

Great progress has been made toward better health in our own country in the last decade. Through the knowledge gained from medical research, impressive inroads have been made upon the great killing and crippling diseases. It has been estimated that some two million lives have been saved since World War II by new medical treatments, like the antibiotics and other drugs, and new surgical operations.

Progress has also been made in many other countries, but this story is less familiar to us. How these advances against disease have been achieved throughout the world, and what this means to us, is the story I would like to tell here.

This year, 1958, marks the tenth anniversary of the World Health Organization, one of the agencies of the United Nations. It is especially fitting, therefore, to take a look at what it has done for world health. Moreover, the anniversary commemoration and eleventh World Health Assembly of WHO have just been held, from May 26 to June 16, here in our own country, at Minneapolis. It was my privilege to participate in those meetings as one of the U. S. delegates.

Having served as one of the Congressional advisers to the U. S. delegation to the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, last year, it had also been my privilege to invite WHO to hold its 1958 meeting in the United States.

My service in Congress has deeply involved me in matters affecting the health of the people. As chairman for many years of the House of Representatives' committee handling appropriations for the medical research, public health,

education, and welfare programs of the Federal government, I have not only had the opportunity to learn much about our nation's health programs, but have also been able to devote myself to helping achieve progress in the health field through giving leadership to the actions taken by Congress.

Thus, these observations on ten years of progress against disease reflect a profound interest on my part during a good many years of experience both in Congress and at home in my native state of Rhode Island.

Although we in the United States do not suffer some of the devastating illnesses which plague populations in many other parts of the world, we nevertheless stand to gain from a strong international health organization working to eliminate disease and raise the standard of living the world over.

WHO benefits every citizen of the United States in many ways.

From an economic standpoint, we have had a major stake in a healthy world. Our country has billions of dollars of investments, private and governmental, throughout the world. American industry has expanded in many parts of the globe, and many Americans are living and working abroad. Improving the level of health in the countries in which we have investments is definitely to our advantage.

The stability of our own economy depends in large measure upon our trade with other nations. We have better markets for our products where widespread disease does not depress their national economy. By the same token, we must pay more for products and materials we import if the economy of the exporting country is weakened by disease and a low standard of living.

My years of experience and continuing interest in trade unionism in our own country have taught me the importance of these facts. Good health and a high standard of living are goals which each of us has always sought as a citizen and union member.

Helping the rest of the world toward these goals through the World Health Organization is a kind of "selfish unselfishness," for it brings us practical benefits.

Even more consequential, perhaps, are the humanitarian values of helping other people to help themselves toward the achievement of better health.

There are many examples of WHO programs which protect U. S. citizens in one way or another. One is the worldwide quarantine practice established by WHO to help assure that disease does not spread from one country to another.

International reporting of diseases is another activity of WHO which benefits us. A worldwide communications network, set up ten years ago, makes it possible better to control epidemics. Through this network, outbreaks of highly infectious or communicable diseases anywhere in the world are broadcast to WHO headquarters in Geneva. The news is then broadcast to health authorities all over the world, to ships at sea, to airports and to seaports, enabling health authorities to apply appropriate measures to prevent the spread of contagious diseases.

The importance of such a medical intelligence system becomes obvious when we recall that international air travel today makes it possible to transplant communicable diseases from an infected to a non-infected area within a matter of hours.

We were all concerned, for example, with the recent Asian influenza epidemic. But I doubt that many of us know about the role that WHO played in helping protect the world from another disaster like the one that influenza brought in 1918-19. Through its influenza study program, WHO keeps a constant worldwide watch on the appearance and spread of influenza. Over 100 laboratories cooperate with two international influenza centers, to maintain an eternal vigil. One of these centers is in London. The other, operated for WHO by the United States Public Health Service, is at Montgomery, Alabama.

When the new type of flu, that came to be named "Asian influenza," first broke out, it was in the Far East. Cooperating laboratories in countries there, first affected by the epidemic, made possible the isolation and identification of the virus responsible for the outbreaks. Thus the world was forewarned of the possible epidemic and it was possible to make the specific vaccine needed to combat the disease.

