

MAY 1957

Congressman John E. Fogarty of Rhode Island has been appointed by the President as one of the Congressional advisors to the United States Delegation to the Tenth World Health Assembly which will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, May 7 - 23.

Dr. Leroy E. Burney, Surgeon General of the Public Health Service, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, is chief of the delegation.

The World Health Assembly, which meets annually, is the governing body of the World Health Organization and operates under the general auspices of the United Nations. Eighty-eight nations are members of the organization, which carries on health programs in over 100 countries and territories throughout the world.

Dr. Burney, in commenting on Mr. Fogarty's appointment, said: "I am delighted that the delegation will have the benefit of Mr. Fogarty's keen insight and wide experience in the field of health."

The Surgeon General said that the Assembly in its technical discussions this year would give major consideration to the relationship of hospitals to total community health services. Mr. Fogarty's long experience as chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor and Health of the Appropriations Committee in the House of Representatives will be particularly helpful to the delegation and to him, he added. The Subcommittee, among other things, handles the appropriations for the Hospital Facilities and Construction Act.

Other topics which will be considered by the World Health Organization and which are of particular interest to Congressman Fogarty and his Committee are the relationship of chronic diseases to the problem of the general aging of the population and the means by which fuller and more rapid interchange of research information between the various member nations can be facilitated.

Mr. Fogarty has long been interested in the research program of the Public Health Service's National Institutes of Health and in the growing health problems presented by the general aging of the U. S. population. Both of these problems are also of growing concern to European nations.

At the conclusion of the World Health Organization meetings, Mr. Fogarty will visit the Pettenkoffer Institute of Research and the Institute of Neuropsychiatry in Munich, and the Instituto Saitas Superior in Rome, if time permits.

Mr. Fogarty said that Dr. Burney had recommended these institutions to him as important European centers of medical research which will afford him an excellent opportunity for comparative study of U. S. and European methods of administering research programs.

**Suggested Statement for use by Congressman John E. Fogarty
on Tenth World Health Assembly**

I have just had the extreme good fortune of attending the Tenth World Health Assembly in Geneva. Leading health officials of more than 80 nations of the world participated in this Assembly.

To me this was an inspiring example of world-wide cooperative effort in an area of major importance to world progress. Of all endeavors in which man is engaged, perhaps health is the one which surmounts national barriers most effectively. Health is an intimate, personal matter which affects each of us, whether we live in a skyscraper in a western city or whether we live in a shack in some remote and isolated section. Efforts for better health, therefore, tend to cement the world together.

Moreover, the health professions have a common bond of knowledge, language, and experience. At this Assembly, I witnessed health specialists from every corner of the globe pool this experience and knowledge to promote better well-being everywhere. I can think of few more worthwhile endeavors to encourage international understanding, good will, and cooperation.

I was particularly impressed by the tremendous diversity of health needs and problems to which attention was given. The needs range all the way from basic deficiencies in sanitation and nutrition to the complex problems of atomic energy and of medical and hospital care in aging populations. To solve this variety of problems, this Tenth World Health Assembly considered a variety of approaches.

The three major items on the agenda were the eradication of malaria, the health implications of atomic energy, and the role of hospitals in preventive medicine. In the world today there are about 200 million cases of malaria each year. This represents a shocking waste of human resources and a tremendous drain on world productivity. Malaria is a disease which can not only be controlled but can actually be eradicated by the application of modern public health techniques. In our own country, and in about a dozen other nations of the world, this goal has been virtually reached. However, some 600 million people still live in malaria-risk areas. Of these, about 300 million are being protected through their own national health services and through the work of international agencies such as the WHO.

This is certainly a wonderful start. At the World Health Assembly, the health experts expressed high hopes of ridding the world of this disease in the foreseeable future.

The world's health leaders also considered such newer matters as chronic diseases and the health problems of the aging. They dwelt particularly on how hospitals can play a greater role in preventing these diseases, retarding their progress, and rehabilitating their victims. In the United States and many other nations, for example, we have begun to make progress in this direction through the establishment of detection clinics and diagnostic services, and through organized courses of instructions in patient education. Much work has also been done in helping to restore chronic disease patients to self-help and even to productive work.

On the other hand, it was recognized that the world's health agencies still have a long way to go in this area. Certainly, we in the United States have as much to learn about the development of hospital services as we have to contribute. A wealth of knowledge was brought to bear on this subject and exciting possibilities were held in store for the future.

In 1954, President Eisenhower spoke before the United Nations regarding the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Since that time, the World Health Organization has been taking an ever increasing role in the medical uses of atomic energy so that all nations of the world can share in the use of this new tool for the diagnosis and treatment of diseases. Atomic energy has also brought up another question of international importance--the disposal of radioactive wastes and the protection of communities against exposure to nuclear radiation.

The World Health Organization has taken several steps to improve health services in this field. It has employed staff experts to assist nations in the use of radioisotopes. It has conducted courses in the newer medical techniques. It has affiliated with and supported international organizations which have determined levels of safety and tolerance for workers in this field.

I am fully confident that the health experts at this Assembly and their associates throughout the world will be able eventually not only to harness this useful development for good, but also to protect the world's people from the hazards associated with the use of atomic materials and substances.

One thing that particularly impressed me was the great number of Ministers and Directors of Health who had received their postgraduate training in the United States. This is true also of the staff of the World Health Organization and of its Director General. The United States has thus played a leading role in the work of the World Health Organization.

At the same time, many Americans have been given the opportunity, through the World Health Organization, to visit, study, train and work in other countries of the world. This has broadened their own experience. It has enabled them to apply their knowledge for the benefit of many nations. And it has enlarged our own reservoir of competence here in the United States through the interchange of knowledge and experience.

This opportunity for world-wide scientific exchange is perhaps the greatest contribution of the World Health Organization. Its annual assemblies provide a forum to bring peoples together in a common effort to solve common problems. The work I witnessed was heartening as well as inspiring. I believe that these assemblies help bring us closer to the goal of a better and a healthier world.