortly expected to arrive at the port of Bougie, where these relief supplies will be unloaded and stored. They will then be distributed under the supervision of the ICRC delegates in the mountains of the Petite Kabylie, and in the department of Sétif.

This operation, which will require considerable material resources and complete support on the part of the administration, will be carried out in direct liaison with the local authorities. It will subsequently be extended over other parts of Algeria.

Kidnapping and many disappearances are causing great anxiety, chiefly amongst Europeans and have resulted above all in very numerous requests for searches : in two weeks the ICRC has received more than 200 of these.

In addition to its normal tracing procedure, the ICRC has decided to resume the practice, frequently employed during the Second World War, of broadcasting appeals. These transmissions have been sent out on the France V wave-length in French and Arabic. These broadcasts are continuing.

Finally, the delegates of the ICRC will resume their visits to all categories of prisoners throughout Algeria, especially to prisoners of European origin, arrested or interned as a result of the events. These visits, which are one of the ICRC's specific tasks, have as their principal object the examination of material and moral conditions of detention and the suggesting of possible improvements. One delegate, Mr. Michel Martin, left Geneva and arrived in Algiers on May 25 in order to take part in this activity of the delegation.
