

WORLD HEALTH

Curbing Disease

UNLESS there is a vigorous intensification of research, the progress many countries are making in their fight against disease will be slowed down and may even be halted in some areas according to Dr M. Candau, director-general of the World Health Organization. In his introduction to the organization's twenty-third annual report (HMSO £1.50, published in English, Russian, French and Spanish) Dr Candau says that without significant discoveries the control of some diseases including certain vector borne parasitic diseases, cardiovascular disease and iron deficiency anaemia "is unlikely to make much progress in the next ten or even twenty years". But he adds "we know what needs to be done and what questions to ask, and we have the technical resources and the research skills to find the answers".

Treading the same middle road of cautious optimism, Dr Candau says that public opinion has become "unduly sensitive" during 1971 to the problems of cholera and the adverse effects of DDT. The problems "have been magnified out of all proportion to the real hazards". On DDT Dr Candau says that "the recognition of the fact that DDT might carry with it certain hazards should not be allowed to obscure its immense advantages. It has", he says, "conferred incalculable benefits on millions of people by reducing their burden of disease, improving their well being, and opening up vast territories to economic development. On the evidence available to WHO at present it would seem that, in spite of the adverse publicity DDT has received, there is at present no justification for abandoning this most valuable weapon in the fight against disease."

The mammoth 400 page report lists the work of WHO and highlights particular problems and successes of 1971. Cholera provides one of the less happy aspects of the year, three times more cases (148,000) being reported in 1971 than in 1970, with almost a sixfold increase reported from African countries. The number of countries reporting the disease (39) was, however, much the same as for 1970.

Reported smallpox cases rose from 30,000 to 50,000 in 1971, 25,000 of these coming from Ethiopia. This is accounted for by better recording in Ethiopia following the start of an eradication campaign there. The rise in the number of cases is the first since 1967, however, and the number of areas heavily affected by smallpox has dwindled considerably since then.

WHO also highlights the problems of cardiovascular disease, which, according to their own figures, was responsible

for 39 per cent of all deaths in men aged 25 to 64 years in a survey carried out in 29 technologically advanced countries in 1967. This loss, Dr Candau says, is far from inevitable. Too much food and too many cigarettes must be "vigorously combated" and early diagnosis and treatment of hypertension and heart disease must be extended.

The report also emphasizes that while much research is needed, many diseases, particularly of childhood—for example, measles, whooping cough, diphtheria and polio—could be better controlled simply by the application of existing knowledge.

In the course of 1971 WHO was responsible for running 1,900 projects throughout the world, 950 of those being collaborative projects with other organizations. The organization spent \$75.2 million during the year and published 101 papers, technical reports and official records.

ENVIRONMENT

Policy for Europe

THE cost of cleaning up pollution over a period of five to ten years and creating an environmental protection agency would be between 1 and 2 per cent of the gross national product of the European nations, according to Dr Hillard Roderick, director of the OECD Environment Directorate. The cost to industry would be about 10 per cent of its capital investment per year and some small companies would go out of business, but although these sums are huge they are not so large that they could not be sanctioned.

In such a situation, said Dr Roderick, the task of OECD is to harmonize environmental policies and to develop

guidelines for governments to follow; these guidelines, which are about to be agreed by governments, include the principle that the polluter and not the taxpayer should pay for the cleaning up operation.

Dr Roderick was speaking at a meeting of the European-Atlantic Group on "European Environment Policy", along with Mr Michel Carpentier, chief of the EEC Division of Environment, and Mr Sten Renborg, director of the Environment Directorate of the Council of Europe.

It emerged clearly from the meeting that there is no European environment policy as such, but there are plenty of organizations worrying about the environment, and, according to Mr Renborg, over the past few years the stage has been set for such a policy.

Mr Carpentier said that the strength of the EEC in environmental matters is that it can issue directives on the environment which advisory bodies cannot. And as the EEC's future is linked to "continuous and balanced expansion" the commission must be very concerned—"the solution to environmental problems is to some degree a condition of the EEC's survival".

But if a European environment policy does not yet exist, it is possible, with an enlarged community in the offing and the Stockholm conference in June, that one will emerge. Mr Renborg for one, although he said he is afraid that Stockholm will create more confusion than it will clear up, is looking forward to a ministerial conference on the environment in Vienna in March, 1973, when the Council of Europe ministers will meet to compare their problems and examine possible solutions. That, said Mr Renborg, "will be the next important milestone".

TEACHERS

More Come to Stay

ALTHOUGH the number of teachers in maintained and direct grant schools, further education establishments and colleges of education in England and Wales moved ahead by about 4.5 per cent to 404,000 in 1970, the proportion of graduates remained almost constant at 23.4 per cent. The number of mathematics graduates teaching in schools increased by 1.5 per cent to 5,820 between 1969 and 1970, while teachers with degrees in other science sub-

jects increased by 3 per cent to 15,601.

Since 1950 the percentage of graduate teachers has increased from 18.0 per cent to the present figure, and in that year 27.2 per cent of men school teachers had degrees, compared with 12.0 per cent of the women. In 1970 the comparable proportions were 32.3 per cent and 15.0 per cent respectively.

The report also reveals that a rise in the inflow of graduate teachers into schools has been accompanied during the past few years by a reduction in the outflow (Table 1), a situation which undoubtedly reflects the employment situation for graduates in general.

Table 1. Movement of Graduates in and out of School Teaching *

	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70
Gross inflow	13.6	14.2	15.3
Gross outflow	12.0	12.0	11.4
Net increase	1.6	2.2	3.9

*Flows and increases are percentages of the number of graduates at the beginning of the period. Source: *Statistics of Education, 1970, 4* (HMSO £1.70).