

tions of the United Nations; and you of the other American Republics know how closely we are cooperating with your own health organizations. The Federal Security Agency, through our Office of Education and the Food and Drug Administration, as well as the U. S. Public Health Service, is actively committed to this common cause. Along with the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, the State Department, and, of course, the Army and Navy, it is a partner with you in this drive for a world of better health.

We count it a privilege to stand with you in this great partnership to look for, and work for, and fight for the advancement of health with which the return of peace will challenge us.

By THOMAS PARRAN

*Surgeon General, U. S. Public Health Service*

It is a genuine pleasure to greet fellow public health workers of our twenty sister Republics on this fifth Pan American Health Day. The peoples of the Western Hemisphere have long known that disease recognizes no national boundaries. For forty-three years, the American Republics have demonstrated the value of international collaboration for the improvement of health.

The traditional relationship between the U. S. Public Health Service and the health authorities of Latin America has grown closer through the years. Twenty-two Public Health Service officers, detailed to the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, now are working with your own personnel toward the solution of health problems that confront us all. Since 1940, approximately 200 of your public health specialists have been awarded Public Health scholarships for graduate study in the United States. At present, thirty-five of these students are enrolled in our universities. Next year, we hope that number will be doubled.

The Pan American Sanitary Bureau, since its creation in 1902, has grown steadily as a potent instrument among American Republics for collaboration in health matters. And, within the past few years, a very intensive program for health improvement has been developed in Latin America through the Institute of Inter-American Affairs. The program, started as a war measure, will be of lasting benefit to all Nations of the Western Hemisphere.

Inter-American cooperation in matters of health has long since proved its value, even though the organizational machinery has been limited. Its actual accomplishments have been marked. Even more important, it serves as a demonstration of practical international collaboration.

International collaboration in the health field is by no means new. Attempts to limit the spread of the great epidemic diseases have been in progress at least since the days of the Babylonians and the Egyptians. Since the 15th century, there have been efforts among nations to control the spread of plague, typhus and syphilis. Until the etiology of these diseases became known, however, such attempts could be based only on experience and empirical procedures.

International health agreements over the past century have been directed mainly toward the control of epidemics, the exchange of epidemic intelligence and the application of uniform quarantine measures. While such elements are basic, effective health collaboration among nations calls for international teamwork on the whole health front.

World-wide planning is now moving forward in many fields, and it is significant that fundamental human needs have been the consideration of a number of recent international conferences looking toward the peace following the war. At Hot Springs, Va., early in the spring of 1943, forty-four nations drafted plans for the

conquest of hunger and progressive improvement in the diets of all people. To that end, a permanent, international organization on food and agriculture was agreed upon. The policies set down at the meeting, when carried out, will—more than any other single program—assure higher levels of health in all lands.

Again, we have the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration which has been given the task of mobilizing the available resources of the forty-four United Nations to bring aid and relief from suffering to victims of the war. UNRRA is the single international official relief agency of the United Nations. Its health division will be responsible for the largest health and sanitary program ever undertaken on an international scale. But UNRRA is an emergency organization. Its life span will not be more than a few years after our enemies have surrendered. Before that time, it will be necessary for the United Nations to create a permanent international health organization ultimately to become world-wide in scope.

Mr. Raymond Fosdick, President of the Rockefeller Foundation, recently termed public health as “one of the rallying points of unity” for international teamwork.

“Health,” he said, “is something all nations desire, and no nation by the process of gaining it takes away from another. There is not a limited supply of health for which nations must compete. Rather, every nation by promoting its own health adds to the better health of other nations, just as by assisting in the public health efforts of other nations we protect ourselves. Here, in brief, is a field of common interest to the race of men everywhere on the planet.”

I am sure that all of us agree with Mr. Fosdick. Optimum health for all peoples is not controversial. At present, starvation and disease are the two central facts for two-thirds of the world's population. Sick and starving people do not make the peace nor keep the peace. If the more fortunate nations cannot work together to assure adequate health services and food supplies for all people, they cannot hope for the peaceful world we are fighting to win.

