

IN THIS ISSUE

NUTRITION in Relation to Health and Disease was discussed in a Round Table held at The New York Academy of Medicine, November 16–17, 1949, as part of the Annual Conference of the Milbank Memorial Fund. Understandably nutrition derives its significance from its purported relation to health and disease. Is malnutrition an influence on the contraction and perpetuation of disease? Does it lead to impairment of certain highly prized attributes of living? Or obversely, is satisfactory nutrition conducive to immunity and resistance to disease—and here the terms are used in their broadest sense? Does proper nutrition safeguard and enhance the body in its structure, functions, and life? Animal experiments give a presumptive answer, yes. In them nutrition has been shown to influence the course and outcome of pregnancy, the status of the newborn, growth, resistance to certain infectious diseases, ageing and longevity. But before unqualified acceptance of their applicability to man, evidence from studies on human subjects is necessary. Part of the Round Table program offered evidence of some of these associations in man.

Of late it has become increasingly suspected that nutrition casts its influence upon a group of diseases that have become a problem of considerable magnitude in medicine and public health: namely, chronic and degenerative disorders. Hence, another portion of the Round Table was given to exploration and orientation in this sector.

Not only a demonstration of its importance but also the availability of satisfactory methodology is essential to the practice of nutrition. Particularly necessary are clinical procedures for the appraisal of nutritional status and detection of deficiency states so that the amount of malnutrition in the popula-

tion may be measured, the affected persons be identified, and the particular natures of their impairments be differentiated. Accordingly, recently developed methods were set forth.

Thus the Round Table on Nutrition in Relation to Health and Disease presented several aspects of its subject: demonstration of significance, exploration, orientation, and technical advance. Abundant evidence was adduced to indicate the importance and readiness of nutrition for application in clinical medicine and public health.

One report given at the Round Table is published in the current issue of the *Quarterly* under the title "The Influence of Nutrition on the Course of Pregnancy." Other papers will be published in later issues and the complete Proceedings will be made available in a separate volume.

The Influence of Nutrition on the Course of Pregnancy included in this issue is a summary by Dr. Guttorm Toverud of a monograph by his late wife, Dr. K. Utheim Toverud, which was published in Norway in 1945 and reported the results of an experimental Health Station established in Oslo in 1939 for the prenatal supervision of pregnant women and for health supervision of infants born to these women and of other infants. The prenatal program emphasized dietary control which was supplemented by the addition of minerals or vitamins when these were deemed necessary. Over a five-year period marked improvements in the health of the mothers was noted. The still-birth rate, neonatal mortality, and the frequency of premature births for the group with prenatal supervision at the Health Station were each about one-half or less than the corresponding rate for Oslo or for the total districts within Oslo which were served by the Health Station.

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Mr. Paul H. Jacobson, Vital Statistics Analyst, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, presents in this issue a paper "Marital Dissolutions in New York State in Relation to Their Trend in the United States." The development of statistics on divorce has lagged far behind that of birth and death statistics in this country. The National Office of Vital Statistics is attempt-

ing to remedy the situation and about three-fifths of the states now have central registration of divorce of some kind. New York is not one of these and the preparation of Mr. Jacobson's report entailed a huge job of collecting data "by questionnaire from 52 of the 62 counties in New York State, and from a majority of the courts and counties in other states for which information has not been available since 1940." The report is not restricted to divorce statistics; it is concerned also with other types of marital dissolution.

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One of the round tables at the 1949 Annual Conference of the Milbank Memorial Fund was devoted to the topic "Modernization Programs in Relation to Human Resources and Population Problems." Four of the ten papers presented at that round table are included in this issue. All will be available eventually in a volume constituting part of the proceedings of the Conference.

The first paper in this series, "The Liberian Foundation: Aims and Methods," is contributed by Dr. Stanley J. Leland, Director of the Foundation. Under the initial stimulus of the late Edward R. Stettinius, two sister organizations, The Liberia Company and the Liberian Foundation were established with the cooperation of the Liberian Government, to foster respectively the economic and social development of Liberia.

In the next paper, "Utilization of Human Resources Through Industrialization," Dr. Wilbert E. Moore, of Princeton University, comments on certain theoretical aspects of the industrialization process and discusses labor mobility as one aspect of this process. He gives primary attention to the bearing of social institutions and attitudes of the people on problems of moving workers to new places and to new types of employment. For inductive evidence on some points he presents preliminary results from a field survey recently carried out in the Mexican "Zone" of Atlixco, where modern textile plants and Indian villages are in close proximity.

Some of the problems confronted in efforts at modernization through agricultural expansion are discussed in the paper,

"Utilization of Human Resources in Agriculture," by Dr. Conrad Taeuber, of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. According to Dr. Taeuber, a major obstacle to the provision of adequate food for the world's population at present and in the foreseeable future consists not in a lack of resources or in a lack of scientific and technical knowledge, but in ignorance of ways and means of applying existing knowledge in different cultures. We need to know more about "the social processes by which change occurs, and by which desirable changes can be brought within a framework of the political and social values which we hold to be fundamental."

The paper, "Problems in Health Promotion in the Far East," is contributed by Dr. Marshall C. Balfour, who has spent more than a decade in the Orient as a regional director of the International Health Division of the Rockefeller Foundation. Dr. Balfour discusses the interrelation of public health problems in the Far East with problems of population, education, and economic and social development. In some respects his views with reference to public health policy in undeveloped areas depart rather widely from those that are now conventional in public health circles. For this reason the paper should attract wide attention.