

AN IMPORTANT TASK FOR THE ICRC

INDEMNIFICATION OF FORMER ALLIED PRISONERS OF WAR IN JAPANESE HANDS *

II

V. LISTING OF FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR ENTITLED TO BENEFIT

The bases for division had thus been clearly defined even before the amount of funds available for distribution was known. However, the number of claimants in each of the beneficiary countries had also to be determined so that the amount of the share for each individual and, consequently, the sum which the ICRC would have to pay to each of the national agencies, could be calculated.

To carry out the census of former prisoners of war qualifying under the terms of Article 16 and the relevant decisions of the Executive Committee proved to be the most complex of all duties entrusted to the national agencies and the ICRC. It was also the one which required the longest time.

1. Lists submitted by States

Japan had not acceded to the Geneva Convention of 27 July 1929 relating to the treatment of prisoners of war. It was therefore not subject to any formal obligation, as provided for in that Convention, to communicate to the ICRC Central Prisoners of War

* The first part of this Report—which is followed by Annexes not reproduced here—appeared in last month's issue.

Agency the names of all enemy military personnel captured during hostilities. It is true that the Government in Tokyo did supply some information to the Central Agency, but those lists were incomplete and quite inadequate to permit the identification of all allied prisoners of war in Japanese hands. Nationals of some countries were not included in those lists and no distinction was made between prisoners of war and interned civilians.

That omission by the Detaining Power could not unfortunately be remedied by information from other sources. ICRC delegates had not been authorized to visit camps regularly, so that a great many prisoners were not covered by the delegates' supervision. Consequently the Central Agency could not supply a full list of prisoners entitled to benefit.

Under these conditions it was for the Powers in whose armed forces the prisoners had served to give their number to the ICRC. The International Committee therefore, on 16 November 1953, asked the States concerned to provide it with lists indicating in respect of each serviceman:

- the name, first name, date and place of birth;
- military unit, rank and number;
- nationality;
- where held captive by the Japanese.

As these lists were a long time forthcoming, the ICRC repeated its appeal four times. In February 1955, that is, when the Japanese funds were about to be transferred to it for distribution among the POWs, it had still not received all final lists. Three States had sent none.

The Executive Committee was informed of this situation and prolonged the deadline for despatch of these lists first to 30 April 1955 and then to 31 May 1955. It decided that thereafter Powers which had not submitted the requisite lists would not be entitled to benefit by the provisions of Article 16. However, a large number of new lists and supplementary lists continued to be received after 31 May 1955. In addition, some countries, including the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, had received further information from Japan which they wished to compare with the lists already drawn up. Part of the Pakistan lists were, moreover, lost between Karachi

and Geneva. Several countries had not been able to contact in time all their former prisoners of war to enable them to register.

Under these conditions, the ICRC suggested that the Executive Committee should postpone the final deadline until 30 April 1956. The Executive Committee so decided on 14 March 1956, adding that, consistent with the ICRC proposals, no name submitted after 30 April 1956 could be considered for computation of the amount of the national share. It was also understood at the same time that the ICRC would ask the States to constitute a reserve fund to meet claims of former prisoners of war whose names had not been known or had been omitted at the time the lists were drawn up.

In the meantime, Indonesia decided not to ratify the San Francisco Peace Treaty and was, therefore, no longer one of the Powers to benefit from the provisions of Article 16.

2. ICRC check of lists

The purpose of examining the lists received in Geneva within the time limit prescribed by the Executive Committee was to ensure uniform application of the provisions of Article 16 and thereby to guarantee equality of treatment among all servicemen concerned. For that purpose the ICRC checked that the qualifying criteria had been observed and that names of former prisoners of war had not been included in the lists of a country more than once or in the lists of several countries.

The check on qualifying criteria, as the lists reached the Central Agency, revealed omissions and inaccuracies in respect of which the ICRC asked the States concerned for clarification.

For example, the list submitted by Australia had opposite some names the words "presumed dead" without indicating whether these persons were servicemen killed in action or dead in captivity.

The Pakistan list mentioned "presumed prisoner of war" which did not make it clear whether the person concerned had been a prisoner of war or not. The nationality was sometimes missing; some of the prisoners of war listed were shown as being of Indian nationality.

The International Committee also compared the lists received from the Allied Powers with the information which the Japanese

Government sent it during the war, in order to check that no prisoner of war of whom it had been officially informed by the Detaining Power had been omitted from the lists drawn up by the Powers of which the prisoners were nationals.