To reach this objective, a great amount of planning is necessary—planning which should begin now among the United Nations—for formulating methods to deal with the many and varied aspects of international health. It is commonly agreed that a permanent international health service is an essential postwar need. It is commonly agreed also that the subject of international health should be placed in the fore-front among the several spheres of international collaboration. It is a “rallying point of unity.”

No one individual—no one nation—can define fully the functions of a world health service. Joint planning and action, however, have highlighted several broad essentials. Let us consider these briefly.

Collection and interchange of epidemic intelligence is basic. With the traditional quarantine barriers made largely ineffective by air transport, it becomes increasingly necessary that epidemic diseases be controlled wherever they exist. This is a measure of protection essential to all nations. Essential also to an international health program is the continued standardization of biologic products. This activity should be expanded to include international standards of foods and drugs. With the expected great increase in the interchange of food products among nations after the war, it is obvious that standards of purity and of quality should be the subject of international agreement. Current collaboration among medical scientists of the United Nations to solve urgent wartime problems points the way to continuation and expansion of international research into health problems of general concern. A first responsibility is international action for the training of public health personnel, leading—I hope—to the establishment of international schools of hygiene.

Commissions of experts, selected to deal with major disease problems can do much to promote the necessary control. Malaria, leprosy and typhus fever are diseases which come to mind as appropriate objects of expert study and coordinated action. Health education on an international scale similarly is indicated. A world health program should give scientific guidance to nutritional policies.

There are some of the many fields requiring attention of a world health organization. The control of disease and the improvement of health of people of all nations is basic to world stability.

By Mrs. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

There is very little excuse for me to speak to this audience at all. The other speakers can tell you all the real things that you want to know about the need for collaboration between the American nations and the scientific reasons which make public health a necessity in every country. Insofar as I am concerned, I can only speak of the interest that the layman must have in understanding what the scientists and the governments of the various nations are trying to do, because without the cooperation of the citizens of all these nations even the very best plans will not really succeed. The problem before us is to make the men and women who make up the nation understand the need and the value of public health services.

We are very far in this nation from doing all that should be done through public health. I do not know enough about the other nations to know if that is the case with them also, but I imagine it is so, because we are very far from perfection everywhere. Here in our country I do not think that we have quite begun to really touch the question of nutrition, which I think Dr. Parran would agree, is one of the very first things that we will have to deal with, in order to secure the best results from public health work.

We can all feel that in this war a very remarkable thing has been achieved in keeping away epidemics which might have taken a very heavy toll in every nation. Those of us who remember the last war, can remember right here in Washington what the "flu" epidemic meant, and in every country people who are of my age can remember what that brought to us. We might have today, without the precautions which have been taken, many epidemics which would slow down productions and affect the war and the war effort very seriously in this country, and in many others.

The other day I was amused on the train on talking to a young soldier who had just been discharged and was traveling with two others to their respective homes. I asked him what had happened, and he said, "Well, I have been all the time in Greenland, Iceland and Newfoundland, and I am discharged because I have a tropical disease." That certainly was a most surprising thing! It can, however, easily happen if earnest efforts are not made to protect us by preventing the carrying disease from one country to another. This problem is to be serious for a long time after the war, and it will always be serious until we attack disease in all the various countries, and every country raises its standard of public health and until many of these conditions are completely eradicated or controlled.

It was very interesting to me in going through various countries to see how well we have succeeded around our camps in limiting in a very short time the danger of malaria, as well as other tropical diseases. It can be done with knowledge and a certain amount of willing discipline on the part of the public as a whole.

We here in the United States have many things that we know we ought to do but that we have not done. I hope that with the close of the war the women of this country will focus the energies and experience we have gained through war work to promote public health, because I do not believe that any government or