PROCEEDINGS

of the

WORLD ASSEMBLY

of the

World Council for the Welfare of the Blind

31st July to 11th August, 1964

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World Council for the Welfare of the Blind

held at

STATLER HILTON HOTEL, NEW YORK CITY, U.S.A.

31st JULY to 11th August, 1964

The purposes of the Council shall be to work for the welfare of the blind and the prevention of blindness throughout the world by providing the means of consultation between organizations of and for the blind in different countries, and by the creation of co-ordinating bodies where necessary, and for joint action wherever possible towards the introduction of minimum standards for the welfare of the blind in all parts of the world and the improvement of such standards.

World Council for the Welfare of the Blind

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Certain of the papers included in these Proceedings were originally delivered in languages other than English and, while every care has been taken to ensure accuracy in translation, it is possible that some variations from the original structure and sense may have occurred. Furthermore, certain papers prepared in the English language were delivered by speakers not entirely familiar with that language. Some editing has therefore been required. Our apologies are submitted for any inaccuracies that may have resulted therefrom. Due to lack of space, it has been necessary also in some cases to abridge the addresses. We feel sure that the speakers will appreciate the need for these slight editorial changes.

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BACKGROUND OF THE CONFERENCE

The World Council for the Welfare of the Blind grew out of a resolution adopted by the International Conference of Workers for the Blind held in Oxford, England, in 1949. An interim committee was set up under the chairmanship of Mr. W. McG. Eagar (United Kingdom), known as the International Committee for the Welfare of the Blind, which was responsible for drawing up a draft constitution and for the registration of the future Organization. Only eight countries were represented in the International Committee, but at the constituent assembly held in Paris in July, 1951, other countries came into membership, and the first Assembly in Paris in 1954 included representatives of thirty-four nations. Committees were set up to deal with specialized aspects of work for the blind and two autonomous bodies, the World Braille Council and the International Conference of Educators of Blind Youth, subsequently became affiliated with the W.C.W.B. as consultative committees on braille and education.

In 1951, Colonel E. A. Baker, of Canada, became the first President of W.C.W.B. and was re-elected to this office by the two subsequent World Assemblies in 1954 and 1959. Under his chairmanship, an Executive Committee of twenty-five members has been responsible for the Council's general policies. The day-to-day administration remains in the hands of the Council's Officers and is carried out by the Secretary-General. The Executive Committee meets every two and a half years to consider reports from the Consultative and Standing Committees and from the Officers and to make decisions at policy level. The President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary-General, Treasurer, and all other members of the Executive Committee are elected by the World Assembly, which includes all honorary, representative and associate members of the Council. Forty-three countries are represented in the General Assembly at the present time. The Assembly meets every five years. New elections are held immediately following each Assembly.

At the opening of this, our Third Quinquennial Assembly, the composition of the Executive Committee is as follows:

President: Colonel E. A. Baker

Vice-Presidents: Prof. P. Bentivoglio (Italy), Mr. E. T. Boulter (U.S.A.) Mr. K. Dassanaike (Ceylon), Prof. Dr. C. Strehl (Germany), Mr. S. Uzelac (Yugoslavia).

Secretary-General: Mr. J. Jarvis.

Treasurer: Mr. H. Amblard (France)

Individuals serving on the national delegations of the following countries represent their geographical areas:

EUROPE: France, Italy, United Kingdom, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, Yugoslavia.

EAST ASIA: Ceylon, India, Japan, Pakistan.

SOUTH AMERICA: Brazil, Colombia.
MIDDLE EAST: Turkey.
OCEANIA: New Zealand.
AFRICA: Ethiopia.
NORTH AMERICA: Canada, Guatemala, U.S.A.

The Chairmen of the two Consultative Committees also have seats on the Executive and there are three seats 'at large' held by individually elected members.

The World Council has been granted consultative status in category 'B' with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, with UNESCO, UNICEF, and with the International Labour Organization, and enjoys a close relationship with the World Health Organization and other international groups. It is a member of the Conference of World Organizations interested in the Handicapped, of the Union of International Associations and of the International Conference of Social Work, and has gained widespread recognition as the only responsible world organization covering all aspects of blindness and its prevention.

The Council has sponsored or participated in a number of important international conferences in addition to its own World Assemblies and Committee Meetings. An International Conference on Braille Music Notation took place in Paris in 1954 under the sponsorship of W.C.W.B. UNESCO and the American Foundation for Overseas Blind. This led to the publication of an international manual on braille music notation and to further negotiations with a view to reaching world uniformity in this field. A Pan-American Conference on the Welfare of the Blind and Prevention of Blindness was held in Sao Paulo, in 1954. A European Seminar on the Rehabilitation of the Blind held in London, in 1956, was jointly sponsored by the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind and the World Veterans' Federation, and further conferences were held in Tokyo (Far East Conference on Work for the Blind) in 1961, in New York (International Congress on Technology and Blindness) in 1962, and in Kuala Lumpur (Second Asian Conference on Work for the Blind) in May 1963. The Organization has also been represented at a number of other international meetings in the fields of social work and of general rehabilitation.

Meetings of the World Assembly were held in Paris and Rome, in 1954 and 1959, and in New York, U.S.A., in August, 1964. Meetings of the Executive Committee have been held in Paris, France (1951); Bussum, Netherlands (1952); Como, Italy (1953); Paris, France (1954); London, England (1956); Colombo, Ceylon (1958); and Hanover, Germany (1962). There have also been meetings of the two Consultative Committees. I.C.E.B.Y's Conferences have been convened in 1952 (Bussum, Netherlands); 1957 (Oslo, Norway); and 1962 (Hanover, Germany). The next conference is scheduled for Boston, U.S.A., in 1967. The other eight committees have held a number of meetings during the Council's existence.

As a result of concerted action by the World Health Organization, the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, and the International

Association for the Prevention of Blindness, 1962 was declared PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS YEAR and April 7th that year PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS DAY. The occasion led to considerable publicity and as a result new eye banks were created, chairs endowed at universities for purposes of ophthalmological research, etc. National magazines for the blind issued special numbers and many articles on this subject appeared in the world's Press, focusing general attention on this grave problem.

In 1956, it was decided that the W.C.W.B. should undertake responsibility for the upkeep and development of the home and birthplace of Louis Braille as an international shrine and museum. It has received wide publicity and generous donations have been received from a number of countries for support of this project. Blind persons from all over the world call at Coupvray to visit the museum and it is hoped shortly to complete negotiations to have it classified as an historical monument.

An international exhibition of technical devices, aids and games for the blind has been established at the Paris Headquarters of the World Council in co-operation with the American Foundation for Overseas Blind.

An International Catalogue of Braille Music and a Revised International Manual of Braille Music Notation have been published under the auspices of the World Braille Council, the former being undertaken by the A.F.O.B. at the request of the Braille Music Conference. Other useful printed reports or leaflets have been distributed by the W.C.W.B.'s standing committees, among them three I.C.E.B.Y. reports, a Manual on communication with deaf-blind persons, a leaflet on the employment of the blind and a leaflet on the Louis Braille Museum. A complete catalogue of technical aids and appliances has been published jointly by the American Foundation for the Blind and the Royal National Institute for the Blind with the official endorsement of the World Council. The proceedings of World Assemblies and the Reports of the various committees are made available to all members.

The World Council publishes a bi-annual Newsletter designed to act as a link between its members. It has a wide circulation and is also made available to many international governmental and non-governmental organizations and other groups interested in our field. It aims at keeping members informed of all changes in the administration or leadership of organizations of and for the blind the world over, of new legislation concerning the blind, of special projects or achievements in work for the blind, of future plans, meetings, conferences, etc. It also reports on past conferences and reviews books and publications of special interest to the blind. The Newsletter is produced in both English and French.

As far as possible, all documentation emanating from the Council's offices is also published in both languages.

The W.C.W.B. has given a wide distribution to certain documents published by the International Labour Organization dealing with

special provisions for the blind and on the legal obligation to employ the disabled. An international catalogue of films about the blind and some short monographs on specific aspects of work for the blind, have also been prepared and circulated by the Council.

A list of those persons in membership at the time of the World Assembly and the names of members elected to the Executive Committee to serve for the next five-year period will be found at the end of these Proceedings. Names of elected Chairmen of the Consultative and Standing Committees of W.C.W.B. are also listed.

January, 1965.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The World Council for the Welfare of the Blind met in General Assembly in New York City, United States of America, from July 31st to August 12th, 1964. The pages of this publication will serve as a permanent record of that Assembly. They also indicate the scope and depth of this Council's concern for the prevention of blindness, where possible, coupled with the development of more adequate services for blind people everywhere. It is our firm belief that the ultimate goal in the operation of programs for blind children and adults is clear. It is to ensure the return to society of individuals who, despite blindness, have achieved a degree of adjustment, self-reliance, vocational skill and social acceptability that permits them to live with relative normalcy as full participating members of the community. While the type of program to be extended may differ from place to place, we are convinced that the final goal can be achieved in any social, cultural and economic setting.

Considerable advances have been made in many lands during recent years and it may be claimed with full justification that the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind has contributed substantially through the broad dissemination of knowledge and by concentrating scattered efforts into a unified force. The blind people of the world and all who are concerned with their well-being owe a deep and lasting debt of gratitude to Colonel E. A. Baker, whose long period of service as W.C.W.B.'s first President has been so distinguished and effective. Under his leadership we have gained a level of prestige in international affairs which provides assurance that our Council will be given due and careful consideration in high places. It now remains for those of us who follow to take full advantage of the ground work that has been so brilliantly laid by Col. Baker for the progressive betterment of conditions for all blind people.

At the close of the New York Assembly it was my high privilege to be elected to the Presidency of the Council. In accepting that responsible office I called on all W.C.W.B. members to pledge themselves to ever more tireless endeavours towards the prevention of blindness, sight restoration, education, rehabilitation, employment and general welfare of the blind. It was pointed out that through the discussions of the Assembly and the resolutions adopted at its conclusion we have all gained in knowledge and have been given a new basis for securing greater support of our labors at the international, governmental, and community levels. The professional worker for the blind alone can achieve little of lasting importance. If a new era of opportunity and social acceptance is to dawn for all blind people, we must establish a true and trusting partnership involving governments at the international, national and local levels, agencies for the blind, organizations

of the blind, blind individuals, the medical and educational professions, industry and the myriad other services that comprise our communities.

The following pages contain information, points of view, conclusions and a summary of our future aspirations. Their effective utilization can contribute in marked fashion to a growth of confidence in and by the blind which are the essential pre-requisite to their full and normal living.

Through the efforts of its officers, standing and consultative committees and world-wide membership, the work of W.C.W.B. will go forward without interruption during the next five years. It is our earnest hope that new member countries and additional Associate Members will shortly swell our ranks. We also trust that many readers of this volume will recognize their ability to contribute their endeavours for the betterment of conditions for blind people in all corners of the earth.

ERIC T. BOULTER, *President.*

The Council expresses its grateful thanks to the many organizations and individuals in the United States whose financial and other support contributed greatly to the success of the Assembly. We are particularly indebted to the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration of the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the American Foundation for the Blind, the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, Howe Press of the Perkins School for the Blind and the many organizations represented on the Host Committee.

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FIRST SESSION
INAUGURAL SESSION **Friday morning, July 31st, 1964.**

Joint Session of W.C.W.B. and A.A.W.B.
held at United Nations Headquarters.

Chairman: **Mr. E. W. Christiansen,** *Director, New Zealand Foundation for the Blind.*

ADDRESS OF WELCOME TO THE UNITED NATIONS

By **Jose Rolz-Bennett,** *Deputy Chef de Cabinet, United Nations.*

The unexpected and unavoidable absence of Mr. Paul G. Hoffman, Managing Director of the United Nations Special Fund who was to have greeted you this morning, gives me what I regard as a most valuable privilege. In offering his apologies—and extending my own warm welcome—I should like to explain why I so greatly appreciate the opportunity to address you however briefly.

The World Council for the Welfare of the Blind is intimately concerned with vital social and economic problems affecting millions of people. You have highly effective programmes of action on those problems. And though the fact is perhaps not generally well-known, a primary objective of the United Nations—specifically spelled out in its charter—is the promotion of economic and social well-being for humanity as a whole. Indeed, it is urgent business abroad in connection with the UN's Decade of Development that prevents Mr. Hoffman from being here today. In his place, therefore, I should like to touch very briefly on some of the United Nations work in the field of your own particular interest; as well as in the general field of helping the developing nations speed their social and economic progress, a matter also of great import to each of you.

Your work, and this work of the United Nations, are of course closely related. No one knows better than you that blindness is far more than a serious personal handicap. Taking the minimum estimate of ten million blind people in the world—and assuming that for general lack of social services at least eight million of them are wholly or partially dependent—the minimum cost of providing food, clothing, and shelter works out to over half a billion dollars annually. The loss of potential productive capacity dwarfs even that figure in size and significance. As Hellen Keller has said: 'If one-tenth of the money we now spend to support unnecessary blindness were spent to prevent it, society would be the gainer in terms of cold economy.'

It is in the developing countries of the world that blindness takes its greatest human and economic toll—since it is here that facilities for

prevention, rehabilitation, and useful employment are most lacking. And it is these countries and their people who can least afford the wastage. This is why the relatively modest programmes of the United Nations and its specialized agencies to find methods for controlling and curing the diseases that cause blindness . . . and for equipping those already blind to lead productive and satisfying lives . . . have such great potential importance. And this also why the consultative services of organizations such as yours are so important to the United Nations and to the developing countries.

A principal field of United Nations effort is the prevention of communicable infections, particularly tropical river blindness and trachoma. So virulent is river blindness that the World Health Organization finds it a potential threat to economic expansion in parts of Africa and the Americas . . . and is directing major campaigns of education, research and insect control against it in Kenya, Ghana, the Sudan and elsewhere. Trachoma, which affects half a billion people, is the subject of intensive W.H.O. laboratory studies in Israel and Tunisia; and trachoma control programmes are being undertaken by W.H.O. in fifteen other states. Programmes of similar scope are being carried out by UNICEF in India and the Sudan.

Step by step with preventive measures go efforts at rehabilitation. Blind Egyptians, at a workshop and training centre set up in Cairo with the assistance of the International Labor Organization, are being taught not only such traditional skills as tailoring and weaving; and basket, brush, and carpet making . . . but shorthand, typing, and telephone switch-board operating. In India, the I.L.O. is assisting in training the blind for industrial employment; while UNICEF has provided equipment for a model school for the blind and equipment for three regional braille printing departments. In Malaysia, UNICEF has under way a three-year plan to train school teachers for the blind; to integrate educational facilities for the sightless into the general school system; and to establish a central braille library. The United Nations is gradually developing a library of informational material on establishing rehabilitation centres, specially tailored to the needs and capabilities of developing countries.

These limited but gradually growing activities are part of the UN's over-all pattern of development assistance efforts. Just as overcoming the effects of blindness and other physical handicaps will remove roadblocks to social and economic progress for the developing nations, so technical assistance in building self-sustaining economics will open new employment opportunities for the physically handicapped in those nations. Just as we have found that the residual resources of the handicapped can be developed to allow them to become highly productive individuals, so we have found that the natural resources of whole nations can be developed to make their economies more rapidly and highly productive than had previously been believed.

To this latter goal, the United Nations and its entire family of specialized agencies are devoting unprecedented, and unprecedentedly effective, efforts. The United Nations family has now become, next to

the United States, the largest single source of development assistance . . . with programmes totalling nearly $1 billion annually. New industries are being brought into existence, creating new markets and new jobs. Unproductive land is being reclaimed in the millions of acres to feed millions of people. Natural resources of literally immeasurable potential are being uncovered and human resources are being developed, attracting hundreds of millions of dollars in capital investments to the developing nations.

Thus the United Nations is bringing the sharp edge of modern science and technology to bear on the Gordian knot of social and economic problems. Individuals handicapped by limitations on their personal resources, and countries handicapped by underdevelopment of their national resources, are benefiting alike from assistance that helps each make the most of available assets. It is vital that this great endeavour be better known and better understood—so that it may be more fully and liberally supported. And this is why I feel, as I said earlier, so highly pleased at the opportunity to touch on these matters with you today. For just as the work of your organization is so urgently needed by people who are handicapped, so your support is needed in efforts to assist whole nations struggling to overcome theirs.

In keeping with this thought, and in conclusion, I should like to read to you the following message from the United Nations Secretary-General, U Thant, who wished in his own words to express his interest in your work.

He says:

> 'I am most happy to extend my greetings to the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind and to all those who have come to take part in the work of this great Congress. The primary objectives of the United Nations are the preservation of peace and the promotion of economic and social well-being for humanity as a whole. Therefore it is interested in all endeavours aimed at combating disability, improving the conditions of life for handicapped persons and creating opportunities for such persons to become active participants in all spheres of social life. Among the ways and means to achieve this goal, rehabilitation is of primary significance, and the work of your Council has made a major contribution towards progress in the welfare and rehabilitation of blind persons everywhere. This Congress is a graphic illustration of what can be done in the field of international co-operation. For it transcends cultural and socio-economic boundaries and unites the whole world in a concerted effort to reintegrate the blind person into the normal life of the community as a useful and productive member. Let me wish you every success in your noble cause.'

To those sentiments of the Secretary-General, let me add, once again, my own most cordial welcome; and, on behalf of the United Nations, express deep appreciation for all that you are doing.

Welcoming Remarks of Col. E. A. Baker, President, World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a very great pleasure to speak to you directly this morning. I have been heartened by the message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations. My mind goes back to the days immediately following the first Great War when the numbers of war blinded aroused public attention in many countries. In our country, the United Kingdom and the United States greater interest in the war blinded focused attention as well on those who had lost their sight in civilian life. In almost every instance there has been close association between the war blinded and the civilian blind.

The first conference was held in 1931 to bring into being a world-wide organization that would work for the improvement of standards for blind people including services and education. However, after some years of effort that were not successful, the next conference was held in Oxford, England, in 1949, when an even more definite effort was made and a Committee was appointed under Mr. W. McG. Eagar, of Great Britain, a representative body to work with him. They brought into being the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind at a meeting in Paris in 1951. The organization for some reason selected me as their President and I have tried to serve faithfully but I could not have succeeeded without the great team of excellent assistants, representative of their countries, the Secretary-General, and the organizations that have taken an interest and have helped tremendously. I think in all this development we have more than ever realized the importance of the prevention of blindness. I once asked a United Nations Officer if they would consider the rehabilitation of 40,000 blind people in India a successful work in the period of a year and the answer was—'It would be marvellous.'

I replied that in that period of time 100,000 people are losing their sight from preventable causes. In my opinion prevention of blindness is the key to this whole situation. Those who have been unfortunate enough to lose their sight from accidents or other known preventable causes know only too well we have not yet found any means of furnishing a good substitute. We can ameliorate the condition by techniques and equipment but cannot restore the valuable asset of sight. It is important that through this World Council, through the United Nations, through the International Association of Ophthalmologists, through training of persons in all of the countries, we make every effort to gain knowledge on the causes of blindness and provide the measures necessary to aid the problems of the thousands who would otherwise be faced with unnecessary loss of sight. We who are blind can best appreciate the frustrations and problems and must put forward every effort to save others following in our path.

I was delighted to know that the American Association of Workers for the Blind would be holding this joint meeting with us. I have had a long association with the A.A.W.B. which has served so well the

United States, Canada and Mexico. I extend my sincere compliments and best wishes and hope that your best efforts will be more than rewarded in the future.

Welcoming Remarks by Dr. D. C. MacFarland, President, American Association of Workers for the Blind and Chief Division of Services to the Blind, Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, U.S.A.

It is a privilege and an honor to welcome you on behalf of the American Association of Workers for the Blind. For our membership, it is the concluding day of one of the most successful meetings in the history of our organization. For you who will be participating in the deliberations of the World Council, this is the beginning of what will be a very exciting and profitable interchange of useful ideas, techniques, and methods of providing service to blind persons of our respective nations. There could be no more fitting setting for the conference than this building which is dedicated to international understanding and co-operation. I am certain that I speak for all the membership of our organization and for the many agencies throughout the country when I express the hope that you will have time at the conclusion of the conference to visit as many of the agencies and programs across the country as possible. Modern transportation presents us with unusual possibilities for frequent personal contact, and we should not fail to take advantage of this opportunity. Although I realize that it is difficult and expensive to convene a meeting with representatives from so many countries throughout the world, I sincerely hope that the time will come when the World Council can meet on an annual basis. Much of the progress which has taken place and which you will be discussing in detail during the next ten days is a direct result of our ability to communicate frequently and to visit the many centers where research is being conducted and its findings are being implemented. I had the privilege of visiting a few programs in India and the Middle East and was very much impressed with the interesting work now being carried on to rehabilitate the blind of these countries and with some of the very practical applications which could be adapted for blind residents of our own nation. From attendance at international conferences and reading their proceedings, one cannot fail to note the wonderful spirit of co-operation manifested by all rehabilitation workers. This great humanitarian service is obviously universally supported. Even in areas of extreme tension, frictions are noticeably lessened when welfare work is the topic of major discussion; thus, rehabilitation provides a climate for friendship and mutual assistance. Realistically speaking, it would be impossible for all nations to find common agreement on the many problems we face. Frankly, I am not convinced that a complete state of agreement would be totally desirable. Competitive effort plays a substantial part in all human endeavour. It

is unfortunate, however, that we do not have more of the friendly competition illustrated by our rehabilitation efforts.

We have made great strides in every segment of our work over the past twenty-five years. During this time we have been blessed with the discovery and development of many new antibiotics and drugs which make prevention and cure of blindness so much easier than most of us remember in our earlier years of life. At the same time, new surgical techniques have emerged bringing with them corrective and curative miracles which vastly improve our chances for winning the greatest battle we face—prevention of blindness. Improved disc and tape recording techniques and the provision of special lenses for the near blind have substantially increased the quality and availability of reading materials thus widening the educational horizons for all the blind. Vocational rehabilitation with all its new techniques is a natural outgrowth of the educational and medical advances in recent years.

Through the application of the simple but invaluable principles of rehabilitation, blind persons have achieved a position in society never before dreamed of. Society has come to recognize the dignity and worth of every man in spite of his disability. Along with this growth is developing another sociological change. There is a much greater awareness of and concern for the large segment of our blind population who are unemployable due to chronic disability in addition to blindness or to advanced age. We are coming to recognize the economic and social wisdom of extensive services for these individuals rather than having them depend on sporadic charity which can only provide a submarginal existence at best and poses problems of human deterioration which ultimately have serious effects on the entire community.

Even with the scientific and sociological advances we have made both on a national and international level, no one would argue that our work is close to completion while there are still more than twelve million blind persons in the world today. On the contrary, we are just beginning to scratch the surface and the major challenges to our ingenuity still lie ahead. Fortunately we are living in a world that is interested in and willing to support our efforts and we are working at a period of time in history when tools and techniques for our work are abundant. Under these conditions, it seems reasonable to predict that through preventive efforts alone we will reduce the estimated number of blind persons by at least fifty per cent. during the next few decades. Concurrently, scientific and technical accomplishments will immeasurably improve the status of the remaining group.

My assignment this morning was to welcome you and not make a speech. I could not resist the opportunity, however, to share with you some of the thoughts which I believe are pertinent to all of us and uppermost in the minds of you who will be deliberating world affairs during the coming week.

Again may I express on behalf of all of us in work for the blind in the United States a very cordial invitation to visit us in our home settings where we can discuss specific aspects of our programs and benefit from your suggestions. Thank you.

Address by Mr. John Roosevelt, Member, Board of Directors, American Foundation for Overseas Blind.

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Members of A.A.W.B. and W.C.W.B. and Distinguished Guests:

President Lyndon B. Johnson had hoped that he could be here in person to extend a cordial greeting to you all. Unfortunately, pressing affairs have prevented his traveling to New York today. He has, therefore, asked me to read you his message, which I am now privileged to do:

THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON

'I am pleased to send warm greetings to the members of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind and the American Association of Workers for the Blind on the occasion of your joint meeting.

'I have the greatest admiration for those who devote time and effort in helping the blind to live satisfying and productive lives. I wish all of you continued success in your great humanitarian work.'

(*Signed*) LYNDON B. JOHNSON.'

This impressive gathering of the most talented, resourceful and devoted workers for the blind from all sections of the United States and the far corners of the world is of profound significance. I confidently expect that your joint endeavours will lead to the development of new opportunities of full, creative and rewarding living for blind people everywhere.

The President of the United States recently bestowed this country's highest civil award, the Medal of Freedom, upon the beloved and distinguished Helen Keller, who has already received the highest tributes that can be conferred by the American Association of Workers for the Blind and the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. In commenting on the dedicated labors of Miss Keller and her fellow recipients he then stated, 'They have made man's world safe, his physical body more durable, his mind broader, his leisure more delightful, his standard of living higher and his dignity important.'

Surely these have been the purposes to which Miss Keller has devoted her unrivalled energies, her great physical talents and her spiritual leadership qualities. They are purposes, too, that are being vigorously pursued by the people of the United States through their public and private institutions and they are the purposes that motivate your ceaseless and effective endeavours on behalf of the blind people of the world. We have an unshakeable belief in the dignity of the human person—of every human person—and we are unalterably opposed to the concept that, even in the slightest degree, a blind person should be regarded as an inferior being. Our Federal, State, and Local Governments and our many private philanthropic and welfare organizations, including

active associations composed of blind individuals, are moving forward concertedly towards our goal of full and equal participation by all blind people in the social, vocational, cultural and economic affairs of our towns and villages, our country and the world.

In a spirit of fraternal service and in all humility we sincerely desire to share with all the world the effective medical and social welfare techniques, technological appliances, training procedures and other service aids that derive from our experience in the service of the sightless throughout this land. With equal eagerness we seek to gain from our fellow servants of the blind in other lands the beneficial effects that result from their sociological, pedagogical and technological endeavours and their quest for the means of combating and preventing the scourge of blindness itself.

Through these joint meetings of American Association of Workers for the Blind and World Council for the Welfare of the Blind so aptly occurring in this edifice that is the symbol of international understanding and brotherhood, the feet of the world's blind people already firmly set on the pathway of life may take additional forward strides towards the ever less distant goal of full emancipation.

The people of the United States of America are privileged indeed to serve as hosts for this historic gathering. In their name I offer you our warmest greeting and our fervent wishes for your full success.

MESSAGES

Messages were then read from:

HEADS OF STATE

H.I.M. Haile Selassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia

'It is with great pleasure that We have delegated Ato Abebe Kebede, Administrator General of Our Welfare Foundation and who is also responsible for the welfare and education of the blind in Ethiopia, to attend and participate in the deliberations of the General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, which is to be held in New York from July 30th to August 12th, 1964.

'Since the standard of living of the blind people in general is much to be desired yet in the developing countries, We feel that it is your great responsibility to give a deep and thoughtful consideration to this problem in the course of your discussions, as well as to study the impact of blindness in said countries. In doing so, We are confident that you shall be the hope for your brothers and sisters living in darkness at the remote corners of the earth. We also urge the countries who are economically advanced and who have had greater experience in the education of the blind to share their knowledge with others in this field.

'We assure you that as long as our means permit, we shall not fail to support your objectives and closely participate in your activities.

'May God bless your work.'

Mr. Heinrich Luebke, President of the German Federal Republic

'The World Assembly for the Welfare of the Blind in which representative organizations of fifty nations collaborate proves the readiness of the blind for mutual assistance beyond any national boundaries. Those countries which are struggling to build up a system of welfare for the blind must be aided by counseling and deeds. Knowledge gained in the treatment and cure of the diseases of the eye as well as experiences in the field of the education of the blind and their rehabilitation is particularly helpful to them. It is a noble aim to improve the difficult lot of the blind throughout the world and this deserves the support of all governments and of the citizens of all countries. I salute the delegates of the Third World Assembly for the Welfare of the Blind and wish your work the fullest success.'

Mr. Enrique Peralta Azurdia, Chief of Government, Republic of Guatemala

'The chief of the Republic of Guatemala wishes to express his best wishes to the General Assembly of the World Council for the Blind. Wishing them success in this event which will no doubt bring better services for better education as well as for rehabilitation for the sightless in the entire world.'

Hon. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of India

'I send my greetings and good wishes to the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind on the occasion of its General Assembly at New York. Much has been done in India as in other countries of the world for the welfare of the blind, but much yet remains to be done. I am sure we can all learn from each other's experience and if the discussions of the World Assembly contribute to the mitigation of the sufferings of millions of blind persons and to the prevention of blindness, the forthcoming Assembly will serve a very useful purpose. I wish success to its deliberations.'

Mr. Eamon De Valera, President of Ireland

'I send heartfelt greetings to the Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind with my best wishes for the Delegates. May their praiseworthy efforts to improve conditions for those handicapped by blindness meet with abundant success.'

H. E. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

'I am pleased to send this message of goodwill to the General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind commencing in New York on the 30th of July, 1964.

'It is difficult for those of us who are fortunate to be blessed with the gift of sight to begin to understand the psychological implications of

those who are deprived of this great gift, especially those who once knew what it meant and lost it. To begin to do so, perhaps we can do no better than recall the immortal words of John Milton of 18th Century England, when he referred to his blindness as "that one talent which is death to hide".

'It is significant that this point of view is shared by no less a person than the Rev. Father Thomas J. Carroll, one of the few experts who have devoted their entire working lives to the service of the blind. In the opening paragraph of his famous book entitled *Blindness*, he said, "Loss of sight is a dying."

'True enough Father Carroll had in mind adventitious blindness rather than congenital blindness. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that this terse but revealing statement is a pointer to the whole problem of blindness.

'After World War II, the need was felt to establish a permanent international organization for the welfare of the blind. As a result, in 1951 the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind was formally constituted.

'As patron of the Nigerian National Advisory Council for the Blind, may I take this opportunity on behalf of the people of Nigeria, to record my profound appreciation of the heroic efforts of this august international body to bring relief and restore happiness to the blind.

'Finally, may I express the hope that the deliberations of this conference will help to facilitate the work of the World Council in this humanitarian service.'

Mr. C. R. Swart, State President of the Republic of South Africa

'On behalf of the people of the Republic of South Africa, I send greetings and good wishes to the Conference of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind assembled at New York.

'We have a great admiration in our Country for the excellent and beneficent services rendered to the blind both by our own Organization, represented at this Conference, and by other similar bodies in the world.

'We express our sincere gratitude for so much wonderful assistance given to those who are afflicted with blindness and wish the World Council a very successful and fruitful Conference.'

Mr. Habib Bourguiba, President of the Tunisian Republic

'As the Third Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind begins its work, I wish to salute the Participants and assure them not only of the good will but also of the support and sense of responsibility of Tunisia, which within the limits of its means, will always make every effort to contribute to the realization of the goals which the Council has chosen.

'The task that you have undertaken is one of the most noble and most purposeful. Because of your untiring efforts in solving their problems, men, women, and children who would be isolated by their

severe handicap are able to find again their faith in life and their place in society.

'We place an immense hope in the World Council finding a solution to a problem which, in its various aspects, human, social, cultural and economic, is familiar to us and which has been the object of our solicitude and attention since the first day of our independence.

'The results which you have already achieved and of which you can justly be proud, should be an incentive to develop your effort and co-ordinate your activity on both national and international levels. To do so, it is essential to multiply the communications among the various countries, to compare experiences, to devise wide programs and to extend a helpful hand to the less privileged areas of the world. I have especially in mind Africa, this continent which faces gigantic problems and possesses only limited means to face them.

'I call upon the Participants of this Assembly in their function as representatives of the World Council and with the help of all men of good will throughout the world, to adopt energetic measures and undertake a vast plan of action in favour of these millions of human beings who are expecting from us the means which will enable them to make their necessary and legitimate contribution to society.'

Mr. Lyndon B. Johnson, President of the United States of America

'I am pleased to send warm greetings to the members of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind and the American Association of Workers for the Blind on the occasion of your joint meeting.

'I have the greatest admiration for those who devote time and effort in helping the blind to live satisfying and productive lives. I wish all of you continued success in your great humanitarian work.'

Mr. Paul Leoni, Constitutional President of the Republic of Venezuela

'On the occasion of the meeting in New York of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, I send to that distinguished body my most sincere words of esteem in the name of the government and people of Venezuela.

'In a world agitated by the urgency of grave problems, the blind have the right to request with full justice that they be actively incorporated in social life.

'At the present deliberation of the Assembly, solutions capable of translation into terms of happiness for the handicapped and greater recognition of their rights will no doubt be made. With all sincerity my wishes are for the success of this Assembly and I reiterate the intention of the Venezuelan Government to support all that tends to better the economic and social conditions of those who find themselves deprived of sight.'

Mr. Josip Broz Tito, President of Yugoslavia

'In extending my cordial greetings to all participants in the General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, I wish to convey to you my best wishes for further successes in the work of your Organization.

'Rehabilitation and protection of the blind represent, undoubtedly, the most humane tasks in the field of social welfare of all the countries exerting efforts towards ensuring that the disabled play a full part in the life of a society, to give greater meaning to their living and to make their life happier. Your Organization has so far played a significant role and, for this reason, it can be rightly expected that the decisions to be adopted by the General Assembly will constitute a new encouragement towards making further efforts in the field of rehabilitation and protection of the blind.'

Vice-President

Dr. Zakir Hussain, Vice-President of India

'I am glad to know that the next General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind will be held at New York this year. I send my best wishes for the success of the Conference.'

(Inspiring messages were also received from the **Prime Minister of India, Dr. Lal Bahadur Shastri,** and that country's **Minister of Health, Dr. Sushila Nayar**)

Prime Ministers

Mr. Lester B. Pearson, Prime Minister of Canada

'It is a pleasure to extend most cordial greetings to Delegates attending the third General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. I am particularly proud to join in paying tribute to Canada's Colonel Baker as he relinquishes the Council's Presidency, a post which he has graced with distinction since your Organization was first formed. May all who participate in this truly international gathering derive renewed encouragement to carry on the great work to which you have dedicated yourselves. Best wishes to your Membership in many lands and to your Council for continued success.'

Mr. Georges Pompidou, Prime Minister of France

'At the opening of the World Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, I wish to bear witness to the great interest shown by the French Government in your work, the need for which grows clearer every day.

'If, indeed, the integration of the blind person in his community was a relatively simple matter at a time when mechanization and technical advance had not yet reached their full development, on the other hand

the conditions inherent in modern life each day create new difficulties which the blind person has to overcome. He cannot do this alone, and if appropriate measures are not taken he may find himself more and more isolated in his disability.

'But, very fortunately, one may hope that the techniques which you are about to study will allow us to come nearer to finding a solution to the problems with which we are thus faced.

'I hope that, thanks to the efforts of your Organization and to the enlightened and understanding assistance of various countries represented here, a decisive step may be made towards this goal.

'Rest assured that, for its part, France, the land of Valentin Haüy and of Louis Braille, will bring all its sympathy and full assistance to the great task which you have undertaken.'

Ministers of State

Mr. Flavio Suplicy de Lacerda, Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of the United States of Brazil

'The Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of the United States of Brazil follows with great interest the proceedings of the Quinquennial Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind now taking place in New York in which Brazil is represented by its delegates.

'We take this opportunity to extend to the President and participants of this Assembly our most hearty good wishes for its success which no doubt will benefit the blind all over the world.'

Mr. Camilo Alonso Vega, Minister of the Interior, Spain

'The high ideals which have drawn together in New York the representatives of so large a number of countries to study the problems of the blind in a changing world have moved me to send my most cordial greetings to you, not only in my capacity as President of the Superior Council for the Blind of Spain, but also as a member of the Government of my country, to express to your President and to all the representative, honorary and assistant members present at this meeting our very deep sympathy with your aims, together with our best wishes for the success of your work which we believe will be very fruitful in the service of a branch of social welfare which, by its humanity, transcends all frontiers.'

'The delegates of our National Organization for the Blind, which recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of its foundation, go to New York wishing to collaborate, to the best of their ability, in the work of that Assembly.'

Rt. Hon. Anthony Barber, Minister of Health, United Kingdom

'I send with pleasure my greetings to the 1964 World Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind; I am deeply conscious

of the outstanding services rendered to blind people by voluntary organizations and individual workers in this field.

'There is a statutory responsibility in this country to provide services for physically handicappd people including those who are blind and deaf; I am fully aware that these statutory services are strengthened and enriched by the united and continuing partnership with voluntary organizations such as those represented here.

'In paying tribute to the outstanding work of the World Council in stimulating the establishment and improvement of services for the blind throughout the world, I wish the Council a most successful Assembly.'

We have received messages of encouragement from **The Premier of Northern Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello and The Federal Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Chief The Honourable J. M. Johnson.**

Honorary Members, W.C.W.B.

Mr. W. McG. Eagar

'Though I have the good fortune to be pretty good for an octogenarian, I am afraid I can no longer travel around the world even in the cause of the blind. This letter is to tender my formal apologies, to wish the Assembly every success, however success is reckoned, and to send my regards to all my old friends who gather in New York.