The ICRC deemed it expedient furthermore to examine in the countries concerned the documents which had been used for the drawing up of these lists. That examination consisted of spot-checks of all cases whose qualifications appeared doubtful.

In Pakistan, the ICRC delegate had for that purpose to travel some 3,000 miles. In other countries, records were fortunately more centralised.

To check that names did not appear twice in the lists, the ICRC drew up a single alphabetical list for each country which had supplied several lists, in order to ensure that there were no repetitions. This proved to be necessary, particularly in respect of lists supplied by the United Kingdom, Pakistan and Vietnam. The IBM punched-card system was used for these verifications. It was also found that some names were included on several lists, such as those of New Zealand nationals on the British and Australian lists, those of Australians on the British lists, and Belgians on the French, British and Netherlands lists. That check showed moreover that nationals of the Grand-Duché of Luxembourg who had been prisoners in Japanese hands had all been members of the French armed forces. They were shown as such on the French lists; the Grand-Duché was in any case not a Party to the San Francisco treaty.

The various verifications carried out resulted in the elimination of 9,747 names from the lists received by 30 April 1956. At the end of 1956 those lists were final for all the beneficiary Powers except for the Philippines and Vietnam. Subject to adjustment in respect of those two countries they covered a total of 153,933 former prisoners of war in Japanese hands.

3. Philippines

(a) As has already been pointed out, the Government of the Philippines only decided after a long delay to ratify the Peace Treaty with Japan. The registering of former Philippine prisoners

of war was therefore not started until most of the other beneficiary Powers had submitted their lists. In addition, it appeared that the listing of Philippine beneficiaries encountered considerable difficulties so that operations were likely to be protracted.

In order to avoid keeping those former prisoners of war whose claims had already been recognized, in the other countries, waiting unduly, it was decided to distribute the Japanese assets in two phases: the first distribution was to enable compensation to be made to the beneficiaries of the other countries without further delay, after placing a lump-sum in reserve from which the Philippine share would ultimately be drawn. The second distribution would then be made between all the beneficiary Powers from the balance of funds remaining from the reserve earmarked for the Philippines, after determining the exact number of Philippine beneficiaries and paying the national share thus due to the Philippines.

(b) Before reaching this step, the ICRC attempted to come to a compromise solution with the Government of the Philippines with a view to speeding up the remittance of indemnities to the Philippine beneficiaries.

The International Committee had in fact seen that it was not possible to accept, just as they were, as a basis for distribution, the lists which the Philippine authorities had submitted to it and which contained 66,217 names. After eliminating 6,541 cases given on these lists as "civilians", there only remained 59,676 names; the question was to discover how many of these applied to former prisoners of war fulfilling the conditions of qualification under Article 16.

This checking encountered insurmountable difficulties. Some pages of the manuscript list were illegible, so that it was impossible to verify whether names had not been written down several times over. Furthermore, the same person's name sometimes figured on different lists, either because it had been transcribed in several ways, or else because it was classified under the heading of the first name and elsewhere under the family name.

In these conditions, the Governments of the other beneficiary Powers decided to propose to the Philippine Government an overall

reduction of the number of cases on the lists submitted to the ICRC. An International Committee delegate went to Manila in May 1954 when he proposed to take the number of 40,000 men as a basis of calculation for the Philippines' share.

The Government of the Philippines did not accept this proposal. It insisted on maintaining the figure of 60,000, although it declared itself prepared to take every step to draw up lists which could be checked.

(c) The lists of former Philippine prisoners of war had consequently to be drawn up again on other bases.

From the files of the armed forces of the Philippines it was not possible to discover the names of all former Philippine prisoners of war in Japanese hands, with the result that enquiries had to be undertaken in each case. The United States for its part was unable to supply the necessary details for the drawing up of a complete list.

It therefore only remained to contact the beneficiaries themselves. The Red Cross of the Philippines having then been appointed the national agency for the distribution of funds under Article 16, it had henceforward to carry out this heavy task. The ICRC instructed its delegate in Manila to assist the National Red Cross Society in the execution of the mandate entrusted to it.

