

Tracing missing persons

One of the important tasks of the ICRC in the Middle East is the tracing of missing civilians and soldiers.

Last year, the ICRC delegations in Israel and the occupied territories, Syria and the United Arab Republic received over 5,600 requests for news; this figure does not include those enquiries, running into tens of thousands, arising out of the civil war in Jordan.

“ The Red Cross and My Country ” in Asia

On several occasions, *International Review* has mentioned the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross to disseminate knowledge of the principles of the Geneva Conventions in schools, through the publication of a textbook “ The Red Cross and My Country ” with its complement the “ Teacher’s Manual ” ¹. It is highly desirable that these booklets, edited and illustrated by the ICRC, should be made known and disseminated as widely as possible.

Mr. J.-M. Laverrière, who had already made a first tour of Asian countries for this purpose, went for a second time on a trip that lasted from 9 August to 30 November 1970, in the course of which he visited the ministries concerned and the National Societies of Burma, Ceylon, the Republic of Korea, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

In each country, the responsible government officials expressed to the ICRC delegate their interest in this scheme and their acceptance to introduce the textbook in their primary schools, while the National Societies, on their part, fully conscious of the importance of this action, promised their co-operation. In several places,

¹ See *International Review*, March and December 1969, July 1970.

moreover, the spreading of knowledge of the Conventions has already begun, either through the National Societies or the school authorities. Ministers of Education in several Asian countries will thus each be receiving within the next few months many thousands of copies of the textbook.

It should be emphasized that this splendid result was made possible only through the close co-operation between the Ministers of Education and National Societies, as, in several cases, the illustrations had to be adapted to the traditions and customs of each particular country and the text had to be translated into its appropriate language. Editions of the textbook and "Teacher's Manual" in eleven different languages ¹ are now in preparation. They include versions in Chinese, requested by Malaysia, and in Tamil and Sinhalese for Ceylon.

The printing of 600,000 copies of "The Red Cross and My Country" and of 70,000 copies of the "Teacher's Manual" is in progress at Singapore, and it is thanks to the generous support of the Singapore Government and Red Cross that it has been found possible to carry out to a large extent the publication of these booklets. In spite of the very large number of copies turned out, the ICRC will not be able, however, to satisfy the requests, some of which are considerable, of several Asian countries, at least not in the immediate future.

The success of the ICRC action shows once again how highly governments favour the dissemination of the Red Cross idea and how desirous they are to make known among youth the Geneva Conventions ¹.

¹ *Plate.*