

By L. S. ROWE

*Director General of the Pan American Union*

I am delighted to have the opportunity to extend the congratulations of the Pan American Union to the recipients of the prizes for the best essays in commemoration of Pan American Health Day.

This day possesses a deep significance for all the nations of the Western World. When we stop to think of the misery so unnecessarily imposed upon those who suffer from preventable diseases we begin to appreciate what Health Day means for all the Americas. Viewing the situation from a purely material standpoint, scientific estimates indicate that adequate health protection throughout the Americas would increase production by more than thirty per cent. Approaching the subject from the more important moral angle there is a real challenge to the Americas to eliminate the suffering due to causes that can readily be prevented. It is gratifying to know that real progress is being made toward this great purpose. With redoubled effort we may confidently look forward to a time when the health of the peoples of this continent will receive adequate care and the standard of living will be raised to a level consonant with spiritual and physical well being.

It is a highly significant and, at the same time, most encouraging fact that with a view to attaining this goal the nations of the Americas are cooperating with one another by placing at the disposal of one another not only technical talents but also cooperating in other essential ways. This is an outstanding expression of that spirit of solidarity which is of the very essence of Pan Americanism.

In closing, permit me to congratulate the Acting Director, Dr. Aristides Moll, and other officials of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau for their foresight and statesmanlike vision in establishing Pan American Health Day.

By CHARLES M. HAY

*Deputy Chairman and Executive Director, War Manpower Commission*

Our observance of Pan American Health Day this year takes on special significance. Forty-four nations are now at war, the most devastating war the world has known. When peace returns to the world, these peoples—those who have gone down in defeat as well as the victors—will still have to face the age-old enemies of disease and want which have always followed in the wake of war.

We in the Americas have worked out something like a common front against these forces of disease; but many peoples of the world are ill equipped and ill organized for protection. Guerilla tactics can never win this war. The fight for the victories of health calls for broadscale scientific planning. Above all it calls for united action. It is not too much to hope, I believe, that the physicians and nurses, the scientists and engineers—and the common people—of all nations will be enlisted in the war against disease. We cannot win with less.

Disease knows no man-made boundaries. Strategists who plan the campaigns against it must work with the map of the world in front of them. It is not enough to eradicate the carriers of typhus or malaria or yellow fever in one sector of the world; as long as they exist anywhere, they are a threat to all. It is gratifying to know that we are beginning to build hemispheric protection on this side of the oceans. But humanity cannot be guaranteed real protection until similar safeguards become worldwide.

The barriers of distance have all but ceased to exist. The germ that attacks a man in Bombay or Moscow or Chungking or one of the islands of the Pacific may easily survive the airplane passage to San Francisco, New York, Rio de Janeiro or Valparaiso.