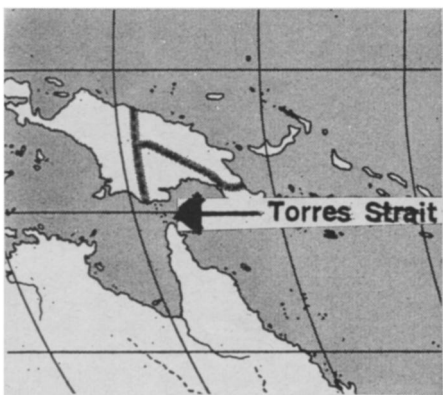


from abroad



AUSTRALIA

Efforts to deepen a key strait

The search for a place to make a deeper channel through Torres Strait, the strategic and commercially vital 95 miles of water separating the north-jutting Cape York Peninsula from Papua, New Guinea, is beginning with renewed intensity. The Australian navy's hydrographic ship H.M.A.S. Moresby has left Sydney on a mission to establish whether passages within the island-studded strait can be deepened from 33 feet to 41 feet or more.

A deeper passage is regarded as essential for full exploitation of Australia's current mining boom. The growth of the Australian submarine force also makes it necessary for the strait to be deepened as submarines would be highly vulnerable in 30 feet of water.

Three Government departments, navy, shipping and national development, are pooling their resources in a bid to open up the Strait. The Moresby was assigned to survey Gannet Passage and Endeavour Strait, two channels which might be deepened.

Endeavour Strait, which has not been surveyed for 40 years, is said to have a sand bar across its western outlet with only a 24-ft. water clearance. The Department of Shipping will soon install a tide-depth gauge and a system of radio signals to indicate water depth to ships.

Preliminary investigations by the Australian navy show that underwater sand drift, causing rapidly moving shoals through Gannet Passage, preclude its being deepened without enormously expensive dredging. So attention is being paid to Endeavour Strait.

One advantage of the Torres Strait route is that it lies in Australian territorial waters, unlike the alternatives, the Lombok and Sunda Straits, which are Indonesian territory.

Immigration: brain gain

Immigration is helping Australia keep pace in the international race for brains, according to Prof. Gustav Nossal, director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, Melbourne.

"In Australia," he says, "we are in the fortunate position that net intake of brains still far exceeds net outflow." Prof. Nossal's figures show that over the past six and a half years, Australia recruited 1,400 medical practitioners, 1,600 scientists, more than 4,000 engineers, and 3,500 architects and surveyors. In all, 36,000 professional workers settled in Australia in this period, or nine percent of all immigrant workers.

If Australia stopped taking professionals dissatisfied with life in England, they would be snapped up by the U.S. or Canada, he says. "Migrant streams are generally enriching and this is especially true in science where progress depends so vitally on new ideas."

William A. Scholes

GENEVA

Pakistani sterilization campaign

Pakistan hopes to start sterilizing 50,000 men per month, its health ministry has told the World Health Organization, following the third general meeting of the Pakistan Family Planning Council in Dacca.

Approximately two-thirds of the operations are planned for the East and one-third for West Pakistan. The West has been lagging; several hundred vasectomies were performed during average recent months while mobile surgical teams and clinics in the East claimed to have done 33,000 to date.

Ministry doctors explain the difference as one of popularity of the procedure. To popularize sterilization, a doctor has been appointed special health education officer for the West. Other physicians will be trained in vasectomy.

Done under local anesthesia, the procedure takes only about 10 minutes, explains Dr. Jaime Zitter of Chile, medical officer in WHO's Human Reproduction Unit, which is providing professional counsel and research-support for nations intensifying family planning efforts.

The simple ligation technique involves suturing the conduit from the testes to the penis.

"For all practical purposes," says Dr.

Zitter, "the procedure is, however, irreversible. Potentially, it is reversible, but in 90 percent of reported cases around the world it has not been so."

WHO consultants have just arrived in Pakistan as part of a UN advisory team. They are: Drs. Dorothy Nyswander of the U.S., Guillermo Abriola of Chile and Gordon Cummings of Barbados.

The medical observers in Geneva are taking the 50,000 a month goal of male sterilization with a grain of salt. According to its own reports, Pakistan has succeeded in inserting only 50,000 intra-uterine devices per month. Simple as it is, the sterilization procedure is more complex than IUD insertion.

David Alan Ehrlich

INDIA

Brain drain takes the best

More than 15 percent of the engineering graduates from the Indian Institutes of Technology, the best engineering institutions in the country, go abroad and never return. The purpose for which they go is, ostensibly, higher studies. But after the completion of their studies they remain for jobs. A salient feature of this brain drain is that 84.6 percent of the engineers have passed their examinations in the first division.

A survey by the Institute of Applied Manpower Research also shows that many engineers are willing to return to India after their higher studies, but they are reluctant to face the uncertainties of finding suitable jobs.

The survey, besides recommending close watching of this brain drain, also points out the need for an agency at home and in the Indian diplomatic missions abroad to keep continuous contact with those qualified Indians abroad whose talents are needed for national development. The agency should advise them about the specialized skills in short supply and the job opportunities in this country. The survey also emphasizes that manpower officers should be appointed at selected embassies to achieve this objective.

It should be remembered in this context that 2.6 percent of the best qualified engineers from the Indian Institutes of Technology are unemployed. According to the survey, the slowing down of economic growth in recent years and the postponement of the Fourth Five Year Plan has had an unfavorable impact on the absorption of engineers in development works.

K. S. Nayar