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he went, the representative of the ICRC had mutually comprehensive talks with the leading members of the National Societies. These visits enabled exchanges of views to be made concerning problems with which the Red Cross Societies are concerned, especially those of the reuniting of families and the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions.

The ICRC has in fact continued its efforts throughout the year for the reuniting of families, where members have been separated as a result of conflicts and tensions which occurred and which are still taking place in various parts of the world.

At the outset, a great deal was demanded of the ICRC which itself, often alone, made representations and took part in organizing convoys. Now, however, these activities are being undertaken in an increasingly effective way by the National Red Cross Societies. However, the International Committee still continues to intervene in certain countries, either by dealing with individual cases, or by forwarding recommendations to the authorities and the National Red Cross Societies concerned. Thus in 1963 several thousands of families were able to be reunited in the countries of their choice, thanks to the understanding of the authorities and to the co-operation of National Societies.

5. LATIN AMERICA

At the end of July, Mr. Pierre Jequier, ICRC delegate, returned to Geneva after concluding a mission in Latin America which enabled him to make a number of contacts and intervene on behalf of the victims of internal disturbances.

He was received by two Heads of State, Mr. Paz Estensoro, President of the Bolivian Republic and General Nicolas Lindlay, President of the Military Junta of Peru, and he also discussed matters thoroughly with government authorities in the Argentine, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Argentine

The Argentine Government gave permission to the ICRC delegate to visit persons imprisoned as a result of the recent

political events. Accompanied by Dr. Francisco J. Martone, President of the Argentine Red Cross, Mr. Jequier visited three prisons in Buenos Aires and the military penitentiary of Magdalena, 72 miles south of the capital. He spoke without witnesses with detainees of his own choosing and, as is customary, handed his reports to the detaining authorities.

6. SPECIAL SERVICES

Central Tracing Agency (Geneva)

This important service of the ICRC remained most active throughout 1963. The Central Agency in fact received 47,500 communications and sent out 50,300 which represents a considerable increase over the previous year (44,000 inwards, 35,000 outwards).

A staff some 40-strong remains attached to this service whose tasks are most diverse.

A large number of cases dealt with still relate to victims of the Second World War. It is by no means easy to find traces of missing military and civilians, to establish, if necessary, proof of their decease or to discover their burial place. One has to undertake and assiduously continue making innumerable enquiries, more often than not based on slender indications and uncertain facts, taking into account the advances and withdrawals of the armed forces involved at the time, the voluntary or enforced migrations of the population and the transfer of prisoners from the camp, more often from one country to another. It is indeed evident that the passage of time merely increases the complexity of these searches, which, however, often succeed in re-establishing contact between persons who have been separated for a long time.

For the past fifteen years or so, the Agency has been issuing *captivity, hospitalization or death certificates* to former prisoners of war, interned civilians and deportees or to their next-of-kin. These documents which enable the holders to regularize their personal status, to obtain compensation, a pension or some other benefit, are often drawn up at the request of National Red Cross Societies, private associations or official bureaux, whose archives have, for some reason or another, been either destroyed or dispersed.