

BOOKS AND REVIEWS

Health and Development, by Dr P. Dorolle, *Inter-Parliamentary Bulletin*, Geneva, 1967, No. 4.

... Despite all efforts at both the international and national levels, despite the positive results obtained, which should not be minimized, the general world health situation is not improving. It might, in fact, even be said that the situation is worsening. Moreover, in the social field, if we do not advance, we retreat! And why is this? Because, despite the increase in the quantity and the quality of the assistance given the developing countries, needs are increasing more rapidly than the resources available to satisfy them. Requirements are increasing more rapidly because fresh countries are achieving independence, because those that achieved independence in past years are more conscious of their needs and their right to health, and also because the population is rising. This constant increase keeps pace with, or may even outrun, whatever concrete progress has been made. Furthermore, there is a negative factor to whose existence and importance sufficient attention is not always drawn, namely, the fact that development itself has its drawbacks and creates new health problems. There are diseases of development, the physical and mental illnesses resulting from the crowding together around large towns in the under-developed countries of a population living under wretched conditions, unworthy of the human species, packed into absolutely inadequate dwellings in a grossly polluted environment. There are also diseases created by the great hydraulic engineering works: irrigation systems and dams encourage the spread of diseases whose vectors need water for their development. This applies to malaria, bilharziasis and onchocerciasis, which has been termed "river blindness", and these are only examples. Consequently, while remaining subject to the scourges of under-development, the populations of many of the under-privileged countries are also already subject to these diseases of development. This will make clear to you the immensity and complexity of the problem.

The inevitable conclusion to be drawn is that we must do more and we must do better. I am aware, and I repeat this, that the more fortunate nations are doing a great deal to help the less fortunate ones and I know that this effort is a considerable burden. Unfortunately, however, there can be no doubt that it is inadequate. I am referring not merely to health as such: health is only a part of development, one of its aims as well as a factor in its achievement, and cannot be dissociated from economic

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and social conditions as a whole. Consequently, it is assistance to developing countries as a whole which should be increased and extended in all its aspects . . .

Illiteracy: Grim Companion To World Hunger Problem. — *Freedom from Hunger, Rome, November-December 1967.*

Illiteracy was directly related to lagging agricultural production in an address to the International Congress of Farm Writers held at EXPO 67 in Montreal.

"Over this next critical quarter century," said FFHC Co-ordinator Charles Weitz, "we will be called upon to cope not only with more hungry people but with more untutored ones as well. We underestimate the inherent menace of such a situation at our own peril. I for one can imagine no more dangerous combination than hunger wedded to ignorance.

"Can peace prevail in a world where hundreds of millions, or billions, a majority of the world's inhabitants, suffer both a hungry belly and an impoverished and bitter mind? Can civilization itself long survive such a test?"

Mr. Weitz said United Nations experts estimate that there are 200 million more illiterates in the world today than there were five years ago. The percentage of children attending school in an "alarming number" of African, Asian and Latin American countries was slowly but ominously falling.

The situation was not to be wondered at, Mr. Weitz said. In the developing nations, between 75 and 80 percent of all heads of household are farmers, so when agriculture in these countries failed or was depressed, there tended to be failures in other areas. It took money to build schools, to hire and train teachers, to provide schoolchildren with textbooks. The failure of a maize crop in the Andes, an outbreak of rinderpest in southeast Asia, or a drought in central Africa meant not only less food and less money but also fewer new schools and sometimes the abandonment of existing ones.

"Let us make no mistake about it," Mr. Weitz told the gathering of journalists, "the world is engaged in a war, a war against hunger and human misery. Every man, woman and child alive today, and for at least another generation to come, is involved in this war—willing or not and ready or not."

In the face of the crisis, two things had to be done immediately:

- World agricultural production had to be greatly expanded.
- Population had to be stabilized at some reasonable level before it crushed all man's progress to date.