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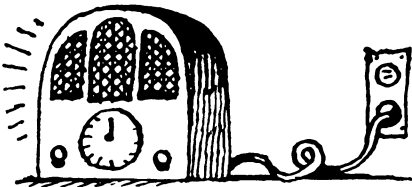
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FROM SWITZERLAND

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)

preventable, theoretically," Dr. Higginson says, "so our agency has a specific scientific mandate to go after the etiology. We will make full use of our unique international position."

One 1968 project will be to organize specialized three-week courses, for 30 junior researchers from as wide an international range as possible. The agency will pay all costs and publish the courses.

The agency's transplantation center will be in the Department of Tumor Biology at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. The Institute maintains a frozen tumor bank of transplantable tumor strains, and offers materials to any investigator.

David Alan Ehrlich

FROM CANADA

Microwave Dryer

An experimental microwave machine which can dry soaking wet paper at 25 feet a minute was revealed in Toronto by Houston-Schmidt Ltd. The equipment is based on a design evolved by the National Research Council of Canada.

The machine can be used for rapid drying of paper, photographic prints and even leather. Water molecules in the material are brought to the boiling point without heating the material itself. The steam is then blown away.

The experimental unit will be delivered to the Pulp and Paper Research Institute of Canada near Montreal this month.

The machine uses a magnetron to generate five kilowatts of power at a frequency of 2,450 megacycles per second. This microwave field is contained in a four foot long waveguide.

In a demonstration of the equipment, heavy wet paper was fed through the device at about 25 feet a minute. The power generated by the waveguide was adequate to handle 18-inch-wide wet paper at that speed.

The machine resulted from investigations by the Canadian research group when it was confronted with finding a method of drying very large mural photographs for Expo '67. The machine reduced the time needed to dry such prints from 12 hours to five minutes. As the microwave field generates heat only in the moisture in the print and not in the fiber of the print, the fiber is not damaged by the heat.

Tom Weissmann

FROM AUSTRALIA

Fallout No Health Worry

The National Radiation Advisory Committee has reported that fallout from the five French nuclear tests in the Pacific last year does not consti-

tute a hazard to the health of Australians.

The report said the first substantial fallout deposits in Australia occurred 12 to 14 days after each explosion. The highest radiation doses to the whole body was an insignificant 0.46 millirad compared with an average annual natural dose of about 100 millirads.

Kidney Grafts Successful

Doctors at Royal Melbourne Hospital, Melbourne, have achieved an 83 percent success rate in transplantation of kidneys over the last 12 months—believed higher than anywhere else in the world. Since January 1965, 24 patients have received kidney grafts at the hospital and 20 have recovered to lead normal lives so far.

Dr. T. J. K. Jamieson, medical superintendent, says the program began three years ago as a pilot project but results have been so outstanding that it could no longer be considered a trial scheme.

The hospital's team of doctors has, with the permission of relatives, used only kidneys from donors who had died. Overseas practice has preferred kidneys from living donors related to the patient because surveys showed that grafts from related living donors gave a 65 percent success rate, while grafts from dead donors gave a success rate of only 39 percent. But the results in Melbourne were much better than either of these figures.

The Melbourne team has used an artificial kidney machine to prepare patients for the transplantation operation and intensive care to make sure they were free from infection and their blood pressure was normal.

The first patient to undergo the kidney graft successfully two years ago is still in good health. Kidney function in all the long-term survivors is reported excellent and stable.

"It is hoped that even greater success will be achieved with the establishment of a tissue-typing center on an experimental basis in June," Dr. Jamieson says.

W. A. Scholes

FROM GUATEMALA

Million for Nutrition

The Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama in Guatemala City received grants of \$1,158,512 last year, most of it from United States sources. This is \$87,068 above the 1965 figure.

An accounting released last week shows that the National Institutes of Health put up \$907,730 for 14 research projects, making it by far the largest single donor. The U.S. Army contributed \$43,795.

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