

The relationship between health and an adequate diet is already well established. If records of life expectancy and disease are compared for advanced and less developed countries or for prosperous and poverty stricken areas in the same countries, it is obvious that those who were brought up in poverty have on the average a far shorter and less healthy life than those in more fortunate circumstances. The average age to which an inhabitant of India could expect to live in 1931 was 27, for instance, compared with about 66 in Holland. The infant mortality rate before the war was 170 for every 1,000 live births in British India, 189 in Roumania and 225 in Chile, compared with 32 in the European population of New Zealand. The effect of better living conditions is seen in the rapid improvement of health in the more advanced countries in recent decades. In the Netherlands in 1840-51, for instance, the expectation of life at birth for males was 30 years; in 1931-40 it was 66 years, and about half of this advance was made after 1900.

Ill-health and a shorter life are not the only results of malnutrition. People who are not well nourished often lack the energy and the ability--even the imagination and the will-- to better their lot. They number perhaps three fourths of the world's population. Some physical and psychological disabilities formerly considered inherited or inevitable are now found to derive from a wrong or inadequate diet. Indeed, the newer knowledge of nutrition suggests that the majority of the world's people have not begun to realize their full potentials as human beings.

If all peoples are to have a proper diet there must be more food produced--much more. The world has never had enough. Even in the United States, perhaps the best-fed country in the world, it was estimated in 1936 that for everyone to have a diet that would furnish the allowances of nutrients recommended by the U.S. National Research Council, the consumption of leafy, green and yellow vegetables would have to be increased by 90-130%; citrus fruits and tomatoes, up to 50%; milk, 40-70%; eggs, up to 15%; meat, up to 5%. In the less developed countries the increase would have to be very much larger with more emphasis on the energy-producing foods.

An important part of the work of FAO will be to correlate the science of nutrition with the science of agriculture, so that the right kinds of food will be grown in the right quantities to meet the known nutritional needs of the world.

As with food, so with the fish and forest resources and all the other agricultural products that man uses. The aims of FAO are clear and definite. They are, in brief, to further action that will raise standards of living and improve the production and distribution of everything that is grown.

FUNCTIONS

FAO's task is not to solve the world's food problems but to help the nations individually and collectively to solve their own by supplying them with the requisite information, advice and encouragement. FAO has no legislative or executive powers and few administrative ones. It cannot coerce anyone. It will simply serve as a world centre for the exchange of knowledge. The responsibility for making use of it lies with the nations themselves.

At this point in the world's development man's knowledge of how to obtain what he wants from nature has far outstripped his social arrangements for putting it to practical use. The natural sciences have shown how the fertility of the soil can be increased, how new and more productive strains of crops and livestock can be bred, how diseases and insect pests that constantly menace the food supply can be combatted. Industrial science has developed new tools and machines, new means of storing, processing, handling