

The general conclusion among members was that this Congress not only contributed to the difficult problem of the amelioration of the world food situation, but also achieved progress in international fellowship and goodwill in the friendly atmosphere of the meeting and parties. The next Congress will be held in the United States in the summer of 1960 under the presidency of Prof. R. Bradfield, of Cornell University.

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UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES

THE eighth report of the Technical Assistance Board to the Technical Assistance Committee of the United Nations Economic and Social Council* describes the progress and developments during 1955 of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance for Economic Development and includes also some details of activities to be undertaken in 1956 and of plans for 1957. The general level of activities was markedly higher, and the contributions of 27.9 million dollars from seventy-one countries, compared with 25 million dollars in 1954, permitted assistance to be given to a hundred and one countries and territories. At the end of the year, some fourteen hundred experts were collaborating with their counterparts in the less-developed countries, and while it is not practicable to isolate the impact of technical assistance on economic development or to measure it precisely, it is clear that significant results have been achieved in many technical assistance activities.

During the year, geological maps of forty-five regions of Bolivia, to be used in prospecting for oil and other minerals, were completed, as was a similar survey in the Yemen. The first geological map of Nepal is being prepared, and a geological survey institute was set up in Afghanistan. Assistance was given in aerial surveys of forests in Brazil and Iraq, and surveys of ground-water resources in Jordan and Pakistan were being expanded, while in Indonesia a team of eight experts assisted the National Planning Board with the preparation of a five-year development plan and investment programme. Expert advice and the assistance of workers trained abroad under fellowships has enabled the production of DDT and penicillin to be commenced in Chile, Egypt, India, Pakistan and Yugoslavia, while the petrochemical industry in Venezuela has been assisted in the establishment of what will be the largest factory in South America manufacturing fertilizers and insecticides. Assistance given since 1951 to the cottage and small industries of Burma has led to these industries playing an increasingly important part in the country's economy, while throughout the world, nearly a thousand engineers, foremen and skilled workers from all branches of industry have been trained under the worker-trainee programme and large vocational training schools have been opened in Brazil, Guatemala, Haiti, Indonesia and Iran.

Port and shipping experts were assisting the Governments of Jordan and Yemen with the recon-

struction of the ports of Aqaba and Ras-el-Khatib, and nineteen countries received expert advice on the improvement of their civil aviation; more than 1,140 students completed courses at schools in various countries of the International Civil Aviation Organization during 1952-55. Irrigation and land reclamation received much attention in Syria and in large river basins such as those of the Ganges-Brahmaputra, the Tigris and the Euphrates. In a pilot area of 230,000 acres on the right bank of the Ganges in East Pakistan, about one-fifth of the main canal has been excavated with the support of the Colombo Plan and the International Co-operation Administration of the United States, and it is expected that irrigation water will be available in the Kushtia area by the end of this year. Recommendations made by specialists of the Iraqi Development Board on the advice of a geologist of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization have led the Government to allocate 4.5 million dollars for drilling wells, fifty of which have been completed or are under construction. A pilot area on the Volta River in the Gold Coast has been brought under experimental cultivation, and in Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq and Libya demonstrators have been trained to introduce new techniques and improved small tools to farmers. Some of the field workshops in the large-scale farm-mechanization plan of Uttar Pradesh in India have increased their output by nearly 300 per cent, and more than five hundred instructors and operators have been trained by international experts.

New varieties of cotton are being tried in Iran, and cultivation trials in Yugoslavia have given a substantially increased yield of cotton per acre. Programmes for increasing the production of wheat and rice have been undertaken in Egypt, and a scheme for developing coffee cultivation has been started in Ethiopia. Assistance given in Central America and Mexico has enabled local authorities to keep the locust plague under control everywhere except Northern Honduras, and the control of olive and fruit flies has been developed in Libya. With the building up of supplies of vaccine to control rinderpest and other animal diseases in Afghanistan, Austria, Burma, Ceylon, Ethiopia, Honduras, India, Iraq, Pakistan, Thailand and Yugoslavia, the emphasis of technical assistance has shifted to the organization of field control schemes.

The training of school teachers has from the start been an important feature of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, and in 1955 more than a thousand rural teachers attended courses in Haiti, while about 2,500 have been trained in the Philippines since work started in 1953. In Indonesia more attention has been paid to training teachers for rural communities, while assistance in teaching science has ranged from the organization of a chemical laboratory and of a scientific instruments centre for the National Council of Research in Egypt to the development of institutions for arid zone research in Brazil and Peru. In Turkey the Institute of Hydrology has now reached the stage when its work can proceed satisfactorily under the direction of national staff, and an international team, which in 1954 completed the organization of a scientific and technical documentation centre in Mexico for the Latin-American countries, is organizing a similar centre in Egypt to serve the Arab States.