'The establishment of the World Council has been a great bit of work and I hope with all of you that the next decade (and others after it) will witness its continued growth in scope and strength.'

Mr. Jose Ezquerra

'I am sorry that my age and my health make it impossible for me to attend this conference. Nevertheless, I am proud to serve as an Honorary Member of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind which has taken such effective action concerning the regeneration and rehabilitation of the blind.

'I want to express to you my very best wishes that this world meeting be showered with the best results ever, in all decisions for the betterment of all our brothers.'

Dr. Helen Keller

My dear Friends,

'It grieves me beyond words that my present state of health prevents me from sharing this great occasion with you. I rejoice at the steady growth of the American Association of Workers for the Blind and the remarkable progress of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. Always I shall treasure blessed memories of our comradeship in the service of the blind and the deaf-blind throughout this land and in the far corners of the earth. As you gather to your tasks at these joint

meetings and as my World Council colleagues continue with their work in the days ahead my thoughts and prayers will span the few miles that separate us.

'As we look back over the years of our mutual endeavour we can derive satisfaction from the improved circumstances that are now enjoyed by vast numbers of our blind and deaf-blind friends. Yet the continued desperate plight of so many of the world's sightless people is heavy on my heart. You who are assembled here have it in your power to accelerate the rate of progress through which all the blind may achieve the liberation of body, mind and spirit for which they have so long yearned. I am confident you will not fail them.

'May God's richest blessings crown your labors, advancing the day when the blind and the deaf-blind the world over may achieve total fulfilment in a world at peace.'

International and National Organizations

Mr. Rene Gonin, Secretary, International League of Blind Esperantists

'International League of Blind Esperantists assembled in Hague August 1st to 8th wishes your meeting success about works and activities for welfare of the blind.'

Mr. T. H. Tylor, Chairman, Royal National Institute for the Blind, England

'May I, on behalf of the Royal National Institute for the Blind of Great Britain, extend cordial greetings to all delegates and every good wish for the success of this General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.

'The theme which the Assembly has chosen, "The problems of the blind in the changing world", is one which is of the deepest interest to our organization and to me as a blind person myself. The R.N.I.B., as a voluntary organization, has always collaborated closely with our Government Departments and Local Authorities for the general well-being of the 110,000 blind persons in Britain and has been particularly concerned in the provision of its national services to ensure that its pioneer and experimental work is developed to the stage where it can eventually be taken over by the statutory authorities as part of a fully integrated welfare system.

'Your present deliberations will lead to a useful exchange of knowledge which cannot fail to extend the emancipation of blind people in every country of the world.'

Mr. S. T. Dajani, Chairman, Arab Blind Organization, Jordan

'Greetings to you all from the Holy Land. It gives me great pleasure to send you this message of goodwill and friendship. I should have liked very much to be with you in order to renew old acquaintances and make

new ones but unfortunately I could not make it. . . . Best wishes to you and I pray and trust that the conditions of blind welfare will improve all over the world as a result of your combined efforts.'

Mr. Mieczyslaw Michalak, President, Polish Union of the Blind, Poland

'Having no opportunity for personally attending the World Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind may I send from Polish representatives the best wishes for fruitful deliberations to all delegates and observers.

'It is our earnest hope that the present Assembly will improve our knowledge of blindness and its problems and will contribute to improvement of our services to blind persons. We also sincerely hope that the World Council will become a really universal organization guaranteeing thorough representation to visually handicapped of all the countries. With all good wishes.'

SECOND SESSION **Friday afternoon, July 31st, 1964**

THE PROBLEMS OF THE BLIND IN A CHANGING WORLD

Chairman: **Dr. M. Robert Barnett,** *Executive Director, American Foundation for the Blind and American Foundation for Overseas Blind, U.S.A.*

The Extent, Causes and Distribution of Blindness A Statistical Survey

By **John Wilson,** *Director, Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind. London.*

It is an astonishing fact that, during the five years since this Assembly last met, the world's population has increased by 300 million. In the fourteen days of our conference another four million will be born. The pace is accelerating: by 1975, the world's population will have reached 4,000 million and shortly after the close of this century it should reach 6,000 million. One enthusiastic mathematician has calculated that, if we go on at this rate, by A.D. 2700 there will be only one square foot of the earth's surface for every individual.

Nobody knows how many blind people there are in the world today. All that is possible is to make an intelligent guess on the statistics which are available, and this was how the World Health Organization, in 1962, produced its minimum estimate of 10 million. To avoid constant repetition, I will use the phrase 'blindness rate' to mean the number of blind people per 100,000 of the general population; thus, on the world's present population of 3,200 million, the W.H.O. estimate works out at a blindness rate of 320. That estimate was based on minimum figures and deliberately ignored the fact that many countries count only the totally blind. If an internationally acceptable definition of blindness had been used, the figure would have been much higher. Throughout most of Asia, a blindness rate of 500 would be more realistic and, in tropical Africa, at least 700. I believe that a blindness rate of 450 would be nearer the truth as a world average, and that would give a total of 14 million blind people.

The guess-work becomes even more approximate as we look to the future. Nuclear wars apart, the growth of the general population is reasonably predictable; what is much less certain is our capacity to reduce the proportion of that population which will be blind. It is a race between the mothers and the doctors and, for the present, the mothers are winning. It should however be possible to analyse the main factors which will control the situation and this I will attempt to do.

People are living longer. Today, a twenty-year-old Indian can expect to live until he is 63; his father would have been lucky to have lived into his fifties. This lengthening of the life span is happening over much of the world and must have a considerable effect on the world's blind population because the risk of blindness increases sharply with age.

In Britain, where the general blindness rate is low (207), the rate amongst people over 70 is 1,640 (about equal to an area heavily affected with trachoma), and the rate amongst people over 85 is 5,750, a figure which would not be out of place in the worst 'river blindness' area. Mainly because of the ageing of the population, the number of blind in Britain has continued to increase at a time when the blindness rate in most other age groups has been progressively reduced; two-thirds of the British blind are now over 65 years of age.

This age factor has not yet had its effect on the blindness statistics in most of the countries of Africa and Asia. A recent survey in Northern Rhodesia showed that only 12 per cent. of the blind were over 60 years of age. The reason must be that, previously, only a small fraction of such populations survived into the upper age groups in which cataract and glaucoma are most prevalent. A critical change is now taking place and with each decade an increasing number of Africans and Asians will survive into their sixties and seventies. There is no reason why they should be insulated from the ophthalmic consequences and, indeed, the evidence is that cataract is not only more prevalent in Asian communities but also that it occurs at an earlier age than in the West. In the massive populations concerned, even a small change in the age pattern could have a startling effect on the number of the blind.

But the main reason for the world's population growth is the improved survival rate among children. As a country's health services advance from a primitive to a transitional stage (which is what is happening over much of the world at present) the death rate per thousand of children under four years drops from about 250 to 70. This is the force which has detonated the population explosion and it has already produced astonishing results. In India, there are 170 million children below fourteen (38 per cent. of the population); in Ghana it is 40 per cent.; in Mexico 41 per cent. Every day, throughout the world, 300,000 children are likely to be born and their chance of survival is spectacularly better than ever before. As they themselves reach the age of parenthood the growth of the population will accelerate from arithmetical to geometrical progression. This is the age group which most concerns workers for the blind and the question which we must ask is what fraction of this exploding child population will be blind.

At the time of the Oslo Conference, by the simple process of totalling the figures returned by the various countries and by using them to strike an average for countries which did not make returns, I estimated that the minimum number of blind children of school age was 66,000. Much has happened since 1957 and it now looks as though the figures on which that estimate was based were in many cases too low. The Government of India, for example, has recently estimated that there are 400,000 blind children in that country. This seems an incredible

figure but, whilst in New Delhi last year, I had the benefit of seeing some of the samples on which it was based and they are most impressive. There is too little information to justify an international estimate, but it is a chilling thought that, even if the world's blindness rate amongst children were no higher than the present level in the United States (and it must obviously be much higher), there would today be more than 600,000 blind children in the world.

As health services improve, child blindness decreases, but the big question is whether the reduction will be fast enough. In a predictable period of years, the number of children in the world will double; unless, during that same period, the blindness rate amongst children halves, the total number will not fall. Put another way, unless we are as efficient at preventing the causes of blindness as we are at preventing the causes of death, the position will get worse. We have to gallop in order to stand still.

In countries with advanced medical services there is good reason for optimism. In England in 1962, the blindness rate amongst children was 21. Despite a steady increase in the general birth rate, the number of blind children has continued to fall and is now lower than ever. The same is true of other countries with a similar standard of medical services. One disturbing fact is that blindness from hereditary causes is assuming greater significance. Children with these conditions have a better chance of survival nowadays and, if they not only survive but become parents, they will cast a long shadow into the future. However, that problem is being energetically tackled and it is reasonable to expect that in the advanced countries the number of blind children will continue to decline though the proportion with secondary handicaps will increase.

But what happens in such countries can have only a marginal effect on the world picture. Nearly three-quarters of the world's population lives in Asia, Africa and Latin America and it is in those areas that the critical equation will work itself out.

In such countries, not only is the population growing more swiftly but the blindness rate amongst children is much higher. In India, if we accept the Ministry of Education's estimate, the rate is 235. Surveys indicate that in areas where 80 per cent. of the population has trachoma —and that is fairly common in Africa and the Near East—1 per cent. of the children will probably be blind. This figure has recently been recorded in a survey in Southern Arabia. In the Luapula Valley of Northern Rhodesia (though fortunately this is a freak figure) it was found that 82 per cent. of the blind lost their sight in the first ten years of life. If such figures were projected into the next few generations the result would be appalling, but we need not take such a pessimistic view.

Some of the causes of infant mortality, notably smallpox, are also major causes of child blindness and their control is an unmixed blessing. Trachoma, conjunctivitis, measles, gonorrhoea and leprosy can now be controlled and, if we have the will to match our skill, a great reduction can be made in these giant diseases which have destroyed the eyes of children from the beginning of human history; but, as these

giants dwindle, it is becoming increasingly evident that the centre of the stage will still be dominated by the massive spectre of malnutrition.

During the past three years, consultants of the World Health Organization have made an international survey of xerophthalmia, the eye condition associated with vitamin A deficiency. In its advanced form, keratomalacia, this a direct cause of blindness, but by far the most serious effect of vitamin deficiency is that it predisposes children, particularly in the months immediately after weaning, to blindness from causes which would not destroy a well-nourished eye. The report of the W.H.O. consultants is a grim document; it shows, with a mass of supporting evidence, that this is a major health problem throughout the world, being particularly serious in the highly populous areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In Dacca, a city with half a million inhabitants, two eye hospitals in a single year recorded 259 children blinded by keratomalacia. In Indonesia, where xerophthalmia is one of the most prevalent maladies amongst infants, it was found that 8 per cent. of children with this condition had lesions which would cause blindness.

The Food and Agricultural Organization has estimated that about a third of the world's population lives on a diet chronically deficient in protein and essential vitamins. In such communities, the blindness rate is usually high, but it would be much higher were it not for the fact that children with keratomalacia often die. In Indonesia, it was observed that about half the children with xerophthalmia die in the first few years of life; the death rate amongst children with keratomalacia is probably even higher—one authority put it at 80 per cent. Today, however, it is often possible for emergency treatment to save the life, though not the sight, of such children. This is a most welcome advance but, in the massive populations concerned, even a modest improvement in the survival rate could cause a startling increase in the number of blind children.

The conclusion seems to be that, unless nutrition can be improved or the ocular effects of malnutrition controlled, the blindness rate amongst children over much of the world will not fall below the critical figure necessary to balance population growth. Experiments are being made with the use of massive doses of vitamin A, but the only sure answer is a permanent improvement in diet. This is a task for agriculturists, Community Development workers, and teachers and perhaps as Dr. Cicely Williams has said, the problem will be solved only when a different view prevails of the value of child life.

Control of trachoma and river blindness (onchocerciasis) is now as much an administrative as a medical problem. Techniques of prevention will doubtless continue to improve, but already any country which is determined to do so could control these scourges. It is a question of the priority which is assigned to the task, and that largely depends on the extent to which the public's conscience is stirred.

In any country, the prevalence of blindness from glaucoma and cataract is related to the number of eye specialists able to do the necessary surgery. In the United States there is one eye specialist to

every 30,000 people; in Northern Nigeria, there are four specialists to 30 million people. There is an acute shortage of eye specialists in the countries which most need them and, unless something decisive is done to increase training facilities and to induce ophthalmologists to work in rural areas, a great burden of needless blindness will be passed on to the next generation.

Conclusions

There are too many uncertainties in this situation to warrant any dogmatic conclusions. However, on the facts so far as I have been able to ascertain them, I believe that the following trends are likely:

1. Amongst that minority of the world's population which enjoys advanced medical and social services, the blindness rate is likely to continue to decrease until it reaches about 200. It may go lower in populations with a low average age. The proportion of blind people will rise and the number of blind children should continue to fall until the hereditary causes become the decisive factor.
2. Amongst the three-quarters of the world's population which lives in Asia, Africa and Latin America, we should expect a steady, and in some places a sharp increase in the number of old blind people. The blindness rate amongst children should go down but, because of the accelerating growth of the child population generally, the actual number of blind children is unlikely to fall. The critical factor is malnutrition and, unless its ophthalmic consequences can be controlled, the blindness rate amongst children is unlikely to fall fast enough to balance the growth of the child population generally; in some areas the results of this could be alarming.
3. If the world's blindness rate is assumed to be 450, and if that rate is not appreciably reduced, the number of blind people in the world will rise from 14 million at present to 18 million by 1975 and to 27 million by the turn of the century. To maintain the present figure of about 14 million, the blindness rate will have to be reduced from 450 to 350 by 1975 and to 230 by the close of the century. The first of these two propositions seems too pessimistic and the second too optimistic; the truth may lie somewhere in between, in which case, by 1975, we can expect a blind population of about 16 million and, by the turn of the century, about 20 million.

It is for others in this Conference to indicate how far we in work for the blind are likely to respond to the astonishing challenges of this changing world. To do so significantly we must extend the whole scale of achievement. Where we have thought in hundreds, we must think in scores of thousands; where we have been concerned with single institutions, we must promote whole national systems. In the process, we may have to abandon some of our traditional specialism so that we can gear the advance to those dynamic forces of educational and social betterment which are moving in the world today. We must be con-

cerned with prevention and join with the doctors in giving this effort the momentum of a great international cause.

Professor Toynbee has said that the twentieth century may chiefly be remembered as the age in which men dared to regard the welfare of the whole of the human race as a reasonable objective. That human race contains a growing multitude of blind people; they are not dots on a statistician's chart nor cards in a computer, but people whose welfare is our objective. We will not attain it unless the need of the blind anywhere becomes the active concern of workers for the blind everywhere.

Changing Patterns in the Provision of Services to the World's Blind People

By **Eric T. Boulter,** *Associate Director, American Foundation for Overseas Blind, U.S.A.*

Most of you are aware that this is not the first occasion on which workers for the blind in the United States have joined with their friends from overseas at meetings in New York City to study the major problems of the blind and to devise means for their amelioration. A number of people in this conference chamber were active participants in the World Conference on Work for the Blind in 1931. I would like to particularly salute those enlightened pioneers who initiated the quest for international co-operation thirty-three years ago and whose earnest pursuit of the means for world wide partnership in the service of the blind has been maintained so energetically during the intervening years. It was at those New York meetings in 1931 that the dream of a World Council for the Welfare of the Blind first emerged. While a number of factors, including a catastrophic world war, caused the achievement of that dream to be elusive for a number of years I am convinced that the devoted labors of those days contributed substantially to the erection of a sound international framework following the Oxford Conference of 1949.

Since the 1931 New York meetings, and more particularly since the first post-war Conference in 1949, remarkable changes have occurred in the pattern of services to blind people throughout the world. Yet these significant program changes could not have been achieved had they not been preceded by the most important factor of all—a basic change of attitude toward blindness itself. Firstly, the historic fatalistic approach to blindness and the attitude that 'the blind will always be with us' has largely disappeared. It has been replaced by an urgency of motivation in locating and revealing the basic causes of the major blinding diseases and eradicating those causes and consequently the diseases themselves. The new spirit is equally evident in the growing availability of ophthalmic services even in many of the least developed countries, including the training of increased numbers of ophthalmologists, the creation of eye departments in hospitals, the operation of mobile eye units and the direct involvement of prevention of blindness within general programs of sanitation, village hygiene and basic

public health activities. As we have learned from the distinguished speaker who preceded me, the blind population of the world continues to be numerous—much too numerous—yet I firmly believe that for the first time in the world's history we stand on the threshold of an era during which massive inroads will be made on the scourge of blindness in all parts of the earth. As we look back over a few short decades we can think of so many causes of blindness which we were then impotent to handle but which now lend themselves to control or successful treatment—cataracts, trachoma, ophthalmia neonatorum, venereal disease ophthalmia, detached retina, retrolental fibroplasia, onchocerciasis, and the rest. And the massive world-wide campaigns now being waged against hunger will surely play their part in achieving a reduction in the incidence of blindness deriving from vitamin deficiencies.

The welcome changes in our programs for those who are incurably blind result from another basic change of attitude. Diligent though many of our predecessors were in their desire to help the blind it seems apparent that too many of them regarded the blind as a separate segment of the community. It was only within such a pattern of separation that they sought to provide basic services for the blind. Thus the concept was prevalent that blind children could be educated only with other blind children, that blind men and women could be trained for and engage in work only with other blind people and if the unemployed blind received a pension to provide for the basic needs of food, clothing and shelter they were well provided for. Today these attitudes appear preposterous, for the fundamental philosophy underlying our programs for the sightless in this decade is that every blind person should hold his head high as an equal member of society. Thus our programs are geared to assist him to fully participate in the life of his town or village and to accept equally the privileges and responsibilities of full citizenship. Where this goal is truly being sought we find the national and local governmental authorities, the voluntary organizations for the blind, the blind people themselves, the other community welfare organizations and the general public working in trusting, harmonious partnership for the betterment of the community as a whole.

These are some of the relatively new programs that are emerging in places all over the world, based upon an acceptance of the principles I have enunciated:

1. *The Pre-school Blind Child.* There is a growing recognition that from the day he is born, a blind child is, and must be encouraged to remain, an effective and accepted member of the family unit. To establish adequate programs, reliable systems must be established to ensure that all blind babies and pre-school age children be brought to the attention of the appropriate authorities. Thereafter, the provision of a service in the home by trained child welfare specialists must be ensured. The purpose of this service is not simply to train the blind child in the development of certain skills but equally importantly to bring real understanding and wisdom to the minds of the other family members, so that the blind child

will truly be accepted as a full member of that family unit. When circumstances demand that the blind child should be placed in a crèche or nursery school the placement of that child in a regular crèche with seeing children of his own age is proving in very many places to be the most effective method. Naturally such a program demands the provision of training for the staff members of the crèche, but this is not a difficult task.

When even more exceptional circumstances require that the blind child should be placed in a nursery school with other blind children, maximum and continuing contact with the family must be maintained, coupled with the provision of training to those family members. With a modicum of ingenuity, toys and playthings can be selected with a view to their instructive as well as their recreational value. Thus the process of growth and development in the companionship of the sighted can commence.

2. *The Education of Blind Children.* It is in this area that possibly the most remarkable developments have occurred during the past few years. When the 1931 World Conference was held in this country many of its delegates observed the then embryo program for the education of blind children within the general schools systems of certain communities. The expressed consensus following those visits was that while this was an interesting and laudable effort the program probably lent itself uniquely to the American educational pattern but would be unachievable elsewhere. How wrong they were. In countries where a few short years ago no programs of any kind for the blind were operative, we now see blind children happily attending schools with their sighted brothers and sisters, cousins and playmates. From Brazil to Borneo, Tunisia to Turkey, Tanganyika to Thailand, Israel to India, Morocco to Malaysia, we see this process gaining momentum. The recognition that the blind child of school age is not a separate entity but an ordinary child of average intelligence, requiring only a minimum of special assistance, has convinced ministries of education in these and other countries to recognize their responsibility for providing the educational services that are available to other ordinary children of average intelligence. As they have observed the integrated pattern of education of the blind, they have been struck with its effectiveness and its economy. Thus plans have been developed and are being implemented under which a number of blind children receiving instruction will be multiplied four or five times during the years immediately ahead. It is not only at the primary level that this integration of blind children in the general educational pattern can be observed. From place to place around the world we learn of the admission of more and more young blind people to technical training schools, to academic secondary schools, to colleges and universities.

It is to the eternal credit of the enlightened administrators of special schools for the blind in the past that this trend towards the participation of blind pupils in regular activities was first

initiated. It was when the old prison-like walls were torn down from around our schools for the blind and the pupils within those schools were permitted to engage more and more in activities with seeing children of their own age groups in the community around them that we were able to perceive the first indications of what might lie ahead. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to the perceptiveness of those school administrators and in the modern day we owe them equal gratitude for the enlightened manner in which they are preparing themselves for and accepting the new and onerous tasks that now await them. While the school for the blind is and always will be an essential feature of the educational pattern for blind children it is apparent now that the pupil population of those schools is undergoing a radical change. With the increased availability of the resource room and the itinerant teacher programs for many blind children we can see that the school for the blind is with increased frequency the best form of education for what we might loosely classify as 'problem' children. These are the children with highly unsatisfactory home conditions, the children with serious secondary physical defects, the slow learners, the psychologically maladjusted and so on. What a glorious change it is that within current program patterns, facilities, good facilities, are being provided for the instruction of these children who would have been thrown on the educational scrap-heap just a few short years ago.

3. *Adjustment and Rehabilitation.* Here is another glorious concept in the changing pattern of services to the blind. In past years the relatively few blind people who were able to secure services from our agencies were offered precious little choice in the framing of their own destinies. If you were a child you were sent to a school for the blind; if you were an adult of working age you were taught a trade; if you were unable to work, and if funds were available, you were offered a small pension. This was it—school, trade, or pension. Now the sound, basic social work recognition of a blind person as a whole individual, with inherent talent, developed skills, abilities, interests and varied potentials is gaining ground everywhere. Recognition of the fact that life in the modern community is not simply a matter of performing a vocational task but is an intricate, complex thing has led to the creation of services for development of each blind individual for participation in that complex way of life. And so in our lexicon of everyday terms in agencies serving the blind around the world we find the words and phrases 'mobility', 'communication', 'requirements of daily living', 'civics and world affairs', and the rest. Good programs starting with medical restoration where possible, psychological evaluation and service, and full utilization of past educational and vocational skills are being offered widely. These programs are leading to the return to society of well-balanced, able, resourceful blind persons to lives of dignity, usefulness and happiness within the social framework of their own lands.

4. *Employment.* With the development of the new attitude calling for full and normal living by blind persons in their own communities has come a new approach on the matter of preparing blind persons for and providing them with opportunities for employment. The progressive elements in our profession have long since adopted the philosophy that the blind person can, in broad terms, be prepared for the type of employment he might have expected to follow had he not suffered the handicap of blindness. With the adoption of this just but simple philosophy a whole new world of employment opportunities has opened up to us. No longer do the agencies for the blind have to provide the working space, the tools, the materials, the markets and the supplementary financial assistance for the support of all blind workers. Now the factories, the farms, the offices, the stores, the government departments, the schools and universities and the other professions have become the employers. The blind have become effective and respected employees within the general pattern of industry, commercial and economic life. When the World Conference of 1931 occurred, the first hesitant steps towards the employment of blind people in ordinary industry were being taken. Now the numbers of blind people so employed runs into the tens of thousands and the total is being increased week by week. I recall that during the 1949 Conference in Oxford a small group of us were discussing the possibility of introducing agricultural and other rural training courses to provide natural employment opportunities for country dwellers throughout the world. A number of people clicked their tongues and advised us that while it might be possible to teach blind people to grow things they could never do it efficiently enough to earn a satisfactory livelihood. Yet today, not only in Europe and in North America, but in the great continents of Africa and Asia and through the Middle East and in parts of Latin America rural training centers are in operation. The students emerging from these training centers are being satisfactorily re-settled in their home districts and providing for their full self-support through the skill of their hands and the sweat of their brow.

Workshops for the blind, the old tried and proven means of employment, still have an important function to discharge. But the old order changeth and the modern workshop is a far cry from that which we knew a couple of decades ago. The new workshop discharges a double role. It provides advanced training in an industrial setting for blind persons who will ultimately be transferred to open industry and offers terminal employment for those who cannot become so employed. But how many of these workshops are in effect factories, humming with modern machinery and other equipment, manufacturing basic products and handling sub-contract work along strictly industrial lines.

No longer is it an unusual sight for a blind student to be seen walking the campus of a college or university. The remarkable

acceleration in the admission of blind students to higher education in countries throughout the world has already led to a marked increase in the entry of blind persons into the professions and the rate of such entry is being constantly stepped-up.

Thus are the patterns changing. Through the vision, the daring and the energy of the pioneers in our profession; through the indomitable will and the faith in their own destiny displayed by countless blind men and women much has been accomplished. The impact that these achievements has made upon public opinion has convinced governments everywhere that it is indeed a function of government to assist the blind to achieve full citizenship. From this recognition on the part of governments has come the demand that inter-governmental organizations should help to accelerate the pace of progress through providing their aid. Commencing with a small meeting in Geneva in 1950 the United Nations family has become an increasingly potent force through succeeding years in the service of the handicapped including the blind. Within a month of this meeting the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Rehabilitation of the Handicapped will again convene in Geneva with representatives of the United Nations itself, W.H.O., I.L.O., UNESCO, UNICEF, working hand in hand with the leading international non-governmental organizations including the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind to plan the next steps in the expanding program of service to the handicapped throughout the world in partnership with peoples and governments everywhere.

Have we reached our goal? Have we achieved the ultimate? Of course we have not, and in fact we know more clearly than ever that we have so far merely scratched the surface of the problem. But I truly believe that the great difference now is that we do know where we are going, we do recognize what can be achieved and the means through which these achievements can be made. Now we are not alone. Powerful forces are allied with us. With their help and with firm resolve we can take giant strides in the coming years. Let us now resolve—blind and sighted alike, representatives of governmental and voluntary organizations, national and international agencies, specialists in work for the blind and those engaged in general community development activities—let us recognize that we each have abilities to contribute and roles to perform to the end that the blind may achieve maximum fulfilment and dignity within the family, the community, the nation and the world.

The Changing Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Planning Rehabilitation Programmes

By **Martha Branscombe,** *Chief, Social Welfare Section, Bureau of Social Affairs, United Nations*

In the decades since the Second World War the field of rehabilitation has undergone profound changes both from the philosophical and the practical points of view. We have left behind the old philosophy whose

basic notion was that a disabled person was rehabilitated when his needs for food, clothing and shelter were satisfied, and when he was given a crutch to lean on or a cane to tap with. We have moved forward to the time when we recognize that a disabled person, whether his disability is an orthopaedic defect, a sensory deprivation, such as blindness, or a chronic illness, is just another human being who functions side by side with us, perhaps with different methods, but nevertheless with full responsibility and dignity.

In practice, developments in rehabilitation are characterized by a distinct shift from private philanthropy to governmental and international responsibility. In this respect, the year 1950 was a crucial year for rehabilitation for it inaugurated two historical events whose ramifications are of the first magnitude. First, it marked the auspicious beginnings of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, whose work not only brought hope and a sense of worth to countless blind persons throughout the world, but also stimulated and encouraged other international agencies and local and national bodies to persist in their dedicated efforts to assist the blind in every phase of their life.

Secondly, the year 1950 marked the entry of the United Nations into the field of rehabilitation. The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations adopted a resolution requesting the Secretary-General 'to plan jointly with the specialized agencies and in consultation with interested non-governmental organizations a well co-ordinated international programme for rehabilitation of physically handicapped persons.' In accordance with this resolution, the United Nations initiated an international rehabilitation programme with the close co-operation of the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization, UNESCO, UNICEF and a number of non-governmental organizations, whose collaboration was effected through the Conference of World Organizations Interested in the Handicapped.

Since then the international responsibility of both the United Nations and the non-governmental organizations has been continually expanding so that the individual efforts of each serve to complement, augment and further the mutual interests of all.

The rapid acceleration of social and technological progress—one of the most important phenomena of contemporary life—has had a significant impact on rehabilitation. The improvement of techniques of communication has made information on all aspects of rehabilitation accessible to the remotest parts of the world. It has made possible, within the family of nations, exchange of knowledge on the most modern scientific achievements, knowledge of research findings, knowledge of new restorative and prosthetic techniques, knowledge of experience in planning, organization and operation of rehabilitation programmes, knowledge of the different attitudes and approaches to rehabilitation. Thus, the voluntary groups, originally functioning only on local and national levels, came to share their experience and frequently joined together in a concerted international attack upon the common problem. The World Council for the Welfare of the Blind is one striking example of such concerted action, with its outstanding

role as co-ordinator of international activities in the field of blindness. Another is the American Foundation for Overseas Blind whose work on behalf of the blind has been of major influence in every phase of rehabilitation in this field.

International concern for the disabled received a powerful impetus first when the numbers of disabled individuals reached untold proportions in the wake of the Second World War, and second, when intensified industrialization and urbanization increased the hazards of accidents and disease. In almost every country, Governments recognized that rehabilitation was a major aspect of their social and economic programmes. In many instances, before embarking upon their national rehabilitation programmes, they called on the advice and technical assistance of voluntary organizations. Thus, the experience of these organizations formed a nucleus for subsequent broader plans. Governmental involvement in rehabilitation through the intermediary of such non-governmental agencies, expanded the sphere of their activity and increased public mental awareness of their vitally important and useful role. A few illustrations may serve to emphasize the wide range of rehabilitation activities carried on by non-governmental organizations.

The Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind has conducted a research survey in Northern Rhodesia on the relationship between malnutrition and blindness. It has also provided expert assistance to the Uganda Foundation for the Blind on administration and training in the two training centres at Salama and Kireka. The American Foundation for Overseas Blind plans to establish a sheltered workshop for the blind and a rural training centre in Ceylon. It has also assisted in organizing the Paris Rehabilitation Centre and has provided two training scholarships to France. The World Rehabilitation Fund has made available to a rehabilitation centre in Sierra Leone a player-recorder and educational tapes on rehabilitation. And, of course, the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind plays a unique role in co-ordinating international action in the field of blindness, in particular in terms of consultation and of convening meetings as exemplified by the present Congress.

It has become abundantly evident that the sphere of non-governmental activity in rehabilitation has gone far beyond the original beginnings when rehabilitation services were planned and put into effect solely on the initiative of local voluntary bodies concerned with specific groups of the disabled and aimed primarily at ensuring material welfare and immediate care of the handicapped.

The role of the non-governmental organization has expanded in manifold ways. But in point of fact, the basic principles underlying this role have not changed, for the goal remains the same—the restoration of disabled persons to full participation in the life of their society. However, there are certain areas on which the work of the non-governmental organizations could fruitfully concentrate.

1. With the ever increasing participation of governments in rehabilitation programmes, it becomes more and more necessary

for the non-governmental agencies to explore specific individual problems which sometimes are too readily absorbed in over-all comprehensive planning.

2. From such exploration it is logical that non-governmental organizations can find themselves in the enviable position of spearheading new projects directed towards the solution of the rehabilitation problem, including research, demonstration, training, organization of studies, seminars and conferences.
3. Inevitably there exists a gap between the activities of scientific institutions and those of formal administrations, and in this connection, the non-governmental organizations can play a most useful role by functioning as an effective connecting link between the work of the two.
4. Since increased leisure time is recognized as a new phenomenon in present-day life, the satisfactory utilization of this leisure time is an important feature in planning individual rehabilitation programmes. The non-governmental organizations, by focusing attention on this phase, can make a valuable contribution towards creating for blind persons new areas of personal satisfaction.
5. Apart from assuming leadership in these areas, the non-governmental organizations can also direct attention to the important task of disseminating information on the various aspects of rehabilitation to the disabled themselves, so that they can confront the increasing complexity of modern living with greater knowledge at their disposal.

The fourteen years of close co-operation between the United Nations and the non-governmental organizations have produced the most gratifying effects. The mutual confidence characterizing all our efforts to solve the problem of rehabilitation has served to transform theoretical plans and procedural rules into a creative relationship in which imagination and understanding have joined with skills and techniques to make rehabilitation a workable human reality.

The Changing Role of Government in the Provision of Services for Rehabilitation of the Disabled

By **Mary E. Switzer,** *Commissioner, Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D.C.*

Well over a century ago the philosophy of government in the United States was well expressed in a very few words by William Ellery Channing. It was in an era in which the nation was just beginning to realize the soundness of its foundations and the strength of the forces that were propelling it toward its destiny that the eminent clergyman and author wrote these words: 'The office of government is not to confer happiness, but to give men opportunity to work out happiness for themselves.' It is a phrase that seems to say that in its truest sense, government is a method to help people find the greatest amount of

happiness—the happiness of health, of economic security, of enjoyment of basic rights, and equal opportunity to attain them.

The words point clearly to the significance of the individual in democratic society and to his right to use his abilities and his talents in his own way to build a future of his own making. But we can read in them, too, the obligations of government in a universe in which there is pain and hardship and frustrations for many people, giving them less than an even chance to reach whatever their goals may be.

In the United States we try to meet these obligations with a variety of agencies, sometimes ingeniously designed to combat the effects of economic privation, of disease and accident and catastrophe, and of all the kinds of physical and mental disabilities that interfere with employment and other normal pursuits of life.

These agencies and the services they provide are constantly being improved. The role of government is one of leadership in initiating services and supporting them in such a manner that there is really equal opportunity for all to obtain them. It is quite in line with something that was said of us as a nation, just after the last war, in a report made by a mission sent to this country by the French Association for the Improvement of Productivity to observe our industrial and social practices. The report contains the observation that the United States has 'the mentality of progress, of constantly improving what there is. It is unwillingness to be content with the present situation, no matter how good it may be. It is the continous effort to supply new techniques and new methods. It is faith in human progress.'

These words describe an attribute of the American character which has been noted many times by foreign visitors—the ability to take an idea, to experiment, to add and discard, and to shape it to the highest degree of usefulness. That is what we have tried to do during forty-four years of a public program of vocational rehabilitation of the disabled, and the growth of the program is one expression of the nation's faith in human progress.

The handicapping effects of disability on the individual have been the concern of a State and Federal partnership since 1920. The aggregate of activities in which they engage we call vocational rehabilitation. We label these public efforts with the term vocational because they have for their legal and philosophical objectives the preparation of disabled persons for employment suited to their abilities, and their placement in jobs wherein their dependency on families or on public funds will be erased or greatly reduced. It is part of our fundamental belief that for most people the great satisfactions of life stem from an ability to work, and its consequent fruits of economic independence and accepted status as productive members of society.

In the more than four decades that there has been a public program of vocational rehabilitation, its purposes have broadened, its capacities have increased, but its underlying philosophy has not changed materially.

Some of the original concepts remain. The State-Federal partnership remains intact. The Federal government, through the Vocational

Rehabilitation Administration, provides national leadership and administers grants of Federal money to States in support of their basic rehabilitation programs. Agencies in each of the States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands, conforming to Federal standards of organization, purpose, and performance, provided the actual services through which more than 110,000 disabled persons found employment in 1963, and another 120,000 will have reached the same goal in the fiscal period that ended with June of this year.

But other concepts have changed. The initial program of services was built around job training, counselling and guidance, provision of orthopaedic appliances, and placement in a job. It was frankly an experiment in a new field, and the program was continued on that basis until it was given permanent status in the sweeping social legislation of 1935.

It was in 1943 that there occurred the first significant effort of government to expand rehabilitation services in the direction of the concepts we have today. The Barden-LaFollette Act took a long step by providing for medicine, surgery, hospitalization and other treatment to reduce or remove the disability. It made persons with mental illness eligible for services and, in broadening the general base of services, provided for better rehabilitation of the blind.

The real turning point for the public program, nevertheless, came in 1954. The Congress, after lengthy hearings, passed legislation that authorized broad changes in the program—in the directions it could take, for more substantial financing of State operations, and in providing for widespread training in specialties needed to provide rehabilitation services, with support of Federal grants.

There was also provision for support of research and demonstration projects in rehabilitation, a development that has had the most profound effect on the course of the program, its scope, and its services, by bringing together the leadership and financial support available through the Federal government with a tremendous amount of imagination, resources, and talent that had long been dormant among persons and groups willing and able to work for rehabilitation of the disabled.

The new legislation recognized that there were new frontiers to cross. But it recognized, too, that there were needs among several groups of our population, which though they had been with us always, were growing to proportions and into situations that demanded action.

Half of the hospital beds in the nation were occupied by mentally ill persons. The plight of mentally retarded children and adults was coming out into the open, and demanded consideration. The growing proportion of older persons in our population, many of them disabled, presented special problems. There were gaps in services for the deaf and hard of hearing, for the blind and visually handicapped, for the orthopaedically disabled.

