

MISCELLANEOUS

problem by problem, you find how very difficult it is to do anything in practice. Here lies one of our great tasks : to retool our machinery so that we can be pioneers in this field. . . which has, under a more old-fashioned label, always been ours.

To conclude, all our innovations are based on adaptation to changes and to the positive needs of the community. But, at the same time as the agency must understand the community, the community must try to understand the agency, its character and its possibilities. Co-operation must work both ways. When this is so the voluntary agencies can give both leadership and labour to help not only to meet, but also to prevent, the new problems which we shall always have and which we ourselves create in our maddeningly changing world.

At about the same time, the XVth International Congress of the International Association of Schools of Social Work was held in Manila. A discussion group examined a subject which is of interest to the Red Cross—"Employment of volunteers, and the role of schools of social work in training them"—and which retained the attention of the representatives of institutions which work towards furthering a full understanding between professional and voluntary workers.

WORLD HEALTH DAY

The theme of World Health Day this year, on 7 April, will be A Full Life despite Diabetes. Dr. M. G. Candau, Director-General of the World Health Organization, issued for the occasion a message of which we quote below the main passages :

At the beginning of this century diabetes mellitus was a formidable disease. Its diagnosis in a young child was a notice of premature death. Its discovery in a man or woman in the prime of life meant a complete change in the way of living, and a greatly reduced expectation of life.

And then, 50 years ago in the later months of 1921, the persistent interest of a young Canadian surgeon, Frederick Grant Banting, in research on diabetes, was finally rewarded. Together with his younger collaborator, Charles Herbert Best, they isolated insulin and in January 1922 used it successfully in the treatment of patients. One of the greatest and most dramatic discoveries of modern medicine, it completely transformed the outlook for the majority of sufferers from diabetes . . .

. . . Despite these discoveries, diabetes appears to be on the increase, and there are many undetected cases, particularly amongst men and women above the age of forty, who are overweight. This knowledge has led many public health authorities to try to detect such cases by organizing community screening surveys, using blood or urine tests . . .

. . . Diabetes is still a serious disease and neglect of the prescribed treatment can lead to dangerous complications—coma, blindness, kidney and nervous disease, skin infections and, above all, degenerative changes in the heart and blood vessels.

The more people know about the disease the better they will be able to fight it. Information and education at all levels can therefore help to promote both early detection and proper care. Physicians and other members of the health team—including nurses, dieticians, health educators, medical social workers and pharmacists have all a part to play in the educational process . . .

HENRY DUNANT IN NORTH AFRICA

Henry Dunant went in 1853 to Algeria and later on to Tunisia. In the course of his travels, as well as after his return to Geneva, he showed a keen interest in the language and customs of these two countries. He also delved into their culture, as is apparent in his *Notice sur la Régence de Tunis* and in the notes which he compiled in Heiden.