

## BOOKS AND REVIEWS

OECD, not known for romanticism, stated last year that the importance of export volunteers will increase so dramatically that their number will be doubled before 1972.

However, volunteers are an instrument of, and not a substitute for, planned development efforts. Their efficiency, the worth of their work, depends upon the way they are enabled to work. Their activity has to be integrated more in existing development plans, both national and international. Development poses a multitude of problems, for which multitudes of synchronized approaches on a multitude of fronts are necessary. But these multiple approaches must be covered by one basic plan of operations. Volunteer work should not consist of separate crusades but should be an integral part of a basic plan.

Increased and well planned international co-operation in the volunteer field could also bring important advantages. More development projects could be undertaken by the many private and governmental organizations sending long-term volunteers to work overseas, if those organizations would begin to 'pool' their personnel resources. A kind of 'free exchange of volunteers' arrangement could bring similar advantages that many countries find in 'free-trade area' agreements. Equally, an intensified use of volunteers in international projects would help not only to overcome basically similar problems but, at the same time, would increase international co-operation among different nations—a side benefit becoming even more important in our modern world, and, incidentally, being urged by our young generation. . . .

**In the service of all**, *World Health*, World Health Organization, Geneva, January 1969.

The International Atomic Energy Agency is the youngest of the agencies of the United Nations. There are a number of reasons for this. Immediately following the Second World War the idea of such an agency was almost inconceivable. One country held a monopoly of the secrets of the atom, and world opinion, disturbed by the staggering examples of nuclear destruction, was far from imagining what peaceful uses atomic energy might have.

In 1953, atomic monopoly ended and the mood changed. President Eisenhower proposed to the United Nations that an international organization be created allowing the technically developed countries to devote a portion of their resources to this new source of energy for the good of mankind rather than for its destruction.

The following year, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution on the peaceful uses of the atom and expressed the desire to create, as soon as possible, an international atomic energy agency. A conference in October 1956, at which 81 states were represented,

unanimously approved the establishment of such an agency; on 29 July, 1957, less than a year later, 26 countries had ratified the relevant agreement and the International Atomic Energy Agency was born. Today it has 98 member states. Its headquarters are in Vienna.

Underlying all the activities of the agency is the twin desire to promote the peaceful uses of atomic energy and to assure that these uses do not imperil peace or health.

Today, the work of the Atomic Agency has grown considerably: 3,000 scholarships have been granted, 120 professors were sent out on mission, hundreds of conferences and seminars have taken place attended by 15,000 scientists. Beyond these figures, however, it is the Agency's field work that is making its real contribution to human well-being.

In the field of medicine, the Agency has been carrying out research on goitre in the Andes and the Himalayas, as well as in certain islands of Japan. It is also cooperating with WHO in studying anaemia, malnutrition and the effects of parasitic diseases in man. It has furnished material for the radiological treatment of cancer to seven countries. Methods and techniques for medical diagnosis and treatment using isotopes have been developed and standardized.

A programme to use irradiated serum for snake bites has been started and it may be possible by this means to save the lives of some 3,000 persons a year. The sterilization of bandages and dressings, cat-gut as well as surgical instruments, by ionizing radiation has already considerably reduced the risk of infection....