The expansion of services in mental retardation is a case in point. In 1955, the total of disabled people rehabilitated into actual employment was about 58,000, and of these, 531, or less than one per cent.,

were retardates. But in 1963, when the total was more than 110,000 almost 6,000 or about 5·5 per cent., were retarded.

There were two principal reasons for this acceleration. The late President Kennedy focused national attention on mental retardation by appointing a committee to formulate an attack of national proportions on the handicap, and there was a growing volume of public insistence, led by extremely forceful voluntary groups, that there be substantial action.

Even before the President's dramatic action there was activity in the public rehabilitation program. An early demonstration grant was for development of ways that retarded youths who had been considered unemployable could be successfully trained by workshop methods for jobs within their capabilities. So successful was the demonstration that grants have been made for forty-three similar demonstrations, in thirty-one States—many sponsored by voluntary agencies—from which hundreds of retarded youths have progressed into jobs. Fifteen of these projects have now been absorbed into their communities and are being operated without Federal aid.

Retardation also is being combated with other kinds of services. It was mildly shocking to the nation to be told that there are 1·5 million school age mentally retarded children who need special education, but that three-quarters of them do not have access to it because of a lack of qualified teachers.

Two kinds of action are meeting this situation. The Congress has provided legislation authorizing the U.S. Office of Education to support the training of teachers of handicapped children, including the retarded; and the V.R.A., through its training program, is supporting special research and training centers where institutional and community problems in rehabilitation of the retarded will be studied, and specialists trained in methods for field work.

State rehabilitation agencies are grappling with the problem in new ways, combining their resources with those of State and local systems to conduct varying curricula of study and work, in school classes, workshops, and on the job. These united efforts of school and community are in operation in a dozen or more metropolitan areas, with V.R.A. support. They will spread in the next few years to give untold thousands of retarded youths a grip on their future.

These actions directed toward one disability are perhaps a classic example of the new role of government in the provision of rehabilitation services—counselling and special education beginning in grade schools and continuing through high schools, support of workshop training, and preparation of special teachers to meet a shortage that is acute.

Yet there are highly interesting developments in other areas of disability. Blindness and visual defects are high among them.

Our reading of history, from Biblical times, through the Crusades, and down through the centuries in which there was gradually forged the kind of civilization we have today, tells us of the great attention that blind people have commanded from peoples and their govern-

ments. Blindness has always elicited more response in the human breast than any other disability.

Blindness, of course, was a major concern of our State governments since early in our history. For well over a century, most States have maintained residential schools to provide academic training and some measure of vocational training for young people. There arose, too, many voluntary groups whose activities not only kept the problems of the blind alive in the public consciousness, but also provided immense areas of practical help.

Too, a long time ago—in 1858—the American Printing House for the Blind was established in Kentucky, chartered by the State to provide at cost embossed books and tangible apparatus for blind persons, to meet a rising demand from schools and institutions for such materials. In 1879, during a time of national economic stress, funds began to dwindle, and the Congress appropriated funds to keep the House alive. With continuance of this aid, the House prints a wide variety of materials and manufactures aids to education that greatly improve communication among and with the blind. Just recently, a demonstration grant was awarded the institution to support the publication of new coded materials which will help substantially in teaching science and mathematics to blind students.

Up to this point in time, services for the blind were traditionally divided between such public and voluntary forms of aid. State institutions for blind children and public funds for the needy blind were the usual forms of government aid, supported by the work of voluntary groups. The inadequacy of such help was recognized by the Federal government in the Social Security Act of 1935, which contained a provision for Federal assistance to States for better support of their needy blind citizens.

But a more tangible effort to help blind persons, and in a different direction, came through the Randolph-Sheppard Act of 1936, a landmark in the vocational rehabilitation of blind persons.

This legislation authorized establishment of vending stands on government property, operated as small businesses by blind persons, under general supervision of the State rehabilitation agencies. Thousands of blind persons have had employment in these enterprises, either as direct operators or employees, and such employment has been vastly increased in recent years as many States encouraged establishment of stands on non-government property.

This latter aspect has caused the program to grow spectacularly. In 1953 there was a total of 1,543 stands in operation, operated by 1,581 blind persons, returning to them an average annual income of $2,209. In 1963 the totals were 2,365 stands, 2,542 operators, and an average income of $4,392. Some stands in exceptional locations and with good management, have produced incomes many times this average.

Not only were employment opportunities increased for blind persons, but the vending stands were showcases for their abilities. The law and its application were highly imaginative in conception and are increasingly successful as one of the government-led aspects of helping the disabled.

In the following years, especially after the war, Congress and the nation began to look more closely at our health problems. National surveys were undertaken, and out of them came the knowledge that about 30,000 new cases of blindness occurred each year, and that about two million of our citizens are handicapped for employment by some disorder of vision. It was a tremendous challenge to vocational rehabilitation.

After the legislation of 1954, the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration was much more able to cope with this situation. A strong tide of interest brought more than a hundred research or demonstration projects into being, ranging through many aspects of blindness and visual handicaps but the most emphasis has been on two subjects, employment and mobility.

Some of the earlier projects looked into the possibilities for training blind people in agriculture. A State rehabilitation agency formulated methods for training in greenhouse and nursery work, and its success has spread through many States. Other projects—and these have their counterparts in other countries, notably India with which we perform co-operative rehabilitation research—have developed methods of preparing the blind for farm work. Still others are concerned with training in metal work, electronics, various kinds of mechanical shop practices, and piano tuning.

But the public program is committed more and more to intense promotion of vocational individuality for blind people, to safeguard against their being shunted into traditional jobs that had been thought suitable, and to give them vocational choices suited, as far as possible, to their own preferences, abilities, and personalities. As much latent talent exists among blind persons as among any group, and the VRA premise is that the prime requirements are imagination and experimentation to seek out and develop those talents.

In this wise there are support grants for projects to study the capabilities of blind persons in electronic computer work—another field in which there is activity in our foreign co-operative research; to improve tactual sensibilities for understanding prepared charts, graphs, and maps; and a highly successful university course in which blind persons are trained to translate and transcribe the Russian and German languages.

One of the great stumbling blocks to rehabilitation of the blind is mobility—to be able to find their way about their jobs, getting back and forth to work by public transportation, to use the streets with confidence. A principal difficulty has been a lack of qualified instructors. This lack is diminishing, as nine projects over the country, with support of V.R.A. funds, turn out instructors prepared to teach the proper use of canes, of auditory cues, and ways of doing most of the things that sighted people do.

The great number of persons with disorders of vision that handicap them for employment also came into the rehabilitation picture. Since 1958 the VRA has granted aid to medical schools, State rehabilitation agencies, to hospitals and to voluntary groups, in support of optical

aid clinics, where all kinds of lenses can be fitted to an infinite variety of eye defects. There now are 24 of these clinics in 22 States helping hundreds of persons to the point where they obtain satisfactory employment. It is easily the most useful service that has been devised for the visually handicapped.

The doubly tragic problems of those who are not only blind but deaf, are doubtless familiar to many of you in this conference, for, over a period of years there has been an integrated international effort to get at this complicated disability. Some years ago, with the participation of international experts and research funds from the V.R.A., the Industrial Home for the Blind here in Brooklyn, prepared and issued a manual of practices that is being used to reach the minds of these people. It has been a great success, and in this country, the Brooklyn institution has become a regional center for this work in the Eastern half of the nation. Their trained instructors are beginning to reach a significant number of the estimated 800 deaf and blind persons in the surrounding 15-State area.

A major hope in rehabilitation activities for the blind is development of new instruments to overcome or circumvent effects of the handicap. For three years VRA has been supporting research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for design and improvement of devices useful in the rehabilitation of those who need prosthetic and orthoptic assistance, who have speech and hearing difficulty or for the blind. We are expecting to hear shortly of substantial progress in braille communication methods and in electronic and mechanical aids to mobility. When these are developed we fervently hope they will have considerable meaning for the 12 million blind people over the world, including the estimated 400,000 in the United States.

Work in the field of blindness always carried with it contingency for emergency, or of change—encounters with unknown diseases or conditions that may be caused by changing modes of living. We are in a period of very rapid medical discoveries, where beneficial developments in one field can possibly affect physical or mental functions in an unsuspected manner. Such was the experience in overcoming the eye disease we know as retrolental fibroplasia, which blinded an estimated 10,000 babies in the United States alone about a dozen years before its cause was discovered in 1953.

The spread of the disorder had caused international concern and it brought about a world concentration of medical research. The fact that the disease occurred almost exclusively in premature babies narrowed the search, and there finally emerged convincing evidence that administration of oxygen in high concentration and for prolonged duration in incubators was the cause. Better control of these techniques halted the disease. It was a fine illustration of what can be done when an alarm is sufficiently loud.

Nevertheless, the dark harvest of blind babies reached its peak from 1949 to 1953. Consequently, many hundreds of such children are now at various stages of preparing for their futures. Many States, feeling the lack of qualified teachers to meet the upsurge of blind students,

took extraordinary steps to increase their number; and a great many State rehabilitation agencies are extending services to school systems that will provide guidance and counsel for these blind students, against the time that they might need vocational rehabilitation services.

Those children who were born in 1949 are now in high school or preparing to enter vocational rehabilitation. Those born before that year may be in college or on a job. Those who were born after that year are, in most cases, under the eye of a school and rehabilitation agency, to anticipate their needs and help them to reach their goals. It is a splendid example of the kind of planning that must and is being done to keep the rehabilitation program ready to cope with the future.

There are many other areas of disability that have been entered by the rehabilitation program to provide new services:

An estimated eight million persons—one of our largest disability groups—are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech difficulties. The V.R.A. is supporting a fine effort of the American Hearing Society to reach many more of them by establishment of remote hearing centers for examination and treatment, or referral of difficult cases to larger facilities.

In a growing number of hospitals mentally ill persons are getting pre-discharge guidance and training by trained counselors, and several States have 'halfway houses', where discharged patients are helped to adjust to community living.

In thirteen States there are delineated programs—and more are coming—to select persons receiving public assistance for rehabilitation into employment and off of relief rolls.

The great number of workers who have been disabled and seek benefits under our social security laws are now automatically referred to State rehabilitation agencies for determination of their potential for rehabilitation. In 1963, more than 456,000 applicants were examined and 27,000 entered the rehabilitation program.

There is a developing effort to devise programs with organized labor for services to union members and their families, and with claimants of State Workmen's Compensation benefits.

The increasing number of older persons in the population—about 17 million now who are above 64 years, with an expected increase to 24·5 million in 1980—is creating concern. Services are being designed to meet the problems of chronic illness and disabilities prevalent in older persons—to find jobs for some, or to find ways to move more of them out of hospitals and nursing homes and into family or self-care.

Within the past year plans have developed rapidly for reaching into such areas as drug and alcoholic addiction.

Rehabilitation agencies and the military are formulating plans for services for young men rejected by the military draft process for physical or mental disabilities.

Federal and State prison systems are working with the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration and State rehabilitation agencies to devise services for those who have run afoul of our laws, to give them opportunity for employment and the rebuilding of their lives.

Above all, there is increased emphasis on the creation of rehabilitation centers and facilities where the wealth of knowledge coming out of research can be applied effectively. Since 1954, when amended Federal hospital construction legislation provided for aid to rehabilitation construction, 278 projects—many of them community-sponsored—have been approved throughout the country. The Federal government, paid approximately one-third of the cost.

So broad have the interests of our people and our government become in the welfare of the disabled that in recent years we have joined in a co-operative program with other countries for research into rehabilitation problems germane to their own needs and whose results will also offer solutions to world rehabilitation problems. In Israel, India, Pakistan, Poland, Brazil, Syria, UAR-Egypt, Yugoslavia, and Burma there is a total of fifty-five projects, some of them looking in to aspects of rehabilitation that have not been touched upon in the United States.

The United States helps to support this research with the use of foreign currencies accumulated in these countries from the sale of U.S. surplus foods. Another important aspect of this activity is the exchange of physicians and other experts between the United States and the participating countries, to study at first hand the methods and results of international research.

This summary of our faith in human progress, in terms of the practicalities of helping disabled people reach the summit of their abilities and their hopes, reveals the extent of the changing role of government in turning a philosophy into a realistic endeavour. There is no compulsion anywhere in the vocational rehabilitation program. But it does have a great part in sustaining Mr. Channing's thesis that the office of government is to provide opportunity for people to achieve happiness in their own way.

The whole program of vocational rehabilitation is built around one essential ingredient—the personal motivation of disabled people to overcome their handicaps. There is no better expression of the perspective on the public program than these words by Bell Greve, one of our revered leaders in rehabilitation, some time before her death:

> 'Rehabilitation, to be successful, must have three dynamic parts: first, the individual himself and his own desire to overcome, to develop, to participate; second, the ready availability of all the special services which have been found necessary for rehabilitation; third, that attitude of the general public which sees the individual before the disability—sees his capacities as clearly as his limitations —and is willing to offer employment as well as normal community social life.'

To these fine words could be added one short phrase, six words that should be before all of us as we go about our daily tasks for the welfare of the disabled. They shine brightly on the seal of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, proclaiming a simple truth that all of us can accept—Hope is the Anchor of Life.

THIRD SESSION **Saturday morning, August 1st, 1964**

ORGANIZATIONAL AND BUSINESS SESSION

Chairman: **Colonel E. A. Baker,** *President, World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.*

The President's Report on Activities of the Council since the 1959 World Assembly

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to extend my greetings and express my appreciation of the efforts you have made to attend and take part in these deliberations.

First I should report to you, under the heading of necrology, certain of our valued members who are deceased. First, Dr. van Schalkwijk, of South Africa; following his death his seat on the Executive Committee was taken by Dr. Cookey-Gam, of Nigeria. Another good friend, Dr. Gérard Borré, of Belgium; as he was an honorary member who made a tremendous contribution to the development of our Council through his faithful representations in early years he will be greatly missed by the World Council and the representatives from Belgium. Mr. Louis Renaux, of France, and Mr. Florentin, of Venezuela, are both deceased and greatly missed. I would ask you to stand for a minute of silence in tribute to these valued members.

Since our General Assembly in Rome, in 1959, certain events have occurred which have been of great interest to us and I think should be referred to here.

First was an Inter-American Conference on Work for the Blind held in Guatemala in March, 1961. Mrs. de Stahl as a leader in work for the blind and the deaf was our hostess. Mrs. de Stahl is now a member of the government of her country. We are most grateful to her for her hospitality and congratulate her on her appointment as Minister of Social Welfare. The next outstanding event was the meeting in Hanover in 1962. There the I.C.E.B.Y. met in large numbers and your Executive met coincidentally. I think we had a very excellent conference. Certainly we appreciated very much the opportunity of meeting at the same time as the Educators and keeping in touch with developments in their field. There was also the second Asian Conference which was held in Kuala Lumpur in May, 1963. It was a very fruitful conference and we hope will lead to substantial benefit to the blind of that area. Another item concerns the Budget and Planning Committee. At a meeting of your Executive Committee two days ago held in this City

there was a suggestion that a permanent Finance Committee be set up in place of the Budget and Planning Committee, to work with the Treasurer on finances, ways and means, etc. I will now mention the suggested names to serve on this Committee:

Mr. Henri Amblard (France), as Chairman,
Dr. M. Robert Barnett (United States),
Mr. J. C. Colligan (United Kingdom),
Mr. G. L. Nardekar (India),
Mr. Ignacio Satrustegui (Spain),
Mr. Hans C. Seierup (Denmark).

These are all very capable people and, I feel, will be able to give substantial support to our Treasurer in all his operations.

This is a proposal of the Executive Committee, but I think that for the sake of the record and for the encouragement of the group concerned, I would like to have a motion from the floor confirming the appointment of this standing Finance Committee which will continue in office until the next Assembly.

(The establishment of the Standing Finance Committee was moved by Dr. Strehl (Germany), seconded by Begum M. H. Tyabji (Pakistan) and Prof. Bentivoglio (Italy) and carried unanimously.)

The Treasurer will now give you his report, which will be followed by the Secretary-General's report and the names suggested by the Executive Committee as members of the Proxies and Credentials Committee, the Resolutions Committee and the Nominations Committee for your consideration and action.

The Treasurer's Report

In accordance with Article 8 of our Convention, I am herewith submitting our accounts for 1963.

The W.C.W.B. resources were almost exclusively composed by member's fees. Our money is divided into two accounts: one in New York, the other in Paris.

New York Account

Cash in hand on December 31st, 1963	$12,275.46	
Investments	$12,000.00	
		$24,275.46

Membership received in New York: $8,531.20

If we add the interest and sundry minor payments we reach a total of	$9,171.40
Cash in hand on December 31st, 1962	$9,091.70
making a total of:	$18,263.10

To be deducted from this sum	$5,987.64	
being an additional salary and expenses allowed for the following committees: Far East Committee, Education Committee, Professional and Urban Employment Committee, Deaf-Blind Committee, Technical Appliances Committee, leaving in hand..	$12,275.46	
to which we may add our reserve of .. invested in bonds	$12,000.00	$24,275.46

Paris Account:

Corresponding to membership fees, we find a sum of	Frs. 22,991.24	
To which we may add some small assets	Frs. 1,376.81	
making a total of:	Frs. 24,368.05	
By adding our Treasury Bonds ..	Frs. 20,000.00	
we reach a total of	Frs. 44,368.05	
The assets on January 1st, 1963 ..	Frs. 19,831.44	
to our credit		Frs. 64,199.49
Expenses were almost entirely composed of the Paris Office personnel's salary:	Frs. 24,207.85	
and the usual office expenses ..	Frs. 6,901.26	
The meeting of the Technical Appliances sub-committee in Paris cost..	Frs. 5,000.00	
with the Secretary's travelling expenses	Frs. 550.00	
Taxes	Frs. 12.00	
Bring our expenses to:	Frs. 36,671.11	
We renewed the Treasury Bonds for..	Frs. 18,525.00	
which figure with the assets for 20,000 frs.		
This makes our total expenditure ..		Frs. 55,196.11
At the end of 1963, our account shows:		Frs. 9,003.38

Thus:

In Paris: Frs. 9,003.38 ($1,837.45) in cash
Frs. 20,000.00 ($4,081.83) in bonds

In New York: $12,275.46 (Frs. 60,149.75) in cash
$12,000.00 (Frs. 58,800.00) invested

in all: Cash Frs. 69,153.13, or $14,112.91
Bonds Frs. 78,800.00, or $16,081.83

May I insist that fees must be paid punctually so that the W.C.W.B. may rely on the funds it requires for its development. Most member countries have sent their fees in due time, but seven have not yet paid their share and I must draw your attention to the fact that Art. 8, Section 2 of our Convention provides for sanctions including expulsion of those who fail to pay.

I call on all that their fees are sent in as early as possibly, thus to enable the World Council to fulfil the task it has undertaken.

(Mr. Amblard reminded members that the accounts had been audited by Messrs. Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co., and that the auditor's report had been circulated, as had his own report.

He then moved the adoption of his report, which was seconded by Dr. Cookey-Gam (Nigeria) and Mrs. de Stahl (Guatemala) and adopted unanimously).

The Secretary-General's Report

Mr. Jarvis stated that a substantial number of proxies had been received and needed to be verified. He recommended the setting up of a Committee to examine the proxies and to report back to the Assembly as soon as possible. He suggested that delegates should examine their membership lists and report any discrepancies which might have arisen in the matter of proxies. The names of the three following persons were proposed as members of this Committee:

Mrs. Lee (Malaysia), Chairman.
Mr. Amaral (Portugal).
Mrs. Isnard (Brazil).

The establishment of this Committee was moved by Mrs. Nowill (Brazil), seconded by Mr. Dassanaike (Ceylon) and approved.

The Secretary-General went on to submit names of delegates which had been proposed for the Resolutions Committee and Nominations Committee. He reminded delegates that it was the responsibility of the Assembly to elect these Committees and that any alternative nominations could be suggested and voted upon.

Before proceeding with the election of the Committees, Mr. Getliff (United Kingdom) proposed that no delegate should be elected to serve on two committees; seconded by Dr. Barnett (U.S.A.), this was adopted.

Election of Assembly Committees

The Assembly then proceeded to elect the Committees. After some discussion, the following members were elected to serve on the Resolutions and Nominations Committees.

Resolutions Committee

Dr. Rajendra Vyas (India), Chairman.
Mr. Cadavid-Alvarez (Colombia).
Mrs. Chayot (Israel).
Dr. Cohen (South Africa).
Dr. Cookey-Gam (Nigeria).
Miss Hooper (U.S.A.).
Mr. El Ghanim (Saudi Arabia).
Mr. Alagiyawanna (Ceylon).
Dr. J. Tenbroek (U.S.A.).
Mr. Lecogne (France).

Nominations Committee

Capt. H. J. M. Desai (India), Chairman.
Mr. C. Hedkvist (Sweden).
Prof. Dr. Carl Strehl (Germany).
Mr. G. Yazgan (Turkey).
Gen. Ammannato (Italy).
Begum M. H. Tyabji (Pakistan).
Mr. Lloyds (United Kindgom).
Mr. C. White (New Zealand).
Mrs. D. de Gouvea Nowill (Brazil).
Mr. A. Kebede (Ethiopia).

Proxies Committee

Mrs. H. Lee (Malaysia), Chairman.
Mrs. L. Isnard (Brazil).
Mr. Amaral (Portugal).

Report of Proxies Committee

The following proxies submitted to the Proxies Committee: Mrs. Lee (Malaysia), Chairman; Mrs. Isnard (Brazil) and Mr. Amaral (Portugal) were examined and found to be in order:

Austria: Prof. Dr. L. Mayer to Prof. Dr. C. Strehl (Germany)
Mr. A. Wurzer to Prof. Dr. C. Strehl (Germany)

Belgium: Mr. L. de Wulf to Mr. A. Dyckmans (Belguim)

Denmark: Mr. E. Wulff to Mr. Hans Seierup (Denmark)

Germany: Dr. A. Gottwald to Dr. H. Geissler (Germany)

Guatemala: Dr. Salvador Hernandez to Mrs. de Stahl (Guatemala)

India: Mrs. Q. H. C. Captain to Capt. Desai (India)

Italy: Dr. G. Riva to Prof. P. Bentivoglio (Italy)

Japan: Mr. H. Jitsumoto, Mr. Y. Kataoka, Mr. T. Torii, Mr. Y. Tsujimura, Mr. M. Tsurumi to Mr. H. Iwahashi (Japan)

Jordan: Mr. S. T. Dajani to Miss S. Ketchejian (Jordan)

Malaysia: Mr. L. K. Cheah to Mrs. Lee (Malaysia)

Pakistan: Begum N. Jivanji to Begum M. Tyabji (Pakistan)

Yugoslavia: Mr. Milos Licina to Mr. Steven Uzelac (Yugoslavia)

President's Closing Remarks

It has been a pleasure to serve this Organization during the past thirteen years. You have honoured me and I have appreciated your confidence and support. At this Assembly it will be necessary to consider a replacement for my office and I am sure that the person chosen will have your co-operation, good will and assistance, as I have had.

I shall now call upon the Chairmen of our Consultative and Standing Committees to present their reports to this Assembly.

REPORTS OF CONSULTATIVE AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Consultative Committee on Braille (W.B.C.)

By **Sir Clutha Mackenzie,** *Chairman.*

(In Sir Clutha's absence, his report was presented by **Miss Annette Watney,** Braille Secretary of the W.B.C.).

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the honour to submit the following report.

The membership of the Council remains the same as at Hanover with the exception of Mr. Trasléglise of Paris, who has been appointed as the representative of music to replace Dr. Louis Rodenberg, of Illinois, U.S.A., who retired in 1963, for three years. Otherwise the periods of service of the remaining seven members of the Council end this month. They are Senor Enrique Pajon, Spain; Mr. Ma Kho, Malaysia; Mr. S. T. Dajani, Hashemite Jordan; Dr. Rajendra Vyas,

India; Mr. B. Morin, France; Dr. Walter Cohen, South Africa; Dr. Strehl, Germany. These gentlemen have given me their generous advice and support for which I extend to them my profound thanks.

First of all I am tendering my own resignation from the position of Chairman, which it has been my privilege to hold since UNESCO created the Council in 1952. It has been a great honour to serve in this valuable field and I tender my grateful thanks to the blind braillists of many countries who have given the Council their loyal co-operation over the years.

REVIEW OF COUNCIL'S WORK. World Braille text systems during the past fifteen years, including the years when I held the position of Braille Consultant at UNESCO in Paris and since 1954 under the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, the following languages have been furnished with new and uniform braille systems:

European Languages. In consultation with the braille authorities in Yugoslavia we worked out braille systems for Serbo-Croat, Slovene, Macedonian and Albanian. For many years in consultation with the authorities in Spain, Portugal and Latin America, the Council worked steadily towards bringing about uniformity as between Spain and Portugal in Europe and the countries of Latin America. This at last appears to have reached a final satisfactory result.

Arabic. A single Arabic braille was provided for the whole Arabic area throughout Asia and Africa to replace about a dozen conflicting systems.

Asia. For the braille systems of Turkey, Armenia, Persia, Pakistan (Urdu), the eight main languages of India (Devanagari, Bengali, Uriah, Tamil, Malayalam, Gujarati, Kanarese Sikh), Ceylon (Sinhalese), Malay, Indonesia (Bahasa), Taiwan (Taiwanese), and the Philippines (Tagalog), satisfactory uniform braille systems have been brought into existence. On a mission to China in 1947 I made recommendations regarding a single Chinese braille to replace its seven or eight earlier existing systems. One of these, Cantonese, had retained the original braille signs for the Roman alphabet plus many additional signs and tone marks and we suggested that in principle this system should be followed throughout the country. Since then however, no communications have come from the Government of China but it has been noted that a limited number of newspapers is now being published in Roman script.

Africa. In addition to the Arabic of North Africa, revised braille systems have been provided for Hausa, Dogon, Amharic (Ethiopia), Twi, Ibo and Nyanja of West Africa, and Shona of Southern Rhodesia. Dr. Walter Cohen, who is a member of the World Braille Council has provided modern braille systems for three South African native languages, namely Zulu-Xhosa, Northern Sotho, and Southern Sotho.

Pacific. At the request of Samoa, the World Braille Council approved a braille system for this language and this in turn has been passed on to American Samoa.

World Braille Music. The preface to the 'Revised International

Manual of Braille Music Notation, 1956', states—'During 1953 negotiations began between UNESCO, the World Braille Council, and the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind on the subject of the gradual transfer of parent responsibility for the World Braille Council from UNESCO to the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. In the meantime, preparations began for the holding of an international conference in Paris to consider the improvement and extension of uniformity in the field of braille music notation. It was agreed that this Conference should be held under the sponsorship of all three organizations (UNESCO, W.C.W.B., and W.B.C.). Mr. Rodenberg kindly accepted the heavy task of initiation and collating the preparatory documents for the conference. For the thoroughness with which he carried this out we cannot express our gratitude too warmly. The World Braille Council has no funds of its own and the costs of the conference were ultimately borne by UNESCO, the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and the Royal National Institute for the Blind, London. For their generous help we express our deep thanks.

It was the desire of the World Braille Council that the new conference, held a quarter of a century after the International Congress of Braille Music Notation, Paris, 1929, under the chairmanship of M. Georges L. Raverat, should build on the excellent work of its predecessors. The field covered by the 1929 Conference had been limited. The late Mr. Edward Watson, in his 'Preface to 1929 Key', said: 'It was felt that the time had perhaps not yet come when absolute uniformity of method might profitably be discussed; so it was arranged to limit discussion to a consideration of notation symbols only, and to defer questions as to the comparative merits of methods (known as Old Style; New Style; Bar by Bar; Bar over Bar, etc.) to another occasion.' In the interval, too, blind welfare services in Africa and Asia had been spreading, and various Asian countries had been asking for adaptions of Occidental music to fit their special needs. The presentation of music, too, had been growing more complex and divergencies had been increasing in the fields of new instruments and new methods. The writing of the Manual was delegated to Mr. H. V. Spanner, a blind musician of England, who referred his proposals to all the countries concerned for acceptance or comment, and finally submitted his whole work to a special committee consisting of Dr. Rodenberg, Prof. Dr. Reuss and Mr. Sinclair Logan, for final voting. On their approving the draft, the Manual was printed. Subsequently, however, Dr. Reuss raised a number of queries and placed proposals for the inclusion of additional notation. His early proposals we agreed to accept but on his countering with further requirements we replied that these must necessarily be held over for a subsequent world meeting. He then withdrew his permission for the the inclusion of the earlier material. In February of this year a further conference was held in Warsaw in an endeavour to get his proposals accepted in a new work and a further conference is being held in Leipzig to include Poland, Rumania, Hungary.

Czecho-Slovakia, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, the Republics of Bulgaria and the German Democratic Republic in his area. The Manual, however, has been accepted in the English and Spanish areas of the world and may also be in use elsewhere.

World Braille Mathematics. Due to the fact that the British Commonwealth, the U.S.A., France, Germany and Japan each had their individual and satisfactory methods of expressing all forms of mathematics from which they were unwilling to depart, there was in the earlier years little desire for a world system. More recently, however, Miss Reiko Ito and Mr. Ikuzo Ozeki worked out a mathematics system which they consider well adapted to world needs. This was forwarded to Prof. Morin of Paris, who is the mathematics member of the W.B.C., for his opinion, but at the time of writing this report this has not been received. It will no doubt come before the present World Assembly for consideration.

Remaining fields of work. The scope of activities which fall to my successor will include, if possible, the solution of the problem of Chinese braille and possibly those of Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal and Afghanistan. At the time W.B.C. came into existence, Japan had already established its own braille system in which much printing had been done. This system, although not keyed to western braille, appeared extremely concise and effective so that no action was felt to be justified in upsetting it. Otherwise further work may be limited only to considering modifications to existing braille systems and possibly to the evolution of the occasional new system for a language of limited application such as may be required for Africa or other group of indigenous people.

In closing, the World Braille Council and I myself would wish to express to UNESCO, to W.C.W.B. and all those who have contributed to our work, our warm expressions of respect and thanks.

I must particularly thank Miss Annette Watney who as representative of W.C.W.B. in Paris, has magnificently carried out the duties of Secretary to W.B.C. since 1954.

(After some discussion adoption of this report was moved by Dr. Vyas [India], and Colonel Baker asked that it should be coupled with a vote of thanks to Sir Clutha for the very valuable work he had done over the years in the field of the unification of braille. Seconded by Mr. Iwahashi [Japan], the report was unanimously adopted).

Memorandum on Braille Transcription of Mathematical Texts

By **Bernard Morin,** *W.B.C. Member for Braille Mathematics*

Two reasons have led to the evolution of braille mathematical notations during the past few years. The first is that an increasing number of blind people are entering the field of mathematics and are seeking a career in scientific research or in teaching. The other is that the specialized books of which they require transcriptions use new symbols and continuously changing methods of notation.

In order to deal with this situation, it has been found everywhere necessary to modernize the transcribing system in use up to the present time in each country. Among others, let us mention the British (London, 1954) and German (Hanover, 1960) revisions. We must also draw attention to Kovalencko's system in the Soviet Union. Finally, a new edition of the Nemeth Code is about to be introduced in the U.S.A., while in France a project aiming at the reform of the Antoine-Bougignon method is under consideration.

The studies already published are of a very high standard and attempt to cover the notations for a large number of texts on very varied subjects. Unfortunately they are all, to a greater or lesser degree, subject to a restriction which reduces their value. When it is desired to bring up to date a Braille mathematical code, the first consideration is not to question the established rules, and especially those which concern the elementary manuals of mathematics in order not to render outmoded the great mass of already existent works on the subject and, above all, the school textbooks. Too often, therefore, the new mathematical notations are only remodelled versions (sometimes most ingenious) of systems which should be re-thought on new basic premises. Thus, it is not unusual for a writer to suggest two or even three ways of writing fractions, for instance, or even basic figures.

Of course, at the present time, only advanced mathematics are in urgent need of revision and it may seem a great expense, in order to facilitate the work of a small minority of users, to render obsolete all the existing mathematical transcriptions. To this we must reply: first, that the teaching of elementary mathematics also is undergoing a period of important transformations and that even at this level a too narrow adherence to traditional forms may lead within a few years to confusion in transcriptions. Secondly, that scientific works in these days become obsolete in less than ten years. Finally, that if a new code is to achieve any degree of permanence, it must be sufficiently rational to permit of future modifications without endangering its essential basis.

Mr. Izuko Ozeki and Miss Reito Ito understood this when they prefaced their braille code of mathematics (Tokyo, 1961) with a systematic survey—unfortunately incomplete—of all the codes which they knew, of the conditions which should govern a braille mathematical code and of the frequency with which the symbols recurred in the inkprint text. It is possible to challenge the value of the conclusions which they have reached, but one can only compliment them on the spirit in which they have carried out their task. Their text may be held up as an example to those persons everywhere who are entrusted with the task of bringing up to date one or other systems of braille mathematical notation.

Perhaps it is easier in Japan than elsewhere to sweep away tradition. However, all those who are at present engaged on the problem of braille mathematical notation may be well-advised to consider the following general principles:

1. Retain only the essential characteristics of the system to be modernized and set them up as general principles applicable to all individual cases. For example, the main difficulty in transcrib-

ing braille is to show on one line the different levels of the inkprint formulas: these are found in fractions, in indices and powers and in tables. (Matrices, diagrams, whatever the method chosen to solve this difficulty, the same principle should be applied in each of these three cases.)

2. When in transcribing from inkprint into braille it becomes necessary to use special braille techniques, especially in the case of differing levels, it is best to use a method as nearly as possible based on the inkprint. For instance, to distinguish

$$\frac{A}{B+C} \quad \text{from} \quad \frac{A}{B}+C,$$

brackets should be used in the first case*—to show that B+C is the denominator (a similar method is used in inkprint, when an oblique stroke is used instead of a horizontal one: the formula then reads A/(B+C)).

*(According to No. 4 these brackets must be of a kind 'proper to braille' so that the reader may know that there are no brackets in the inkprint, and does not read it as $\frac{A}{(B+C)}$ This precaution, less important for fractions, becomes essential, for instance, in the case of powers, since it is important to distinguish between f^{n+1} and $f^{(n+1)}$).

3. Establish a list of double and multiple braille signs allowed by the system and classify them into groups before giving them a meaning. This will prevent the same braille sign from being used to represent several inkprint signs, while others continue to be little used.

4. Transcribe the inkprint text such as it appears in the print (in braille, distinguish between $\frac{Ax}{2}$ and $A\frac{x)}{2}$ and not according to the meaning of the formula: an inkprint sign must have only one braille transcription even if it is used in a different sense according to the subject treated. This presupposes a presentation of the braille code along the following lines:

   'General principles, letters, abbreviations, figures, mathematical symbols, fractions, indices and powers, matrices and diagrams, passages from formulas to ordinary text',

   and not, as is too often the case:

   'Geometry, algebra, trigonometry, set theory, etc.'

5. Do not adhere too rigidly to details, but lay down general indications enabling transcribers to adapt the rules of the code to the particular work being transcribed. For instance, to render the letters used in the formulas, inkprint works use at least twenty forms of type (roman, gothic, round, script; heavy or light print, ordinary and capital letters, etc.) But each work uses only up to six or seven of those different forms of type. Transcriptions should be established for the most frequently used of these; for the remainder, the transcriber should be allowed a certain freedom.

If such principles are applied, the reformer can improve considerably the braille mathematical notations in use in his country. He will also do a great service to the cause of the uniformity of braille mathematics. Indeed, if one day all countries sincerely wish for this uniformity (which will necessarily involve mutual sacrifices) it will at that time be much easier to compare the respective merits of coherent and logically established systems rather than to argue interminably over innumerable petty details which involve the national self-conceit of each country, without solving the basic issues.

Cambridge, 1964.

Consultative Committee on Education (I.C.E.B.Y.)

By **Dr. E. J. Waterhouse,** *Chairman*

The International Conference of Educators of Blind Youth (I.C.E.B.Y.) which is the Consultative Committee on Education of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind (W.C.W.B.) held its third quinquennial Conference at the Niedersachsiche Landesblindenanstalt in Hanover, West Germany, from August 6th to August 18th, 1962. The proceedings of this Conference have been published and copies are available from the Secretary-General of the W.C.W.B. at his office in London, and from the New York and Paris offices of the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, as well as from the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the I.C.E.B.Y., Perkins School for the Blind, Watertown, Massachusetts.

The Conference was attended by 400 Delegates and Observers from forty-four different countries. The Principal Officers of the Conference were Direktor R. Winter, Host; Mr. E. H. Getliff, Chairman; and Dr. E. J. Waterhouse, Secretary.

