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QUITO, ECUADOR

5,000 DIE IN EARTHQUAKE

In Central Ecuador - rocked by an earthquake - an area the size of Yorkshire is laid waste. Of one town - Pellileo's - population of three thousand five hundred, only three hundred survive the terror. Elsewhere, whole towns and villages are swallowed up. In the space of three days the map is altered as the odour of death hangs over the Quito district. As the tremors continue, the death-roll in the year's biggest natural disaster rises to 5,000 killed, 6,000 injured.

Wearily, the lucky few who escape trudge from communities no longer recognisable to places of safety. Help from the outside world is swift in coming as emergency camps are set up.

Mersey planes from America arrive with medical supplies in desperate need here, at the back-door of civilisation. The badly wounded are flown to hospitals far from the catastrophe.

Peasants flee from the vast cemetery to begin life anew. The world grieves with stricken Ecuador.