

The ICRC hopes that at the second session agreement will be reached on the wording of the various texts, so that discussions at a future Diplomatic Conference may thereby be facilitated. Nevertheless, the character of this second session will still be that of a meeting of experts: the views expressed will not be binding on their Governments. In the words of the President of the ICRC: "As at the first session, discussions will be limited to humanitarian questions; thus special situations, past or present, will be mentioned only for the purpose of improving future law, this being, moreover, in keeping with the character of meetings held under the auspices of the Red Cross".

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## **A Tracing Service in Dacca**

As we mentioned in a previous issue, General Yahya Khan, President of Pakistan, in an interview with Mr. V. Umbricht, member of the International Committee, on 26 July, gave his agreement to humanitarian action by the ICRC. The ICRC decided to send to East Pakistan Dr. Otto Lehner, Head of Delegation, and Mr. Nicolas Vecsey, Assistant Head of the Central Tracing Agency. They left Geneva on 19 August, their mission being particularly to organize, in co-operation with the Pakistan Red Cross, a service to trace the missing and to re-unite families.

Upon arrival in Dacca, the first objective was to make known as widely as possible in East Pakistan the setting up of the tracing service so that the population would know that it could turn to a central office to trace members of their families. Notice of the opening of the tracing service was published in the English, Bengali and Urdu newspapers at the beginning of September, but the ICRC delegation had before that had forms with the sign of the red cross printed and distributed through all post offices. The Pakistan Red Cross, for its part, delivered a number to each of its regional sections.

The tracing service itself, in the National Society's building in

Dacca<sup>1</sup>, as soon as it opened, received enquiries which it filed, forwarded whenever possible, or transmitted to Geneva. It also received visitors enquiring after their kin. At present, it receives and endeavours to answer about a hundred enquiries each day.

The tracing agency in Dacca is in operation and is developing. Enquiries during the first few weeks concerned:

- (a) persons reported missing;
- (b) refugees in India;
- (c) residents of Pakistan whose families lived abroad and were without news.

The tracing service in Dacca is of course in constant touch with the Central Tracing Agency of the ICRC in Geneva.

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## The Red Cross Broadcasting Service

*This is the International Committee of the Red Cross bringing you Red Cross news on 21,585 kilocycles, on the 13.90 metre band. The news will be followed by a variety programme until 10 a.m. GMT.*

This introduction will be heard on three continents for the first time on 23 November 1971. On that date, the ICRC will inaugurate a beamed transmission radio programme. The system will reach all countries along a predetermined line, in contrast to the system of circle transmission over 360 degrees reaching only countries near the transmission centre.

We must go back a few years to make better acquaintance with the ICRC radio service. Its work and broadcasts have been mentioned on several occasions by the *International Review*.<sup>2</sup>

The first broadcasts by the Red Cross took place in 1945 during the Second World War to transmit the names of prisoners of war recorded in the Central Tracing Agency. It was necessary to reach families, most of whom were in Europe. It was for that reason that

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<sup>1</sup> Plate.

<sup>2</sup> See, in particular, *International Review*, August 1961.