The theme of the Conference was: THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION TO MEET EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN EMERGENT COUNTRIES AND THE MEANS BY WHICH THESE NEEDS CAN BEST BE MET. This theme was chosen by members of the Executive Committee attending the General Assembly of the World Council in Rome, Italy, in 1959.

In the development of this theme, considerable time was devoted to hearing reports from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Arab States, and from international bodies such as the American Foundation for Overseas Blind and the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind which conduct programs for blind children in the emergent countries.

A series of strong Resolutions was adopted which, hopefully, will strengthen the hands of educators in the less-developed regions of the world. Attention was also given to some matters of concern to blind pupils everywhere, including the teaching of braille and arithmetic, teacher-training and technical devices.

The Conference appointed an Executive Committee to serve for the period 1962-1967. The chief officers were: Chairman, Dr. E. J.

Waterhouse, U.S.A.; Vice-Chairman, Mr. Tore Gissler, Sweden; and Secretary, Mr. K. N. K. Jussawala, India. The full list of Conference Members is printed below. Plans were made to hold the next Conference at Perkins School for the Blind, Watertown, Massachusetts, U.S.A. in August, 1967.

During this General Assembly of the W.C.W.B. in New York an attempt will be made to select the most suitable dates for the 1967 Conference, to decide on a general theme for the program, and to make a start on selecting some of the main topics together with suitable persons to lead the discussions.

In the period between conferences there are a limited number of opportunities for international action. The Chairman has been able to meet with members of the Executive Committee several times in Europe and in Asia and to discuss with them some of the more pressing problems requiring a solution before the I.C.E.B.Y. can hope to be truly effective.

The first of these problems is to find ways of serving in as direct a manner as possible the classroom teacher wherever he may be. As a start in this direction, which may indeed serve to do little more than to demonstrate that I.C.E.B.Y. is interested in each teacher, a mimeographed newsletter for teachers is being planned to be issued once or twice a year, containing for the most part reprints of superior articles which have appeared in recent issues of professional magazines published in Europe, Great Britain and America. Subscriptions to these magazines are beyond the reach of many classroom teachers.

To make sure that articles in the I.C.E.B.Y. Teachers Newsletter are of a suitable nature for each region of the world, a different editor will be selected for each issue. Mr. K. N. K. Jussawala of Bombay, India, and Secretary of the ICEBY, has kindly consented to edit the first issue.

A second problem facing most schools for blind children is provision of the essential tools of learning. A beginning was made in Paris, France, in April 1963, to come to grips with this problem. Taking advantage of a meeting of the Technical Committee of W.C.W.B. at the headquarters of the A.F.O.B., representatives of the major manufacturers of educational appliances for the blind met and considered what should be the first steps in making these appliances more readily available worldwide. The minutes of this meeting in Paris are incorporated in the report below.

The major unsolved problem as far as the growth of the I.C.E.B.Y. is concerned is the lack of continuous financial support. The assistance of all members of I.C.E.B.Y. and, indeed, of W.C.W.B. in solving this problem satisfactorily is solicited.

Educational Appliances for Blind Children in Emergent Countries

A meeting was held in the Paris Office of the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, 14 Rue Daru, Paris, on Monday, April 22nd, 1963, to consider ways in which educational equipment might be made available in larger numbers to blind children in emergent countries.

The following organizations which manufacture appliances for the blind were represented:

Blindenstudienanstalt, Marburg/Lahn, Germany.
Dr. Carl Strehl and Herr Fischer.

Société Fornels, Paris, France.
M. Jan Smith.

Royal National Institute for the Blind, London, England.
Mr. John C. Colligan and Mr. Cedric Garland.

Federazione Nazionale Delle Instituzioni Pro Ciechi, Rome, Italy.
Dott. Siro Sereni.

American Printing House for the Blind, Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.A.
Mr. Finis E. Davis.

Howe Press of Perkins School for the Blind, Watertown, Massachusetts.
Dr. Edward J. Waterhouse.

International Agencies for the Blind:

Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind.
Mr. Geoffrey Salisbury.

The American Foundation for Overseas Blind.
Dr. M. Robert Barnett and Mr. Eric T. Boulter.

The World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.
Mr. John Jarvis, Secretary-General, and Miss Annette Watney, Assistant Secretary-General.

Other Agencies:

National Indian Blind Society and South African Council for the Blind, Durban, South Africa.
Mr. K. M. Pillay.

Association Valentin Haüy, Paris, France.
M. Pierre Schneider-Maunoury, Vice-President; and M. Louis Lecogne, Secrétaire-Général Adjoint.

La Organizacion Nacional de Ciegos, Madrid, Spain.
Sr. Enrique Pajon Mecloy, Jefe de la Seccion de Cultura.

School for the Blind, Stockholm, Sweden.
Mr. Tore Gissler.

De Blindas Förening, Stockholm, Sweden.
Mr. Charles Hedkvist and Mr. Anders Anor.

Union Nationale des Aveugles de Tunisie.
M. Ahmed Belkhodja.

American Foundation for Overseas Blind, Paris Staff:
Mr. F. Abbott Ingalls, Director; Mr. Albert Asenjo, Mrs. Mary Kelleher, Secretary to Dr. Barnett.

Dr. Edward J. Waterhouse, in his capacity as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the International Conference of Educators of Blind Youth, was in the chair.

It was pointed out by the chairman that at the International Conference of Educators of Blind Youth, held in Hanover in 1962, the need for educational appliances in emergent countries was emphasized, and resolutions adopted looking toward an improved supply.

This meeting was called at this time and place to take advantage of the presence of members of the Technical Committee of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. A tentative agenda has been circulated among all members of the Executive Committee of I.C.E.B.Y. and other interested persons. Many of these had responded, outlining the needs of their particular areas.

From these replies it was apparent that there was a need for braille writing equipment, mathematical devices, duplicators, maps, printing presses, books, etc.

After some discussion, the members agreed that basic needs would be considered, and these basic needs were defined as:

1. Braille Slates and Styluses.
2. Braille Paper for Textbooks.
3. Inexpensive Duplicating Equipment.

It was recognized that these items did not cover the needs of blind children in the emergent countries, but that the greatest need at present was for something of a very simple nature. Mr. Geoffrey Salisbury, whose experience in Africa is extensive, emphasized the need for helping large numbers of children to become literate. He also emphasized the need for equipment being simple and as small as possible since storage facilities were unavailable. Mr. John Jarvis, speaking from his own experience, pointed out that the pocket slate, on which emphasis was being placed in these discussions, while admirable in elementary education, was a poor device once a pupil entered on secondary education.

The group recognized that it was desirable to outline immediate steps for meeting the greatest needs and for postponing consideration of more advanced equipment until the meeting of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, scheduled for New York City in the summer of 1964.

The manufacturers were not in favor of the adoption of a single pocket slate of a particular number of lines and of cells per line. It was

not felt that large cost reductions would be effected if every child were encouraged to use an identical slate. It was also pointed out that plenty of slates are now available, and the capacity of the manufacturers is probably adequate to meet all needs.

Mr. Finis Davis described some development work going on at the American Printing House for the Blind, in Louisville, Kentucky, tending toward the manufacture of plastic slates. It now seemed probable that these could be produced in large quantities at a cost of approximately fifty cents (American) apiece. While this would represent a very large saving in cost, it still might be beyond the capacity of some countries to provide the necessary American currency to purchase what was needed.

Dr. Waterhouse described some studies being made at the Howe Press leading toward a DO-IT-YOURSELF KIT which would be hand-operated and which would enable perons who might be blind to manufacture slates for their own communities at a low cost. The price of this equipment, with the necessary dies for making a four-line pocket-slate, would be in the neighbourhood of 350 United States dollars.

These two agencies were encouraged to continue with their development work. The Howe Press agreed to manufacture a pilot model and to make studies to determine the probable cost of manufacturing a slate in terms of man hours of labor.

It was felt that braille paper for use in the schools was not a serious problem since discarded magazines and other scrap paper were usually available and seemed to be meeting the need. However, where braille books are concerned, the problem was more serious and no ready solution was found.

A discussion took place on inexpensive duplicators for making a small number of copies of braille books. There are three main types in use; the Marburg Duplicator, the Crabbe Press—manufactured by the R.N.I.B.—and the Thermo-Form, which is a plastic-forming device manufactured commercially in the United States. All three of these duplicators are in current use in different parts of the world. They all have advantages and disadvantages. It was felt that probably the most desirable type for general use is the Crabbe machine, and RNIB was requested to continue some of its present work leading toward improved quality of braille. In particular, this involves a wringer press with steel rollers rather than rubber rollers.

It was not possible to decide just what kind of arithmetic equipment should be emphasized. A good deal of use is made of the Abacus and/or Soroban in many parts of the world, and considerable research into its use is going on in some European countries and in the United States. Nevertheless, it was recognized that in many of the emergent countries teachers are not familiar with this type of equipment; and with blind children being placed in the public schools, it was not considered realistic that the teachers accepting them into their classes could be trained in the use of special equipment. Consequently, it was recognized that two types of equipment, namely the Soroban or Abacus,

and also a slate of the cubarithm type should be made available. It was hoped that Société Fornels of Paris, which manufactures a cubarithm slate, could be encouraged to develop one with seven rows of six cells each which might have a hinged lid so that the small cubes would not be lost.

It was hoped that by the time interested persons could meet again in New York City in 1964, suitable pieces of equipment might be available, and information concerning the best techniques for the instruction of teachers and for the use of equipment by blind pupils would have been developed.

Some thought was given to the magnitude of the task under consideration. Although the final scope of the problem is beyond present calculation, it was agreed that the American Foundation for Overseas Blind and the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind could provide some reliable figures concerning immediate needs. It was recognized that as more and more blind children become literate, they would have need for more material of more sophisticated types, and that the problem of equipment would not diminish but would increase. The two agencies, however, agreed to attempt a realistic estimate of immediate needs and to report them to the chairman for distribution to all present by September, 1963.

Mr. Finis Davis, the Manager of the American Printing House for the Blind, and a recent Past President of Lions International, presented a plan for financing. Mr. Davis greeted the group and went on to explain his thinking that perhaps a Lions-*CARE* project could be helpful in satisfying the need in emergent countries. He reported that Lions International, a service organization, is a member of CARE and that, in fact, the two organizations work together very closely. As an example, he cited a recent one-hundred-thousand-dollar Lions-CARE project in a Latin American country which provided the necessary equipment for Peace Corps activity in that area. He went on to say that in talking with Lions International and CARE regarding the need of making basic educational equipment available in emergent countries, that both groups felt it would make a natural joint project. He stressed, however, that he was not in a position to make any commitments in the name of Lions International at this time. He explained that he would visualize it as the professional people in work for the blind in these countries making their needs known to the local CARE office who in its turn would present these needs to CARE headquarters. He stated he would like to think that the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind and the American Foundation for Overseas Blind would then judge whether these needs were sound.

It was agreed that this meeting should go on record as warmly welcoming the recommendation of a Lions-CARE project of support, and expressing the profound hope that at the local, regional, and international levels there would be the fullest possible utilization of control at all stages of the operation. Mr. Davis agreed to explore this matter further.

It was recognized, however, that the CARE organization does not

operate in all countries and that financing arrangements elsewhere would have to be handled in a different way.

The chairman raised the question as to the identity of the group meeting at that time. After some discussion, it was agreed that there should not be a special committee on educational equipment established. The officers of I.C.E.B.Y. were committed to carrying out the Hanover Resolutions, and this gave them *ad hoc* authority to co-operate with other groups, as in the Paris meetings, toward these ends.

Mr. J. C. Colligan, Secretary-General of the Royal National Institute for the Blind, expressed the opinion that there was presently a great deal of idle equipment lying in attics, particularly in the homes of blind people, and that it might be possible to collect such material and put it into use. He, therefore, urged that a request to all persons who might have this equipment be circulated in magazines, particularly braille magazines, with the idea that this equipment would be delivered to the appropriate national organization who would discard non-usable devices, perhaps repair those which needed it, and put them into immediate use in the emergent countries. The Committee went on record as supporting this idea.

The next topic to be discussed was EXHIBITS. A suggestion was made by the Italian representative that a permanent exhibit be established in Rome. In view of the fact, however, that the nucleus of an exhibit already exists in Paris, it was not felt desirable to set up a second such display. Mr. Eric Boulter explained that as a result of the International Congress on Technology and Blindness in New York, in 1962, there would be published a four-volume report, of which Volume IV will be an international catalogue of appliances being made in all parts of the world. The Technical Committee of W.C.W.B. had requested A.F.O.B. and W.C.W.B. to make the Paris exhibit a truly up-to-date one by relating it directly to the contents of Volume IV. It is hoped, therefore, that during the next year the Paris exhibit would contain, in one form or another, an example of all the items outlined in that volume, small, relatively inexpensive items by physical specimens and larger, more expensive items, by photographs and written descriptions.

The chairman agreed to prepare a report on the meeting and circulate it to all present, and to keep them in touch with developments during the months prior to the next meeting of the W.C.W.B., in New York, in 1964.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF EDUCATORS OF BLIND YOUTH

Officers and Executive Committee 1962—1967

Hon. President: Mr. E. H. Getliff (United Kingdom).
Hon. Vice-Presidents: Prof. Bentivoglio (Italy).
Prof. Pierre Henri (France).
Mr. Bj. Mokleby (Norway).
Prof. Dr. C. Strehl (Germany).
Dr. C. M. Waller-Zeper (Netherlands).
Director R. Winter (Germany).
Chairman: Dr. E. Waterhouse (U.S.A.).
Vice-Chairman: Mr. Tore Gissler (Sweden).
Secretary: Mr. K. N. K. Jussawala (India).
Assistant Secretaries: Mrs. S. Ahuja (India).
Mr. S. Armstrong (Canada).
Mr. J. Jarvis (United Kingdom).
Dr. H. Garbe (Germany).

Members of the Executive Committee

Europe: Balkan: Dr. Tonkovic (Yugoslavia).
Benelux: Bro. Leonce (Belgium).
Eastern: Mr. S. Madej (Poland).
France: Mr. M. Bonhomeau.
Germany: Dr. E. Dorner.
Iberian: Don Angel Foz Tena (Spain).
Italy: Dr. E. Romagnoli.
Scandinavia: Mr. E. Hakkinen (Finaland).
Mr. D. Ahrens (Denmark).
Smaller Countries: Mr. Wuterich (Switzerland).
Great Britain: Mr. J. Lorimer.

Arabic Area: Mr. S. T. Dajani (Jordan).
Mr. Rajhi (Tunisia).

South-East Asia: Mr. L. K. Cheah (Malaya).
Mr. E. Jonathan (India).
Mr. Krishnaswamy (India).
Mr. K. C. Dassanaike (Ceylon).
Mr. Yoshiki Kataoka (Japan).
(Pakistan).

Africa: Dr. J. W. Cookey-Gam (Nigeria).
Mr. Kebede (Ethiopia).
Mr. Vaughan (South Africa).

Oceania: Mr. T. V. Thomas (New Zealand).

Canada: Fr. Wilfred Laurier.

United States: Mr. Finis E. Davis.
Dr. Robert H. Thompson.

Latin America: Mrs. D. de Gouvea Nowill (Brazil).
Mr. H. Cadavid (Colombia).
Miss Isabel Gavea (Guatemala).

A.F.O.B. Mr. Eric T. Boulter.

R.C.S.B. Mr. G. Salisbury.

R.N.I.B. Mr. Colborne-Brown.

(Adoption of the Report was moved by the Chairman of the Committee, Dr. E. Waterhouse, seconded by Mr. Getliff (U.K.), and carried unanimously.)

Committee on Professional and Urban Employment

By **J. C. Colligan,** *Chairman.*

This Report is substantially the same as that which I had the opportunity of submitting to the Executive Committee Meeting in Hanover in August, 1962, except that it brings up-to-date the position regarding the distribution of the 72,000 leaflets which were produced by the expenditure of our quinquennial allocation.

It will be remembered that it was left to me as Chairman to augment the basic membership of the Committee, which consisted of: Mr. J. Clunk (U.S.A.), Mr. Iwahashi (Japan), Senora Nowill (Brazil), and Mr. Seierup (Denmark), by finding additional representatives in place of Messrs. Alpaiwala (India), Borré (Belgium), Christiansen (New Zealand) and Renaux (France).

Invitations were issued to join the Committee to: Mr. Hulen Walker (U.S.A.), Mr. Royappa (India), Lt. Nardekar (India), Madame Moller (France) and Senor Luis Blanco (Spain), together with a representative from Germany. In fact all the foregoing accepted membership of the Committee, but as Senor Blanco has retired from active participation in the work of the Spanish National Organisation we have been fortunate enough to secure in his place General Leopoldo Sotillos, and after taking advice from Dr. Strehl it was agreed that he should represent the interests of Germany.

Once the Committee had been established we had to turn our attention to the best possible way in which we could effectively use the annual budget of 300 dollars a year. In May, 1960, I proposed to the members of the Committee that as it would be quite impracticable to consider the holding of meetings within such a limited financial framework we might collaborate in spending the available budget in the production of a really first class piece of propaganda material, which

would be of help to those workers in the field in many countries of the world who are trying, frequently under great difficulties, and with inadequate resources, to interest employers in the potentialities of blind workers in the professional and urban fields of employment. I suggested that such a brochure, in order to have international application, would need to rely principally on pictorial illustrations of the blind worker really on the job and I asked members for their view on the effectiveness of such a piece of propaganda and for their collaboration, if they thought well of it, in supplying information and photographs for incorporation in such a leaflet.

Those members of the Committee who were interested enough to reply to my communication indicated their support for and approval of the scheme—and here I might comment that there seems to be on the part of some members of World Council Sub-Committees a constitutional inability to reply to communications, which results in quite serious delay to the work we have in hand.

Once it had been agreed in principle that as a first step in our work it was necessary to produce such a piece of propaganda material, I asked for photographs to be sent to me and in this connection I should like to pay tribute to the co-operation and help which I received from Dr. Strehl, Lt. Nardekar, Mr. Iwahashi and General Sotillos. From the photographs and information (in English) which they spent, together with some which we had available at the Royal National Institute for the Blind, I was able to invite tenders for the production of an eight page leaflet, in two colours, containing a considerable number of photographic illustrations, with the final page left blank so that it would be available for overprinting in the language of the country where it was likely to be used.

The expenditure of the whole of the 1,500 dollars of our quinquennial allocation has resulted in the production of some 72,000 leaflets, a copy of which is attached to this Report. I circularized the members of the Committee intimating that I would propose to the Executive Committee of the World Council that a supply of these leaflets should be offered to all those member countries of the World Council who feel a real need for them. The final allocation depends upon the total response and though it would have been possible to issue all this supply of leaflets to member countries who need them free of charge, I believed that there were a number of countries who could afford to pay the cost of printing, which works out at £7 4*s.* 6*d.* per thousand. Some countries were able to reimburse us with the cost of these leaflets which gives us a small sum in hand available to produce further supplies if they are needed. Supplies have been taken up by the following countries: Germany, Spain, India, Ireland, Portugal, Canada, Italy, Belgium, France, Lebanon, Philippines, Chile, U.S.A., Japan, Nigeria, Sweden, Yugoslavia, South Africa, Ceylon, Argentina, and by such organisations as the International Labour Office and the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind. Nevertheless, more than 60,000 of these leaflets remain in stock and are available to any member country which feels that they could put them to a useful purpose.

The foregoing Report might appear to indicate only a limited achievement on the part of a Committee which has been charged with dealing with such an important phase of the development of work for the blind internationally, but it will, I think, be obvious that it is virtually impossible to hold meetings of a Committee by correspondence, especially when not all the members reply to communications, and therefore the achievement has to be measured by the capacity of an individual—in this case the Chairman—to undertake a task on behalf of his colleagues and to expend to the most effective purpose the funds which the General Assembly placed at our disposal. It seems, therefore, as if the only conditions under which a Committee could meet would be when all the members have got to come together, for example, at a General Assembly, and I have arranged that a meeting of this Committee should be convened in New York at the time of the General Assembly. This, however, is open to the objection that members of a Committee, some of whom might in all probability be retiring, would be committing their successors to a course of action for the next five years and I invited the attention of the Executive Committee to the possibility of either electing Committees of the World Council at a much earlier stage in the General Assembly's proceedings than has hitherto been the case or of providing facilities for meetings of Standing Committees at the conclusion of the General Assembly, which in fact has now been arranged.

(The adoption of this report was then moved by Mr. Colligan, seconded by Dr. Strehl (Germany) and Prof. Bentivoglio (Italy), and agreed unanimously).

Committee on Rural Activities

By **Capt. H. J. M. Desai,** *Chairman.*

At the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Second Quinquennial Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind held in Rome in 1959, Mr. Emmanuel Kefakis of Greece was appointed as the Chairman of the Rural Activities Committee.

Since Greece ceased to be a Member of the World Council, a new Chairman was elected by postal ballot. Capt. H. J. M. Desai, of India, took over as Chairman with effect from the 16th July, 1963.

The Rural Activities Committee was reconstituted and the following are now the Members.

1. Capt. H. J. M. Desai (India), Chairman
2. Sir Clutha M. Mackenzie (New Zealand).
3. Mr. John F. Wilson (U.K.).
4. Monsieur l'Abbé Richard (France).
5. Mr. Kingsley C. Dassanaike (Ceylon).

Since barely a year had remained for the General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind after the reconstituted Committee took over, not much progress was possible.

However, the Rural Activities Committee decided, by correspondence, to take action on the following lines:

(a) To compile an up-to-date Directory of all Institutions working to promote the Training and Resettlement of the Rural Blind in rural areas the world over.

(b) To prepare a Pictorial Folder depicting the rural blind at work in agriculture and allied pursuits.

(c) To compile a comprehensive list of all subjects in which training is imparted at the existing rural centres for agriculture and allied pursuits.

(d) Collect information regarding the blind studying at normal agricultural schools or centres for the sighted so as to explore the possibility of integrated education of the rural blind in agriculture and allied pursuits.

Due to paucity of data, an up-to-date directory could not be compiled. However, a directory of all available names is compiled and appended to this report. It is hoped to bring this up to date by circulating the same to all the Members of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.

The Committee noted with satisfaction the compilation for the United Nations of a Manual on 'Rural Training of the Blind in the less Economically Developed Areas' by Sir Clutha M. Mackenzie. This Manual has not yet been printed but the draft is already in the hands of the United Nations.

Members are aware that for the first time, the First General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind held at Paris in August, 1954, resolved that the blind coming from rural areas should be trained and resettled in their familiar surroundings. In a period of less than ten years it is gratifying to note that as many as 19 countries have started Rural Training Centres for the benefit of the rural blind. Many other countries are contemplating to start similar centres. The experiment is succeeding particularly in the developing countries.

The Rural Activities Committee also hopes to take up the work of collecting data regarding the rural blind successfully passing out from the training centres with a view to finding out whether their ultimate resettlement has been successful and whether they are economically independent on their own small holdings.

Country	*Name of Centre*	*Director*	*Managing Organization*
Aden	Beihan Rural Training Centre for the Blind, P.O. Box 4063, Aden.	George Clark	R.C.S.B. in co-operation with the Beihan State Authority and the Aden Society for the Blind.
Gambia	Yoroberikunda Rural Training Centre for the Blind (in course of construction), c/o Ministry of Social Welfare, Bathurst.		The Ministry of Social Welfare in association with R.C.S.B.
Ghana	Rural Training Centres for the Blind and Physically Handicapped at: Ho, Kwaso and Tamale, c/o Ministry of Social Welfare, Accra.		The Ministry of Social Welfare in co-operation with local Community Development groups.
Jamaica	Rural Centre for the Blind (in course of establishment).	Major S. B. Wicks	Jamaica Salvation Army.
Malaysia	Taman Harapan, Temerloh, Agricultural Training Centre, Pahang, Malaysia.	Haji Mohamed Salleh b. Musa.	Malaysian Association for the Blind.
	Kuala Besut Scheme for the Blind, Kuala Besut, Malaysia.		Malaysian Association for the Blind.

Country	*Name of Centre*	*Director*	*Managing Organization*
Nigeria	Ikeja Rural Training Centre for the Blind, Near Lagos.	Mr. G. N. Ukabiala	Nigerian National Advisory Council for the Blind.
	Ogbomosho Rural Training Centre for the Blind, Western Region.		Ogbomosho Mission.
	Maiduguri Rural Training Centre for the Blind, Northern Region.		Maiduguri Authority, in association with the North Nigeria Society for the Blind.
Northern Rhodesia	Kambowa African Blind Centre, Near Ndola.	Mr. David Carter	Northern Rhodesia Council for the Blind in association with R.C.S.B.
	Kwambwa and Mnunga Village Centres.		Northern Rhodesia Council for the Blind. Luapula Blind Board.
Nyasaland	Mlanje Training Centre for the Blind, P.O. Mlanje.		Nyasaland Society for the Blind and Nysaland Government.
Sabah	Wallace Rural Training Centre, P.O. Box 3, Tuaran.		Sabah Society for the Blind, in co-operation with R.C.S.B.
Sarawak	Training Centre for the Blind, Kuching.	Mr. R. Babonau	Sarawak Society for the Blind, in association with R.C.S.B.

Country	*Name of Centre*	*Director*	*Managing Organization*
Sierra Leone	Kenema Rural Training Centre for the Blind, (in course of construction). c/o Ministry of Social Welfare, Freetown.		Ministry of Social Welfare, in co-operation with R.C.S.B.
Southern Rhodesia	Farm Training Centre for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, c/o Jairos Jiri Centre, P.O. Box 2034, Bulawayo.	Mr. Jairos Jiri	African Society for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.
Uganda	Salama Rural Training Centre for the Blind, Mukono, P.O. Box 1945, Kampala.	Mr. W. Jackson	Uganda Foundation for the Blind, in association with R.C.S.B.
North Borneo	Wallace Training Centre for the Blind Tuaran, Near Jesselton.		
Taiwan	Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind, 93 Chung Cheng Road, Tsin Tsuan, Taipei, Hsien, Taiwan.	Dr. Ta-Cheng Tung, Chairman. Mr. Tsung ven Shiong, Administrator.	
Philippines	Vocational Rehabilitation, Social Welfare Administration, Barranca, Quejon City, Philippines. (Pig and Poultry Sections)	Mr. Victor Baltazar	

Country	*Name of Centre*	*Director*	*Managing Organization*
France	Rural Training Centre, Agricole de-Villeneuve St. Odile, Plénée-Jugon, Côtes-du-Nord.		Croisade de Aveugles.
Russia	Agricultural Vocational Training Schools in Viyek, Khvosovitchie and Astrakhan.		
Greece	Agricultural School for the Blind.		American Friends of the Blind in Greece.
India	The Tata Agricultural and Rural Training Centre for the Blind, Phansa, Taluka Umbergaon, District Bulsar, Gujarat, India.	Mr. C. N. Naik	The National Association for the Blind, India.

(The adoption of this report was moved by Capt. Desai, Chairman of the Committee, seconded by Dr. Cohen (South Africa), and agreed unanimously).

Committee on Technical Appliances

By **M. Robert Barnett,** *Chairman.*

The members of the Committee on Technical Appliances of the W.C.W.B. have met on four occasions in the five year interim since the Assembly at Rome, in 1959. These meetings were held at New York, N.Y., June, 1962; Hanover, Germany, August, 1962; Paris, France, April, 1963 and New York, N.Y., July, 1964.

Except for occasional miscellaneous reviews of specific appliances which were proposed for our study, the Committee's activities in the past five years have been most greatly concerned with planning for the advancement of world-wide information services. As the Committee had grown over a decade, its role with regard to broad research had become obviously less influential because of the same circumstances of finance and distance which tend to restrict the capacity of all W.C.W.B. committees. In an evolutionary sense, therefore, it became impressed upon the minds of members that in this interim we should attempt to define the Committee's most practical purpose, further recognizing that its greatest contribution would be in the area of technological research and, more specifically, tangible aids and appliances. Simultaneously, national agencies in the United States and United Kingdom were pursuing an idea which grew out of the International Congress on Technology and Blindness which had been convened in the United States in the Summer of 1962. This idea had to do with the establishment of an international research information service whose scope and policies would be helped in their fashioning by their views of the W.C.W.B. Committee.

This report, therefore, is not so much one of direct activity and/or accomplishment, but rather one designed to assist the World Council leadership in determining future policies about this particular committee's scope and function. The Chairman believes that the record will best be served for study by others who follow us by excerpting from the minutes of the 1963 meeting in Paris, France, the essence of our conclusions:

> 'The purpose of the conference* which had just ended was to receive progress reports and contribute opinions to the development of a continuing international research information service. Reports had been heard and thoroughly discussed from both the A.F.B. and the R.N.I.B. with regard to the work which had followed the International Congress in New York City from June 18th to 22nd, 1962.
>
> 'During the informal conferences of April 18th and 19th, representatives of the A.F.B. and R.N.I.B. had raised a question with regard to whether the World Council could in any formal manner give recognition to the plan proposed by the American and British national agencies. As Chairman of the W.C.W.B. Committee on Technical Appliances, Mr. Barnett asked the members of the Committee for their reaction. While it was evident from preliminary remarks from all

*NOTE. Meaning a two-day conference which preceded this Committee session sponsored by A.F.B., A.F.O.B., R.N.I.B. and W.C.W.B.

members that the A.F.B.—R.N.I.B. plan was being watched with enthusiasm, considerable discussion evolved as to whether this new development would affect the definition of purpose and scope of activity of the W.C.W.B.'s own Committee on Technical Appliances. Questions were raised as to whether the Committee is necessary at all or, if it is to exist, just what should be the nature of its duties and service.

'After considerable discussion, it was agreed that there definitely is a role for the Committee on Technical Appliances to play. It was felt, however, that clarification could be achieved by emphasizing that its area of major interest is in the assessment of need for, availability of, and distribution of specific aids and appliances—rather than a committee for direction of research or dissemination of research information. The Committee should maintain very close liaison with the staff leaders of the A.F.B.—R.N.I.B. international research information service and also that it can use its official channel to keep the W.C.W.B.'s Executive Committee and/or General Assembly informed about its work at appropriate meetings.

'With this confirmation of the need for a Committee, the group then turned its attention to an official attitude toward the A.F.B.—R.N.I.B. plan. It was unanimously voted that this Committee does heartily endorse the plan of the international research information service and warmly congratulates and thanks the R.N.I.B. and A.F.B. for the work that has been accomplished in such a short time. Further, the Committee accepts with pleasure the offer of the A.F.B. and R.N.I.B. to assume the responsibility of an international clearing house and offers its service in the evaluation of technical devices in areas in which it would be competent.

'Reverting again to a discussion which had occurred during the informal conference, the Committee formally repeated its request that the A.F.O.B. continue to supply space for the exhibit of appliances in Paris in co-operation with the World Council and the several national agencies that had been providing items for display. It is generally agreed that the exhibit, while every effort will be made to keep it as comprehensive as possible, will actually display only small, inexpensive items while larger, more expensive appliances will be included in the form of photographs or written descriptions.

'Mr. Barnett raised again the question which on occasion had been asked of him as to whether the Committee should be expanded through the appointment of persons from parts of the world not now geographically represented. Once again, the Committee repeated its consistent belief that membership on a committee of this type should not be governed by geographical considerations, and that membership should alter or expand in the future only where an individual and/or his country had experience in development and/or production of aids and appliances as a basis for international judgment.'

(The adoption of this report was moved by the Chairman, seconded by General Ammanatto (Italy), and carried unanimously.)

Committee on Prevention of Blindness

By **John Wilson,** *Chairman.*

In presenting the report of the W.C.W.B. Prevention of Blindness Committee, Mr. Wilson drew special attention to the celebration of World Health Day, 1962, which was devoted to the special theme of prevention of blindness. A Central Planning Committee had been set up in Geneva to co-ordinate the activities of campaign committees throughout the world. At all levels, the World Health Organisation, the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind and the International Society for the Prevention of Blindness had worked in close co-operation. More than 100 countries had participated in this most successful campaign. Eighty-eight national radio networks had put out 429 programmes dealing with eye care and the prevention of blindness. Special material written and distributed by the World Health Organisation had been translated and published in the Press or in magazines in most countries. This emphasis on the work of prevention had had widespread results. India had instituted its most extensive programme of eye care, a tremendous effort had been made in Africa, even to using helicopters in Ghana. Mobile eye clinics had been established in twelve countries. The campaign had also led to considerable activity in higher medical and academic circles: several University Chairs of Ophthalmology had come into being as a direct result of the campaign and foundations to aid ophthalmic research had been established in the United Kingdom and Canada.

The Chairman of the Committee went on to emphasize that the World Council had an essential part to play in the field of prevention of blindness in close association with W.H.O. and the International Society for the Prevention of Blindness. Permanent arrangements for co-operation were now being considered and it was hoped that the committees set up for co-operation at regional level to conduct the 1962 campaign would be reconstituted on a permanent basis. Mr. Wilson reminded the Assembly that there was a world-wide shortage of qualified ophthalmic surgeons and he hoped that W.C.W.B. would press for increased training facilities for this work in all countries.

(The Chairman then moved the adoption of his report which was seconded by Dr. Cookey-Gam and adopted unanimously. Dr. Vyas asked that this should be coupled with the Council's congratulations to Mr. Wilson on the excellent work accomplished to date in this field and it was agreed that this should be placed on record.)

Committee on Services for the Deaf-Blind

By **Dr. P. Salmon,** *Chairman.*

It is with a sense of deep satisfaction that your Committee reports in this, its eighth year of service. In July of 1959 we reported fully on the completion of the first phase of the mandate given to us—the development of a simple and direct communication device for deaf-blind persons throughout the world who use the 26-letter alphabet. The volume prepared at that time for presentation to you in Rome has

been requested from all parts of the world and is now out of print. Some of the basic material is still available in pamphlet form. We were gratified with this interest and our report to you at this time will attempt in brief to point up some of the developments of outstanding significance while, at the same time, deploring the fact that progress has been so slow.

In August of 1962, we reported briefly and in generality to the Executive Committee of the World Council, pointing up some of the activities as well as some of the hopes of your Committee and its Chairman.

In February of 1963, we reported more fully to the members of the Committee and to the Corresponding Consultants, and set the groundwork for a tour by the Chairman of the Committee to Western Europe and the United Kingdom, which was taken in the autumn of 1963. At that time it was his privilege to visit with the members of the Committee and with the Corresponding Consultants and to learn at first hand of new developments and expansion of old services for deaf-blind persons. I believe that we have every reason to feel gratified and hopeful, for there has been much impetus given to the problems of deaf-blind persons in almost every country in the world. While this is only a first step, some of us who are still alive can remember when in many parts of the world there were no services for the blind available beyond that of education in a residential school for the blind. While we may not be here to see the final culmination of a comprehensive service of rehabilitation for deaf-blind persons in all parts of the world, we know that once the human mind and heart become involved in this problem of isolation and frustration something will be done, and where a beginning is made growth is possible.

This report will, therefore, be a synthesis of the 1962 and 1963 reports with some additional information gleaned from my European tour. We are confined by time to a relatively brief suggestion of what is happening, and our temptation is to go deeply into the exciting programs in the United Kingdom, in Canada, in Norway; and our hopes for the programs in Germany, in Denmark, in Sweden, and in Latin America, as well as our regret for the lack of program in the Orient and the Near East (about which we have very little information concerning programs). We shall resist this temptation and report only that phase of development which may, for those of you who are interested, suggest ways and means so that you may carry forward work for the deaf-blind into your own sphere of operation and influence.

May we extend to the members of the Committee: Mr. Kinney, Mr. Sculthorpe, and Dr. Van der Mey, our heartfelt gratitude for their continued patience and interest, and for the extensive correspondence which has kept me informed of their activities; and may we also express our thanks to the Corresponding Consultants who have helped with their thoughtful counsel over these years. We also wish to express here our gratitude to the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind for assisting in the sponsorship of the Chairman's tour in Europe, and to the American Foundation for Overseas Blind and The Industrial Home

for the Blind for their financial participation also. It was an outstanding experience and one which will color my thinking for as long as I remain in work for the blind.

