

II. Methods for classifying information received in the form of lists of names, individual reports, notices of death, etc.

Each document must be marked by the tracing service with a reference number.

For instance, a simple method would be to mark the document with the letter R (= record) followed by a serial number.

The first document will be marked R 1
The tenth document will be marked R 10
The ten-thousandth will be marked R 10.000,
and so on...

Where a document consists of a list of several pages, each page will be marked with a subsequent serial number.

Example : — supposing the tracing service gets a three page list, this being the 4,999th document that has come in since the service has started operating. This list will be marked as follows :

page 1	No. R 4999
page 2	No. R 5000
page 3	No. R 5001

If, for example, this 3-page list is followed by an individual note, it will be marked with the next number, i. e. R 5002.

Note : for the method to be used in recording **replies** received to **individual enquiries**, see page 21, duties of secretariat.

After having recorded incoming documents, the tracing service must take care :

- a) to **register them** : the date, origin, number of persons mentioned and the category to which they belong must be indicated;
- b) to make **copies** or **photocopies** of them, with the object of supplying the Central Tracing Agency (at the ICRC) and the Protecting Power with one, in the case of those persons for whom the ICRC and the Protecting Power are concerned.

c) to record on individual cards the data found in the documents
(see instructions on how to fill in cards, page 12).

d) to classify documents in the records department (if possible,
after they have been bound).

Departments of the tracing service whose function it is to register, list and transmit copies or photocopies of incoming documents to the ICRC Central Tracing Agency, Protecting Power, etc. must have available :

— a typing pool

a) to type out copies

b) to copy out the information in the documents onto the cards

— photocopying equipment.

The tracing service may have to acquaint persons living in the same country with news about relatives of theirs who may have been rescued from natural disasters, or with information transmitted to it from the ICRC Central Tracing Agency about any of its nationals who may have fallen into the hands of the enemy, without waiting for requests to be received from these relatives.

These «spontaneous» messages may be transmitted on the basis of cards made out according to incoming documents. The date when a message has been sent must be entered on the cards which are then returned to the card index.

Wireless messages may be broadcast by the tracing service to relatives on national territory, if thought to be expedient. But this method, which may appear advisable at first sight, if it is desired to send news swiftly to persons who cannot be reached by post, has some disadvantages. Reading out long lists of names over the radio may often lead to mistakes arising from uninformed listeners' not catching correctly the proper names they hear. Frequently, there is confusion resulting from homonyms, while messages picked up by people who listen to the radio and then pass them on to others by word of mouth, are invariably distorted in some way or other.