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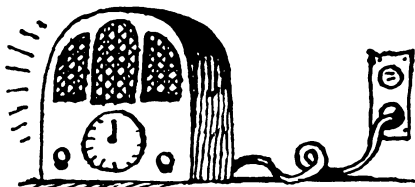
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FROM SWITZERLAND

WHO Takes on Smallpox

With the West frightened by imported smallpox cases in recent months traceable to India, doctor-delegates of 128 nations at the recent 20th annual World Health Assembly in Geneva authorized the United Nations agency to go full tilt in 1968, in the new 10-year global eradication program, World Health Organization's first ever to have such a deadline.

The WHO campaign actually started this year, but it is mostly a period of strategy and recruitment of experts for headquarters and six regional offices.

The battle manual, mapping attack procedures, has been completed and will be published in October by an international panel of consultants.

Almost \$3 million has been allocated for 1968 by WHO. But the agency's effort is largely professional assistance rather than supply.

The 10-year program figures to cost a total of \$180 million. Only \$30 million will be budgeted through dues. The rest must come from the nations.

A big gap is already evident and Assembly delegates and WHO doctors are launching an appeal to the rich countries to donate material, notably freeze-dried vaccine that can survive in the tropics, manpower and even jeeps and other vehicles to comb the bush.

The U.S. has committed itself to supply all needs for 19 West African countries, using jet vaccinators to conquer the child-killer, measles, there.

The U.S.S.R. has already given 850 million doses of the special vaccine bilaterally, mostly to India but also to Burma, Afghanistan and some East African countries. The Russians now pledge 75 million more doses for the new WHO vaccine emergency bank. Within 36 hours, a doctor and supplies were in the Arabian peninsula recently after a call for help.

Switzerland, Sweden, Egypt, Netherlands, Pakistan, Philippines and Cambodia are among others pledging smaller quantities. But the major producers—Britain, France, Germany and Japan—did not speak up at Geneva. Privately, German authorities report that they were having some trouble making the freeze-dried vaccine to meet WHO's specifications. But they expected soon to have samples tested at WHO and then to give generously.

WHO is offering test facilities to everyone, hoping that more contributions and production in the developing countries themselves will soon guarantee the world supply needed for the 10 years.

WHO has a contract with Toronto University to help vaccine producers in South Africa and to help train lab

staff. The UN agency expects to produce standard reference sera and antigens, and will further test new drugs found potentially useful both for preventing and treating smallpox.

The world had 65,512 known and reported cases in 1966. Southeast Asia and Africa are the main trouble regions. The 42,942 cases reported in Asia last year were mostly Indian. Of Africa's 13,608, about 9,000 were in West Africa. The Americas had 2,941, Eastern Mediterranean 5,945, Western Pacific 5 and Europe 71. The last was Britain's outbreak of variola minor.

World Cancer Fight

A new International Cancer Research Agency, setting up soon in Lyons at France's invitation but affiliated with the World Health Organization which created it officially, has had its 1968 scientific program approved by the 128-nation 20th World Health Assembly at Geneva.

The program, supporting work at cooperating institutions the world over, will cost \$1.6 million for the year, available mostly from dues paid by the first members: France, United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Australia, Netherlands. Israel and the U.S.S.R.

The staff, still forming, includes epidemiologists, social anthropologists, biostatisticians and physicians—about 50 professionals. Dr. John Higginson, pathologist and cancer geographer experienced in Britain, America and South Africa, is director; he presented the plan to the World Health Assembly.

Not only well-known institutions, but universities of Africa, Asia and Latin America, developing research facilities, will play an important role, especially in relation to cancer of the liver and the esophagus. A regional center is already operating in Nairobi and another will start soon in Singapore. Others are planned in Latin America. Thus poorer countries will contribute to the search for cancer mysteries and their solution.

The arrangement has eliminated all vestiges of the original complaint of the developing world that the agency would be a European club, with dues the poor could not afford.

The founders have opposed fundamental biological research by the agency, as WHO has a proposed World Health Research Center. The agency in Lyons instead will concentrate on epidemiology and environmental biology, while the existing WHO cancer unit in Geneva will expand its activities on cancer control.

"Seventy to 80 percent of cancers are
(See p. 582)