United Kingdom

I was deeply impressed with the extensive program of service being carried forward in the United Kingdom and I feel that some space must be given here to this program, as it is one which could with effort be implemented in almost any part of the world to some degree. The National Deaf-Blind Helpers' League in Peterborough, England, with the co-operation of the Ministry of Welfare has embarked on a series of 'courses' held in different parts of the country in which possibly a dozen home teachers and a dozen deaf-blind persons live together for a week or two in activity, in recreation, and in daily communication, both as an experience for the teachers and a holiday for the deaf-blind persons. The effect of this program is to bring home to each of the teachers some of the very real problems confronted by the deaf-blind person and a greater capacity to meet these problems in their daily work through the rest of the year. The social implications of this program are endless and it is being watched closely both in England and in the United States. In addition, the League has developed a program of residence integrated into the Peterborough community which, while philosophically different from anything planned in the United States, has much merit. It was the privilege of your Chairman to officially open a series of these 'flats' in Peterborough on his recent visit there, and to talk with and to get to know some of the deaf-blind persons who would be living there. Some of the experimentation going forward here in communications, viz. the doorbell, the telephone, and other remote communication problems, are interesting to deaf-blind persons everywhere and are common to all deaf-blind persons. Similar experimentation is going forward in the United States and probably in other countries. The interest of the Ministry of Welfare in this program is also healthy and profound, and it would seem that the inter-relationship of the public and private activity here might be useful in all parts of the world and tend to create more successful programming. Our congratulations to Mr. Arthur R. Sculthorpe for his vigorous pursuit of this program, to the Ministry of Welfare for their encouragment of it; and to Mr. J. C. Colligan for the unusual work that the Royal National Institute for the Blind is doing. We should comment too, on the special workshop for the blind in Glasgow, Scotland, where an effort is being made to integrate some deaf-blind workers. I had the pleasure of visiting there while I was abroad.

Canada

The Canadian picture, too, is most promising. Reporting earlier, we told you of the interest of the President of the World Council, Col. Edward A. Baker, in programs for the deaf-blind and the inauguration of such a program in Canada under the able direction of Mr. Arthur

N. Magill, now the new director of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. This program continues to grow and we have had the privilege of working closely with the C.N.I.B. in its planning.

Norway

After several years of correspondence with Mr. Einar Bull Johannessen, of Bergen, Norway, about the desire of the agencies for the blind in Norway and the volunteers represented by Mr. Johannessen to do something specific and helpful for deaf-blind persons, and after receiving reports from him of the several meetings carried forward there with deaf-blind persons, and the development of a new communication instrument (Conversation Machine) with the help of a shipping magnate, it was my privilege to meet with them in Oslo this autumn to have an opportunity to see for myself the real work that is being done, to learn of the plans for the future, and to see in operation the new Conversation Machine. We are very proud indeed to have had a part in this planning and we feel that this friendly interchange among people who are willing to take time to think and to write is already showing results in this wonderful country.

Germany

We have had correspondence with several of the leaders in work for the deaf-blind in Germany, and despite the fact that very little has been done in terms of such programs there is a very real interest in looking to the future. On my recent visit to Germany I had the privilege of talking to many of the leaders, and I am convinced that something will be planned to integrate the deaf-blind population into the program of services for blind persons. The warm and friendly feeling of the German workers and their interest in what I had to say to them was very gratifying indeed, and I hope that your Committee may be able to report progress here in its next report. I regret that my stay in Germany was very limited and that I was unable to meet with Dr. Strehl and other leaders who are doing all that is being done for deaf-blind persons here.

Italy

While I was in Europe this autumn, I had the privilege of presenting some of our thinking at the conference in Stockholm, Sweden, of the World Federation of the Deaf, and met there again Dr. Cesare Magarotto, a member of our Corresponding Consultants Committee, with whom we had had some correspondence related to a universal sign language, and had the privilege of seeing him again in Italy and talking to him of programs there. Unfortunately, there is very little being done here for deaf-blind persons, despite the fact that there is a very real understanding of the isolation in which these people live; and here, as in France where I also visited, there is a hope for the future. We shall keep in touch with Dr. Magarotto and shall keep him informed as we develop any ideas at all that may be of use there.

France

As mentioned above, it was apparent on my recent visit to France that programs for the deaf-blind have not yet begun to take form although here, too, there is a deep interest in the problem. There is in Paris a new rehabilitation center, Chateau Des Ombrages, operated by the Association Pour Nos Aveugles—La Lumière Par Le Livre, patterned after some of those in the United States, and in visiting this center I was heartened by the interest shown in deaf-blindness.

Yugoslavia

We have had communication with one of the Corresponding Consultants of our Committee, Prof. Peter U. Vukas, and have been deeply interested in the programs for deaf-blind children being carried forward there. We were impressed with the interest of Mr. Dragoljub Vukotic, President of the World Federation of the Deaf, in deaf-blindness and his willingness to propose some planning in Yugoslavia between several agencies serving the deaf and the blind.

Russia

We have been pleased, too, to learn of the very warm and profound interest in deaf-blindness in the Soviet Union. Our correspondence with Prof. A. I. Meshcheriakov, Chief of the Laboratory of Education, Russian Institute of Defectology, Moscow, has been most satisfying and it is apparent that there is real activity for the deaf-blind in that country. The Chairman received a most interesting paper from him on the program of education of deaf-blind children in Russia. This paper describes a most refreshing and highly professional approach to the education of deaf-blind children which, while it differs in many repects from our own system and program, has much of interest to offer all of us.

Asia and the Near East

Over the past several years we have had extensive correspondence and some visitation from persons in the Near and Far East who have been interested in work for the blind particularly, and have come to recognize that work with the deaf-blind may be integrated with the basic services for the blind, and it is only the heartbreaking slowness of development of any service in this part of the world that makes the probability of any immediate action for the deaf-blind fairly remote. Some notable exceptions, of course, may be mentioned. We have had several students in our professional program from the Philippine Islands and from Japan where some very real efforts are going forward toward the recognition of problems concerned with deaf-blindness. We are fortunate that one of the members of our Corresponding Consultants Committee, Dr. Edward J. Waterhouse, Director of Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, Massachusetts, is a frequent visitor to the Far East and is concerned with the education of blind and deaf-

blind children from that area, and we believe that he has done more than any other man to interest this part of the world in problems arising out of deaf-blindness. His work with the little Chinese girl from Singapore, Chan Poh Lin, is probably well known to most of you and the film concerning this child is available for viewing, I believe, upon request.

Latin America

Development of services for the blind in Latin America is progressing at a slow pace, but it is progressing, and The Industrial Home for the Blind which I have the honour of serving as Executive Director, has had the pleasure of visitors and trainees from several countries of Latin America, and by the very nature of their work with us they were exposed to our program for deaf-blind persons and we have been encouraged by the comments about this program and their obvious willingness to see what can be done to learn who the deaf-blind persons are in their countries and where they live to see if they might also be helped.

The Netherlands

In an odd way, despite the fact that one of our most distinguished Committee members is a resident of Holland, Dr. Cerrit Van der Mey, we have learned but little about programs for deaf-blind persons in that country. We believe, however, that the very nature of Dr. Van der Mey's position in the Netherlands would indicate a sound and healthy attitude toward disability, particularly toward deaf-blindness. This gentleman, who had been invaluable to our Committee, has completed a four-volume mathematical treatise called 'The Algol Translator'. The instrument which you may recall we described as having been adapted to a communication device made it possible for Dr. Van der Mey to do his work as programmer by braille telephone connections between his home and The Hague, some sixty miles away. The innumerable applications of this translator are important to all phases of communication in the Netherlands. We are, at this time, having a summary analysis made of these four volumes (very brief) which we hope may be of some value to workers for the deaf-blind everywhere. At this point, may we extend to Dr. Van der Mey our heartfelt thanks for his continued and unique contributions to the Committee's action. His correspondence and my discussions with him in Holland recently, concerned with the personal problems of deaf-blind persons including the psychological problems arising out of the loss of hearing, have been most valuable in our own projects in the United States.

United States

I wish I could report here that work for the deaf-blind in the United States has developed rapidly and excitingly, but unfortunately this is not the case. There have been, however, some very exciting developments which I would like to report on here—developments which may

in effect be useful to all of you who are concerned with problems of the blind and of the deaf-blind in your own countries.

First may I say that another member of our Committee, also a deaf-blind person, Mr. Richard Kinney, Assistant Director of the Hadley School for the Blind of Winnetka, Illinois, has continued to be one of the substantial contributors to your Committee's thinking and service. Since our last report to you, which indicated his marriage and his promotion to the Assistant Directorship of the School, he has begun a correspondence school for the deaf-blind in the United States. This correspondence will be conducted entirely in braille and will cover the entire gamut of the educational spectrum, allowing deaf-blind persons to study at their own pace in their own homes and to go as far in their aspirations as their abilities permit. We believe sincerely that this may over the years awaken many of the deaf-blind students who study in this way to the opportunities and facilities available to them throughout the country.

When we reported to you in Rome we said that we hoped in our next report that we would be able to say that a number of agencies for the blind in the United States have begun to integrate deaf-blind persons into their program. Some have, but we have been deeply disappointed that there have not been more. As you will recall, our program of services for the deaf-blind at The Industrial Home for the Blind of Brooklyn and projects arising out of this service were carried forward in co-operation with the United States Vocational Rehabilitation Administration and the American Foundation for the Blind; and in June of 1962, again with the co-operation of these two outstanding agencies, discussions were held in Washington, D.C., where it was decided that an effort would be made to set up several regional centers for the deaf-blind since local centers were apparently too expensive and too complex for most of the agencies to attempt. We thought then and we still think that this may be the answer not only in the United States but in all countries where the incidence of deaf-blindness is as low as it is in the United States. Because there are small numbers in each state, the regional center called The Anne Sullivan Macy Service for Deaf-Blind Persons, established at The Industrial Home for the Blind, will serve fifteen of the Eastern states in the United States, with Federal support. We are inviting the state authorities, paticularly those concerned with vocational rehabilitation and welfare, to refer persons who are deaf and blind to our center in New York State (Jamaica, Long Island) for adjustment, rehabilitation, training, and employment. We believe that the emphasis of our program may be interesting to all of you. What we are trying to do in effect is to create a climate in the local community in which the deaf-blind person lives, so that upon completion of his training he may return there to live and to work and to become a contributing member of society. Where this seems unfeasible, we are proposing that such persons remain at the center and be employed in the special workshops associated with it.

We are simultaneously studying attitudes—both the public attitude toward deaf-blindness and the attitude of deaf-blind persons toward

themselves and toward the community. As indicated above, Dr. Van der Mey's contribution to this phase of the study is profound. We had also hoped to be able to train professional workers who might then return to their home states to continue this specialized service for deaf-blind persons, and we have conducted two workshops in our region to try to accomplish this end. We have also made our service available for protracted training programs for professional workers. We are beginning to believe sincerely that there is no real local answer to this problem, that in most countries a national program such as that being carried forward in the United Kingdom is sound and desirable, but in larger geographical areas and in larger populations several regional centers may be required. This latter point, however, is in some question, as it has been very difficult indeed to interest several regional areas in the United States in the establishment of new centers, and it may ultimately seem desirable to plan a national center even for a country as large geographically as population-wise as the United States. We would regret this, as the problem of moving personnel over vast distances and maintaining local contacts for real service would be very great indeed. There is also a real question as to whether, if Federal funds are not made available, any single agency or even single state could afford such a program. This problem would not be as great in most of your countries as it is in the United States where the use of Federal funds through private voluntary agencies, such as the one I represent, is very unusual except in terms of projects such as the Anne Sullivan Macy Service. A permanent program would have to have special legislative action taken or a vast fund-raising program inaugurated.

Before closing, I would like to bring the following matter to your attention:

One of the outstanding features of this trip was a special audience with His Holiness Pope Paul VI, on September 21st, 1963, at which time your Chairman had a brief opportunity to speak with His Holiness relative to deaf-blind persons and the great need that exists for services to be provided to this group of individuals. His Holiness was deeply touched and promised his help. Your Chairman is suggesting a resolution to the Resolutions Committee, the wording of which follows, concerned with further implementing the purpose of this visit to the Vatican, and this will be presented at the Business Meeting on August 10th, 1964.

Resolution

WHEREAS, the Chairman of the Committee on Services to the Deaf-Blind of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, Dr. Peter J. Salmon, was received in a special audience by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on September 21st, 1963; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Salmon stated to His Holiness, 'May I bring to Your Holiness the greetings of Miss Helen Keller, now

83 years of age, who has devoted her life in service to people who are both deaf and blind—one of the most tragic of all afflictions. Helen Keller says they are the loneliest people in the world. We implore Your Holiness to bless deaf-blind persons and urge the peoples of the world to open their hearts to them, and to provide services to bring these deaf-blind back into the warm stream of humanity'; and

WHEREAS, His Holiness expressed deep concern for the problems of deaf-blind persons and compassion for those so handicapped throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, it would be of immeasurable benefit to the deaf-blind of the world if their plight could be brought to the attention of peoples everywhere; and

WHEREAS, a special pronouncement by His Holiness Pope Paul VI would bring this lonely group to the attention of the world:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, consisting of representatives from forty-one nations, assembled here in New York City this 10th day of August, 1964, does hereby direct the Secretary-General to express to His Holiness Pope Paul VI the World Council plea for a pronouncement by him to the peoples of the world, and especially to those concerned with humanitarian works, for their help, for their sympathy and compassion, and for their support of works in the interest of deaf-blind persons everywhere; and

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED, that he express for us our hope that in his own great compassion His Holiness will offer his blessing not only to those who help but to all deaf-blind people everywhere.

As we have done in the past, may we again extend to all of you here in New York a very hearty welcome and an invitation to visit the Anne Sullivan Macy Service Center in Jamaica and learn for yourselves the very satisfying and exciting aspects of it which we have learned to live with.

Again, Mr. President, thank you sincerely for this opportunity to bring this message of hope and challenge to the delegates of our World Council and to invite their participation and inquiry in your Committee's activity.

(Dr. Salmon then moved the adoption of his report. Seconded by Dr. Strehl (Germany),this was carried unanimously).

Committee on Asian Affairs (F.E.S.S.E.A.)
By **Kingsley C. Dassanaike,** *Chairman.*

It is necessary to report that through a decision of the Executive Committee of the W.C.W.B. taken at its meeting in Rome, in 1959, the membership of the Standing Committee was restricted to only the full members of the W.C.W.B. Hence the membership was reduced to just five, as follows:

Begum N. Jivanji (Pakistan).
Mrs. S. Ahuja (India).
Mrs. M. Lee (Malaysia).
Mr. H. Iwahashi (Japan).
Mr. Kingsley C. Dassanaike (Ceylon), Chairman.

The personnel of the membership has also changed somewhat since the Rome meeting. Mr. Holder, of Malaysia, gave way to Mr. L. K. Cheah and Mrs. Ahuja took the place of Mr. Alpaiwala, of India, and Mrs. Lee replaced Mr. Cheah, of Malaysia. We thus lost the services of Mr. Victor Balthazar, of the Philippines, Mr. David Po Cho, of Burma, Mr. S. Sigit, of Indonesia, Madam S. Damrong, of Thailand, Mrs. Mary Lee, of Korea, Dr. T. Tung, of Taiwan, and Capt. Phan Van Suong, of Vietnam. To all of them and to Mr. D. R. Bridges, who has helped us a great deal with advice, we offer our sincere thanks for their kind co-operation and assistance. Their countries have been invited to be associate members of the Committee, but the response has been from Hong Kong alone.

These countries have also been invited to be members of the W.C.W.B., but they have written to say that they cannot afford to be members of the W.C.W.B. Assistance or concessions to emergent countries in Asia to become members has been the subject of discussion before at the Executive Committee and of the Special Sub-Committee appointed to investigate the matter. The decision has been taken and has been conveyed to all the countries concerned. It is however felt that if at any time the concession can be given it will help some of the countries to become members of the W.C.W.B. It seems a pity that from a large area as ours where more than half the world's population of blind persons live there are so few countries represented in the W.C.W.B. The Committee too feels that they must become members, but they cannot afford the membership fee. It is their opinion that to them the membership fee is a big sum of money to pay, and such money is urgently needed to be used for the work they are doing. They know that the W.C.W.B. requires the membership fees for its work, but most of our countries need all the money they collect for their own work. At the Hanover meeting of the Executive Committee of the W.C.W.B. the Chairman pointed out the need for the adoption of some method whereby more countries can become members of the W.C.W.B. and of our Standing Committee. Despite the fact that the Executive Committee after receiving the report of its Special Sub-Committee decided at Hanover that only full members of the W.C.W.B. can be members of the Standing Committees, our Commit-

tee has requested me at its last meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1963 to take up the matter again with the Executive Committee. I therefore respectfully do so, and request the Executive Committee to reconsider the matter and suggest some way whereby these countries can become members of the Standing Committee and of the W.C.W.B. Many of the countries will be satisfied if they are allowed to pay W.C.W.B. membership fees according to the number of representatives they can afford to send to the Council.

During the period under review altogether four meetings of the Committee, including the one at the beginning of the present session of the W.C.W.B., were held. The other three were held at Rome, in 1959, at Hanover, in 1962, and at Kuala Lumpur, in 1963. It was never possible to have the full membership present at these meetings, but we were able to discuss matters affecting the education, training and employment of the blind in our region. It was suggested that individual countries should make applications to the A.F.O.B. and R.C.S.B. to obtain more assistance and for advice for the development of their programmes.

At the Hanover meeting representatives of our countries submitted reports of the work in their countries and considerable progress was noted. Here a request was made for the 'Asian Blind' to be printed in braille. An attempt was made to comply with this request, but it was not found possible to do this at one centre. Already the inkprint copies are printed by the Osaka Lighthouse Service for the Blind free of cost to us, and it is impossible for that organisation to do so in braille also. It was therefore suggested that each country will undertake the printing of the magazine in braille at their National Headquarters.

The Integrated programme and the Training of the Blind in Agricultural pursuits were also subjects we discussed at Hanover. India reported that she had started the integrated education in Bombay, and that a centre for the training of the blind in agriculture and rural crafts had been opened at Phansa. These schemes were indeed very successfully carried out. Ceylon reported the continued success of the integrated education at the higher level. Malaysia informed us that they were about to start training for resource and specialist teachers for this work. This programme, now at the time of writing, is well away, and we shall soon hear more of the programme.

Since Rome, 'The Asian Blind' was printed and published on three occasions. The Committee records its sincere thanks for the excellent work that Mr. Iwahashi and Mr. Nagoaka and their friends have hitherto rendered the Committee by printing 'The Asian Blind' without any cost to the Committee.

After Rome, the Chairman visited institutions in India, Burma and East Pakistan. In India he visited the schools in Bombay, New Delhi, Behar, and Calcutta to see the work in those places. He was pleased to see the progress in those places. In Burma the Chairman met various officials of the Social Welfare Department and visited the various institutions in the country. He also met a number of well-known people who were interested in the welfare of the blind and addressed two public

meetings which were organized to interest people in blind welfare. He helped to inaugurate a National Body in the country by giving advice on different aspects of the work which such a body should and can undertake. It must be recorded with sincere gratitude that the Bishop of Rangoon was of great assistance to the Chairman during his visit to Burma. The work in Burma was getting on very well, but suddenly there has been a black-out, and no news seems to be coming in. Yet he had an enquiry for Literature in Blind Work. The reply to that enquiry has brought no further communication.

In East Pakistan advice was sought on the new schemes for the development of the school there, and a better understanding between the workers of the blind there was established. More recently, in 1962, the Chairman was able to visit the Philippines and noticed that there was a school where the blind were taught together with the deaf. There was no other institution for the education of the blind. The A.F.O.B. has a scheme for integration to be introduced there. In the large centre for the rehabilitation of the handicapped there were quite a number of blind people helped by our friend, Mr. Victor Balthazar.

In Hong Kong he saw that the schools have made great progress, and that the Ebenezar School for the Blind was beautifully housed. The Rehabilitation Centres for the Blind were also making a good headway. A large Workshop for the Blind in the very heart of Hong Kong was just being completed. We have news that this workshop now provides work for nearly 300 blind people. Through the assistance of the R.C.S.B., Miss Lucy Chen, Blind Welfare Officer, of Hong Kong, is now in England and will soon be in the U.S.A. for further training. In Singapore also, besides the school which is so beautifully housed, a new workshop was being completed. This workshop is now functioning. It was felt that this one school would provide the accommodation for all the blind children in Singapore. Its future depended on its link-up with Malaysia. Miss Po Lin, the deaf-blind young lady of Singapore, is back at Perkins for further study.

Monthly news comes from Taiwan of the good progress that is being made in this war-battered country. Poultry-keeping brings much profit, and work for the blind is now being sought in the public sector. Here too there is a unit that manufactures cheap braille slates and they are bought by many in the region.

The Gurney Training Centre in Kuala Lumpur has both assessment and training. This and the Centre in Ipoh are doing good work. Still more recently, three months ago, the Chairman visited Bombay and found the one-year-old workshop in operation. This is a great stride ahead. Like the Agricultural Centre in Phansa this has made incredible progress, and has captured the imagination not only of those who are engaged in the work but also of those in high positions in the country so that the future of this enterprise is assured. These two places could well be models for this sort of work in the region. India has also made arrangements for bringing in 9,000 blind children under the integrated programme within the next five years.

Visits were also made to the institutions in Karachi. The Ida Rieu

School has plans for expansion on a new site in the near future. The workshop and the press had been well organized on correct lines, and if the same enthusiasm prevails these two establishments should serve well the blind of Karachi. The Chairman met many people interested in the work and was able to give advice on the general policy. A scheme for general development of the work in West Pakistan has been prepared, and the education authorities are determined to put it into effect very early. He was able to convince the Education Authority in Karachi that integration programme is the surest way of educating the blind children of Pakistan. The Braille Press, which is run by the National Federation for the Welfare of the Blind in Pakistan, is doing the right thing by printing the Text Books required by the schools in English, Urdhu, and Bengali.

In Ceylon, the National Council for the Deaf and Blind has decided to start a workshop for the blind. The land has been bought and the buildings are now coming up. It is hoped that with the new year the workshop will go into operation.

Of Japan there is little to report except to say that the work there is going from progress to progress, and is carefully well planned, and skilfully carried out. At the present time a committee has been appointed to explore possibilities of further employment of blind people in Japan and to find out what new avenues are available for employment.

In Macao the work among the refugee blind was carried out under a programme set up by the A.F.O.B., under the direction of Major D. R. Bridges. In Sarawak and North Borneo the R.C.S.B. is carrying out a programme of agricultural training and primary education. We have good reports of the work started in Okinawa. Plans are being set up for the rehabilitation of the blind in Vietnam, and the school there is making good progress. Korea has a strong International Advisory Committee on the work. It is heartening to know that a large number of volunteers are actively interested in the work. Detailed reports of the work have not come in, but at the Kuala Lumpur Conference last year we saw some real good samples of the work of the blind children in Korea. We have news from Indonesia that the State is looking after the programme there and work goes on ahead. Of Laos and Cambodia we have no news at all.

It must be stated that owing to the lead taken by our Committee in drawing the attention of all in the region to the need for teacher training, India and Malaya have gone well ahead with training programmes. Pakistan has had a number of teachers trained for the integrated programme. Ceylon has started refresher courses for teachers of the blind. It is happy news to know that other countries are also formulating plans for this.

By far the most interesting and important event in our region since Rome was the Second Far East Conference on Work for the Blind, which was held in Kuala Lumpur in May, 1963. As reported elsewhere this meeting was sponsored by the R.C.S.B., A.F.O.B., and the W.C.W.B. I had the very great privilege of representing the W.C.W.B. at this meeting. I have already submitted a report of this Conference to the

Executive Committee, and it is not necessary to repeat everything here, yet it is important to say something from the point of view of our Standing Committee.

Delegates came from seventeen countries: Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Malaya, Singapore, Thailand, Sarawak, North Borneo, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Philippines, Taiwan, Macao, Okinawa, Japan, Indonesia, and Korea. There were some very interesting papers read at this meeting and they were all very helpful and gave much encouragement to all who participated in the conference.

Delegate after delegate spoke of the magnitude of the problem in their countries and of the inadequacy of the services they were able to render to bring relief to the thousands of blind prople in their countries. Further they pointed out the practical difficulties they had in money, personnel, and equipment to carry out a decent programme for the education and training and employment of the blind. Everyone felt that it was important not only to pool the resources available in our own countries, but also to obtain the active co-operation and practical assistance of the A.F.O.B., R.C.S.B., and the W.C.W.B. in a joint effort to solve the problem of the blind in Asia.

On the Monday afternoon of the second week of the conference, we held the meeting of our Standing Committee. Besides the members of the Committee, representatives of all the countries present at the conference were invited and they all came for the meeting. Thus the meeting was representative of the entire region. It was at this meeting that the Chairman was requested to take up the question of membership again with the Executive Committee.

After the ordinary business of the Committee was conducted, the Chairman outlined the 'Asian Plan' which Mr. John Wilson, the Director of the R.C.S.B., had in mind and which Mr. Wilson had discussed with him earlier. The basic idea of the plan was to have:

1. A joint Asian Plan;
2. A central office for administration sponsored by the A.F.O.B. and R.C.S.B., W.C.W.B.;
3. Three consultative experts to implement the joint plan, (a) educational, (b) technical, (c) placement;
4. Research started to inquire into the causes of blindness in Asian countries.

The Chairman said that the W.C.W.B. would be glad to support such a plan. He further explained that there was an alternative plan to work it from three different regions. The meeting unanimously supported the original plan of Mr. Wilson and appointed a Committee of five to meet the representatives of the A.F.O.B., R.C.S.B., W.C.W.B. and I.L.O. on the following day with a view to getting the plan approved. Accordingly this special deputation met the International Agencies concerned on the next day and agreed upon a plan to work from the different regions as follows:

Region 1. Ceylon, India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Burma.

Region 2. Indonesia, Federation of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, North Borneo, Brunei, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Region 3. Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Macao, Okinawa Philippines, and Taiwan.

Other details of this plan are omitted because a printed copy of the plan has already been submitted to the Executive Committee.

It remains to be said that the conference was organized by Maj. D. R. Bridges of the A.F.O.B. and was indeed a great success. It was a wonderful gathering of all interested in the welfare of the blind in Asia, and provided an opportunity for them to learn from one another.

In conclusion the Chairman would like to thank all members of the Committee, and all others who helped him from other countries, for their co-operation, good-will and friendship, and sincerely wishes them every success in their work in the future.

(The Chairman of the Committee then moved the adoption of his report, which was seconded by Mr. Rajhi (Tunisia) and agreed unanimously).

Louis Braille Memorial Committee

By **G. L. Raverat,** *Chairman.*

(In the absence of the Chairman, this report was presented by **Mr. Amblard**, Treasurer of the Louis Braille Memorial Committee).

Eight years ago you did me the honour of electing me Chairman of the Louis Braille Memorial Committee. This Committee was formed following a decision reached by the W.C.W.B. Executive Committee, in London, that the World Council should in future assume continuing responsibility for the birthplace of Louis Braille as a permanent memorial and museum. Since that time I have discharged the duties of this office to the best of my ability, but the time has come when I can no longer continue to assume this responsibility, and feel that it should rest on younger shoulders than mine. It is with regret, therefore, that I tender my resignation as Chairman of this Committee, while thanking you sincerely for the confidence you have placed in me for so long. May I take this opportunity of paying tribute to the other members of this Committee: to my old friend Mr. Renaux, whose death is a sad loss to all; to Mr. Amblard, with whom I have co-operated and who has been of great assistance; and to our co-opted members, Mr. Bayer, the Mayor of Coupvray, Mr. Roblin, our Curator, and Mr. Ingalls of the A.F.O.B. We have always worked closely together and I am grateful to them for their assistance.

You will, I hope, forgive me if I venture to make a suggestion concerning the appointment of the future committee. Although it would seem essential that one or more of its members should be based in Paris in order to exercise closer supervision over the Museum, it might be advisable for the Committee as a whole to have a wider international character, one or two additional members being drawn from neighbouring countries. This is an international shrine and, as such, it appears

to me that the Committee directly responsible for its administration should be more widely representative. This is for you to decide but I hope that you may bear my suggestion in mind. It also appears to me that the Museum would benefit from a closer co-operation between the members of its Committee and the Coupvray Town Council, so that each of these two interested parties may assume its own responsibilities. In order that our Council may effectively undertake the administration and management of the Museum, we must be in a position to exercise supervision over its day-to-day operation. This is not always possible. It would be useful if one of the members of the newly appointed committee might be specially detailed to co-operate with the town authorities and to visit the Museum regularly.

Over the past five years, since the last World Assembly met in Rome, Louis Braille's birthplace in Coupvray has continued to fulfil its function as an international shrine and a meeting place for the blind of many lands. As a result of our publicity campaign, the number of visitors has continued to grow from year to year. As an example: while from November 1960 to November 1961 there were 1,045 visitors, this number rose to 1,346 during the corresponding period in 1961-62 and to over 2,000 last year. Many of these visitors have come from overseas, from distant countries of Asia, America, Africa and Oceania. There have also been a large number of French visitors and the Museum has also been visited by several groups. On 14th September, 1963, the Third National Congress on Blind Welfare visited Coupvray to visit the birthplace of Louis Braille and in October, 1963, it was visited by the Association of the Intellectual Blind. The Crusade of the Blind organizes a pilgrimage to the shrine every year. A special commemoration ceremony to mark the birth date of Louis Braille is held in Coupvray on 4th January of each year in the presence of the Town Council and of numerous officials and representatives of various organizations of and for the blind. Other groups, from schools, members of blind associations, teachers, etc., have also visited the Museum. The Touring Club of France organized a group visit to the Museum last year.

This greater activity is mostly due to better publicity. Leaflets describing the life and work of Louis Braille and giving details about the Museum were printed in French, English and German and bought by several associations in the member countries for distribution to their members. A bilingual edition of the illustrated biography of Louis Braille, published in London under the auspices of the R.N.I.B., is on sale at the Museum. Letters were sent to several schools, training colleges, tourist offices, associations and schools for the blind, etc., drawing their attention to the historical interest of our little Museum. In February, 1963, as a result of representations made to the Louvre Museum in Paris, the Coupvray Museum was added on the map of the museums in the Ile de France. Illustrated postcards, bearing a drawing of Louis Braille's house and a stamp issued in his honour and postmarked from the village of Coupvray are on sale at the Museum. In order to enable visitors to find the Museum more easily, signs have been set up at the entrances to the village; a wall bearing a panel

publicizing the Museum was defaced by the O.A.S. during the night of 1st-2nd September, 1962, and we were obliged to have it restored.

In the past few years many recordings have been made in Coupvray and a historical reconstruction of Louis Braille's life written by our Curator was again broadcast by the French radio. Documentary films for cinema and television have also been shot in Coupvray. The cameramen took views of the Museum and of the village. Radio Monte Carlo, the Belgian, French and British radio networks, had sent their technicians.

The increased publicity led the French Ministry of Cultural Affairs to take an interest in the Museum. As a result of a visit made by the Inspector of French Museums and on his advice, we took measures to strengthen the security of the Museum and its collection. At the request of the Ministry a detailed inventory of the contents of the Museum and a set of regulations based on the official regulations for national museums were drawn up and submitted for approval. On 29th July, 1963, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs published a decree appointing a curator to the Museum. In October our President, Colonel Baker, and myself met to discuss this matter and we submitted to the Louis Braille Committee a memorandum asking the Coupvray Town Council to give us further information concerning this appointment, but Mr. Bayer was unable to give us any very clear indications. It is hoped that final approval of the Museum's status as a national museum will be granted by the Superior Commission for Historical Monuments before this Assembly meets in New York.

We have continued to receive generous gifts for the maintenance of the Museum. Some of these come from countries, some from associations and some from private persons. Certain national associations have promised us a regular grant each year; others for a stated period of time. We have also received gifts of braille books, photographs, documents, a book containing embossed illustrations, etc. Some countries have given us albums containing interesting photographic coverage of their respective blind welfare activities.

A reorganization of the Museum was carried out in 1961, aimed at providing visitors with a simple chronological guide to the life and work of Louis Braille. Starting in his father's workshop, where he lost his sight, it follows his development through the years and shows us the influences which shaped his personality. As a result of the death early this spring of the tenant who occupied the main living-room of the Braille cottage for so many years, it will now be possible to expand the Museum and open this room of historical interest to the public. However, some redecoration will be required and an estimate for around frs. 5,000 has been submitted by a local contractor, this to include repair and redecoration of the living-room, the staircase and two small upper rooms.

Owing to scarcity of funds it was felt that we might have to dispense with the services of the Curator and be content with one person to cumulate the offices of curator and custodian. However, upon M. Roblin agreeing to a reduced remuneration it was decided to retain

his services; it was agreed that the matter of his fee would be reviewed when finances allowed. On the other hand, the custodian's salary was increased during the summer months when the Museum is open for longer hours.

Increased insurance cover against all risks was arranged for in 1962 and measures taken to improve the security of the collection against theft or deterioration.

Now we come to a matter of first importance—providing for the Museum's greater financial stability for non-recurrent costs entailed by repairs and renovation. This is a problem which has come up for discussion on several occasions both by the Executive Committee and by the Assembly. At the last meeting of the Executive Committee in Hanover, it was suggested that each member country's annual fee to W.C.W.B. should be increased by 10 per cent., the additional income to be used to constitute a reserve fund for the Louis Braille Museum. This suggestion was not adopted. Other possibilities of putting the Museum on a sound financial basis were considered. It was decided that an approach should be made jointly by the W.C.W.B., the French Government and the Louis Braille Memorial Committee, to a suitable international or trust fund with a view to obtaining an endowment which would provide the capital fund necessary for the future financing of the Museum. Such funds, of a historical, cultural or social character exist; some of them are sufficiently well endowed to grant us a subsidy for the preservation of an historical museum. It was decided, however, that such steps should be initiated only if a further appeal to the generosity of our members proved fruitless. Although donations have been most generous, it is clear (as you may judge from the financial report) that these will not meet all demands.

Let me once again appeal to your generosity and your gratitude. This Museum is not only the birthplace of a man; it is the birthplace of your opportunities, your hopes, your successes. All the doors that open before you in your life were unlocked by Louis Braille. It is thanks to him that we are all meeting today and that the blind can in future take their rightful place in the world.

And to those of you who are not blind, I say: Louis Braille is for you, too, an example and an inspiration. He is a symbol of the courage and determination which break down all obstacles, of constructive youth, of the victory of spirit over human weakness.

I know that you have already done all that it was possible for you to do to contribute to this shrine; now, I ask you to do the impossible. This Museum must become the centre of Louis Braille's light-bringing work and a lasting tribute to the memory of this great leader. In advance, let me thank you for your help.

(M. Amblard then moved the adoption of this report. Seconded by Dr. Cookey-Gam (Nigeria), this was carried unanimously).

Louis Braille Museum

It is an honour for me to submit to you the accounts for the upkeep of the Louis Braille Museum which, as you well know, depends on the W.C.W.B.

In spite of our precarious means we are glad to be able to state that the year's income amounted to Frs.: 10,860.62 ($2,172.12), whereas our expenses were only Frs.: 5,570.70 ($1,114.14). These are almost entirely composed of caretakers salaries and health service dues, making Frs.: 4,970.70 ($994.14); sundry expenses added Frs.: 600 ($120) to this.

We were very happy to receive gifts from the following sources: from Grande Paroisse, Melun (France), from A.F.O.B. New York, from Vereniging 'Het Nederlandse Blindenwezen' (Holland), from the 'Ligue Braille' (Belgium), from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (Canada), from Wisconsin Council of Blind, from Nigeria National Council for the Blind and a personal offering from our President, Colonel Baker.

These gifts make a total of: Frs.: 10,860.62 ($2,172.12).

The income exceeds expenditure by Frs.: 5,289.92 ($1,058).

This proves that our position is sound, though unpretentious, for 1963. However, in the future we must be prepared to undertake various expenses for the upkeep and organization of the building, as it will now be possible to make complete use of it for the shrine, giving thus its full meaning.

To conclude, our cash in hand on December 31st, 1963, stands at Frs.: 9,981.12 ($1,196.20), to which we may add Frs.: 15,000 ($3,000) in Treasury Bonds (plus interest).

The assets in the Louis Braille Museum account amount to:

To hand	Frs. 10,393.62	($2,078.72)
Bonds	Frs. 15,000.00	($3,000.00)
making	Frs. 25,393.62	($5,078.72)

This position, though perhaps not brilliant is reassuring for this year and we sincerely trust that our friends will maintain their financial help in order to keep Louis Braille's birthplace worthy of his name.

FOURTH SESSION **Monday morning, August 3rd, 1964**

THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF BLINDNESS UPON THE INDIVIDUAL

Chairman: **Mr. Abebe Kebede,** *Administrator-General of the Haile Selassie I Foundation, Ethiopia.*

The Social Impact of Blindness on the Individual

By **Ignacio de Satrustegui,** *Director-General of the Organizacion Nacional de Ciegos de Espana.*

The first shock the adult suffers as a result of blindness is primarily emotional. The trauma profoundly affects the Ego and in turn the basic social and personal relationships. The blinded person becomes much more dependent on seeing people than when he enjoyed sight. This dependence on others, which occurs specially during the early months of blindness, is lessened when he regains his balance, gains information about his surroundings, improves his mobility and orientation and is trained to work or takes up professional activites in keeping with the limitations imposed by blindness and generally achieves confidence in all aspects of daily living. But in principle, as a result of his handicap, the blind person finds himself socially in an inferior position in comparison with the seeing. It is sufficient to reflect on what would happen if the world were populated exclusively by blind people to understand that the survival of the human race in such conditions would be impossible.