In April 1957, the Philippine Red Cross sent out an appeal through the press and radio asking all former prisoners of war or their surviving heirs to register with the local branch of the Red Cross nearest their homes. The individual files thus drawn up for each case and the lists made out on this basis were then sent to the headquarters of the Society which had opened a special section for the compilation of the results of the appeal and to draw up national lists.

Taking into account the difficulties of communication between the capital and the many islands in the archipelago, as well as the illiteracy of a large number of claimants, the date of registration had to be extended until 31 March 1958.

(d) Meanwhile, it was discovered that an appreciable number of Philippine nationals had belonged to the American armed forces during the war, and if the United States Government was entitled to waive for its own nationals claim to benefit from Article 16 of the

Treaty of San Francisco, it could not do the same for military personnel having served in its armed forces, but who had Philippine nationality at the time of their captivity.

Former Philippine prisoners of war who had belonged to the "Philippines Scouts" in the land or sea forces of the United States were therefore qualified to benefit from compensation as laid down by Article 16, even if they had since acquired American citizenship.

A further appeal was therefore made to this category of beneficiary. For former prisoners of war resident in the United States, the last appeal was broadcast on 11 January 1959 with an expiry date for registration on 15 March in the same year.

(e) In order to verify the results of these registrations in the Philippines and the United States, the ICRC first of all made checks in the Philippines on the basis of military archives. When information drawn from this source was lacking or was too incomplete, the International Committee based itself on other data, either to establish that the claimant had really undergone war captivity (attestations made by companions in captivity), or for the purpose of showing the existence of ties of relationship between deceased former prisoners of war and claimants. About a third of the beneficiary prisoners had died.

Lists were drawn up in this way by the IBM Agency in Manila.

In the United States, requests for registration submitted by former Philippine prisoners of war having served in American units and resident, some in the Philippines and others in the USA, were sent for verification to the United States Defence Department.

A final check was carried out in Geneva on the basis of an overall list drawn up by IBM in March 1960. These checks established that 44,055 former Philippine prisoners of war could be considered as being beneficiaries. It was on the basis of this figure that the Philippines' share was determined for the first distribution.

(f) In view of the fact that 60,000 shares had been placed in reserve, the 15,945 remaining shares were then available to be distributed, in accordance with the Working Party's decision, to all the beneficiary Powers in proportion to the number of former prisoners of war recognized as being beneficiaries.

In spite of the long delay in drawing up the definite list of Philippine former prisoners of war, a large number asserted their claims after the expiry date of 31 March 1958. The Philippine Red Cross nevertheless accepted their claims for registration and presented additional lists which were subjected to checking similar to that described above. They were in addition compared with the basic list of 44,055 beneficiaries, with a view to discovering possible errors and duplications. When these checks were made, the total number of Philippine beneficiaries amounted definitely to 55,124, and the Philippine Red Cross drew from the national share in the second distribution the necessary funds for the compensation of these late claimants.

In the other countries, the lists had been drawn up by the national authorities and the cost which this work had incurred was defrayed by each of the Powers concerned. Expenses incurred by the ICRC in drawing up and verifying the list of the Philippines were therefore charged against the national share reverting to that country.

4. Vietnam

Vietnam did not possess documentation capable of serving as a basis for the drawing up of a list of former prisoners of war in Japanese hands. The beneficiaries were therefore called upon to register individually with the central or local authorities.

At the time of the entry into force of the Peace Treaty of San Francisco, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam only controlled the southern part of the country. Certain regions over which the authorities of South Vietnam still exercised control at the beginning of the operations for the registering of beneficiaries, had passed into the hands of North Vietnam before the definitive list could be drawn up. In these conditions the list submitted to the ICRC showed:—

2,690 registered beneficiaries under the control of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam (South).

525 registered beneficiaries under its control at the time of registration were resident in areas which, since then,

had passed under the control of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North).

1,285 beneficiaries as an estimate by the Saigon authorities of persons who had been unable to register because they were resident in the part of the country already controlled by North Vietnam at the time of registration. The list showed no names for these cases.

4,500: Total of the Vietnam list.

The authorities of the Republic of Vietnam proposed that the shares of the prisoners of war resident in North Vietnam should be held in reserve for them.

The problems resultant from such a situation far surpassed the framework of a technical checking of the lists. The ICRC therefore asked the advice of a legal consultant in international law, Prof. P. Guggenheim, with whom it raised the following questions:

(a) Have former POWs, regularly registered on lists by the Saigon authorities, but at present resident in North Vietnam and not therefore able to receive their indemnity from the South Vietnamese Government, acquired a lasting right to such benefit?

