

## 8. WIDER HORIZONS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Proof of the progress of public health thinking in Canada is that the fight against ill-health has spread to campaigns against all the conditions that cause it. In those wider applications of public health, full weight is now being given to environmental hygiene. Nutrition, housing, sanitation, recreation, economic and working conditions - all are now part of our ever-widening field of public health interest.

There are three progressive stages in the history of public health work in Canada :

1. Sporadic Action against Epidemics - In its earliest years, public health work was almost always limited to emergency action to control disease, with a certain concern for sanitation and quarantine measures.
2. The Preventive Stage - in which public health work broadened its campaigns to include all the environmental aspects of the fight against ill-health - sanitation, pasteurization and immunization directed against specific diseases.
3. The Ultimate Goal of Universal Good Health - that positive concept of total health that is defined in the constitution of the World Health Organization as "a state of physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".

For generations the public health profession in Canada has been fighting what in many respects was a rear-guard action against disease. It has had great successes, but it is now finally provided with the extra resources necessary for it to take the offensive.

Our programme for the future must be a dynamic one. It must change to fit the needs of the time. Our aim is to raise the level of health in Canada to the highest in the world. No less objective is worthy of our efforts.

Yours is a profession in which the results are tangible and self-rewarding, for they are measured in terms of human life and human happiness. The public health profession is one to which you must come with high ideals and sturdy determination. Today, as so often throughout the course of human history, the forces of destruction must be counterpoised by the higher human instincts to build and to progress. Over all our future plans there hangs a cloud of apprehension. We cannot altogether quarantine our economy against world economic disaster and the widespread malnutrition and disease that would follow in its wake. Another disaster - atomic war - could make a mockery of civilization, and sweep away the health advances of a century by employing the most brilliant discoveries of science to destroy all that science has created.

We can only trust that - despite the threats of chaos and disaster - men of good-will can continue their work for humanity. In this unstable world, in which so many elements and instincts are for destruction, the determined service and the enlightened sacrifice of the public health worker is a great stabilizing influence. In the quest for universal health of mind and of body, through all difficulties and all disasters, the members of your profession steadily carry civilization's shining light.

In the wider comprehension of health as one of the fundamental rights of every human being, there can be no greater goal for national cooperative effort and the expenditure of the nation's financial resources,