The Blind Among The Seeing

Besides the implicit dependence of the blind person, his social life is influenced by a factor of supreme importance: the attitude and conduct the seeing adopt towards blindness and towards him. On this depends, to a great degree, his response, and because of this his relationships with those who see. Various economic, cultural, intellectual and social factors, and in some cases a lack of knowledge of the real problems of blindness and the best means to overcome them, influence the attitude of the seeing towards the blind. In principle, the sighted have a great sympathy for the blind. But this sympathy may not always be put to intelligent use and may thus defeat the very aim it so generously pursues.

The idea that blindness means an end of usefulness gives rise, even today, in many parts of the world, to fatalistic attitudes which prevent all hope of social integration with equality. Without going to extremes, we may say that even in the most developed countries there is still a spirit of compassion, wrongly understood, among the helpers and friends of the blind. The effect is to lessen the reserves of optimism and energy which are so necessary to the blind if they are to strive without dismay

to resolve, in so far as it is possible, their personal problems and to convert themselves into useful members of society.

When people, even though acting with the best of intentions, prevent the blind from doing anything for themselves, the latter's reactions may be those of faint-heartedness or even hostility, which only makes their social position worse.

Undoubtedly for the blind man to live in absolute equality with the seeing there are difficulties, owing in no small part to the impossibility to converse in an original manner about the world that is of first interest to the seeing. The spectacle offered by Nature in its infinite aspects, the beauty of the plastic works of art, the wonderful advances of modern technology, the various sports and so on, provide the most common basis for social intercourse and to this the blind do not have direct access.

This does not occur on purely intellectual ground where the blind enjoy maximum possibilities when backed with means of access to the culture.

These briefly enumerated difficulties produce in some blind people attitudes of withdrawal into themselves or a tendency to prefer living with those who suffer from the same limitations, thus satisfying, with less effort and in a much more closed society, their natural need for sociability.

Placing the blind person in a determined social context, let us point out some of the traits most frequently observed in his informal relations with the seeing.

The first fact that calls our attention is the limited horizon of the blind in their relationships, especially in comparison with those who see. Although the blind in themselves do not bear a limit in being sociable, now that the feelings of communication are primarily hearing and speech, their social lives are much more restricted than those of the seeing.

The imposition of not being able to take in a situation at first sight or to recognize the people gathered together socially, obliges the blind man to retract, wait for the others to be introduced and inform him of what is happening. If the others make no attempt to approach he remains fatally isolated. In other words, normally, the blind man cannot choose his friends as the seeing must take the initiative to open the friendship.

It is convenient to recognize with all sincerity that the beginning of such friendships demands generosity, tact, fine psychological perception and above all authentic cordiality on the part of the seeing; virtues and human conditions that do not always live together. The blind should frequently reflect on all this to appreciate without resentment or embarrassment the friendship offered to them and the collaboration received from the seeing, as well as the friendly spirit of co-operation with which they must reciprocate. All fruitful social activity is born in efficacious collaboration but, in the case of the blind, nothing can be conceived or gained without the assistance of the seeing. This is evident even in the case of a blind person possessing extraordinary merits.

Thinking once again of the difficulties faced by the blind in living on terms of equality with the seeing, it is observed that when they cannot see who belongs to a group or familiar ambient their conversation and attitudes lack spontaneity, not so much because of an inferiority complex, but just for reasons of elementary prudence.

In summarizing, let us enumerate the main consequences which, in our judgment, blindness inflicts on the social life of an individual in his informal relations with the seeing:

1. It makes him dependent and this places him in an inferior social position.
2. It produces a certain isolation, which leads to a tendency to introversion or to join groups whose members suffer from the same limitations.
3. It restricts the themes on which he can speak with actual direct knowledge.
4. It limits to a great extent his initiative to extend his social contacts.
5. His behaviour in strange surroundings loses spontaneity.

The Blind Person and Marriage

Observation affords sufficient and eloquent information as to the difficulties encountered by the blind of both sexes in the matter of marriage with the sighted.

The blind man has less chance than a sighted man of marrying a seeing woman, and in the case of a blind woman her possibilities are even more limited; one rarely meets with marriages between a blind woman and a seeing man.

For the blind man, the factors which make it difficult for him to marry a seeing woman are above all, the fear—when there is a motive—that the blindness could be handed on to the children; this is, of course, applicable to the blind woman as well; the economic insecurity which is also cause for delay in such marriages; and the impression of the lessened protection and strength he can offer.

The blind woman presents an even more difficult and problematic situation. Psychologically, blindness affects her more, and her social maladjustment and isolation are intensified in virtue of her spiritual state.

Sighted men believe that a blind woman is incapable of running a house or educating and caring for her children. The fewer opportunities to form a natural friendship with blind women restrict the possibilities of appreciating other charms or discovering new facets which would encourage love to flower.

It is hardly necessary to say that marriage between the blind and the seeing, besides helping to resolve many of their psychological problems, constitutes perhaps their most effective element of integration into the general society. But the difficulties that the blind encounter on the way frequently make them turn once more to those who are like themselves, producing too many marriages that are neither beneficial nor advisable from a social point of view.

The Blind in the Working World

Work constitutes, without doubt, the most fundamental problem for the blind. If the greatest obstacle for the deaf-mute is communication, for the blind man it is preparing himself for work and the opening of the doors which will enable him to find employment.

In many parts of the world the participation of the blind man in the daily toil of society through a profession or paid work is still limited to very reduced groups and this is a most important factor in conditioning his social situation. It is not necessary to insist that independently of other psychological and economic effects the possibility of integration of the blind amongst the seeing through work is a highly desirable goal from a social point of view.

Towards this, all the organizations for the blind in the world have focused their attention on the advances, in the professional field, that are taking place, mainly since the second World War, in the countries most developed industrially. Where the blind encounter work in equality with the sighted, with clear understanding that they are perfectly capable and expected to carry it out, there is born a feeling of responsibility that is definitely an important factor for real and true incorporation in a social task.

In effect, work, whether for the blind or the seeing, has a dual function: social and individual. The social function consists in the integration of a useful element in society through its active participation in the creation of goods or the lending of services. The work of the blind reflects, because of this, in benefit to the society.

But the importance of work to the blind is seen most clearly in their individual personal dimension. Through it, the blind man can provide for his own needs and become a man of value. This means the domination of the consciousness of invalidity, the intimate satisfaction of returning to society some or much of what has been received and consequently gaining confidence in himself.

From all this can be deduced the need to create and extend the Rehabilitation and Training Centres which provide the training for existing employment or in view of future openings. There will be many difficulties to overcome in all parts of the world and results will be slow, but this should not lead to discouragement. On the contrary, the powers that be must study the stimulants that will awaken the professional vocation among the blind, examine in a realistic way the possibilities of each individual in relation to the work to which he can aspire, imbue in the blind an exacting criteria in respect to the quality and production of their own work, and finally carry out an untiring, intelligent and sincere publicity campaign among employers to convince them of the possibilities of the blind who are professionally qualified.

The State and the Blind

All States, in a greater or lesser degree, in a direct or indirect way, are actively preoccupied with the problem of blindness. It is worth while to show that this preoccupation must aim at the incorporation of the blind in society which entails social obligations and rights.

At the risk of appearing repetitive let us say that in this task it is impossible to separate the economic from the spiritual aspect.

When the blind man cannot earn his living he constitutes for the family a burden which in the majority of cases, becomes insupportable. Then his social decorum suffers gravely. For another part, the sensation of uselessness that this produces in him brings about a deep depression which aggravates the situation.

The first object is, without doubt, survival. Because of this the application when it is possible, on the part of the State, of formulas that open activities able to be fulfilled by all normal blind people, is very praiseworthy. When these formulas permit those deprived of sight to resolve their economic problem and their social security in the same degree as the average producer of his own country, the first goal of national amplitude—much superior to the solutions based exclusively on a system of pensions—will be reached.

Until now this paper has dealt with the blind among the seeing, in marriage, in the working world and in their relationship with the State. But, in conclusion, it is effective to quote the words of John Milton when writing to Mr. Cyriak Skinner:

'These eyes, though clear to outward view
Of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot,
Not to their idle orbs doth sight
Appear of sun, or moon or star,
Throughout the year, or man or woman.
Yet I argue not, against heaven's hand
Or will, nor bate a
Jot of heart or hope; but still bear up
And steer right onwards.'

It is significant that with this attitude he created and produced as strongly as any other in his field and it is indeed a message and example to be carried in the heart by every blind person for his total integration into society.

The Social Impact of Blindness upon the Individual

By **Mrs. H. L. Lee,** *Secretary-General, Malaysian Association for the Blind, Malaysia*

The two important words in this title are 'Social' and 'Individual', for one without the other would not produce any impact. It is the interplay of these two conditions that brings about the type of impact, and the degree, or force of the impact upon the individual.

Those gifted with sight often find it difficult to observe the blind objectively, as they tend to project their own feelings upon the blind, interpreting them as being equally acceptable in the condition of the blind. When first confronted with the sight of a blind person, the normal person feels profound pity. 'What if it had happened to me? How awful if I never see the sky, the flowers!' He would indeed be amazed to hear a person blind from birth expressing the thought that this had never

bothered him, since not having known what it was like, he never thought of missing it—until constantly asked the question by well-meaning sighted people. If the idea were accepted that we could isolate the blind individual from society we might in all probability find that the impact of blindness at birth upon him would be negligible. If we went one step further and imposed the usual theory that those who are blind at birth need adjustment at a later period when they approach adulthood on realising that they are different from other people, we might well find the problem negligible because the condition that there is no society precludes such conjecture. Presumably such an individual would be able to scratch together an existence, and die, if not in bliss, at least in blissful ignorance that he has missed the best things in life. The moment we place the individual in society, what happens?

He must conform with society. This is most difficult to achieve even for some 'normal' members of society. The blind individual with his handicap has to make a niche for himself in a society made for the sighted. Whether he competes in urban society or rural society the fact remains that society has been moulded, long before he was born, to meet the needs of sighted people. At every stage in his life he will find that it rests upon him to adapt himself to existing conditions of society if he is to make himself a respected and contributing member of the society in which he lives. Fortunately for him society today is slowly but surely beginning to realize that it, too, has responsibilities in this struggle to give its blind members equal opportunities in every field.

That there is an impact is indisputable and it affects the blind individual in every phase,

1. within the immediate family circle;
2. during his school life;
3. in his employment;
4. within his community.

Much has been written on the need for adjustment of the blind and it has been broadly accepted that the impact on those who are blind in adulthood is immediate whereas those who are blind at birth, whilst not completely ignorant, are more likely to become acutely aware of their difference on approach to adulthood.

In societies where organized work for the blind has developed in the last century and made sufficient progress so as to influence the public into accepting its responsibility to assist the blind, it is found that within the family circle much can be achieved to restore confidence in the blind member. Within the average family there is usually worked out a pattern of behaviour wherein each member has his own responsibilities to himself and to his family. There is a sense of well-being built on the assumption that each member is a personality in his own right and though there may be difference of opinion, each member has his allocation of respect, love, privileges and duties. When one member becomes blind whether at birth or in adulthood, as soon as there is a demarcation that he is different from the others, this delicate balance is shattered and the impact on the blind individual could be damaging—sometimes

for life. In the society described earlier it is becoming more wide-spread to accept the person's blindness, and try in every way practical to adjust things in such a way that the blind member may be relieved of certain responsibilities which he is unable to carry out because of his affliction, and to relegate to him other duties which he is not only capable of but at times in which he would excel over others. At the same time he is not deprived of privileges, e.g. schooling, or sharing in family outings which the rest of the family take for granted. The attitude of the family towards the blind member is healthy and at no time is he made to feel that he is pitied. Neither is he made to feel that he should shirk his responsibilities just because he is blind, as does happen in a society where organized work for the blind is unknown or only beginning to be organized.

In these circumstances, families which have a blind member often accept his affliction, as a stroke of fate. Their treatment of him could range from resentment that he has been dumped on them as a burden for life or, at the other extreme, loving tolerance to the extent that he is unable to do anything for himself. Whilst no statistics are available on this it could be said that wealth is no criterion where this matter is concerned. It may well be that the poor farmer eking out a living on subsistence level will still prevent his blind son from helping him in the fields, preferring that he spends profitless hours idling on the verandah. On the other hand the wealthy man will give strict instructions to his servants that every need of his blind son should be catered for and that at no time should he be allowed to do anything for himself. The motivations are different as the poor farmer merely wants to make sure that the boy is out of harm's way as he cannot afford the time or money to look after him should he fall or hurt himself while working in the field; the rich man does not want his child to be seen working for fear his friends may ridicule him for being heartless enough to make his son work despite his wealth! Just as societies differ, so do blind individuals differ. We do find that there are those who are bright and hard-working, those who are warped. But, whatever their dispositions and whatever the motivations of their families, such prolonged idleness for the blind individual and segregation from the normal activities of the family will kill inititative in the long run. It would not be surprising to see him grow up indifferent and irresponsible, to do nothing and to expect society to do everything for him. When his family is unable to do anything more for him, probably through the death of the bread-winner, he then becomes a liability to the society and ultimately to State Welfare.

Let us now move out of the family circle and take a step towards the education and training of the blind person. In the society which has organized schooling for children, either residential or on an integrated basis, the young blind person is given an opportunity to prepare for the day when he will have to seek employment in competition with the sighted.

Education of the blind is expensive and the specialized equipment and materials required are out of proportion to that used by sighted

people. Nevertheless, there is no alternative if the blind person is to be placed on an equal footing when he is eventually let loose in the rat race in which most sighted people find themselves today. This term 'rat race' usually refers to the period of life when individuals in employment scramble for better positions and try to reach the top of the social ladder. Few realize that we are in the rat race very much earlier on in life. Today in many societies young children are flung into the mad scramble almost as soon as they enter school. No longer is primary education sufficient. He must go through secondary education and if he has any intention of reaching executive class, he must obtain a university degree. In certain societies where unemployment is a severe problem even those with high academic qualifications find competition a grinding pace. Therefore to suggest that the blind person should be deprived of education just because the equipment and material he requires are expensive, would be for society to shirk its responsibility in helping the blind to become self-respecting and contributing members of the society.

It could even be argued that since taking the three Rs is expensive, blind people need only be given vocational training, either oriented to rural or urban requirements. To the realist, education or schooling provides the elementary tool for employment. In society where basic schooling is gradually spreading to all levels of society, the general intelligence is raised. It is a moot point to argue that certain blind individuals could be found, who without any education have a higher intelligence than some educated sighted people. The fact remains that if general education for sighted citizens is raised to a high level, the blind person who does not receive this education is gradually left behind. His general knowledge is limited. If the particular society in which he lives is highly industrialized, the general standard of vocational training will be raised accordingly. Without a sound schooling the range of such training for the blind person will be limited. To take a simple example, a blind boy with a secondary schooling is likely to become a better Telephone Operator or Stenographer than one with only primary schooling, as this occupation does not depend on the mastery of the manipulating of the machines but also on general knowledge and intelligence in handling the situation.

Let us now consider the social impact of the blind boy who has had no schooling. Most of us take it for granted that when we go to school we are expected to gain a Certificate which will enable us to go one step further in education. Most of us also overlook the fact that during this period we are also going through the very important process of growing up. In schools we take the knocks of failures, the bewilderment of being able to excel in one subject, and yet failing dismally in another, no matter how hard we tried. We fail to understand why a certain teacher or a certain boy could behave so meanly, yet we do not lose faith in all other teachers or our classmates. Without the protection of the family circle we are learning to adapt ourselves to living with other people. In other words, our school is a society in a nutshell and we learn to differentiate the kind people from the bad, the inconsiderate though well-meaning, the thoughtless. We learn to accept rude ques-

tions, probing remarks and jeers in their proper perspective, and by the time we leave school and take our positions in the world, whether as clerk, factory hand or executive, we are adjusted. The blind person who is deprived of this slow and long process of growing up finds it immensely difficult to adjust himself to society, not having been initiated earlier into their ways. Therefore when he is exposed to them when working in a factory or an office he might be inclined to think that certain remarks were levelled at him just because he is blind and helpless. To expect him to gain perspective at a late stage is unfair.

In the field of employment there is increasing competition even amongst the sighted. Yet in many societies where blind people have been trained and educated to a high point of efficiency and where the placement service has achieved success, large numbers of blind people have been placed in open employment despite overwhelming competition from the sighted and at times in spite of high unemployment figures. This is only possible where the attitude of the public, particularly of the employers, towards the blind, is advanced. However, the search for employment is exacting. In certain instances although the blind person may have the necessary training or education, employment cannot be found for him in certain factories or certain offices because the posts are what can be termed 'dual posts'. For instance if the post is for a Telephone Operator-cum-Receptionist, or Telephone Operator-cum-Copy Typist, the Blind Operator, however high his standard cannot be accepted due to his inability to fill the other half of the post. Most factories today work on the assembly line basis. At certain points of an assembly line, the blind cannot take over the process particularly where quality control and such like operations are required. In many small factories, a sighted employee may be given a particular job on certain days, alternating with another job which a blind person cannot take over. Even if it wishes to assist, the management might find it physically impossible to do so without upsetting the schedule. It would also be interesting to consider the attitude of certain Unions in certain societies on the employment of blind people when they are not eligible for certain reasons, to be members of the Union.

Mobility is another issue of interest. In a highly competitive society, labour moves to points of employment as the situation demands. The factory hand or the stenographer thinks nothing of hopping on to a train for a town hundreds of miles away, taking on a post in the heart of the town and then finding accommodation some miles away in the suburb. If there are no canteen facilities within the firm he will think nothing of dashing out for a quick meal in another part of the town. It is accepted that mobility training for the blind has reached a remarkable degree in certain societies and this must be so in order that the prospective employer should not consider mobility a potential burden should he decide to employ a blind person.

On the question of lodgings, the blind person in a strange town or area would sometimes find difficulty in convincing the prospective landlord that he is quite capable of looking after himself.

When we have finished with schooling and with employment what

else would the blind expect from society? In many communities, blind people are still expected to participate from the side line in social gatherings of any sort. When it comes to the question of starting families of their own, there are more complex problems. In Western societies where blind and welfare work has reached a high standard the problem may not be so acute. This is more so in those societies where marriage is based on romance, and the personality of the person is sometimes valued above his physical appearance. In these circumstances the blind man or girl still has a chance to win his or her mate, and does not need to be regarded as being different because there are many sighted people who live to the end of their lives unattached. In societies where all adults are expected to settle down as a matter of course the blind man who has received sufficient education and training to obtain employment has a certain amount of rating in the marriage market and he would still be able to attract a sighted girl into agreeing to marry him. However, this is more difficult for the blind girl to achieve.

Thus in considering the social impact of blindness upon the individual we can see that however great his courage and patience, and his will to overcome his handicap, it is recognized that the obstacles confronting him are, if not insurmountable, onerous. The obstacles are not made by him but are inherited in the society into which he is born. It therefore behoves society to make some efforts to assist the blind person to rise out of his desolateness and to give some education, training and guidance so that he can help himself and society.

So far, we have laid emphasis on the impact of blindness on the blind person, but if society is to help the blind, the right attitude of the sighted towards blindness is vital. Over-sympathy leading to a desire 'to help' the blind may reap results which are undesirable. How often have we come across instances where the sighted person solicitously offers to help the blind person feed himself with an attitude that he needs his bib and tucker to be fixed on for him. It never seems to occur to some sighted people that the stage whispers which accompany some of their offers of assistance in this and other similar circumstances, are most painful to the sensitive blind. To be treated as precious bone china or to be ostracized for their affliction can be equally humiliating. The reaction from the blind person is then misunderstood as 'ingratitude', 'wanting to be difficult', 'non co-operative'. The remedy for this lies in a healthy attitude towards the blind and we will come closer to this if in their efforts to educate the blind, the protagonists for work for the blind give equal importance and attention to guiding the public on the proper attitude to adopt. They have already achieved a measure of success in those societies where their influence has been felt for some time. With continued efforts to spread this knowledge, it is not unforeseeable that society throughout the world and the blind members of society will jointly work towards lessening their impact on one another, so that the blind will take their rightful place in society.

The Social Impact of Blindness upon the Individual

By **Berthold Lowenfeld, Ph.D.,** *Superintendent, California School for the Blind (U.S.A.).*

Differences in people, whether they are of race, religion or an identifiable sensory loss, have their social impact. This is particularly the case if the individual belongs to a minority group, distinguishable from the majority by definite characteristics. How a given society reacts to a given minority depends upon circumstances which prevail on either side. Among these circumstances on the part of society are such factors as cultural status, governmental social philosophy, general enlightenment of the populace, and affluence; on the part of the individual, the origin and history of his group, the ease with which he can be identified as its member, and either real or assumed characteristics of the group.

Blindness is a sensory loss which can be recognized in most individuals with comparative ease, either by the way they appear or by the way they act. It is therefore not surprising that certain generally prevailing attitudes toward the blind can be determined in any given society.

In reviewing the way society has regarded and treated the blind during the history of the Western world, we can distinguish three phases. The blind were treated as liabilities, as wards, and as members, in successive historical stages.

In the early days of mankind, when struggle for survival brought individuals together to form a tribe, any member who could not fully contribute to the subsistence and defense of the group was a liability and, consequently, subject to elimination. From Roman and Greek history we know that blind children were left to the mercy of the elements. They were either set in the mountains as was the case in old Sparta, or put into a basket and placed in the current of the Tiber River, as was the case in Rome. A few of those who became blind later in life were regarded with veneration and awe, such as Homer and Tiresias. But even Plato had no use for the weak ones in his ideal state. Thus, all that was left for the blind was to eke out the meagerest of existence by begging on the streets. For many centuries the blind were held in this status, and historical writings provide ample evidence of its wide spread and long duration.*

A decisive change was brought about with the growth of the monotheistic religions. The blind were given the right to live and beyond that, the right to be protected. The early Church considered them as its special wards and throughout the Middle Ages they, together with children and the aged, were considered preferred receivers of charity. It is interesting to note that these three groups are still singled out as special categories in the framework of social legislation in the United States and in other countries. At the end of this second period, an increasing number of blind individuals proved to themselves and to their contemporaries that they were capable of outstanding achievements,

*French, Richard S., *From Homer to Helen Keller*. New York, American Foundation for the Blind, 1932, 31-57.

and this aroused the attention and devotion of those who were to become the pioneer educators of the blind.

The third historical phase, that of the integration of the blind into society, began with the establishment of educational facilities for blind children. Since then many changes have occurred which justify our contention that we live in a period in which the integration of the blind into society is, although gradually, becoming a reality.

I would like to offer to you a few facts which can be cited as proof of this historical interpretation. Since I have personally witnessed most of the changes which took place in work for the blind in the western world and particularly in the United States over the past forty years, I can do this in a somewhat autobiographical manner. In these four decades or so, the world as a whole has indeed seen great changes; the aftermath of the First World War, the Great Depression, the Second World War, the Atomic Age, and now the Age of Automation. During these years events in work for the blind have taken place in the United States which are, in my opinion, no less revolutionary.

Let me first discuss *the rise of public school education* for blind children in the United States. After the first years of growth of classes of blind children in public schools in the early 1900's the enrolment levelled off and remained proportionally the same for many years. It amounted to no more than 10 to 15 per cent. of the total blind school age population as registered with the American Printing House for the Blind. From 1952 on, the enrolment in public school programs showed a steady increase until, in 1962, 58 per cent. of all registered blind children were enrolled in such programs. In fact, the largest share of the increase due to retrolental fibroplasia appears to have been absorbed by the public school programs in which attendance rose from 985 in 1952 to 9,684 in 1962. While public school attendance of blind children multiplied ten times, enrolment in residential schools for the blind rose from 5,108 in 1952 to 7,040 in 1962. The reasons for this shift I have discussed in my article, 'History and Development of Specialized Education for the Blind',* and, therefore, I will mention here only the three factors which I consider most responsible for it. (1) The increasing integration of the blind into society; (2) the American high regard for public school education, and (3) the recognition of the importance of family life for the individual child.

There are other changes which also point in the direction of integration. Residential schools for the blind have turned from more or less 'closed' schools to more or less 'open' schools, thus following the trends which characterize changes in the public school education. Personnel in these schools, particularly the teachers, are required in many States to be professionally trained and certified in their area of specialization. Administratively most schools function now under State Departments of Education and are thus an integral part of the public school systems of their States. Public school programs for blind children also have undergone considerable changes. They have developed from so-called

*Lowenfeld, Berthold, 'History and Development of Specialized Education for the Blind'. *The New Outlook for the Blind*, 1956, 401-408.

braille classes which were segregated into resource programs and itinerant teacher provisions. In these the blind child is placed in the regular classroom and receives supportive assistance, given to him and his teacher by an instructor especially trained in the education of the blind. Programs for the *education of teachers of the blind* were, until some decades ago, conducted almost exclusively by a few residential schools for the blind. At present they are a part of the teacher education offered by public and private Colleges and Universities within their regular course programs.

In the field of work with the adult blind, the following developments are significant for the trend toward integration. *Vocational Rehabilitation* and its underlying philosophy, has undergone perhaps the greatest change. When I came into work for the blind in the early 1920's, the prevailing practice was to assume that the 'blind' could do certain types of work and these were generally taught in schools and workshops for the blind. Compare this with our present-day approach which asks and tests for the individual blind person's aptitudes and interests, provides training in the kind of work for which he is best suited, no matter whether any blind person has done it before, and assists him in being placed in the field for which he has been successfully trained. This complete change in approach has resulted in an increased influx of blind people into industry, private enterprise, and the professions. The legal framework for this advance in the United States was provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, particularly in its 1954 Amendments, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration has used it boldly and imaginatively to build up strong programs serving all disabled citizens.

Social legislation, for which the Federal government assumed responsibility only in 1935, has secured a modicum of subsistence for most blind people in need of it and provided the starting means for the personal and economic rehabilitation of many. The Federal assumption of responsibility for the public assistance programs has contributed to a general rise in the standards of public assistance and to a greater uniformity of these services in all States from which the blind derived particular advantage. It is obvious that economic security is a precondition for successful integration into society.

About half a century ago, most agencies for the blind conducted as an integral part of their services a *home for the blind*, sometimes two, one for men and for women. This continued the European practice by which blind children would enter the residential school and upon graduation transfer from it to another building where handicrafts would keep them productively occupied until they became too old to work and were moved to still another building—on the same grounds—for the aged blind. This gave blind persons a kind of 'cradle to grave' (or 'womb to tomb') security, but it also isolated them completely from the community, apparently to the satisfaction of the then prevailing attitudes. Almost none of the American residential schools followed this practice but many adult agencies provided homes for the blind, often in connection with their workshops. If we survey the field now, we find very

few of these institutions in the United States and their demise is deplored by few if any. It is in line with the increasing integration of the blind into society.

Many consider the limitation in *mobility* as one of the most serious effects of blindness. At a time when blind people were confined to residential schools, to special workshops, and generally to a life-space restricted by the concepts of the seeing world concerning the effects of blindness, there was no great need for mobility. True, there always existed some individual blind people who overcame the societal restrictions and acquired mobility and other skills, but this was done apart from the generally prevailing confinement of the blind to a restricted life-space. In our days when many blind children go to public schools, blind students attend colleges, blind people are trained for and pursue many kinds of work and take part in all phases of communal life, there is an urgent need to develop their mobility potential to its fullest. It was not by chance only that Dr. R. Hoover and his associates developed the long cane technique in connection with the rehabilitation of war-blinded service personnel. Here was a group of young and potentially fully active individuals who needed mobility as an essential prerequisite for their return to normal life. Mobility skills and mobility training techniques have been refined and systematized so that they constitute now a special field of instruction for which training facilities are available at two colleges in the United States. Mobility training is rapidly becoming a part of the rehabilitation of all blind people in the United States. It promotes their integration into the normal stream of life.

There are other facts which could be mentioned in support of our thesis that we live in the period of integration of the blind into society because this trend permeates most of the activities in our field.

But let us not be over-optimistic—we are only on the way to integration and there are some potent factors which must be overcome before full integration can be achieved. They are largely in the area of socio-psychological interaction and we find them to be the same as or very similar to those working against integration of other minority groups. Gowman stated in his book, *The War Blind in American Social Structure**, that one must recognize that the blind person holds a marginal position in society and 'presents an unusual stimulus to uninitiated others, a stimulus which may arouse feelings of threat, conflict and fundamental impotence'. Since it is human nature to avoid negative stimuli, seeing people may tend to avoid those who are blind or show reluctance to meet them in a closer personal relationship. The same avoidance reaction may also be caused by an unwillingness to enter into a situation of social contact where the partner's reactions are less predictable than those usually encountered. This, I believe, is the case when a clerk or waiter turns toward the seeing companion of the blind person and asks him about the latter's wishes. It is not so much a lack of recognition of the blind person's capability to take care of himself, but rather the avoidance of a situation which the individual feels less competent to handle.

Gowman, Alan G., *The War Blind in American Social Structure.* New York American Foundation for the Blind, 1957, XV.

Wright, in her excellent book, *Physical Disability—A Psychological Approach** points out that a physical disability puts a person into an inferior status position'. 'She states: 'The stereotype of a person with a disability typically describes one who has suffered a great misfortune and whose life is consequently disturbed, distorted, and damaged forever.' I do not need to cite to you examples for this attitude which is daily incurred by the blind and those who work with them. The stereotypes about physically disabled persons in general are, in the case of the blind, stongly supported by a process of early conditioning which presents the blind, in fairy tales and folkore, as helpless beggars and uses them for moralizing purposes as examples of an underprivileged group which lives only by the good deeds of others. The commonly accepted connotations of the word 'blind' itself, as in 'blind fury', 'blind alley', etc., also reinforce negative attitudes. In addition, religious influences and naïve concepts of justice as well as superstitions explain blindness as retribution for sins committed by parents or ancestors, or put the responsibility for his blindness on the blind person himself. Psychoanalytically oriented theories stress the importance of sight in the psychosexual development of the individual and equate loss of sight with castration, referring also to the Oedipus legend.

Since we are talking about attitudes, I would like to discuss with you two points of view among those who work with the blind, both, in my opinion, extreme and unrealistic. On the one hand, there are people who feel that they must describe their concept of blindness by enumerating and detailing all the possible losses it can generate. True, blindness is a severe loss which seriously affects the cognitive, social and economic functions of any individual. But what good does it serve to depict the blind in such a way that the blind person can hardly recognize himself, lost in all these losses, and that the seeing are led to conclude that there is either no or only rarely a chance for their full rehabilitation. On the other hand, there are those who claim that blindness is just a nuisance or inconvenience. Surely, blindness is more than that since both terms imply that you can get rid of it if it annoys you. Statements of this kind, if they are made by professional workers in the field, inevitably cast serious doubt on their realism and are taken for wishful thinking only. While the loss appraisal leads one to believe that, in the face of such overwhelming losses, nothing really effective can be done, the nuisance appraisal evokes the question why, in the face of such a rosy evaluation, anything should be done. I want to warn of both appraisals, since they prevent a recognition of the actual status and needs of the individual blind person. In my opinion, they do far more harm than good, though they may be temporarily captivating.

As a result of all these influences, the majority group tends to have preconceived ideas about the capacities and other personal characteristics of blind people. Collectively, they are inclined to separate them from the majority and to provide for them those services which they think are good for them and needed by them. This approach dominated

*Wright, Beatrice A., *Physical Disability—A Psychological Approach.* New York; Harper & Brothers, 1960, 17.

the early charitable agencies for the blind, and there are unfortunately too many of them which have not yet shed it. One of the most encouraging facts in this situation is that blind persons themselves have assumed increasing leadership in guiding their own destinies. This is expressed by the important role which organizations of the blind are playing in promoting legislation on behalf of the blind and determining the direction of work for the blind in general. It also shows up in the ever-growing number of executives and employees of public and private agencies serving the blind who are themselves usually visually handicapped. As an example, international and national conventions in our field were dominated in the past largely by sighted representatives while in the more recent decades blind persons themselves have assumed leadership and greater responsibilities.

The social position of the blind has great similarity to that of other minority groups, as pointed out by many writers. Although there are factors in the socio-psychological position of the blind, which go beyond the simile with minority groups, there is good evidence by research that negative attitudes toward the blind have a significant correlation with anti-minority and anti-Negro attitudes and also with 'authoritarian personality'.* It stands to reason, then, that any efforts directed toward reducing anti-minority and authoritarian attitudes will also have a salutary effect upon the position of the blind in society and will improve their outlook for full integration. This, indeed, is the challenge of our time in the United States.

What has been pointed out so far pertains largely to the social impact of blindness in the Western World, particularly the United States. I would like to digress from this for a moment to call your attention to the unique status of the blind as an emergent group in some of the developing countries of Africa and Asia. In many of these countries, the 'ward' position of the blind as we know it from Western culture is either greatly abbreviated or skipped entirely. This is exemplified by the way in which efforts are made to provide education for blind children in some parts of the developing world. Residential schools are in many of these countries non-existent or serve only an infinitesimal number of those who need an education. Many of these blind children who had no opportunities for gaining an education are now placed in regular public schools and provided with the special help they need. Similarly the adult blind of some of these countries are not hampered by traditions of charitable institutions which would tend to keep them in a 'ward' position, but are integrating in their societies, contributing their individual skills to the economic and social life of their communities.

What Goethe, Germany's greatest poet, said about 150 years ago when the United States was one of the developing countries, may very well be applied to those of today:

*Cowen, E. L., Underberg, R. P., and Verrillo, R. T., Development and The 'Testing of an Attitude to Blindness Scale'. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 1958, 297-304.

'Amerika, du hast es besser Als unser Kontinent, das alte, Hast keine verfallens Schlösser Und keine Basalte.	'America, you fare much better Than this old continent of ours, No basalt rocks your land enfetter No ruined towers.
Dich stört nicht im Innern, Zu lebendiger Zeit, Unnützes Errinnern Und vergeblicher Streit.'	Your mind feels no troubles When time is for life From useless past struggles And fruitless old strife.'

In conclusion, let me ask the question, why it is of practical importance to recognize that we live in the age of integration of the blind into society? If we accept this interpretation of our historical place in work for the blind, we not only gain an objective for our efforts but also a criterion for what is desirable and undesirable in work for the blind. 'Institutions and services for blind individuals, unimpeded by further handicaps, which separate the blind and keep them separated are regressive. Even though they may be temporarily beneficial to a blind individual, they are undesirable and inimical to the interest of the blind. Institutions and services which aim at the integration of the blind and instil in them the spirit of independence and strengthen those qualities and skills which will enable them to take their rightful place as members of their society are progressive, desirable and in the best interest of the blind.'*

With this set as a goal, our efforts can combine with those of others who are struggling for their rightful place and move us on toward the fulfilment of an age-old ideal.

*Lowenfeld, Berthold, 'Co-operation in Work for the Blind, Here and Abroad'. *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Convention of the American Association of Workers for the Blind*, 1950, 19-20.

FIFTH SESSION **Monday afternoon, August 3rd, 1964**

MODERN APPROACHES TO FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE BLIND

Chairman: **Mr. A. N. Magill,** *Managing Director, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Canada.*

Modern Approaches to Financial Assistance to the Blind

By **H. C. Seierup.** *President, Dansk Blindesamfund, Denmark.*

I have been requested to make a statement about modern approaches of financial assistance to the blind; this is a comprehensive subject for a broad international audience.

Delegates representing many nations of greatly different economic, social, political, and cultural backgrounds are gathered here. Because of these different backgrounds the concept of 'modern approaches' probably will not be interpreted alike by all participants.

I tried to approach the subject at first by delving into international statistical compilations. However, I feel that I have done so with only limited success.

The available statistics are scanty, particularly data of sufficiently uniform nature to permit correlation. There are no international surveys specifically dealing with the conditions of the blind.

In addition, the main international tabulations concerning general social conditions confirm that a brief rough analysis of the situation is not possible.

Even income statistics display wide divergencies from country to country. In the U.S. for instance, the national *per capita* income in 1961 was twice as high as in the U.K., West Germany, and Denmark, nearly ten times that of Spain, most of the South American countries, and Japan, and twenty-five to fifty times higher than India, Afghanistan, Somaliland, and other less-developed countries in Asia and Africa.

The difference in national income—apart from the pronounced unreliability displayed in the compilations—will result in great differences in the budgets allocated for social expenditure. Furthermore, it seems the poorer the nation the lower is the percentage of the national income that can be devoted to social welfare in general.

Where West Germany, among the European countries within the highest one-third income brackets, can spare, for instance, 20 per cent. of the national income on social welfare measures, the economically most underdeveloped Asian nations, with national *per capita* incomes less than one-third of the West Germans, have only been able to spend 1 per cent. of their national incomes for public assistance.

Moreover, the need for social welfare measures may be presumed to be far greater in countries with the least development.

