

Dacca¹, 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.

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*.²

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

¹ Plate.

² See, in particular, *International Review*, August 1961.

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the circle transmission was made available to the ICRC. After the war, it was used to convey information of a general nature on Red Cross activities.

It soon became apparent, however, from the reception reports sent in by many amateur radio enthusiasts that the power was inadequate to reach beyond the Mediterranean basin. Yet it was precisely in the regions beyond that limit that the ICRC's work was gradually extending.

The ICRC Press and Information Division, in the autumn of 1970, started negotiations with a view to obtaining beamed transmission facilities to Africa, Asia and Latin America, in the hope of making contact with the national radio systems of the countries on those three continents. Such contacts, apart from their use for the receipt and transmission of information, would also make it possible to send messages to National Societies in emergencies and pending the setting up of a local ICRC receiving and transmitting unit.

The difficulty was to obtain available frequencies, the world radio broadcasting network being already overloaded. However, with the assistance of the International Frequency Registration Board, a technical department of the ITU, it was possible to find frequencies which were at certain times simultaneously available on the Swiss shortwave system (Schwarzenbourg) and on national broadcasting programmes throughout the world.

Application was then made to the Swiss Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Administration (PTT). In his reply, the head of the radio department of the PTT informed the ICRC that the frequencies chosen were not only approved but were being made available free of charge. For its part, the ICRC undertook to send the PTT Administration regular reception reports from monitoring stations of overseas national broadcasting corporations and from amateur radio enthusiasts.

Henceforth, the ICRC may broadcast eight half-hour programmes once every two months. The programmes, in French, English and Arabic, will be broadcast to Asia, Australia, Africa and the Middle East. Later on, programmes will also be broadcast to Latin America.