(b) Can former POWs not registered on lists by the Saigon Government because they have at all times been resident in a zone outside its control, be represented by the Hanoi Government as successor in North Vietnam to the Saigon Government and as such bound by the Treaty of San Francisco? If so, should these former prisoners be excluded from benefitting from Article 16, not being registered within the time limits? If this is not the case, is the claim of the Saigon Government that a reserve be constituted justified in law?

On 8 December 1956, Prof. Guggenheim replied to these questions as follows:

(a) Former POWs whose names were transmitted within the prescribed time limits have acquired a lasting right to benefit under Art. 16. Amounts due to them should be held in reserve until they can be distributed.

(b) The Government of North Vietnam cannot be regarded as successor to the Government of South Vietnam. On the other hand, the claim of the Government of South Vietnam asking for the constitution of a reserve to cover the case of former POWs not registered on the lists, because they had at all times been resident in territory outside its control, is justified in law, as the Government had already, on the conclusion and entry into force of the Peace Treaty with Japan, had its claim over the entire territory of Vietnam recognized by the co-signatories. It would therefore seem fitting that a reserve be constituted until its utilization is possible, or until it proved impossible for the Government of South Vietnam to exercise control over the whole of Vietnamese territory, in which case it would lose all rights to the reserve.

On the basis of Prof. Guggenheim's conclusions, the ICRC proposed to the beneficiary States to pay the Republic of Vietnam the share corresponding to the 2,690 former prisoners of war identified by and accessible to the Saigon Government (Vietnam I share), and to hold in reserve the amount earmarked for the 525 beneficiaries who could not be reached (Vietnam II reserve), and for the 1,285 unregistered prisoners of war (Vietnam III reserve).

The Working Party of the beneficiary States, at its meeting on 12 March 1957, gave its agreement to this manner of proceeding.

In December 1959, the situation in Vietnam had not changed. The country was still divided into two States by the provisional demarcation line established by the 1954 armistice agreement.

It was therefore decided that the Vietnam II and Vietnam III reserves would be handed over to the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

It was, however, understood that the national agency of that country would hold these for five years, distributing during that period the share due from reserve II to beneficiaries presenting themselves in the South, and paying out of the funds of reserve III indemnities to former prisoners of war who, arriving from the North, had not had the opportunity of registering at the time when the lists were drawn up. Should their numbers exceed the 1,285 cases expected on the constituting of the reserve, they should be paid out of the funds of the second distribution.

On the expiry of the 5-year period, funds not utilized would be devoted to a general aid action for former prisoners of war already compensated, or for their dependants. This action would be carried out on the basis of an agreement between the national agency of the Republic of Vietnam and the ICRC.

VI. FUND DISTRIBUTION

1. Share-out among national agencies

When—for the reasons already explained—it appeared necessary to distribute the Japanese assets in two stages, the ICRC examined, in co-operation with the governments of the beneficiary Powers, what sums should be first distributed and how they should be remitted to the claimants.

The International Committee bore the following criteria in mind:

(a) In all countries where the number of former prisoners of war in Japanese hands had been determined definitively, that number should be the basis for deciding the amount of the national share.

(b) In respect of countries where their number had not been finally determined, reserve funds would be set up, taking into account the maximum estimate submitted by the national agencies of those countries. The ICRC would retain those funds until such time as the number had definitively been determined.

(c) With due allowance for the foregoing, the sums earmarked for the first distribution would be as large as possible.

(d) The ICRC having received the Japanese assets half in Pounds Sterling and half in US Dollars, payment of the national shares would also be made in those two currencies.

(e) The individual share would be determined by dividing the total funds entrusted to the ICRC by the total number of former prisoners of war shown on the national lists (including the provisional figures used for computing the reserves). It would then suffice

to multiply the individual share thus arrived at by the total number of beneficiaries shown on each national list in order to calculate the amount due to each country.

(f) This initial distribution would not include the interest accumulated since the Japanese assets were made available to the ICRC and invested. It was arranged that the yield on that capital would be allocated to cover the expenditure incurred by the ICRC in the discharge of its mandate. Any balance thereof remaining would be added to the funds for the second distribution, after determination of the Philippines' share in the first distribution.

