(7) Zoonoses

A preliminary study of the problem of zoonoses, made in the Regional Office, has shown the need for stimulating closer co-ordination between the work of Veterinary and Health Departments. One means of attaining this aim will be to offer fellowships for the study of veterinary public health.

2. EPIDEMIOLOGY

At the eleventh session of the Regional Committee in 1958 a resolution was adopted stressing the importance of establishing epidemiological units in public directorates.

Towards this end WHO policy is to provide consultant experts and, through its fellowship programme, training facilities for national personnel.

In Ceylon the WHO epidemiologist completed his assignment in the middle of 1959. An epidemiological unit has been set up under a fully trained national officer. Another expert has been supplied for one year to assist with the organization and upgrading of hospital accommodation and treatment for infectious diseases.

In Indonesia a WHO epidemiologist was assigned in December 1958. It is expected that, in order to ensure that this international assistance is put to good use, there will soon be provided a suitable national counterpart, who will have the opportunity to work with the expert and undertake special training overseas.

3. HEALTH STATISTICS

As in previous years, assistance has been mainly directed to helping countries to improve the collection and processing of basic statistical data. The Regional Seminar on the Certification and Classification of Mortality and Morbidity, held in October, was concerned with the methodology of cause-of-death certification and of morbidity reporting. A programme is being developed to stimulate the teaching of death certification in all medical colleges and their associated teaching hospitals by the provision of teaching materials and in other ways. Much interest was also shown in hospital statistics.

Good national or state-wide vital statistics will take very many years to achieve; yet some progress is being made. A complete detailed plan for the new Burmese system has been submitted for final approval. It is hoped to set up a working model of the new system in Rangoon city and perhaps in a rural area. The Nagpur project in India has demonstrated on a small scale that international rules and procedures are both practical and productive. Also West Bengal is initiating new developments and has received some small assistance from the Regional Office. Progress continues in Indonesia and Thailand.

A very welcome new development during the year has been the appearance of epidemiological studies from some of the field projects. In Ceylon the partnership between the epidemiological and statistical units has produced a series of papers, largely based on ad hoc field work and leading up to a detailed programme for reorganization of notifiable disease reporting, which has been submitted to the Government. In Nagpur the former WHO statistician introduced some improvements in notifiable disease reporting, and the new death notification forms are beginning to yield a wealth of useful...