

Conference. In addition, a reception will be given by the Central Committee of the Finnish Red Cross on the evening of 21 August to enable Red Cross delegates to meet the organisers of the Conference and the representatives of Finnish social welfare bodies.

The programme of the Red Cross Meeting will be sent later to the National Societies. Attention must be drawn to the fact that it will, in particular, comprise a lecture by a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross on the protection of the human being in case of conflict or strife, a report on the activities of the League and in particular on the IVth Red Cross International Seminar on Welfare Service, as well as visits to several institutions of the Finnish Red Cross.

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The League Health and Social Affairs Bureau has conveyed the foregoing information to National Societies in the hope that as many of them as possible will attend this International Conference at which attention will be drawn to the work of the Red Cross and the importance of the Geneva Conventions in social welfare.

HEALTH IN THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

World Health Day takes place each year on April 7. This happens to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the World Health Organization whose theme is Health in the World Tomorrow. For this occasion, Dr. M. G. Candau, Director General of WHO, delivers the following message:

The seventh of April this year marks the twentieth anniversary of WHO. It also provides an opportunity to review the past and to anticipate the future.

Looking back, the Organization and its Member States have witnessed the general improvement in world health which is largely due to their combined efforts.

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There have been disappointments; there still remain the inequalities between the developed and the developing countries which it is the Organization's aim to reduce.

In general, however, the record is one of success and achievement. Recent scientific advances have already contributed to these achievements; they will do even more in the future. Therefore on the seventh of April and throughout the Anniversary Year it is proposed to concentrate on the theme: "Health in the World of Tomorrow".

Tomorrow clearly means the next ten or twenty years. This is the period during which the scientific discoveries of the past decade will become generally applicable, and the new ones now germinating will prove their worth. These advances will affect the health of the inhabitants of every country. How will they operate?

We can assume that there will be some general improvements in environmental conditions, the control of communicable disease, nutrition, and in a greater availability of medical care. These will certainly be beneficial. But the impact of the new discoveries will be most dramatic.

We have been told that it is not unreasonable to expect from the extensive research now being undertaken a break-through in cancer. Similarly, more precise knowledge about certain common diseases of the heart and blood-vessels and their relation to the chemistry of the body opens up the prospect of controlling these great killers of today.

Research into the chemistry of our tissues and organs may throw light on the process of ageing and bring us nearer to the postponement of old age.

More will be learnt about the causes of the mental disorders, and when we are able to classify them better, treatment will be more specific and effective.

Drugs and antibiotics which will cope with the hitherto elusive viruses are other possible additions to this incomplete but formidable list.

But mankind will still be exposed to a multitude of influences which unless controlled can nullify these expected advances. Some are old, some new but all are potentially if not actually harmful. The list includes the various chemicals with which we live—pesti-

cides, food additives, radioactive residues; the polluted air, soil and water; urbanization with its possible squalor, disease and social maladjustments. In many countries population growth will bring comparable problems. Add to these the insidious evil of drugs and we have a grim catalogue.

Weighing the effect of these influences and remembering the health promoting activities now in progress, I consider the balance is favourable. The individual should benefit.

He will have better health with which to enjoy the leisure and the longer life which the future promises.

Finally what is the role of WHO in all this? It is not new. Much of the Organization's current programme has foreseen these developments. Indeed, many of its research activities have already contributed to them. WHO will maintain and extend all these interests, stimulating the advancement of knowledge and encouraging its application for the benefit of all. For the World Health Organization is itself an expression of faith in the future.

It can be seen that the Director-General of WHO is optimistic about the future. He does, however, also draw attention to the fact that considerable efforts must be made in every sphere in order to control technical progress which today is so advanced and rapid, to place it really genuinely at the service of mankind. This is also stressed by Mr. Pierre Gascar, author of a work on sickness in the developing countries which focusses on medicine in the future, his conclusions are also full of confidence¹:

The movement has in fact been developing for some time, and since it favours a rehumanization of medicine and a sane assessment of the limits of technology, it is now spreading beyond its immediate frontiers, heralding a general reaction against enslavement by the machine. Medicine has always been in the vanguard of renaissance, of those revolutions that have shaped world history. In restoring modern society's essentially human scale, medicine offers us a glimpse of that new age when in every field, and in step with scientific progress, the brotherhood of man will become a phrase with fresh meaning.

¹ Mr. Gascar's address and that of Dr. Kavka, form part of a series of articles presented by WHO in Geneva for World Health Day.

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This means, however, that in order to safeguard the health of the world in the future, there must be open-mindedness in medical education and ethical training combined with international co-operation. Dr. Stanislav Kavka emphasises this point as follows when describing the future of medical training :

If there is to be one doctor for every 770 people, then the world today is 3.5 million doctors short. The figure is staggering, but what of tomorrow when the number of people in the world may have doubled?

In medical education one always has to think of tomorrow's needs, if only because it takes eight or nine years to make a doctor—about six years of medical school and two or three years of practical experience. Population increases and changes in the composition and distribution of population are going to have great influence on health services, and the demand for professional health care can everywhere be expected to increase by leaps and bounds. The economic aspect is important—new schools and teaching hospitals will have to be built and equipped—but so is the question of human resources, the question of attracting the right calibre of men and women as teachers and students. Over and above these considerations, the explosion of information and of scientific knowledge entails qualitative changes in the style of thinking and working: education will of necessity change both in form and in content.

Modern society and the modern style of life tomorrow call for doctors who have thorough professional knowledge, but also high moral qualities and a serious attitude to their work. Education in medical schools and post-graduate institutes will have to allow for the fact that the doctor in his daily work will need to apply more psychology and sociology. At present, this is no doubt accepted, but the general assumption seems to be that the doctor will pick up the knowledge he needs in these two fields as he goes along rather than as the result of systematic teaching. The danger of specialization is that the patient tends to become an object of investigation, of therapeutic techniques, and that the psychosocial factors are completely lost sight of. This should not be. Specialization is without doubt a higher professional echelon than general practice, it is the terrain on which new discoveries grow, but too much specialization,

eclipsing the general practitioner, can be detrimental to community health care, and if the family or district type of doctor is an essential member of the health team, then education in medical school should be geared to producing him. Though specialization may be attractive to the young men and women entering the medical profession, they should not forget that the generalist has important and fascinating tasks to perform in improving general health conditions, in actively promoting health, in disease prevention and the early detection of cases, and in the psychosocial field.

Post-graduate education is essential today if proper professional standards are to be maintained. The USSR has 13 institutes of post-graduate education and 13 post-graduate faculties in medical schools. In the United States of America, the American Medical Association organized 1600 post-graduate courses in 413 institutes during one year (1966-1967). A new centre for post-graduate medical studies was opened in London in 1967. In Czechoslovakia, all medical establishments take part in post-graduate education and a post-graduate medical institute was opened in Prague in 1953. Such activities will need to be intensified in the future to help doctors keep abreast of the new knowledge and new techniques that are going to transform medicine in the future.

In conclusion, it is probably justified to give an optimistic prognosis on the world's endeavour to secure the health of the human race, provided effective international co-operation is supported by all countries. The isolation of some countries needs to be abolished by an intensive international exchange of information and the development of science. Medical education on a level with contemporary scientific knowledge is an essential factor in the achievement of better health for man tomorrow.