The Working Party of the beneficiary Powers having given their agreement to this procedure, the ICRC began, in November 1956, to pay out the national shares due under the first distribution.

Total of funds received:	£ 2,696,428/11/5
and	\$ 7,542,500.—
Total of registered prisoners:	
— final national lists	153,933
— Philippines' reserve	60,000
— Vietnam shares I, II and III	4,500
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Total	218,433

Individual share: £ 12/6/10½ + US\$ 34.53

The work carried out by the Philippine Red Cross showed, in 1960, that the figure of 44,055 former prisoners of war could be considered the total for all claimants in that country. Consequently the 15,945 shares remaining from the 60,000 which had been kept in reserve permitted consideration being given to the possibility of a second distribution among all beneficiary Powers. Those shares which became available represented, in round figures:

£ 184,000 and
\$ 512,000.

The interest accumulated up to the time of the first distribution of national shares (1956) was increased, to a more modest degree,

thanks to the yield on the reserve fund. After deducting the ICRC's expenses, this interest account showed the following balance:

£ 269,000 and
\$ 440,000.

The total funds available for the second distribution amounted therefore to the following:

Balance of the Philippines reserve—	£ 184,000 + \$ 512,000
Balance on interest account	£ 269,000 + \$ 440,000
Total	£ 453,000 + \$ 952,000

These amounts were paid to the national agencies in 1961 in proportion to the number of claimants in each country, i.e. for each claimant,

about £ 2 and
about \$4.

Attached hereto, as appendix II, is a table showing the first distribution, and as appendix III a table showing the second distribution. Appendix IV shows the available balance as at 31 December 1970.

Part of the assets being represented in Swiss franc accounts, and the expenditure still being incurred by the ICRC for the winding up of the problems in abeyance in some of the beneficiary countries also being booked in Swiss francs, it is in that currency that the balance is expressed, viz. :

Swiss francs 496,464.65

The ICRC was holding this sum available for the Powers concerned.

2. Payment to claimants

(a) The national agencies had responsibility for the distribution of sums received from the ICRC to former prisoners of war whose claims had been recognized.

When making these payments they were not bound by the uniform value individual share, which was merely a system adopted

for computation of the amount of each national share. In other words, each beneficiary Power was free to remit the funds as it deemed fit to the persons who qualified under the terms of the treaty and of the Working Party's decisions. Most did distribute the funds in equal shares. Some, however, endeavoured to individualize the indemnities by adapting them as far as possible to the degree of suffering inflicted on the claimants.

This procedure was adopted, for instance, in the Republic of Vietnam and in France.

In Vietnam it was planned to distribute half of the overall amount equally among all former prisoners. The other half was to be used to pay a supplementary benefit to the heirs of deceased former POWs or to surviving POWs whose captivity had had lasting repercussions. This supplementary indemnity should have amounted to twice, thrice or even four times the amount of the basic indemnity. In the event of there being a balance available after payment of these two distributions, it would be divided among all prisoners in proportion to the length of their captivity.

In France the national share was divided as follows:

- the heirs of POWs who died in captivity received a sum equal to two individual shares;
- surviving POWs suffering from a disability of 80% or more received one and a half shares;
- other former POWs received one share.

This method necessitated the compiling of more complicated individual files than in other countries and it considerably delayed payment to beneficiaries of sums calculated according to this scale. Consequently, it was not until December 1960 that a start was made on the distribution to former French POWs in Japanese hands of the funds paid by the ICRC to the French national agency in January and May 1957.

However, it so happened that the French franc was twice devalued in the meantime and the International Committee expressed the hope that the authorities would take that fact into account when calculating indemnities. This suggestion was not acted upon. Nor did it appear possible to credit claimants with the interest earned by the funds kept in reserve during those four years.

(b) The payment from 1957 on of the first distribution of indemnities revealed two contrasting phenomena:

Except for those countries which claimed for only a few former prisoners of war in Japanese hands, many others found they were unable to reach all claimants included in the lists approved by the ICRC. Some had changed addresses without notifying the national agency and the authorities were unable to trace them. Other claimants had died without descendants. Others omitted to respond to the repeated appeals sent to them or were unable to do so.

When confronted with this problem, the Working Party accepted the suggestion that it invite national agencies to place shares not paid out in the first distribution into a reserve fund for two years, starting on 1 January 1960. It was understood that during those two years the national agencies would take all steps likely to lead to the tracing of claimants who did not collect and to permit the greatest possible number of remittances to be made. At the end of the two years, viz. after 31 December 1961, the balance of any undistributed shares would be added to the funds set aside for the second distribution.