WHO has a poliomyelitis program similar to its influenza program. Six outstanding laboratories, designated by WHO as world regional polio laboratories, together with other cooperating laboratories, collect, identify,

and exchange strains of polio viruses. They also exchange information on the prevalence of polio, determine the immunity of populations, and constantly seek more effective ways of protecting peoples of the world from this crippling disease.

In ten years, WHO has proved to be a truly international body promoting the cause of health for all mankind.

The whole world benefits from WHO's efforts. Health needs are universal. Diseases observe no boundary. They respect no culture creed, economic status, or political belief. Health problems must be solved in these modern times on a global basis, through cooperative effort. That is what WHO helps to do. Parenthetically, it is interesting particularly to us in trade unionism to note that "cooperative effort" is the keynote of WHO, just as it is the soul and source of our strength in our unions.

Some of the remarkable achievements of cooperative work through WHO in its ten years illustrate strikingly how much has been done and suggest that the next decade will see even more progress through cooperation. The first World Health Assembly, held in 1948, set the stage for organized attacks against disease by establishing priorities for three chief offenders--malaria, tuberculosis, and venereal disease.

Programs were developed to help nations improve health services for mothers and children, to provide more sanitary environmental conditions, and to improve nutrition.

The list of accomplishments in health, with important aid and guidance from WHO, is impressive.

Fewer mothers die in childbirth, more babies live through their first year and start their second in robust health. New or improved health centers throughout the world are providing basic health services for millions of men, women, and children. People of all ages, all over the world, are learning good health habits and are becoming aware of the necessity for a clean, sanitary environment.

Through WHO, people throughout the world are understanding the need for cooperation in working together toward a healthier community of healthier citizens.

WHO's record in fighting disease is outstanding. Millions have been freed from the curse of malaria by WHO-assisted control and eradication campaigns. In fact, malaria has been wiped out of nine countries and from large areas of seven other countries through programs stimulated and coordinated by WHO.

Under WHO sponsorship--along with the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF--millions have been examined and vaccinated through mass campaigns against tuberculosis.

Other millions have been treated in mass attacks against yaws, trachoma, leprosy, venereal diseases, and other deadly and disabling diseases.

Although WHO has been primarily concerned with fighting diseases which have plagued mankind for centuries, and in helping governments set up or improve national and local health services, it has responsibilities in newer fields.

One field in which WHO is active is the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Our health and medical professions have found the new radioactive materials to be powerful weapons in the diagnosis and treatment of disease. But these materials must be used correctly, and certain precautions must be taken to assure proper dosages and to protect workers in plants that produce them. Medical and public health workers must be trained to meet the needs for protecting the public against radiation hazards.

WHO has recognized its responsibilities in this new field in a number of ways.

WHO is already working with other international organizations in the distribution of radiation codes and other information. It also is preparing to facilitate the training of health workers to cope with problems arising from the use of new radioactive materials. It is recommending specifications for the preparation of radioisotopes used in medical treatments and diagnosis; and it is stimulating and coordinating research on the health aspects of radiation.

Thus WHO is concerned not only with promoting health by fighting the old and known diseases, but also by utilizing new discoveries to improve the

health of people the world over.

Every American has a big stake in a strong and growing World Health Organization. There is no question as to the value of our investment. The United States' share of WHO's current budget is in the vicinity of \$4,000,000. Where else can we get so much in return for such a small investment? I have urged the Congress to take every opportunity to bolster this very important international activity, and I am sure that in this I reflect a consensus of the American people.

There is another tremendous value of WHO as yet unmentioned. This is its influence for world peace. The value of WHO as a practical contribution to world peace is unquestioned. Other agencies of the United Nations are of course also promoting peace in many ways.

WHO, undoubtedly the most successful of the UN group, promotes the conditions of life which are conducive to peace: good health and a better standard of living.

Good health means more than mere freedom from disease. WHO has helped people in all corners of the world gain self-respect, self-reliance, and freedom from a life where sickness and ill health were considered to be the normal state of existence.

These are the tenets of world peace. WHO represents a changed concept of health for many peoples of the world--the realization that good health is every man's right and is potentially within everyone's reach if we work

together for it.

If we do work together, through informed interest and support of WHO and of our own Nation's health programs, and strongly continue and increase our cooperative efforts in the next ten years, we shall help others and ourselves to a standard of health and living that man, in all his ages on earth, has never before seen--or even dreamed of.

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