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Reply to the Third Report of the World Health Organisation

Motion for a resolution[1]
Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee
Ms Elaine BURTON, United Kingdom, Socialist Group

1. 1955 - 7th Session - Second part

Draft Resolution

The Consultative Assembly has noted with interest the Third Report presented by the Regional Director for Europe of the World Health Organisation on the work of W. H. 0. in Europe during 1955 and thanks him for this communication. While not considering it necessary to comment on this report in detail, the Assembly was particularly interested in certain, points which are mentioned below.

The creation of the Committee of Experts on Public Health of the Council of Europe and the institution of a public health programme as one of the activities of the Council, naturally, gives rise to problems of co-ordination between the two organisations. The Assembly notes that the Regional Director has made a special report on this subject to his Committee and understands that the latter, while emphasising the need for constant attention in order to avoid duplication of work, has expressed its general satisfaction with the arrangements made for securing co-ordination. The Assembly, for its part, is also hoping that such co-ordination can be satisfactorily achieved and believes that the steps already taken as a result of the agreement concluded between the Council of Europe and W. H. 0. on 12th September, 1952 are on the right lines and likely to secure this objective. Indeed, the fact that the Council of Europe has undertaken a programme in the field of public health, of which the Committee of Experts on Public Health is the instrument of implementation, involves no greater problems of co-ordination with W. H. 0. than those already posed in securing collaboration with I. L. 0. and UNESCO with regard to the social and cultural programmes of the Council, for which other Committees of Experts have already been in existence since the inception of the Council of Europe.

The Assembly has taken note of the comprehensive programme of fellowships administered by W. H. 0., which has included the award of nearly 300 fellowships in 1954 and a total of nearly two thousand over a period of eight years. The experience acquired in the administration of this programme would be of great value to the Council of Europe in connection with its own programme of fellowships, and the Assembly feels confident that the Council can count on the fullest measure of assistance from W. H. 0. for this purpose.

Another matter which has occupied the Assembly's attention is' that of alcoholism. This is a serious' problem in several member countries, and one for the solution of which the forces of public opinion are of particular importance. It would therefore seem a question on which the action of the Assembly might ' be particularly beneficial in an attempt to rally public opinion in support of the efforts of the medical profession. The Assembly would therefore be grateful if W. H. 0., in its next report, could give greater details about the incidence of this problem in the different Member States and of the measures being taken to combat it.

While paying tribute to the WHO programme in Europe, the Assembly considers it probable that there are certain public health questions which merit international action but which W. H. 0. has been unable to tackle for budgetary or other reasons. If this is correct, the Assembly would be glad to study any suggestions which W. H. 0. might wish to make as to the action which the Council of Europe could usefully take lo supplement the work of W. H. 0. in Europe.