

mains among many that the federal member of the partnership for health still wants to dominate this aspect of the new effort.

Are we on a collision course in health planning? There is increasing uneasiness concerning the possibility that PHS-sponsored health planning activities as reflected in the Regional Medical Program and the comprehensive health planning program will result in even greater confusion than now exists and ultimately will create havoc. Others are convinced that the rapid growth of federal support for health activities of all sorts demands the maximum possible involvement of all segments of society, especially at the "grass roots," and therefore the two existing approaches, in the long run, will be advantageous.

There is one very fundamental difference between the planning processes being developed under the Partnership for Health Act and those underwritten through Regional Medical Programs. The former are assigned to the public sector and are basically responsible to the political chain of command. The latter are organized through the private or voluntary sector and only at the highest level (i.e., the federal government) is there political responsibility for their conduct. If the two programs are, as some believe, on a collision course, one may speculate as to the ultimate fate of each as the predictable expansion of tax support for all manner of health purposes comes about. But the question still remains: Need there be a collision?

### **Fifty Years of Food and Nutrition —A Report of Achievement**

**T**HE creation of the Food and Nutrition Section in 1917 at the 46th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association in Washington, D. C., was not simply a matter of chance. It represented a clear awareness that by the second decade of this

century scientific nutrition had become in the United States not only an important branch of preventive medicine, but also a major instrument of social policy and an important component of industry and commerce. The first meeting of the Section was held in the shadow of World War I, and its central theme—the relation of food to the war—was a direct reflection of the situation. Emphasis on scientific nutrition was pushed in the name of patriotism and the public, professional as well as nonprofessional, took readily to the idea, for which there was not only an immediate need but also a firm scientific basis.

The end of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the present century witnessed the evolution of the modern concept of deficiency disease. The demonstration by 1912 that diets restricted to protein, fat, carbohydrates, and inorganic salts were inadequate for the maintenance of health and life, and that a deficiency disease could be produced experimentally and cured by dietary supplementation led to a theory of accessory dietary factors, the concept of vitamins. This stage was followed by the elaboration and confirmation of this concept, and the application of the knowledge that was acquired in the process. As the newer knowledge of nutrition began to spread beyond scientific and medical circles, it could not remain without impact on the community. The United States Bureau of Chemistry (now the Food and Drug Administration) considered the value of Vitamins A and B to have been so effectively demonstrated that in 1917 it announced their significance to the public. Nor is it merely a coincidence that nutritionists were first employed in 1917 by state health departments (Massachusetts and New York).

Against this background and in relation to developments in nutrition as they occurred, the Food and Nutrition Sec-

tion has exercised an active and fruitful influence both within and outside the Association. A record of this influence is to be found in the account of "Fifty Years of Progress" prepared for the occasion of the Section's 50th Anniversary which was celebrated at the Miami meeting of the Association in October, 1967. This report appears in the back of this issue of the Journal. We hope it will be widely read not alone because it represents a welcome occasion for a review of the achievements of the Food and Nutrition Section, but also because it is the first historical contribution by a Section to the collection of materials for the Centennial Celebration of the American Public Health Association in 1972. We hope others will endeavor to emulate the example set by the Food and Nutrition Section. At the same time we take this occasion to congratulate the Section on its first fifty years, and to express our confidence that the coming fifty years will exhibit the same commitment to nutrition and community health within the framework of the American Public Health Association.

### **World Leprosy Day**

**L**EPROSY, one of man's oldest enemies, still affects some ten to fifteen million people, chiefly although not exclusively in the underdeveloped areas of the world. The distribution of the disease is world-wide, but the greatest number of cases occurs in Africa, Asia, and South America. The United States has somewhat over 2,000 cases with the highest incidence in California, Hawaii, Louisiana, and Texas. Better understanding of the nature and effects of the disease, and the availability of new drugs and surgical procedures now make it pos-

sible for early treatment to arrest the disease in most cases and for corrective surgery to ameliorate deformities in advanced cases.

Despite medical advances, however, progress in the control and treatment of leprosy lags far behind that in the case of other endemic diseases. Only about 20 per cent of those affected throughout the world ever receive modern medical treatment. In addition, disabling as the effects of the disease are, its victims suffer even more because the term leprosy is enveloped in superstition and fear. Throughout history victims of the disease have been cruelly treated, unjustifiably stigmatized and miserably neglected, and today this situation still exists in a large part of the world.

In 1954, Count Raoul Follereau of Paris, founder of the Order of Charity, originated World Leprosy Day to dramatize the needs of the victims of leprosy—the need for expanded medical services, the crucial need for public enlightenment, and the need for a wide expansion of research toward means of prevention and treatment. World Leprosy Day is observed in more than 100 countries and has been endorsed by numerous world leaders, including President Johnson. To promote its observance on January 28, a World Leprosy Day Committee\* headed by Dr. Leona Baumgartner was formed.

The efforts of the committee are intended to bring to the attention of the public the urgency of helping leprosy sufferers and the need to promote efforts to find a means of preventing the disease. This is indeed a cause worthy of support by all health workers.

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\* World Leprosy Day (79 Madison Ave.), New York, N. Y. 10016