

International Study Conference on Child Welfare

By

M. Doctor, T.N.A.I. Delegate

From December 5th to December 12th, 1952, Bombay was hostess to a Conference which brought to our very doors a renewed consciousness of the fact that children are the greatest of the world resources and that Child Welfare Services should be considered foremost in all national and local programmes.

To it came delegations from some 27 countries and representatives of eight inter-Governmental agencies and 14 non-Governmental international agencies. In addition there were in attendance observers from all over the country.

Thus, under the auspices of the International Union of Child Welfare were convened sessions through which work much of a positive nature was accomplished.

The International Union of Child Welfare, which is a federation of National and International agencies, bases its activity on the Declaration of the Rights of the Child proclaimed in 1923 and revised in 1948. Its objects are to make known throughout the principles of the Declaration, to relieve children in case of distress, to raise the standard of Child Welfare and to contribute to the physical, moral and spiritual development of the child.

Here are some of the findings of special interest embodied in the reports of discussion groups; (Nursing interest was reflected in a way in several group reports).

1. Need for special legislation in all countries to safe-guard the welfare of children in all respects.

2. Parent education essential for the child's care and, therefore, should

be given first consideration in all planning for children's welfare.

3. A comprehensive survey should be undertaken of the handicapped in various fields with the help of Governmental and voluntary agencies in Asian countries.

4. Setting up of pilot centres, complete in all respects to act as a model and as a training centre for all types of personnel, in Asian countries.

5. Health Services, especially in respect of Maternity and Child Health, should be considered foremost in planning Government projects and community programmes.

6. All planning of Education, Health and Social Services should be co-ordinated as between Governmental and Voluntary agencies working for the same object.

7. The United Nations and its specialised agencies to provide facilities for training of personnel in under-developed countries.

To have had social contact and to have participated in discussions which at times reflected wide divergence of views and philosophies, should, I believe, have a salutary effect as members of the Conference return to press for improved Child Health Services in their organisations.

I would wish to record the fascinating quality of the sessions as a whole and the stimulus derived from the fact that even though for a very short period, we were honoured in entertaining representatives of the free nations of the world, banded together, their sole object being the promotion of Child Welfare as the basic needs of the Child is the same the world over.