

The Global Problem: Inequality of Opportunity

By C.-E. A. WINSLOW, Dr.P.H.

The basic problem which confronts us in the building of a stable and peaceful world is the appalling inequality of opportunity which exists between the peoples inhabiting different areas of the globe.

One-fifth of the human race, living in the countries of Western Europe, North America, and the British Commonwealth, have, according to the most recent estimates, an annual income of \$461 per person per year and an average life span of 63 years.

Two-thirds of the human race, living in Africa, Southeast Asia, the islands of the Pacific, and Latin America, have a mean annual income of \$41 per person per year and an average length of life of 30 years.

This inequality is our really fundamental challenge. Even if there were no political and military rivalry between powerful nations, it would still make a unified world impossible. The issue of the rivalry which does exist will ultimately be decided by the strength of the appeal which totalitarianism and democracy can, respectively, make to the submerged two-thirds of the human race. Only if we can gradually improve the living conditions of the suffering peoples of Asia and Africa and the islands of the seas—and if we can do this, not as patronizing rich relations but in the spirit of constructive human brotherhood—can the world of tomorrow be soundly built.

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The problems of poverty and disease in underdeveloped areas are complex and interrelated. Men and women in these lands are poor because they are sick, and sick because they are poor. A coordinated approach to control of disease, increase in food supply, development of industry, and improvement in education, balanced to meet the needs of individual countries, offers the only sound solution of the problem.

The United Nations and its affiliated organizations face a challenge to build up national strength and prosperity in a positive sense. The efforts in this direction will have more fundamental and far-reaching results than efforts to check aggression and prevent worldwide conflict in a negative sense.

This task has been in large measure delegated to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, and to other specialized agencies of the United Nations, such as the International Labor Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and the World Health Organization. It is with the latter that we are concerned in the present discussion, never forgetting, however, that its work must be closely coordinated with that of other international service agencies.

It is the possibility of fostering sound local programs of health service in the underdeveloped areas of the world which will be primarily considered in the present discussion. The limitations on the process are obvious. In order to succeed, we must have:

A soundly planned program . . . adequate trained personnel . . . understanding and support of the population concerned . . . and essential financial support.

"The Spirit of the Symposium . . ."

"The problems of public health are relatively simple as compared with many other problems of international cooperation, but the successes so far attained may be encouraging to agencies dealing with more difficult areas.

"The spirit of the symposium on 'Meeting World Health Problems' was hopeful and confident. The view was expressed, for example, that in the year A. D. 2000, historians would look back on our mid-century as memorable for two of the most significant milestones in the history of the human race: the initiation

in Korea of the first exercise of world police power for the checking of armed aggression, and the development in the technical assistance and Point IV programs of a global responsibility for promoting by concerted international action the physical and emotional and social well-being of all the peoples of the earth."

—from a summary report to the U. S. National Commission for UNESCO, prepared by Dr. C.-E. A. Winslow, chairman of the symposium, and Dr. Reginald M. Atwater, rapporteur.

Meeting World Health Problems, I

The Need for Sound Program Planning

By JOSEPH W. MOUNTIN, M.D.

The health task facing the world today is as vast and complex as it is important. If we are to make any inroads against the global burdens of disease, poverty, and ignorance, we need many things. We need, of course, the basic ingredients of men, money, and material. We need the incentive to progress that comes from popular understanding and participation. We need scientific knowledge, careful joint thinking and planning, effective organization, and high-caliber performance. Above all, we need soundly conceived health programs, suited to

Dr. Mountin, chief of the Bureau of State Services, Public Health Service, participated in the first meeting of the World Health Organization's Expert Committee on Public Health Administration, which convened in Geneva last December. This paper, prepared by Dr. Mountin, was read by Dr. L. L. Williams, Jr., chief of the Public Health Service's Division of International Health.

the problem, the time, and the place, and designed to move logically to attainable goals.

One of the first steps in planning sound health programs is to determine what is involved in the term "health" for various parts of the world. Actually, one of our main problems is that people are not always clear as to the meaning of health, especially in terms of the measures that organized communities might take to improve it. Health requirements vary from place to place. In one area, the apparent over-riding need is for the organization of sufficient medical and hospital services to care for acute illness; in another, health workers have to turn their attention to long-term diseases and mental disorders, and to the health problems of an aging population; in still another, the absence of simple community sanitation and personal hygiene may lie at the root of the health problem; and finally, in some places, the lack of food and the inadequacy of shelter are in themselves public health problems of paramount importance.