

IN THIS ISSUE

THE subject of discussion at one of the round tables of the 1948 Annual Conference of the Milbank Memorial Fund was "The Family as the Unit of Health." The paper "Preventive Medical Services for the Family" was presented at this round table by Dr. Henry E. Meleney, Professor of Preventive Medicine at New York University College of Medicine.

Dr. Meleney discusses types of preventive medical services for the entire family. These include: premarital advice, prenatal care, preventive measures for children, recommendations for old age, advice in nutrition, recreation, counseling, safety education, and periodic physical examinations. More active participation in these activities by practicing physicians, who can know the family personally is recommended. Dr. Meleney favors organization of physicians in groups "to increase their ability to meet a wider variety of family needs."

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The paper "Characteristics of Stable and Non-Stable Families in the Morbidity Study in the Eastern Health District of Baltimore," by Jean Downes, Selwyn D. Collins, of the United States Public Health Service, and Elizabeth H. Jackson, of the Milbank Memorial Fund, describes certain socio-economic features of the population which was observed for illness for a period of five years.

In this particular morbidity study "moving" families constituted an important part of the total families. Socio-economic differences between the "moving" and "non-moving" families are described and evaluated. This paper provides a background for forthcoming analyses of illness in the Eastern Health District of Baltimore.

The last issue of the *Quarterly* carried three of the papers presented at the Round Table on Problems in the Collection and Comparability of International Statistics, held in connection with the 1948 Annual Conference of the Milbank Memorial Fund. Six additional papers presented at that round table are published in this issue and the total series soon will be available in a single volume constituting part of the proceedings of the Conference.

A landmark in international cooperation toward the end of improving the accuracy and comparability of census data will be afforded in the 1950 Census of the Americas, a project in which twenty-two countries of the Western Hemisphere are cooperating. In the paper "Cultural Differences and Census Concepts" some of the difficulties of the census taker faced with different cultural situations are discussed by Dr. Calvert L. Dedrick, Coordinator, International Statistics, United States Bureau of the Census.

Adopted in 1893 and revised six times at periodic conferences of experts from many countries, the International List of Causes of Death provides one of the best testimonies we have to the possibility of international cooperation in promoting accuracy and comparability of statistics. The latest revision, consummated at an international conference in Paris, April 26-28, 1948, is described in "The Sixth Revision of the International Lists of Diseases and Causes of Death," by Dr. J. T. Marshall, Assistant Dominion Statistician, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Canada. The latest revision is distinctive in that for the first time it combines classifications by disease and cause of death and hence furnishes a common basis for morbidity and mortality statistics.

In his paper "Internationally Comparable Statistics of Food and Agriculture," Dr. Conrad Taeuber, Head, Statistics Branch, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, describes another field in which there is a long history of organized international effort toward the development of internationally comparable statistics. From the time of its founding in 1905 until its absorption into the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Institute of Agriculture has devoted a large share of its efforts to the promotion of uniform standards

and definitions in agricultural statistics. Dr. Taeuber also describes briefly the development of FAO plans for a world-wide Census of Agriculture in 1950.

In the next paper, "Problems in the Collection and Comparability of International Labor Statistics," Dr. Robert Morse Woodbury, Chief Statistician, International Labour Office, reviews briefly the efforts of his organization to standardize "international labor statistics over a period of more than a quarter of a century." Stating that the "primary and essential requirement for international comparability of statistics is agreement upon purposes and concepts" he discusses the status of various types of labor statistics and gives special attention to those concerning employment and unemployment.

Of closely related interest is the paper, "Statistics of the Distribution of Family Incomes by Size," prepared by Dr. J. B. D. Derksen, Chief, Section for National Income Statistics and Research, Statistical Office of the United Nations. Dr. Derksen reviews the applications and concepts of family-income statistics and discusses some of the problems arising in the collection and interpretation of these data. He gives special attention to problems of international comparability, a subject in which the Statistical Commission of the United Nations is particularly interested.

The final paper in the series, "General Assessment of International Statistics and Outlook For The Future," is contributed by Dr. William R. Leonard, Acting Director of the Statistical Office of the United Nations. According to Dr. Leonard, the responsibilities of the "United Nations and the Specialized Agencies . . . for promoting the compilation of comparable statistics . . . are being exercised with diligence and effect." Nevertheless, he holds that the "real hope for comparable international statistics lies in the establishment and improvement of national systems; if these are established and improved, comparability can be achieved."