I would like to add, also, that statistics cannot take into account any

care provided by the respective families, and this factor is of particular importance in countries of weak financial structures.

At the same time, historical and political differences will, of course, make themselves felt. For example, nations with marked liberal or progressive traditions will have less expenditures for social welfare in their public budgets.

According to I.L.O. statistics, the U.S., the wealthiest country in the world, roughly spends the same percentage of its national income for social welfare measures as do the far less affluent countries of Portugal, Japan, and Tunisia.

Regarding available information about the principles applying to public assistance, correlation into something resembling an overall survey is not possible either, the more so because the principles are not always easily discernible.

Because I could not submit to this distinguished audience a presentation that was based on inexact figures and diffuse principles, I chose instead to query the various national agencies for the blind.

I sent a brief questionnaire designed to give an individual picture to the organizations in forty countries. I received replies from a total of twenty agencies. These replies show that the picture from country to country is considerably varied.

Even financial aid to the blind seems to range from a few per cent. of average wages per year to up to one hundred per cent. In some countries veterans with service-connected blindness received even more. And at that, the replies were not all sufficiently complete to permit me to draw up a schematic outline.

They confirmed, nevertheless, that aid may be extended to the blind in almost every conceivable way and that the organization in each country deals with only certain aspects of the overall problem.

As a result of my study of the data furnished, I would first like to mention that while there are hardly any limits to the efforts that may be made on a national basis, the international organization should confine itself to limited areas of activities if any substantial results are to be obtained. Co-operation across national borders should also concentrate on those issues common to the national member organizations.

Secondly, I have definitely concluded that only a minority of the national organizations have enough strength to develop the necessary apparatus, that is to say, to create the basis for adequate political and social pressures to have the necessary impact. This impact must be based on accurate statistics and a close familiarity with the country's economy supplemented in addition by a certain and political informational flair.

The national organizations, to a much greater degree than previously, must set up efficient secretariats to make the general public and the governmental authorities understand the problems facing the disabled and the proper approaches to public assistance. The secretariats must engage in highest-level informational, educational, and public relations activities.

A primary problem connected with the care of the blind is the matter of the definition of terms. What are the criteria—medical or vocational —that apply to eligibility for assistance?

With but a few exceptions, the requirement in most countries is a 2/3 or 4/6 disability (combined medical and social welfare estimate). For people with defective sight this often means that a 6/60 vision is the ground for ordinary financial assistance, while vision must be much lower—frequently to only 1/60—to obtain special blind allowances.

Once the criteria have been determined—and room must be left here for the differences prevailing in the respective countries—the question remains how, in principle, financial aid should be granted.

Common to most of the replies in the questionnaire was that in almost all countries aid to the blind takes the form of public assistance.

In a couple of countries (West Germany and Yugoslavia) the blind war veterans are an exception. Aid there takes the form of damages or compensation, and is designed to raise the blind person's income to a level equal to or above that of an active worker. Some civilian blind may in certain countries (Scandinavia among others) receive compensation to cover special expenses.

I would like to recommend as a basis for financial assistance the recognition of the following principle:

Assistance should be divided into four main groups, independent of one another, but in totality forming an ideal that would cover all situations.

The four types of financial assistance I am going to describe are as follows:

1. Disability compensation.
2. Living allowances.
3. Special allowances.
4. Technical assistance.

1. Disability compensation

The amount of compensation should be sufficient to ensure that the recipient is covered for the expenses resulting from his disability. By the very nature of its purpose the amount of compensation should be graduated solely according to degree of disability. Perhaps we should seek to achieve international standards for the degrees of disability.

For the totally paralysed and bedridden the physical handicap must be assessed at 6/6, and this should entitle the disabled person to maximum compensation.

For the totally blind the disability must be assessed at 5/6, and this should entitle the disabled person to the second largest compensation.

On the other hand, persons with defective sight, the hard of hearing, and certain other groups of physically handicapped assessed at the rate of 4/6, ought to receive compensation somewhat lower than the other two groups.

There seems to be a trend here and there to extend assistance also to people with even lower disability rates. This applies to farmers, and it may apply to housewives. They may very well be disabled but it is

possible to give effective assistance to them with comparatively small amounts. The rate of disability in such cases should, however, be assessed at 3/6.

By their very nature, the amounts of compensation are strictly personal. They should not be taxable, nor subject to reduction in case of gainful employment. The compensation should be considered as an amount intended to cover special expenses of the disabled and, therefore, not be classed as support.

2. Living Allowances

Before a person applies for public assistance, an attempt at rehabilitation should first have been made, and every chance to obtain full or part-time employment should have been exploited as well.

If the disabled person *cannot* be rehabilitated, assistance must be granted, whether for reasons of old age, failing health, inability to work, or a combination of all these factors.

If, in spite of attempts at rehabilitation, employment cannot be procured for the disabled person, living allowance over and above the amount of compensation should be granted. It is impossible here also to state any specific amount.

However, in various countries there seems to be increasing recognition that the disabled should have a standard of living corresponding at least to that of unskilled workers.

In many countries the amount granted to the disabled is equivalent to that paid to senior citizens, the pensioners. The maximum amount granted in any country reaches only 60 per cent. of the income of unskilled workers, but usually is much lower.

It ought to be most obvious, but unfortunately it is not, that disabled persons should have the same incomes as healthy persons of the same age brackets. Disabled persons should not be compared to senior citizens.

Consequently, the living allowance to be granted to the disabled must raise income to 100 per cent., and not just 60 per cent., of the income of unskilled workers.

I believe it is desirable for living allowances to be adjusted according to the amount of outside income, whether based upon a sliding scale or on a system with a greater spread.

To demand an average income for the disabled who cannot work will be impossible unless the allowance is reduced in line with income obtained through gainful employment. Otherwise the standard of living of the disabled might reach somewhat higher than that of his fellow citizens who pay taxes to provide the necessary assistance.

3. Special Allowances

Very few countries have so far secured for the disabled a standard of living corresponding to that of unskilled workers. However, when this is achieved, no other forms of support should be granted excepting only for purposes of education, employment, and for the provision of technical facilities.

Where the compensation is lower than the wages of unskilled workers, additional assistance is a necessity. An extra allowance must be granted to the spouse and also to the children.

Modern dwellings are often so expensive that a rent allowance, too, is often required. This is true, even if, as is the case in many countries, apartment houses with common facilities are built for the blind and other disabled.

Many severely disabled persons—including old and infirm blind—need help in their homes. In various countries, the municipalities provide such assistance by sending out domestic help to the individuals.

Finally, an increasingly great number of our society are senior citizens who cannot look after themselves in their own homes, even with extensive assistance from outside. Accommodation must be provided for such old people in nursing homes, preferably homes specialized in caring for disabled senior citizens.

4. Technical Assistance

The development of sound technology has brought the blind to the evolutionary stage to which Gutenberg long ago brought the rest of the population of the Western world.

The public authorities to a far greater degree than at present ought to provide facilities for the blind in the form of talking and braille books as well as periodicals in the same way that publications are provided for the sighted part of the population.

This means that every blind person should be provided with a tape recorder, a braille machine as well as an ordinary typewriter. In addition, a number of facilities to minimize the difficulties of everyday life in, as well as outside the home, may be required.

Considering the increasing traffic, persons desiring a guide dog should be given one. I would also like to mention that certain countries are taking steps to motorize the disabled, not only cripples but also the blind.

Many countries provide free transport or provide for reduced fares on buses and trains, but hardly ever on airplanes.

If assistance is lower than average wages, continuing efforts should be made to provide such benefits, possibly also including free or reduced postal rates and radio licences in countries where they are required. If on the other hand sufficient assistance is provided these special benefits should not be granted.

Private initiative has always inaugurated the initial assistance to the blind and other disabled persons. Funds were collected to aid this work, and private initiative has continued even after the governmental authorities took over the major share of responsibility.

I would like to stress that this private philanthropic effort, whether made by the blind themselves or by friends of the blind, led initially to improved conditions, and has continued to pave new roads of progress for the blind.

Through private initiative experiments in new occupations have been made. New technical and other facilities have been provided, and

schools, dwellings and institutions have been built and are continuously being built with money contributed by private persons.

However, we have reached a sufficiently advanced stage to justify our demands that these activities should to an increasing extent be conducted by, or at least be controlled by, our own organizations. This must be the logical result of generations of effort to improve both the social and financial status of the blind.

I feel certain improvements have taken place in the same way all over the globe. To begin with, help was given spontaneously. Next, help was organized by charitable institutions, and finally governmental authorities have taken over more of the obligations as a result of enlightened public knowledge and demand.

The public recognizes that senior citizens have a natural right to pensions because through their efforts they laid the groundwork for the establishment of the productive apparatus upon which the modern industrial society thrives today.

Roads, bridges, schools, harbours, hospitals, and many other things have been provided by their labours, entitling them to their pensions—both morally and economically. Similarly, society has come to recognize that disability is a common societal risk in which all share and which all must help to provide for.

Today, the demand for social security is universal, and not just limited to the poorest in the community. This development, too, is a sign of an advanced, modern outlook resulting in a much broader perspective than even twenty or thirty years ago. This advanced outlook, this broader perspective, has great possibilities for an improved and more effective social welfare policy.

Simultaneously with this positive development in social welfare policy, from relief measures to a kind of total, mutual insurance covering every citizen in the community irrespective of income and wealth, our small associations of the blind have grown up. Many of these have become today organizations exerting their influence on social welfare policy.

However, a general feature characterizing these organizations is an inclination toward isolation, or their fear to co-operate with other social groups. This, in my opinion, is wrong. The blind are so few that they cannot hold only to their own. In the present day community, where practically everybody is covered by some phase of social policy, the possibilities for a small group to achieve its aims are not nearly so great as they may have been during earlier times.

In my country, Denmark, the blind society not only co-operates with other groups of disabled but also with the organizations of senior citizens.

In that way we have created a kind of holding company—not yet strong, not yet rich, and not at all sufficiently well disciplined.

Yet, our organizations jointly comprise one-tenth of the population, and an even greater percentage of the eligible voters. You can easily imagine what this means in our efforts to achieve positive gains.

However, no one has asked for my advice about how to build effective pressure orgnizations and I shall not dwell on the subject.

Yet, I would like to point out by way of a conclusion that if the standard of living of the blind is to be raised, our associations, whether societies or organizations, whether subsisting on donations, collections or subscriptions, must spend some money on research, public relations and to impress political groups. Otherwise I am afraid that our position in society will remain unchanged. We have to change our social status from that of being blind to that of being a full, equal, and regular member of the community.

This will not be achieved automatically or by private philanthropic means. We can only achieve this goal by determined efforts, both as individuals and as organizations. And this also applies to the W.C.W.B.

Modern Approaches to Financial Assistance to the Blind

By **Barbara Knox,** *Organizing Secretary, National Council for the Blind of Ireland.*

Thanks

May I begin with two words of thanks? First to the Programme Committee for the honour done me in inviting me to present this paper, and secondly to the kind people from many countries who have so willingly given the information needed to compile it. In this last connection I would like to make two comments; first to express appreciation and admiration of those who have taken the trouble and have the ability to answer my queries in English rather than their own tongue. There is not time to do justice to their contributions by quoting at length from them, but if I overlook any salient point which they have put forward, I hope it may be advanced in the discussion.

Scope of Paper

The information given has shown how widely financial assistance varies from one country to another, and for this reason I have tried to give an overall picture of the position in some of the countries in which blind welfare is relatively well advanced, though in general without attempting to quote exact details of cash payments, which would be tedious and might be misleading.

Blindness and almsgiving

From time immemorial and in all countries, blindness has been recognized as one of the most crippling of handicaps, and one which not more than a century-and-a-half ago was regarded, even in highly developed countries, as so severe a disability as to make the blind person incapable of contributing to his own support. This still holds today in the under-developed countries where those whose families cannot, or in much rarer cases will not, support them, are thrown back on begging.

The support of blind beggars through almsgiving is regarded in some parts of the world (and especially in Moslem countries) as a religious obligation. No social slur attaches to it, for the beggar, by giving the faithful an opportunity to acquire merit, confers on them a spiritual benefit no less valuable than the material gift. In some parts of Western

Africa, blind men form themselves into highly organized guilds to beg alms, and such guilds are not less respected than the guilds of craftsmen. In China there are somewhat similar guilds, said to be 2,000 years old.

Blindness as a physical handicap

In countries where there are comprehensive schemes for blind welfare there may still be found the occasional beggar, but he is an anachronism. For in such cases blindness is regarded as a physical handicap, which can be greatly mitigated by schemes for the education, training and employment of the young and able-bodied adult, and by the provision of social security for the aged and also for that minority who, by reason of physical or mental incapacity, cannot support themselves.

In more fortunate and advanced countries there has been a gradual moving away from the more or less unco-ordinated help which sprang from charitable impulse and the social conscience of a few philanthropic individuals to a recognition by the State that adequate financial assistance must be provided to raise all blind persons to a reasonable living standard. This is a scientific age, and the scientific approach to the problem of financial assistance is reflected in a shifting of emphasis from providing the able bodied with subsistence to enabling him to have that aid which will help him to become self-supporting.

Financial Assistance

1. Direct.

Financial assistance falls into two groups: direct and indirect. In all countries where direct financial assistance is given, the blind must be registered according to the definition of blindness adopted in the country concerned; this may vary from total blindness to visual acuity not exceeding 6/60th Snellen, or to ability to count fingers at a distance of one metre.

Countries giving direct financial assistance are numerous, including, among others, France, Germany, Britain, Italy, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries, the Irish Republic, the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Japan.

In the Irish Republic a blind person is eligible for a pension of 35*s*. per week at the age of 21 years, subject to a means test and residential qualification. No pension is given if means exceed £143 15*s*. a year. Earnings up to £52 a year are disregarded, as well as £39 if the blind person has a wife or dependent husband and £26 for each child under 16 years of age. Earnings include wages and profit from self employment. In addition there are Schemes for the Welfare of the Blind administered by Local Authorities. These Schemes provide domiciliary assistance for necessitous blind persons and provide for the education of blind children in special schools, industrial training and employment in sheltered workshops, also maintenance in approved institutions for the blind. Financial assistance is also given to voluntary agencies to defray the cost of specialized training, and the National Council for the Blind receives grants towards the cost of its Placement Service and the employment of its Home Teachers.

In parts of Asia and Africa there is a limited acceptance by the community to help the blind from national or local taxation. This is somewhat similar to the condition which prevailed in Britain at a time when the sole State aid for the Blind was derived from the Poor Law, and can only occur in areas such as Ghana, Federal and Northern Nigeria, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, where some type of Poor Law legislation exists. Singapore and Hong Kong have well-developed Poor Law systems from which the blind benefit, and there are municipal relief arrangements in a number of African towns (Freetown, Bathurst and Nairobi are examples) and in the Copper Belt of Northern Rhodesia, as in the Indian cities of New Delhi, Bombay, Karachi and Lahore; from all these, blind persons may receive assistance.

In Barbados, until about ten years ago, there was legislation modelled upon the Elizabethan Poor Law of more than two-and-a-half centuries ago, which required that blind persons should normally be regarded as the responsibility of their families, but stated that where no relatives were in a position to accept this responsibility, it should devolve upon the Poor Law, acting through the Overseers.

Australia. Blind persons who are over the age of 16 are eligible to receive an allowance of £3 weekly, irrespective of means. A similar type of grant is made in New Zealand and also in the Scandinavian countries. The allowance is based upon the view that blind persons, *by reason of their blindness*, have extra living costs and thus, whatever their financial position, they require this 'handicap allowance'. (It is interesting to note that for the past ten years the small state of *Brunei* has had an extraordinarily well devised system of special pensions for the blind, much like that in Australia, though the monthly amount is smaller.)

Handicap Allowances. As blind people in all parts of the world are gradually enabled, through improvements in education, training and facilities for employment, to take their place in society side by side with the seeing, and cease to be segregated, it seems possible that the handicap allowance may well be part of the pattern for the future. For this reason, a few examples of the extra cost of living for the blind may be outlined here.

Items, perhaps small in themselves, may in the aggregate seriously add to the blind person's weekly budget. Incidentally, in the United States, grants are based on individual needs, which includes the difference between a blind person's budget and his total income. What are these items? They include such things as extra clothing, especially for the aged, for blind people, unable to take exercise, often feel the cold acutely, greater wear and tear of clothing and thus more cleaning of garments, help needed in mending, domestic help, payments for errands and shopping, the services of a guide (especially in the traffic hazards of today) the purchase of apparatus (such as braille clocks, watches and typewriters) or the services of a secretary. Not all countries provide free transport for the blind man or his guide. This list is by no means exhaustive, but it may indicate at least some of the expenses entailed by blindness.

Financial Assistance

2. Indirect.

The second, and perhaps the more important approach, is that financial aid which is given indirectly, to enable employable blind people to become independent, a goal only reached after the education and training of the young blind and the rehabilitation of those who lose their sight in adult life. Countries which have advanced systems of aid may pay the entire cost of rehabilitation and defray the cost of a placement service, or give grants to voluntary organizations to carry out this work on their behalf.

Augmentation of wages for those employed in sheltered workshops, grants to home-workers and grants towards blind homes and hostels, also come under this heading of indirect assistance. Travel concessions and income tax relief are given in many countries. In Britain, recent legislation has given additional income tax relief of £100 p.a. to registered blind persons, and even in Turkey, where there is no system of financial assistance, the wages and salaries of blind employees are exempt from income tax. Exemption from payment of dog licence and radio licence is also conceded in some countries.

The Place of Voluntary Aid. In countries where blind welfare is advanced, there is a growing tendency for the State to undertake tasks which had previously been left to voluntary effort; it is sometimes urged that in future all assistance, direct or indirect, must come from public funds, and that the days of voluntary agencies are numbered.

There are, however, good reasons to believe that voluntary aid is not a spent force. It can still help in those areas in the life of the blind individual which lie outside the scope of public funds, and provide amenities without which life would be drab—such amenities as radio, the talking book, and the provision of books in embossed type for recreational reading.

The passing of the Blind Persons Act, 1920, was the first beginning of State responsibility in the British Isles; before that the problem was almost entirely left to voluntary aid. My country has a population of 3½ million, and a blind population of approximately 8,000, so our problem is small by world standards. While development since 1920 has been slow, the position began to improve when voluntary organizations brought the needs of the blind to the notice of Government and Local Authorities.

My own organization, the National Council for the Blind of Ireland, was founded in 1931, mainly through the efforts of the late Miss Alice Armitage, daughter of Dr. Thomas Rhodes Armitage, founder of the National Institute for the Blind, London. At that time there were in existence two schools for blind children, sheltered workshops, and a small pension at 50 years of age, but nothing was being done to meet the needs of the blind in their homes—many of them alone, with nothing to brighten their monotonous lives. The National Council lost no time in appointing a Home Teacher and Visitor to visit the blind in their homes. From that small beginning has sprung the Home Teaching and Visiting Service of today. The aim of the Council has always been a

welfare service for the blind of the whole Republic. With this end in view branches of the Council have been established throughout the Republic, each with its own Home Teacher to care for the local blind. Pioneer work has been slow, only a few branches being formed each year, until there are now very few counties without a branch.

In 1934, the Wireless for the Blind Fund was started with the provision of twenty radios. Over 9,000 sets have been provided and maintained during the past thirty years—all purchased by voluntary contributions. Thirty years ago employment, except in sheltered workshops, was unheard of. A start was made in 1935 when two boys from a blind school were sent to England for higher education; both were subsequently placed as shorthand typists. Other blind people, aided by the National Council, entered professions such as music, law, physiotherapy and home teaching. The first two kiosks, operated by totally blind men, were opened in Dublin in 1951. In that year also, the Department of Social Welfare opened a training centre in Dublin for blind telephonists. The telephony instructress is a member of the Council's staff. It was not until 1956, in co-operation with the State and Local Authorities, that the Council's Placement Service was started. When it was decided to embark on the training of blind people for open industry considerable difficulty was experienced, due to lack of financial assistance. Eventually we were able to persuade the various Government departments and local bodies that they had a responsibility in the matter, and that it was a good investment to enable blind citizens to become self-supporting workers. Today over 100 are gainfully employed in open industry.

Nevertheless, much still remains to be done, and it is confidently expected that the Irish Government will adopt a more forward looking approach and be more generous in providing badly needed funds for other projects. I have mentioned the position in Australia. It has been said that were it not for what has been done by voluntary agencies, the economic position of the vast majority of blind in that country would be in jeopardy. The ideal is surely to have the closet co-operation between State, Local Authorities and voluntary agencies. My own country has been particularly fortunate in this respect.

The Ideal

What would an ideal service for the blind involve?

For the very young, a secure and loving background, with such training of mind and body as would fit him for his formal education. *For the child of school age*, primary education, followed in the case of the gifted child, by higher education. Special provision for those with a second handicap. For those *over school age*, professional or manual training, followed by suitable employment. For those losing their *sight in adult life*, rehabilitation followed by training for a new occupation, or if possible their former occupation. *For all unemployable*, financial security, together with such amenities as make retirement happy—home teaching service, social centres, radio, etc. Alongside such a programme, a programme

for the prevention of blindness, especially in parts of the world where the incidence of blindness is high.

Such a service should be financed by generous State aid, especially in relation to education and training, and also in relation to the social security of the ageing, in the form of National Insurance, National Assistance, and Old Age pensions. In addition to State aid, grants from voluntary sources, especially in pioneering projects which may initially be too experimental to justify expenditure of public funds.

How far has the ideal service materialized in the world today?

In its totality, perhaps in a very few countries. In part, in a number of countries, though many reasons slow down progress, for example, prohibitive cost. Goodwill is rarely lacking, but few States can afford fully to carry out obligations to the blind except at the expense of other groups of needy persons. Then there are countries where a good beginning has been made, as exemplified by the work of the National Council, and finally those countries where very little can be done owing to the immensity of the problem, for example, large parts of Africa and Asia.

Conclusion

I have tried to indicate something of the modern approach to financial assistance, direct and indirect. What of the future? At the World Assembly in 1954 the following resolution was adopted:

> 'Special economic provision should be made for all blind persons, while ensuring that the incentive to work and to contribute in other ways to the economic and social life of the community is in no way impaired. Each nation should therefore provide its blind citizens with a reasonable level of subsistence in accordance with the standards of living in the community. Such provision should take into account the fact that all blind persons, by reason of their blindness, have needs which are additional to those of a seeing person. Such special provision for the blind may be embodied in a general programme of social security, or may be expressly made for the blind.'

In theory no one could disagree with this resolution, and it is one which should certainly guide the policies for blind welfare in all advanced countries. How far is it practicable to carry it out in some of the poorer countries? In a report sent to me in answer to my request for information for this paper, a worker for the blind in Brazil writes: 'The problem is complex because blind people cannot be considered outside the whole social structure. A great segment of the sighted population in some regions of Brazil needs adequate food, shelter, medical assistance, and so on. Blind people under this condition will face these problems besides the handicap of blindness.' In India it is estimated that there is a blind population of at least two million, so to give each one an allowance of 10*s*. a week would cost £50,000,000 a year—an impossible burden for any government. How can any system of international aid carry such a burden in countries where the number of recipients would be so large that it would be wholly beyond the capacity

of local governments? Today, with the Freedom from Hunger Campaign still fresh in our minds, with its story of half the world's population suffering from malnutrition, many thousands of blind persons remain untouched by any scheme for providing direct financial aid.

We are here today representing many nations but we all have one object in common—to help our blind friends and colleagues. It seems to me that we are not all as well-informed as we might be, and there is need of exchange of information between all countries. We can all learn from one another.

In those countries where the magnitude of the problem is so great that direct financial assistance is out of the question, at any rate for the present, the only possible partial solution would appear to be education and employment. I refer to some of the rural training centres and other schemes undertaken by the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind in parts of Africa and elsewhere.

In other countries where financial assistance is inadequate, I can only say that it is for those of us who care, to keep on pressing for better conditions and increased financial aid for the blind. An enlightened public can do much to influence those in authority to pass the necessary legislation to ensure that each blind individual shall have at least some degree of economic security.

Finally, because we know that a very high percentage of blindness is preventable, the furtherance of blindness prevention must always be a matter of the highest priority, for only as the number of blind persons is drastically reduced can the welfare of those handicapped by loss of sight be reduced to manageable proportions.

SIXTH SESSION **Tuesday morning, August 4th, 1964**

PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT FOR THE BLIND IN A CHANGING WORLD

Chairman: **Mr. H. Cadavid-Alvarez,** *Manager, Federacion Nacional de Ciegos y Sordomudos, Colombia.*

Problems of Self-Support (Employment in the General Stream and Sheltered Employment)

By **Dr. Horst Geissler,** *Vice-President, Deutscher Blindenverband, Germany.*

The limited time at my disposal and the relative lack of statistical material prevent me from treating this question in great detail. But, true to the German national character, I want to start with some philosophical considerations which might help to remove some misunderstandings about the term self-support.

I. Self-support is a particular kind of assistance. It is therefore only relevant when assistance is necessary. Thus it is not the same thing as the fostering of the interests of the blind by organized means. Those in need of help must always strive to help themselves, either if nobody else helps them or if help from others is intolerable.
The disabilities of the blind are so great that they are dependent on help. But there is often a shortage of such help in many parts of the world, either as a result of poverty, lack of understanding, or prejudice. Where those able to see do help the blind, they often do it in a very unpractical manner, or in a way which offends the self-esteem of the blind. When such help becomes intolerable, the blind are forced to be dependent on self-support.

II. The aim of self-support consists in general in ensuring for the blind the same standard of living and the same chances as are taken for granted in the case of those people not afflicted with blindness. The establishment of special institutions for the blind is a necessary step towards the attainment of this aim, and in highly civilized countries this self-support should lead on to self-administration. Some people doubt or even deny the justification of this aim. According to Articles 1, 2 (Sections 1, 7) and Articles 22 to 28 of the Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the United Nations on December 10th, 1948, it is a thoroughly legitimate aim.
It would be a great help if we possessed an international survey of all the stipulations concerning blind people as laid down in the political, criminal, civil, and procedural law of the various countries, including the relevant court decisions. In Germany, the associations for the blind pursue the aim of self-support not

only by ensuring effective representation of their interests, but also by carrying out welfare measures of their own (e.g. employing welfare workers, publishing periodicals in braille, etc.) and running institutions, such as advice bureaux, rehabilitation centres, workshops, convalescent homes, and libraries. Of paramount importance for the private and social life of the blind is their integration into the working and professional world. Self-support must therefore everywhere concentrate all its attention on this problem.

III. (a) In principle, the blind can carry out any profession which does not necessarily require the ability to see. This may sound like a truism, but must be emphasized because there are still many people who do not accept it. What should be a simple statement of fact is therefore becoming an urgent demand. This demand meets with a lack of understanding, because many people think that blindness alone is in itself such a serious handicap that a blind person cannot really be employed except in a few mechanical jobs. In reality, however, the disablement of the blind in some countries is created much more by their social position and by the prejudice of those able to see than by the objective fact of their being blind. Of course there are differences of opinion about what professions the blind can or cannot practise. An objective consideration of this problem will, however, show that the number of tasks which a blind person cannot carry out is considerably smaller than is generally supposed. This is demonstrated by the great variety of professions which the blind do in fact practise, particularly in industrial societies. If in spite of this difficulties arise when blind people seek admission to professions which are not traditionally considered to be their special preserve, their origin is to be sought in a variety of causes, often irrational and emotional. The result is a generalizing and categorical classification of the blind as such, without any regard to their individual personality. Generalizations, however, are misplaced precisely as concerns the blind, since so far from representing a homogeneous social group, either as regards background, character, education, religion, or in any other respect, the blind are held together only by the purely fortuitous characteristic of their inability to see.

In order to give the blind greater opportunities in general professional life, self-support for the blind all over the world must aim at abolishing the prejudices against them. For this purpose we need as exact a list as possible of all existing prejudices and an analysis of them. I see this problem as partly one of systematic study and partly one of publicity. A merely theoretical repudiation of prejudices, however, will not suffice to abolish them. An essential step will be rather

to make a list of all cases in which blind people are or have been successful in carrying out professions which in the eyes of the public are not considered to be specially appropriate for them. There is no doubt that a demonstration of this kind will be most effective on a national level, and moreover, will have considerable international significance, since in some countries the blind have still to prove their fitness for general professional life, and the findings of the various enquiries will frequently offer ideas and suggestions. Some regions of the world are naturally very self-contained in cultural matters, and it is to these that the regional committees of the World Council will have to direct particular attention.

The removal of prejudices is, as should already have become clear, the task not only of institutionalized self-support for the blind, but also to a considerable extent, of the individual person himself. The impression he makes, his character, his education, his abilities and achievements have a decisive effect on public opinion about the blind as a whole. He must endeavour untiringly to be so esteemed as a person and as a colleague that he is no longer dependent on pity. But he can only achieve this if he can tip the balance in his favour with better health, stronger nerves, a more attractive personality, a more agreeable manner in social life, better education, sounder knowledge and greater achievements than his professional colleagues or social counterparts can show.

The conditions for this can only be created by institutionalized self-support, particularly by schools for the blind and rehabilitation centres, to which those afflicted with blindness should be brought as soon as possible. Whether, however, the individual acquires the requisite qualities depends not only on circumstances, but to a considerable extent also on his good will and insight. It is therefore up to us what place we take in human society and general professional life.

(b) In many countries the blind are ensured a job by various kinds of legislation. This can be of great help in periods of unemployment and is perhaps even indispensable during a certain phase in the development of a society's attitude to the blind. A complete and reliable international survey of all existing legislation concerning employment of the blind would be a useful source of information on what regulations have been introduced at various times and in various countries to meet differing circumstances. It is doubtful, however, whether such regulations are of any use in removing prejudices against the blind.

(1) Assistance for the blind often takes the form of giving preference to certain firms which predominantly employ blind people and specialize in certain branches of production.

This admittedly helps to make them economically competitive and usually facilitates the care of the blind because in this way they are brought together in larger numbers in one place. But it tends to isolate the blind from the rest of society and fosters a feeling of self-sufficiency. This inhibits further economic and social development or contributes to a feeling of dissatisfaction, which in turn promotes unfavourable human characteristics. This can therefore only be considered a possible solution as long as there is no way of integrating blind people into general working and professional life.

(2) It is similar with those regulations which ensure the sale or the price of certain goods produced by blind people. Such regulations mean in fact that the purchaser is induced to buy these goods at these prices out of pity and not with an eye to their quality. Otherwise the regulations would not be necessary. They also mean that the purchaser helps the blind to keep up an assured economic standard which they would not be in a position to attain with their own energies. This task of ensuring an adequate standard of living for the blind should be placed on the shoulders of society as a whole, and not of certain groups of people or certain firms. Therefore such regulations cannot in the long run be in the real interest of the blind. Nevertheless they can under certain circumstances be desirable and justified at least for a time.

(3) In some countries there are various professions or activities which are traditionally reserved for the blind, either exclusively or by preference. This has the advantage of not interfering with competition and of not causing any kind of discrimination against the blind. The disadvantage, however, lies in the fact that blind people are then practically restricted to these professions. In this way they are to a large extent deprived of any possibility of further education or further improvement. Therefore it is not advisable to introduce such regulations into those countries where they have not existed so far. Where they have existed for some time steps should be taken to counteract their undesirable effects.

(4) There is perhaps more to be said for those regulations which provide stronger protection for all disabled people, and therefore also for the blind, against dismissal from employment or transfer from one job to another. They are not restricted to certain firms or certain branches of production and favour not only the relatively small group of the blind but cover the much larger category of the disabled. If differentiations are made

within this category, then the blind should always be included among the seriously disabled, irrespective of the cause of their blindness. Admittedly such a regulation can make it more difficult to find jobs for the blind and diminish their working morale. The inherent danger is, however, perhaps not very great, since work for a blind person means more than merely making a living, so that as a rule he would do his utmost to achieve something satisfactory both to himself and his employer. A regulation placing the responsibility firmly in the hands of society protects him against the vicissitudes of economic development, which are considerably more dangerous for him than for those not afflicted with blindness; for the possibilities of integrating the blind and the readiness of the employers to find them work are limited. Moreover, in a difficult economic situation an employer might occasionally be more inclined to dismiss a blind person, since he counts on the fact that he could more easily get assistance from welfare organizations. But even if this assumption is true the blind person is, nevertheless, deprived of the work which he so urgently needs, not only for economic but also for psychological reasons. Therefore a regulation ensuring the employment of the blind is still desirable, even if it entails certain disadvantages.

IV. All these considerations should be valid independently of the various political, social, and economic systems prevailing in different countries, firstly because we are here concerned with a fundamental human problem, and secondly because even in a nationalized economy based on socialist principles rehabilitation must be taken into account. This being so, the aim of self-support for the blind all over the world should be to open up more and more new fields of employment and to aim at legislation adapted to the prevailing conditions, while providing good training and further education prospects for the blind and enabling them, both intellectually and materially, to compete with others. To find an appropriate way for this must be acknowledged as one of the most important tasks of a permanent and extensive international exchange of experience. This cannot be done without the co-operation of the blind themselves. If self-support of the blind plays a leading role in this it should be feasible to reach this goal, making use of the most up-to-date scientific knowledge and technical potential. This is ultimately the condition for a long-term social rehabilitation of the blind.

Preparation of Blind Persons for and Their Employment in Commerce and Industry

By **Louis H. Rives, Jnr.,** *Chief, Division of Services to the Blind, Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, U.S.A.*

In 'Blindness—1964', Miss Mary E. Switzer has pointed out that the U.S. Vocational Rehabilitation Administration is 'committed to a program of intense promotion of vocational individuality for blind people—to safeguard them against being herded into lines of work convenient to society, but crushing to personality, to find instead a life work which by its very nature gives the greatest possible opportunity for functioning of each unique combination of talents.'

She adds, 'For so small a segment of our population, dealing with so hard a reality as blindness, this is certainly not too much to expect of our affluent society.'

And she adds further, 'The area to be explored is what human beings *can achieve* . . . while knowing what cannot be achieved is important too, this should not be the major focus.'

It is the purpose of this paper to show how we in the United States are attempting to put into effect this formula, particularly with respect to preparation of blind persons for their employment in commerce and industry.

A primary point to be made is that our first principle of promoting vocational individuality would be violated if we were able to show great numbers of blind people in any one occupation. We have upwards of 400,000 blind people in the United States and roughly 30,000 identifiable trades and occupations. Our purpose is not to discover how many blind people we have settled with a particular vocational prescription. Rather it is to open up for each blind person the kind of opportunity which is suitable to him. We like to bear in mind that blindness in and of itself does not make him basically equivalent to other blind people.

This is not to ignore what blind people have in common with regard to special methods of general usefulness, such as braille. We see the necessity for gatherings of blind people for intensive training in the use of such things. But when we learn that 1,000 blind students are scattered in more than 400 colleges for higher education in the United States, we think this is as it should be.

These numbers bring up a basic fact of our program planning. We are not surprised to learn that there are no more than 1,000 blind college students in the United States, because we have slowly learned that the problems of blind people are not the problems of great numbers whose massive needs threaten to break the back of our economy, but of scattering and isolation of members of a small minority.

In the United States our entire program for dealing with the vocational problems of all handicapped people rests on a Federal law known as the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. This law has gradually evolved through our legislative processes into a most effective instrument for partnership which includes the Federal and State governments and

handicapped people. Amendments in 1954 enlarged the financing base of this State-Federal program and also established a comprehensive research and training grant program. For all handicapped groups this law now provides a Federal budget of $128,415,000, matched by an estimated $53,500,000 of State funds.

The direct service program carried on by the States with Federal participation gives a mandate for a very complete program of rehabilitation services. And in all States in the Union we have been working very hard to make the ideals of the law a reality. Its practicalities include: medical and vocational diagnosis, physical restoration, including treatment, surgery, hospitalization and convalescent services, training in social and vocational adjustment to meet the individual's needs, selective placement (whether it be in the competitive labor market or in self-employment), and follow-up services to determine if the individual is truly independent, in accordance with his interests, abilities and capacities.

This sounds like a very smooth process. In actual fact, as this experienced World Council knows, it is a question of dealing with trouble —trouble which calls for many hard moral battles for all concerned. We try not to forget this.

We have certain basic instruments on which we rely. These consist of processes and institutions which we have tried and found workable. A whole constellation of these is pre-vocational, having to do with primary functions of self-management without sight. We have found it pays dividends to put forth a great deal of effort in this pre-vocational stage of treatment and training. A pre-vocational element which at its best encompasses all others is the rehabilitation center for the blind as it has evolved in late decades. This provides exposure to an environment which is therapeutic, instructive and above all efficient with respect to blindness. An optical aids clinic for the low-visioned is either available or an integral part of such an institution. Mobility training is a must, as is practical help with an unlimited number of other personal skills by which the human being must manage himself and his life if he is blind. Not the least of these is his relationship with himself and with the world. And though we do not insist on psychotherapy, we do insist that those who run these programs know what it is and what are the potentials of the science and healing arts in this area, as well as how to make them available when they are necessary. The usual basis of our method in these centers, however, is common sense of a kind which is forever preoccupied with finding out how things can be done without sight and teaching blind people to do them. A major development in this respect is the trained sighted mobility instructor, an American contribution to work with the blind. We now have two university courses where instructors learn this skill.

