

Radio communications

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Czechoslovakia, France, Haïti, Honduras, Pakistan, Peru, Poland and the Republic of Vietnam.

The "Miscellaneous" section is not directly concerned with the Red Cross but relates international efforts for the safeguard of man and his essential rights. This section, in 1969, was completed in a detailed manner by analyses of books and extracts from bibliographies.

International Review, of which the circulation unceasingly increases, is, as can be seen, a periodical which is in constant touch with reality and which, by the very extent of the information it contains, is for National Societies and all persons and institutions dedicated to the service of mankind a valuable source of documentary material on humanitarian activity today.

7. RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

In 1969, HBC-88, the ICRC radio station, continued to be very active. Daily contacts were more frequent than in previous years although telegrams between Geneva and the ICRC missions in the Yemen and Nigeria declined from 4,387 in 1968 to 2,850 in 1969. This was due in part to the withdrawal of the radio from the Yemen on 27 September 1969, and to the political situation in the Dahomey-Nigeria-Equatorial Guinea sector where it was sometimes difficult to obtain authority for radio broadcasting.

The 2,850 telegrams exchanged by the ICRC in 1969 represented some 208,000 words. The cost, at the ordinary rate and if official communications services had been practicable, would have exceeded Sw. Frs. 600,000, and twice that for urgent telegrams.

Equipment.—The ICRC Telecommunications Service has two main stations in Geneva.

The first was brought into service at the beginning of 1964. It includes two transmitting/receiving radios of the amateur type. Although still serviceable they are not designed for continuous use round the clock.

The second was installed towards the end of 1969. It is professional type equipment designed for continuous day and night use.

Messages can be transmitted by radio-telephone, radio-telegraphy (AM or SSB) or by radio-teletype on frequencies between 2.0 and 30.0 megacycles.

Since the end of 1968 the ICRC has also improved its equipment in the field. It has provided its missions with two, more powerful (1 kw), mobile stations for contact with Geneva, and with secondary stations, much easier to use, for local communications. Although a qualified radio operator is essential for communication between field bases and Geneva, a brief course of instruction is adequate for any doctor or delegate without technical knowledge to enable him to use a secondary station.

Personnel.—Being in contact with Santa Isabel and Cotonou twenty-four hours out of twenty-four, the ICRC again had to call in extra operators in 1969. For this it received help from Swissair and from the Zurich police radio service, both of which made specialists available.

Trial Broadcasts.—In 1969 the ICRC broadcasting service transmitted six trial broadcasts on 7,210 KHz (41.60 m band). This frequency was allocated to the ICRC to broadcast, in case of need, family news received by the Central Tracing Agency.

These broadcasts were satisfactorily monitored in 34 countries and 3,284 reports were sent in by 550 correspondents. Of these, 230 received all six broadcasts.