On the other hand, the start of the payments induced a number of former prisoners of war not included on the lists to put forward claims for indemnity. Consequently, in spite of the care taken by the national agencies to draw up lists of the persons intended to benefit from Article 16 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, and although the time limit for that work was several times extended, it became clear that the census had not always been complete. The upheavals of the war, and the difficult circumstances which followed it in most of the countries concerned explained this state of affairs to a great extent. There could be no question of rejecting these late claims and debarring those who submitted them, for by the very fact of their having been prisoners of war in Japanese hands they had acquired a right to the indemnity provided for in Article 16 of the Treaty. On the other hand, the national shares had been calculated on the basis of lists approved by the ICRC. It was no longer possible to change the shares paid out in the first distribution.

The existence of the balance remaining for the second distribution and the funds comprising the shares not paid out during the

first distribution fortunately provided the national agencies involved with the means of meeting this unexpected situation.

The supplementary lists which they sent to the ICRC were examined and controlled in the same way as the basic lists.

(c) These changes in the number of claimants were a considerable burden in several countries and a reduction in the relative value of the balance of funds available for the second distribution.

Except in the cases of countries which had only a few former prisoners of war, it could reasonably be asked whether for such small amounts an equal distribution per person was justified or whether it would not be preferable to use the balance for relief limited to those ex-POWs or their heirs who were in the greatest need. Such a procedure would, of course, not benefit all former prisoners whose claims had been duly recognized. At least a more substantial aid could be provided to those in the poorest circumstances.

Faced with the difficulty of finding satisfactory criteria for selection, many countries adopted the first solution, which was undoubtedly also the simplest, at least when distribution was by equal shares. The available balance (funds from the first distribution and undistributed shares of the first distribution, after deduction of indemnities paid to late claimants) was paid out in those countries in individual amounts calculated according to the same principles as for the first distribution.

Other countries, however, chose to attribute the balance of Japanese assets to specific objectives, in the interest of certain categories of former POWs. For instance, Canada, Pakistan, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, in agreement with the ICRC, founded special funds (trust funds) whose use—consistent with the objectives of Article 16 of the Treaty—was specified in byelaws. Sums drawn from these funds were intended to assist those former POWs, or their families, who were in particularly difficult circumstances. They were used, in some cases, to supplement the assistance already being granted by the authorities, such as in the form of housing assistance to elderly, sick or convalescent former POWs, or in the form of scholarships, help to purchase prostheses for disabled former POWs, and so forth.

In the Philippines the national agency adopted a similar solution. After consulting the ICRC, it devoted the balance of funds to the supply of prostheses, wheel-chairs, crutches and spectacles for disabled POWs. It also granted financial aid to some POWs whose state of health demanded medical or surgical treatment. In addition, in some cases it granted allowance for funeral services. This programme was to continue until the funds, plus the interest earned from investments made by the national agency, were exhausted.

A similar solution is now being adopted in the Republic of Vietnam, following agreement between the national agency and the ICRC.

VII. CONCLUSION

The reader of this report cannot fail to be struck by the long lapse of time between the signing of the Peace Treaty at San Francisco and the payment of indemnities to the former prisoners specified in Article 16. The generous intentions expressed in September 1951 by the representatives of the Powers parties to the Treaty were thus, in many cases, put into effect only belatedly; so much so, indeed, that the beneficiaries were often not the persons who had suffered the particularly harsh conditions of wartime captivity, but were their spouses or descendants. The prudent provision for the payment of the indemnities to the families of deceased former prisoners of war was therefore more widely applied than could have been expected at the time the Treaty was signed.

The two main causes of this state of affairs were the problems involved in the collection of the funds to be distributed and the drawing up of the lists of claimants.

The International Committee of the Red Cross avails itself of this opportunity to express its thanks to the authorities and National Red Cross Societies which made a decisive contribution to the solution of those fundamental problems. It is particularly grateful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom and to the national agencies appointed in each country to apply Article 16

for their understanding and for the support they gave it in the discharge of the mission entrusted to it. In spite of the long time which the beneficiaries had to wait, it was undoubtedly due to these combined efforts that it was possible to carry out the indemnity operations in almost all the countries concerned.