Much assistance has been given to governments in training health staff, the control of communicable

* United Nations: Technical Assistance Committee. Eighth Report of the Technical Assistance Board. (Economic and Social Council. Official Records: Twenty-second Session, Supplement No. 5.) Pp. vi+104. (New York: United Nations; London: H.M.S.O., 1956.) 1 dollar; 7s.; 4 Swiss francs.

diseases and in strengthening national health services. During the year about 570,000 persons in Morocco and Tunisia were treated for trachoma, a high percentage of cures being obtained. Measures were taken to protect about two-fifths of the estimated population of South-East Asia against malaria, and epidemic malaria is no longer prevalent in about half the island territories of the Caribbean; but it has become a matter of urgency to intensify the efforts to eradicate malaria in these regions before the anopheline vectors develop too great a resistance to the insecticides at present used for their control. In Indonesia the mass campaign against yaws has brought the disease under control in about thirty areas, while in Thailand 7.5 million people have been surveyed and about 750,000 treated for the same disease. As examples of assistance given to improve housing conditions, the report cites the establishment in India of a research centre to study the socio-economic and technological aspects of housing development in a dry tropical climate and of another in Indonesia to study these factors in a humid tropical climate. More than a thousand Civil servants of various grades received training during the year, and in Jordan, on the recommendation of an expert on Civil Service reform, a Civil Service Department and a Civil Service Commission were set up; technical consultants in Bolivia helped to draft legislation establishing a permanent Civil Service, and the postal services in Iran, Lebanon and Uruguay have been considerably improved as a result of international advice and assistance.

Although most of the experts supplied in 1955 were recruited from Europe and North America, they were drawn from sixty-nine countries and territories, and workers in receipt of fellowships studied in ninety-four. During the year, 2,431 fellowships were granted, as compared with 1,524 in 1954 and 1,195 in 1953, and there has been a growing trend towards the establishment of training institutes within countries which are receiving technical assistance. Special attention has been paid to co-ordination of the technical assistance provided under the expanded programmes and under bilateral aid programmes, while the general financial stability of the Expanded Programme considerably improved during the latter part of the year.

INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

THE publication, in June, of the first number of the *Indian Journal of the History of Medicine** is in itself an event of historic importance. Much of the credit for this noteworthy step is due to Prof. D. V. Subba Reddy, who founded the Indian Association of the History of Medicine nine years ago, and became its first secretary. Prof. Reddy is editor of the new *Journal*, which is to be the organ of the Association and will be published twice a year, and he will also shortly vacate his chair of physiology in the University of Madras in order to assume the duties of a chair of history of medicine, the first of its kind in India.

* *Indian Journal of the History of Medicine*, 1, No. 1 (June 1956). Pp. iv+69. (Madras: Indian Association of the History of Medicine, 1956.) Rs. 8 per year (two issues) or foreign currency equivalent to Rs. 12.

By the creation of a new chair and a *Journal*, India has recognized, most opportunely, the importance of a historical perspective in medicine. The Medical Education Conference, set up by the Government of India, which met in Delhi in November 1955, acted wisely in recommending that history of medicine should be included in the medical curriculum. This decision was made for several reasons. Not only has the subject a special cultural and humanistic value, but also, as the report of the Conference states, "after studying the history of medicine, the future medical practitioner will be better equipped for his profession under conditions prevailing in this country. Our people think and talk about their illnesses in terms of ideas and expressions based largely on our ancient systems of medicine. How can a physician understand fully what his patient describes as his symptoms unless he has an acquaintance with these ideas and ways of giving expression to them?"

This very appropriate argument in favour of the study of medical history may not apply in every country, but it is certainly valid for India. Events have moved rapidly, and already the report has borne fruit. Dr. Reddy is to be warmly congratulated on the high standard which has been attained in the first number of his *Journal*. It is a veritable mine of information on the early medicine of India and the East. The opening paper, which was originally an address to the Association, is a scholarly contribution by Prof. J. Filiozat (French College at Pondichery) on Ayurveda and foreign contacts, showing the links between Indian medicine and Greek medicine; Prof. P. Kitumbiah (Christian Medical College, Vellore) contributes a paper on the concept of heart and blood-vessels in ancient Hindu medicine; and Prof. M. V. Sastry (Madras) writes on training for medical practice in ancient India. Prof. Reddy himself supplies an article on Buddha's discourses on medicaments, treatment and nursing; other authors deal with nursing under ancient Indian systems, with Arabian medicine and with Rhazes' *magnum opus*, "Al-Hawi, or Continens". The *Journal*, which is well produced and clearly printed, will be published twice a year. It deserves every encouragement.

This recognition by India of the importance of history in medicine is a welcome sign of progress. Many other countries have become aware of their medical heritage. Throughout Europe, nearly every university has its chair of history of medicine and there are many institutes which serve as centres of knowledge. In the United States and in South America, especially in Brazil and Venezuela, close attention is given to the history of medicine.

Towards this widespread awareness of the value of history as a cultural and ethical basis of medical education, Britain alone shows an attitude of almost complete indifference. In London, the Wellcome Historical Medical Library and Museum continue to stimulate and keep alive an interest in the past, as also do the various societies of history of medicine, in England, Scotland and Ireland. The tale of neglect is truly surprising. Nevertheless, a more cheerful attitude is foreshadowed by the recent news that a British journal—the only one of its kind—entitled *Medical History*, will commence publication next January under the editorship of the well-known medical historian, Mr. W. J. Bishop, and will appear quarterly.

One of the strongest arguments in favour of medical history is that it directs attention to the ever-present need for an application of the principles originally