The importance of our optical aids clinics can hardly be over-stressed since they furnish a firm foundation for the program of the individual who may be termed with equal truth partially seeing and partially blind. We feel that one-half million dollars has been well spent in twenty-three clinics to demonstrate the need of the most individual

fitting of lenses for the complex optical problems of persons with low-vision.

There are two schools of thought about whether centers for the rehabilitation of the blind should provide vocational training. Be that as it may, most of our actual vocational training is done outside these centers. It is in this part of our program that we give most emphasis to individual handling. At first through our counselling procedures and then through special arrangements, we plan for various kinds of experience with the sighted in a program for the sighted and with as few adaptations as possible. The vocational counselor is the guiding spirit, manager and engineer of this concept. The 1954 Amendments to the Vocational Rehabilitation Act provided for the establishment of university training courses for rehabilitation personnel, including counselors. Of these courses, there are thirty-seven, one of which is at Southern Illinois University, where a special five-weeks course is given called 'Developing Employment Opportunities for Blind Persons in Competitive Occupations'. As of now 195 counselors have taken this course and are employed in forty States and three foreign countries.

We expect these counselors and placement specialists to be highly versatile and very sensible. Their duties may be described as doing whatever has to be done whenever it has to be done, to get their clients ready to work and working. Their job is to bring suitable resources into play and into harmony, including both their own and the client's initiative. Needless to say, the management of the industrial community and the right *rapport* with employers is crucial. We expect these men to be diplomats. We also expect them to be relentless workers and unremittingly devoted to their job of selling positive ideas about blind people.

It should be added, however, that counselors are not lone crusaders. In addition to the centers, previously mentioned, the helping skills and professions in American life have multiplied in recent years and certain of these have become extremely valuable allies of vocational rehabilitation. Not the least of these is the audiologist as an authority on the blind individual's most valuable sensory resource. Moreover, every teacher of adults is a possible ally and resource, and in our highly organized society we have trained teachers of virtually everything. If the vocational counselor is adroit he can make a good teacher of the blind out of any excellent teacher of a skill a blind person is capable of mastering. And naturally in a concerted attack on a blind individual's vocational problems social work and psychology have their places.

The putting together of resources to produce a dynamic program of vocational rehabilitation may be illustrated in several projects of which we are particularly proud.

At Wahpeton, North Dakota, we have a demonstration program of how one of the Nation's outstanding trade technical schools may be used to train blind workers for the competitive labor market. A course in the machine shops is currently offered and courses in gasoline engine repair and electronics are planned for the Fall. Other courses such as data processing and various phases of automotive mechanical work will be blended into this program.

Another successful program, bringing valuable resources into play, is a project undertaken by Georgetown University to develop a system for teaching blind students to translate Russian and German as heard in broadcasts. Of an original fifteen trainees all but one are now engaged in advanced language training; eleven have been offered full-time employment in government establishments. A second larger group is completing a two-year training program, and it appears that the great percentage of these individuals will likewise be employed.

Plans have been completed for a demonstration project to begin next month at the University of Cincinnati for training blind persons as computer programmers. The methods and techniques developed during this project will not be designed solely for the highly professional, scientifically oriented performers, but for individuals working in much more routine situations, such as payroll and inventory control.

A little digression is in order here to mention that part of our International Program is a project for the training and placement of blind persons as cone winding machine operators in Israeli Textile Mills.

At the present time there is another demonstration project under way in Israel, developing methods and techniques for training and placing blind persons in data processsing occupations such as operators of sorting machines and other tabulating equipment.

During the past year we have completed two National Planning Conferences. One was in Medical Records transcription work. The other was concerned with blind persons as telephone operators. The primary purpose of these conferences was to develop guidelines for rehabilitation personnel for the selection, training and placement of blind persons in these job areas. The size and scope of the entire Vocational Rehabilitation Administration program may be grasped by a review of its reflection in the 100 research and demonstration projects described by Miss Switzer in 'Blindness—1964'. Nevertheless, there is something more to be said about the yearly, monthly, daily functioning of that other dimension of the program which affects the lives of blind people through the State-Federal program, applying tried and true practices and principles.

In 1963, the total number of blind rehabilitations in the United States was 4,805. Of these 3,169 were placed in competitive employment. These placements were in the following categories:

Agricultural	344
Clerical and Sales	556
Professional	315
Semi-professional, managerial and official	536
Service	538
Skilled	327
Semi-skilled	319
Unskilled	234

It will be seen that the largest number of placements is in the clerical and sales category. This is in part due to the vending stand program of the United States, which functions under a law known as the Randolph-

Sheppart Act. This is one of the most successful acts of the American Congress in behalf of blind people. Giving blind operators the entrée to Federal buildings, it has now been in effect for twenty-seven years and grosses 50 million dollars yearly for 2,542 operators. This program, however, is a good example of the need for alertness in keeping up with the times. During recent years we have submitted it to a highly imaginative and efficient management improvement study. But already we know that we must plan for a least the next ten years, a program which will permit a transition from the vending stand program as we know it today to one including the advances in automated food dispensing. This will mean more highly organized and carefully designed training of operators to do new tasks. It will also mean a revamping of our thinking with regard to the acquisition and development of business enterprises locations under the program.

We are firmly convinced that while we are currently in a period of change with regard to the mechanization and automation of many occupations, in the long run these advances will provide employment to many more blind persons. These individuals will, of course, require training comparable to and probably more extensive than that provided for the sighted individual. We want to be very honest with the world about this. Much trouble in the past has come of the old 'No-such-thing-as-can't-a-blind-person-can-do-anything' propaganda line. When we put forth our determination to overcome obstacles we want to do it in a framework of reality that the world can accept. Experts in the manpower development programs estimate that in the next generation individuals willl have to be trained at least four times to remain competitive. We believe something more may be required of those who are blind. We have had a little difficulty weaning ourselves away from some ideas we acquired during World War II when blind persons were used extensively in industry with comparatively little training. We were a little spoiled by employers who were keenly competitive for labor. But as we have moved into that situation in history known as the population explosion, some of the hard realities of blindness have reasserted themselves. We think we have what it takes to deal with these realities firmly and effectively. If there is one idea on which American life is based, it is the idea that work is dignified. This is what makes us tick, and when we occasionally sparkle, it is because of this—not because of anything we have in our pockets or in our banks.

We would not be human if we did not add to this report for the World Council a few model instances in which our men and women are doing very well indeed. For the record, then, there is appended to this paper a group of letters from employers which tell something about their attitudes toward blind people, as well as what blind workers are doing:

Medical Records Transcribers (From a Hospital)

'We should like to take this opportunity of relating our experience with blind medical transcribers in our hospital. There are six legally blind persons employed as typists in our medical records department and five more at other locations in the hospital.

'Mr.— was the first blind typist employed by us in February, 1943. His work is outstanding and last year he was chosen for the "Employee of the Year Award" among more than 2,800 employees of the hospital.

'Mr.—, also totally blind, came to us in April, 1949. It is noteworthy that the amount of work which he turns out on many days is practically double the national average of 7,000 words for medical transcribers. Miss— is a relative newcomer to the group but shows promise of an equally fine performance.

'All of our blind typists are working from recordings using electric typewriters. They are transcribing all types of medical dictation using a variety of forms and typing as many as seven copies of each. In general, their work is equal or superior to that of sighted typists. In most cases, they use public transportation getting to the hospital and are entirely independent in moving about.

'When properly trained and oriented to the job, the medical transcriber without sight can compete on an equal basis with other workers. Based on our experience, we are happy to endorse the employment of such persons by other hospitals and medical facilities.'

Wire Trimmer (From Electrical Appliance Corporation)

'Miss— is employed as an assembler and wirer in the circuit module assembly department at the Radio Division of our city. She joined the company in March of 1951 and has been in her present assignment for the past six months.

'Her current responsibility involves a process of lead trimming or "nibbling" capacitor and transistor wires which are soldered between two printed circuit boards. The boards, about one inch by one-half inch in size, are spaced one-half inch from each other and the protruding wires must then be trimmed for subsequent potting and inserting in various communications electronics sub-assemblies.

'The procedure, for Miss—, begins when a box of about two dozen modules is placed alongside of her left hand. She takes each module in hand and to the ordinary viewer, either side appears the same, but Miss— (by detecting with her fingers a buss wire laced inboard) determines the side appropriate to either a one-half inch length cut or one-thirty-second inch cut. After trimming the circuit module boards, she then places the item in a completion carton and performs the same operation again on another module. According to Miss—'s supervisor, she is currently meeting the standards of quantity and quality.

'Her attendance record has little or no absence notations, while her general enthusiasm in the department is a model for her co-workers. Truly, Miss— is an integral member of our employment force.'

Assembler (From a manufacturer of Stoves)

'In reply to your enquiry, we wish to state that Mr.— is still very much an employee of this company. Our record shows that he was employed in July, 1945, after receiving training through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

'Although he is totally blind, he does all of the door assemblies on

our heavy duty commercial ranges. The doors are of several different sizes and colours. Using a power drill, tapping gun and power screw driver he turns out fifty of the large doors and more than twice this number per day when working on the smaller doors. He has a perfect safety record, and his attendance has been excellent. It is true that he works in a restricted area, but his materials and tools are well organized which, in part, accounts for his excellent production.

'Although he was employed during a period of war production, we find his services no less valuable today.'

Machine Operator (From an Automotive Parts Manufacturer)

'We are glad to endorse the placement of blind workers in business and industry. About ten years ago our company employed a totally blind young lady who performed a packing operation in our shipping department. Later she took dictation in braille shorthand and typed correspondence for members of our sales force. Unfortunately, she left us to become a housewife.

'Another totally blind worker, Mr.—, has been with us for fifteen years. He is an operator on our main production line which turns out clamps used in the automotive industry and other industries. He operates a forming device which is used to shape the wire component utilized in many of our clamps. His speed and skill on this job must be equal to that of other operators in order to maintain the flow of production.

'Blind workers of the caliber that we have known can hardly be considered handicapped and would be definite assets to the employer.'

Darkroom Technician (From a Hospital)

'We wish to report our complete satisfaction with the services of Mr. —, Darkroom Technician in our X-Ray Department. As you know, Mr.—, is totally blind having been referred to us by your organization in 1956.

'In the darkroom we use the time-temperature method of developing, and it was found that no adaptations were necessary for a blind worker. He works completely on his own, taking the film from the cassettes, placing it on racks, putting it through the developing and drying processes, and returning it to a table outside the darkroom. His movements are quick and smooth, and he has never failed to keep pace with the flow of work.'

Typists (From a Manufacturer of Kitchen Utensils)

'Miss— has been a member of our stenographic pool for nearly eleven years. Although she is totally blind, she is able to carry her share of the work load along with the other typists. The work consists of transcribing correspondence which has been recorded by persons in various departments of the Company. In addition, she and other girls are sales force in the field. The correspondence must be typed using paper of several different colours and the "call reports" are done on printed forms. This presents no problem for her, since she has a section in her desk for each colour of paper and knows exactly where to fill in the printed forms.

'Only infrequently does she need assistance in correcting an error, and she has become so proficient that only an occasional cursory check is made of her work. In short, we can say that Miss— is an efficient and valuable member of our stenographic pool.'

Clerk in Bank Printing Department

'Principal duties include packaging and mailing of check orders; and performing the finishing work on various types of printed matter. Also operates the perforating and binding machine. Mr.— is totally blind.'

Vending Stand Operator (From a Postmaster)

'I am happy to report that the Vending Stand operation in the Federal Building and Post Office . . . is highly satisfactory. The operator is courteous and friendly and seems to be very popular. . . . The stand is a real convenience for the employees and the general public, and the operator demonstrates convincingly the potential capabilities of blind persons. . . .'

Much more information concerning our workers is available by direct contact with those in charge of our State programs. It is our hope that such meetings as this will foster international communication, for which the twentieth century has supplied truly marvellous technical facilities. It is for us to build relationships and a habit of communication which will equal our technology.

Rural Employment

By **Capt. H. J. M. Desai,** *Hon. Secretary, The National Association for the Blind, India, and Hon. Secretary, The Tata Agricultural and Rural Training Centre for the Blind, Phansa, India.*

Providing employment opportunities for the blind in a changing world is one of the most challenging tasks facing blind welfare workers the world over.

We all are agreed that all possible avenues of employing the blind should be simultaneously explored.

Individual aptitudes and abilities, environmental influences and a variety of other factors all go to to make the blind person an individual in his own rights. He has his own likes and preferences and these greatly influence his choice of a career.

The generation which tied down the blind to traditional crafts like cane work or basket-making is now fortunately passed. The wider our horizons and the more avenues of employment we explore, the speedier is the task of resettling the blind happily. It is, however, imperative to resettle the blind in careers of their choice, preferably with their families and friends and in their familiar surroundings.

The Problem Essentially Rural

Having recognized the need for exploring all possible avenues of employment—both industrial and rural—recognizing that nearly 70

per cent. of the total blind population of the world—numbering some 7,000,000—live in rural areas; and further recognizing the fact that only for a negligible percentage out of this colossal number training and resettlement facilities are available at present, the need for placing the greatest possible emphasis on rural employment becomes at once obvious.

Modern Trends

It will be recalled that till the First World Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind met at Paris in August, 1954, not much importance was attached —at least at international level—to rural training and employment of the blind. The concept was altogether new, though a number of blind farmers and others engaged in rural activities had made a success of their own farms and other rural activities without any systematic training or guidance.

The First Assembly emphasized that the fundamental training and adjustment of indigenous rural populations should be primarily effected with due regard to their family and community backgrounds and, in the case of the newly blind adults, to their past employment usually as smallholders and village craftsmen, and in the case of women, as domestic rural workers, by providing training centres for this specific purpose.

The emphasis was on providing adaptive training to blind men and women in simple practical agricultural pursuits in familiar surroundings.

The Far East Conference on Work for the Blind, held at Tokyo in the subsequent year, strongly endorsed this recommendation. Thus a new era—one of training and resettling the rural blind in their familiar rural surroundings—began.

Advantages of Rural Resettlement

The advantages of training and resettling the rural blind in their familiar rural surroundings are obvious. For one thing, it prevents psychological and emotional disturbances resulting from separation from family members and friends. For another, local interest in the progress of the blind person continues to be maintained.

It is an accepted fact that it is a wrong policy to uproot the rural masses and to plant them in towns and cities where the cost of living is comparatively higher, where securing living accommodation at reasonable rents is practically impossible and beyond the reach of a majority of the blind and where mobility presents great difficulties for untrained rural folks.

Once the rural blind are attracted to the cities, even for training purposes, it becomes extremely difficult to wean them back to the rural areas and to resettle them there. The training in cities equips them mainly for urban jobs which are difficult to find in such large numbers —especially in the developing countries where the problems of unemployment and under-employment are already great.

Harnessing Rural Man-Power Resources

To mobilize and harness all available man-power resources—the untilization of such resources to the fullest extent possible—is of great importance to any country and particularly to a country with a developing economy.

The vast masses of handicapped persons—particularly the blind—who till recently lived as unproductive members of the community, can easily be mobilized to the great advantage of the community provided the organizational and fiscal problems could be successfully overcome.

Once the necessary organizational efforts are forthcoming and complementary resources mobilized, the potential surpluses of man-power would help in securing all round rapid progress.

The available handicapped man-power in rural areas could easily be utilized in creating productive community assets.

Large scale scientific agricultural diversification can produce endless employment opportunities for the handicapped.

Development of processing industries linked with the rural economy of the country can absorb a large number of trained handicapped persons and in turn help in strengthening the rural economy.

Since nearly seven million out of the estimated ten million blind population of the world live in rural areas, it is obvious that the need for mobilizing these resources is not only great but imperative.

Training for Rural Resettlement

Before I proceed to rural employment proper, I would like to emphasize the importance of organizing training of the rural blind on sound and scientific lines.

Training of the rural blind need not be confined to exclusive institutions for the blind. It could be integrated. Training can be imparted in the normal institutions for the sighted obtaining in rural areas with such help as may be necessary to augment available training facilities.

The training should be basically simple. It should always be understood that no attempt is made at turning out expert agriculturists. It would suffice if the training aims at enabling the blind individual to fit in the family unit or in the village community as a contributive and useful member of the society.

The training will have to be according to the local and regional needs and should also be based on the abilities, aptitudes and needs of the individual.

I am not in favour of mass production of half-trained personnel who would only be drifting from one occupation to another till they ultimately find something suitable to their own skills. The endeavour therefore, should be to locate the residual abilities of the individual and to try and develop them to the extent possible. In other words, the endeavour should be to lead to specialization in careers of their own choice—keeping in mind the economic benefits which they are likely to receive on their ultimate resettlement in their own areas.

Just as in Industrial Resettlement the emphasis is on selective place-

ment (viz. matching the assets of the client to the job demands) so also it is essential that in agricultural or rural placements, the client specializes in subjects of his choice.

Rural Job Opportunities

The opportunities available to the trained blind are so numerous and varied that they would cater for the preferences of a very large majority of the rural blind. Experiments conducted by the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, The Uganda Foundation for the Blind in Africa and the Tata Agricultural and Rural Training Centre for the Blind, India, and in many other countries, indicate that the blind can successfully perform a variety of operations in farming and allied pursuits.

These experiments have revealed a very vast number of various farm and non-farm jobs and allied operations on which the blind and the near blind can successfully work, giving—in a very large majority of cases—100 per cent. output and efficiency.

The job opportunities available in rural areas could broadly be classified as under:

(a) Operating various types of farms—either general or multi-purpose or speciality farms—independently on their own or with members of the family unit.
(b) Working as farm hands or labourers or as employees of bigger farms having larger holdings.
(c) Working on co-operative farms managed by the blind.
(d) Cottage Industries, Small Scale Industries or Rural Crafts and Trades or as Petty Shop Keepers.
(e) Working in Processing Industries linked with the local rural economy.
(f) Working independently on small Business Enterprises or as Agents, Propaganda Officers, or on the Staff of Institutions.

A combination of one or more of the above categories, teaming with the partially sighted or the sighted or other handicapped groups, or assisting the family members on a variety of jobs all afford congenial and remunerative openings. Determining suitable farm jobs or a combination thereof—keeping in mind the local or regional needs of the economy of the village—present endless opportunities.

Once the right type of job or a combination of such jobs is selected, half the battle is already won. And here, the Rehabilitation Officer or the Counselor has a very important role to play.

Employment in Rural Jobs

Some of the rural jobs on which the blind can give full out-turn and efficiency and can work successfully are listed below:

1. *Agriculture.* (Almost all operations such as cutting bush, all preparatory tillage work, digging, manuring, levelling, bunding, sowing seeds both by broadcasting and by dibbling, watering, weeding, harvesting, grading, packing and marketing. The blind can grow a variety of crops such as Cereals, Pulses, Oil Seeds, Cotton, all

Cash Crops and a variety of Vegetables. The growing of crops involves a variety of operations such as layout of fields, bunds and water channels, making ridges or furrows, and raised beds, spraying of insecticides, harvesting of crops and marketing. In a very few operations, help from the sighted is absolutely essential).

2. *Horticulture and Nursery Practices.* (Raising of seedlings, grafting, airlayering, propagation by cuttings, all could be successfully performed. Raising of Nurseries is easy for the blind as also profitable since not much space is required).
3. *Floriculture.* (Raising of all kinds of Flowers and Decorative Plants, Making of Garlands, Bouquets, Buttons, Venies [flowers tied by ladies on their hair] and running of small Flower Shops).
4. *Rearing of Livestock.* (Rearing of Cows, Sheep and Goats, Pigs, Rabbits, etc., for Beef, Meat, Pork, Furs, Hides, Skins, etc.; Care of animals and their feeding, etc.).
5. *Animal Husbandry and Dairy.* (Keeping of Milk Cattle, selling milk. The blind can milk the animals as also look after them, feed them and keep the dairy clean).
6. *Poultry Raising.* (Poultry Raising for table as also for eggs is most profitable, does not require large space and could be profitably handled by trained blind).
7. *Small Scale and Cottage Industries and Rural Crafts and Trades.* (Palm Leaves Matting, Raffia work, Sisal work, Cane work, Bamboo work, Coco-Fibre and all their Products, Rope making, making of Brooms, Baskets, Straw Bottle Covers and Hats, Tape making, making of Chicks and Blinds, making of Bricks and other items of Pottery, making of String Bags, Fishing Nets and other Nets required for Sports, making of Cement Blocks, simple Carpentry and Tailoring, making of indigenous Cigarettes (Bidis), Spinning, Handloom Weaving, Beads work, simple assembly work and a variety of simple repetitive operations could be successfully done by the blind with a little practice. It is essential that raw materials should be easily available and marketing of the produce is properly arranged by Voluntary Agencies or through Co-operative Societies).
8. *Running of Petty Shops, Sales Kiosks, Vending Stands, etc.* (The blind can run Petty Shops, Sales Kiosks or Vending Stands profitably if the number of articles sold is restricted and they are taught to organize the shop methodically and to keep simple accounts.)
9. *Independent Professions.* As in the urban areas, so in the rural areas the blind can successfully work as Salesmen, Insurance Agents, Propaganda Officers, and run Magazine Subscription Agencies or do other suitable jobs. They can also advantageously work on the staff of welfare institutions.
10. *Small Business Enterprises.* If the problems of initial capital and operating space could be solved satisfactorily, the blind can successfully manage Small Business Enterprises such as Toy making, Plastics work, Leather Craft or for that matter any other small business enterprise, with some sighted help.

The above operations are purely illustrative. The variety of occupations available to the rural blind are restricted only by one's imagination. In any country, a number of rural operations would suggest themselves. Much would depend on local conditions, easy availability of raw materials, a ready market for the produce and the organizational ability of the Voluntary Agency or the Co-operative Society and its interest in promoting the economic resettlement of the rural blind.

Role of Blind Women

In all his writings, our friend Sir Clutha Mackenzie has been most enthusiastic about the role of the African blind women in the rural economy of their country. Because of their twin abilities in ably managing both household and farm work, they are reported to make better wives than their sighted sisters. Imagine how much more could be achieved by systematically training rural blind women in the care of children, cooking, laundry, other household chores, domestic science as also farm work and allied pursuits. We must admit that till recently, the blind women have been comparatively neglected the world over. Every one of us present in this distinguished gathering can help in ushering in a new era in which the blind women—particularly the blind women from rural areas—get their rightful place in sharing training facilities and available employment opportunities. I have not the least doubt that the blind women can work equally successfully as blind men in the various farm operations listed in this paper. In addition they could be so very helpful in all domestic duties.

Difficulties

I am not for a moment minimizing the difficulties in the way of organizing Rural Employment of the blind.

Perhaps no task is more beset with difficulties than the one of training and resettling of the Rural Blind.

The major hurdle is to get over the initial resistance of the blind themselves. So far, they have been used to the traditional crafts and workshop employment. The idea of hard manual work on the farm is foreign to them. Diffidence has to be got over.

The age-old beliefs of the sighted villagers and family elders have to be overcome. It is not easy to convince them that the blind can work successfully on numerous farm operations, where many able bodied sighted farmers have failed. Only effective demonstrations by successfully resettled blind would convince them. That is why it is imperative that the first few batches resettled under any scheme must be very thoroughly trained and should be in a position to create an excellent impression on their return to their own small holdings.

In many cases, the blind would have no land or livestock or any other rural assets to return to. Providing them with these and with the initial developmental finance would also present a major problem. All these and numerous other difficulties would have to be resolutely faced and overcome. Unless the Voluntary Agencies persevere over a period of years

with determination and grit, such schemes are likely to fizzle out in the first few years of their existence.

Recommendations

I, for one, am fully convinced of the very vast avenues of employment available for the rural blind on farm and allied pursuits. If their training is organized on sound and scientific lines, the rural blind can profitably work on a variety of farm and non-farm occupations. Instead of continuing to be hundred per cent. burdens on the family or on society, even if they can be made useful to the extent of 60 per cent. to 70 per cent. or so—especially in the developing countries—I would consider the scheme fairly successful.

With a view to ensuring that the optimum benefits are derived by countries planning to organize programmes for the rural blind and the usual pitfalls are avoided, I would, in all humility, submit the following recommendations for their kind consideration:

1. *Planning.* Every country should carefully plan out at least one short-term programme and a long-term programme for training and resettling their rural blind. The success of any scheme would depend upon careful planning. The scheme should fit in with the rural economy of the country. Availability of adequate financial resources should receive careful consideration.
2. *Research.* All possible avenues of employment in rural areas should be located and listed. Systematic research into the economics of the available jobs is of great importance.

   In this connection, I would greatly commend the International Rehabilitation Research Programme launched by the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration of the United States of America for conducting research into rehabilitation and allied matters. This is the first ever research programme of its type and magnitude in the world and needs to be multiplied many fold in many other countries to the great advantage of the handicapped.
3. *Training.* The training should be kept as simple as possible and should be planned to suit the economy of the country as also to keep the local and regional needs in mind. Individual and specialized training should be emphasized. A very wide variety of subjects should be taught so as to give the rural blind ample opportunities to select careers of their choice.
4. *Developmental Finances.* I am fully convinced that adequate developmental finances should be made available if programmes of rural training and employment are to make a headway. All farm and allied operations require adequate funds for development. Unless, therefore, the sponsoring agencies are assured of adequate funds they should not launch rural programmes on large scales.
5. *Resettlement and Follow Up.* To my mind, the most important part of the programme is the ultimate resettlement of the blind person. This would necessitate the grant of subsidies or loans to enable a blind person to develop his own small holdings or enterprises. It

is imperative that the Voluntary Agencies provide adequate financial help to develop the farms of resettled trainees to enable them to make a success of their undertakings. The Resettlement Officer should also be able to secure the maximum possible co-operation of the local District and Village Officials, progressive farmers, social workers and the village elders.

6. *Co-operative Farming.* Not all blind persons would have their own smallholdings. It is imperative that Co-operative Farming Societies of the Blind are organized to resettle the landless trained blind. These should be multi-purpose farms so that the blind who have specialized in different subjects could be grouped together to the great advantage of all. In the years to come, more and more co-operatives in all spheres of blind welfare work would be necessary to organize the blind on co-operative lines. Availability of credit facilities on easy terms would greatly accelerate the pace of progress.
7. *Pilot Rural Training and Employment Programmes.* In every country, at least one Rural Training Project and one Rural Employment programme should be started—preferably in a selected region or district—where conditions are favourable to push up the employment of the rural blind. If it is not feasible to set up exclusive Centres, arrangements may be made to organize the training with the normal institutions obtaining in the area. It may be necessary to employ full time Rural Counsellors and Rural Employment Officers.
8. *Leadership.* For the successful organization of any rural training and employment programme, leadership of the highest order is necessary. Unselfish, dedicated and devoted work—carried out over a period of years with a missionary zeal and spirit—alone can achieve the objectives. The leadership should provide the necessary drive, stimulus and the organizing capacity to undertake research, locate available avenues of employment, plan and execute training programmes and organize a sound resettlement and follow-up service. Above all, it would be essential to do all these keeping the goodwill of the village elders, the Government and Local Officials and the blind themselves.

Conclusion. Employment of the blind is a matter of deep and abiding interest to every one of us. It is a vital human problem. All education must lead to congenial and remunerative employment. It is the fundamental right of every human being to be economically independent. The handicapped from the rural areas can materially contribute to the rapid economic development of any country.

If the existing idle rural manpower is harnessed into productive channels and utilized for the greatest good of the largest number, a human problem of considerable proportions would be solved and the economy of the country would get a much needed fillip.

In all sincerity and with all the earnestness at my command, I would humbly urge this very distinguished and dedicated assembly of blind

welfare workers kindly to explore all possible available avenues of employment simultaneously and not to restrict their fields of activities only to the known and tried methods of workshop employment or employment in open industries.

Rural Employment affords a very wide and varied field of opportunities. Many careers can be profitably pursued by the rural blind. They are much happier to work in their familiar surroundings. Family lives are not disrupted and their dear ones can also give a helping hand.

The Rural Blind, especially those in the emergent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, numbering millions, look to this Assembly for Leadership. Let us all do our very best for their speedy and successful rehabilitation. God bless them all.

Thank you.

Sheltered Employment, Shops and Vending Stands

by **Charles Hedkvist,** *Director, De Blindes Förening, Sweden.*

Within the barely two months which the Programme Committee has put at my disposal for preparing this talk, it has unfortunately been impossible for me to collect data regarding sheltered employment workshops in a certain number of countries and to arrange this material to form a more or less world-wide survey. Such a survey would perhaps be of a certain value, and the task should in such a case be entrusted to one of the W.C.W.B.'s Sub-Committees.

I would, however, warn you against expecting too much of value from such a survey. A comparative study of working conditions, etc., can undoubtedly lead to fruitful ideas, and the organization of the work in one country may perhaps also to some extent serve as guidance for organizations and institutions in another country. However, both the organization of the activities and the work itself depend to such a degree on the traditions, rate of industrialization, market conditions, consumers' habits, etc., of a country that probably only in exceptional cases would it be possible directly to transfer the experience relating to some sphere of the work from one country to another. Besides, the evaluation of the results achieved depends on the previous experience and state of development of the country concerned. It often happens that what is regarded as a success in one country appears to be a more doubtful achievement in another. In addition, in order to compare the activities in different countries, one must be able to take the motivation of a scheme and its objectives into consideration as well as the people it affects. The motto of this Conference 'The Place of the Blind in a Changing World' applies to a great extent to this sphere. The continuing change in the concept of the community as such, and some of the other factors affecting developments, are not the same everywhere. To this must be added a more or less pronounced tendency to think along conservative lines on the part of the organizations and institutions working for the welfare of the blind.

I have interpreted my task in this connection in such a way that my talk should provide the basis for a discussion which can lead to an ac-

ceptable definition of our objective regarding sheltered employment for the blind in the new conditions taking shape in our changing world. It will then be the task of those who bear the responsibility in every country to judge in what way and at what speed this objective can be reached.

If one is to try and establish an objective for sheltered employment one must, in the first place, try and elucidate the motives for such employment. The most important new factor which may be expected to affect developments in this sphere is the changed notion of the responsibility of the community *vis-à-vis* the individual citizen.

The new notion of a social conscience which, in the democracies, is increasingly penetrating into people's minds and which, it is to be hoped, will direct developments during the coming decades, may be formulated in many different ways. I should like to express it in the following words:

All citizens have equal rights to social security and to an acceptable standard of living from the financial and cultural point of view. All citizens need the support of the community, but the support the citizen requires in order to reach an acceptable standard varies. Consequently, the community must organize its activities in such a way that every citizen receives the individual support he or she requires.

The fact that one person needs a greater measure of community support than the other must not serve as an evaluation of the individual. Thus the division of citizens into 'socially useful' and 'socially less useful' ones is opposed to the modern notion of social justice.

The right to work according to one's ability is one of the rights that the community has to guarantee its citizens.

It is important that these principles should be established, since they imply both that the steps taken by the community to provide employment for the handicapped can no longer in the first place be motivated by economic social reasons, and that one citizen is not more valuable than another by reason of his work. On the other hand, the steps taken by the community must naturally be organized in such a way that they entail the lowest possible cost without neglecting the right of the individual.

Since it is cheaper to utilize the possibilities provided by the open labour market, it is thus in the first place the community and not the individual that is interested in making use of these possibilities. In the choice between work in the open labour market and sheltered employment the only acceptable motive is finding out whether the one implies greater advantages for the individual than the other.

When does the question of sheltered employment arise?

Sheltered employment in itself may be of importance for a comparatively large group of blind persons whose working capacity would permit them to find work in the open market but who, for different reasons, either cannot or do not wish to do so. Certain trends in the labour situation seem to indicate that this group may be increasing. In this connection the most important trends are the following:

As long as industrial rationalization found expression in the creation

of larger production units and the separation of the productive process into short motions and long series, developments were in favour of the employment of the blind. The technical evolution, the increasing cost of labour, and the free market exchanges over larger areas have, however, led to the wish to replace human labour by automatic machinery. We are only in the initial stages of this process, but even now we can trace increasing difficulties in employing the blind at factories where this trend makes itself felt. However, one will probably have to count with an extension of the professions providing services of different kinds as a result of the rising standard of life, and it is possible that this development may also provide new possibilities of employment for the blind and thus to some extent compensate the negative trend of industry.

Another factor which may lead to greater difficulties in placing the blind on the open labour market is the increasing social security. As a rule, work at normal workshop, etc., is more strenuous for a blind worker than for a sighted one, and as the pension scheme and similar social benefits ensure greater advantages and the blind worker is no longer forced by financial considerations to take the first work he is offered, so, in proportion, one may expect increasing objection to undertaking work that is less attractive or more strenuous.

Sheltered employment will naturally also be of importance for the large group which, for different reasons, is unable to compete successfully in the open market. Within a reasonably near future one will unfortunately have to count with an increase in this group, not only comparatively, but even in absolute figures. The possibilities that medical science now has of saving human lives increase more rapidly than its capacity to do away with the after-effects of disease. Diabetes is a typical example of this development: until about twenty years ago, blindness as a sequel of diabetes was almost unknown, because the diabetic died before his vision became impaired. Thanks to insulin, it is now possible to prolong a patient's life for decades, but medical science has not yet succeeded in mastering the after-effects of diabetes.

There would seem to be only a few fields nowadays where notions are as conservative as they are regarding sheltered employment for the blind. A study of the tasks, methods, equipment and organization, etc., in this sphere is sure to prove that most of the workshops for the blind are still equipped and operated in a way which may have been acceptable fifty years ago. And often conditions are worse as regards home-work programmes. As I pointed out before, there are large numbers of blind persons who, for different reasons, have to be directed to sheltered shops although their abilities would enable them to perform normal work. In some cases, drawing the natural conclusions, people have been starting modern industries, but mostly they have not been prepared to invest the large capital and in general face the expense which this would entail. It has also appeared that if the shop, etc., is specially organized and adjusted to blind workers, these can achieve fully satisfactory results, although they cannot compete with sighted workers at normal places of work.

But even the traditional trades of the blind demand a more up-to-

date way of thinking. In Sweden, for instance, it has been possible by introducing certain simple machines and undertaking scientific studies of working methods to increase the production of blind brushmakers by 40 per cent. at least. At the same time the work has grown less strenuous and thus suitable even for weaker persons; still, it retains its former character of a handicraft.

Further, one will have to make greater efforts to find new tasks suitable for shops and home-work, even if in this way it will only be possible to provide employment for a small number of people.

Among the blind there is undoubtedly a certain opposition to applying for work that can be classified as sheltered employment. Often this opposition implies that the blind for whom such work is the only alternative prefer to remain unemployed rather than take up employment of this type. There are two principal reasons for this objection to sheltered employment.

One of the reasons is that sheltered employment is looked down upon socially. This depends partly on the division of people into socially useful and socially less useful, an evaluation which, as pointed out before, is incompatible with modern social ideas. To this must be added that sheltered shops and home-work programmes often are directed by private charity organizations whose leading men and women believe they have the right in different ways to patronize the people whom they employ. This patronizing attitude on the part of the management was quite usual even in the open labour market in the nineteenth century and the beginning of the present century. In spite of the gratitude and admiration one is bound to feel for many organizations for their admirable efforts in providing work for the blind, it must be admitted that their ideas of the respect due to a human being and of the value of the individual often appear too conservative.

Another reason for the objection the blind have to sheltered employment is the remuneration for the work performed by them.

As pointed out before, one meets with pronounced conservatism as regards working tasks in sheltered employment. Often articles are manufactured that no longer appeal to the buyers or that are produced industrially at a very low price. To this must be added that sheltered workshops, etc., are not always operated according to modern principles. Consequently, it happens all too often that the blind worker is paid far too little in proportion to the effort he has made, although the shop is run at a considerable loss.

It is obviously unacceptable that the blind worker should suffer on account of the management's lack of efficiency in adjusting their production to market conditions. Their guiding principle should, instead, imply that every achievement is paid for in proportion to the effort made, and it is the task of the management either to find financially profitable articles or to procure capital to cover the costs incurred.

I said in the beginning that I hoped this talk would provide a basis for a discussion which could lead to an establishing of objectives in the field of sheltered employment. It will then be the task of the authorities,

organizations and institutions in the different countries to decide on the speed with which efforts to reach these objectives should be made, depending on the conditions prevailing in the respective country.

I should like to propose the following points for these objectives:

1. Every blind person has the right to work in accordance with his ability in the field that he is best suited for.
2. It is important that sheltered employment should be as highly regarded as other work.
3. No blind person should be forced to take up a certain kind of work.
4. The training required for sheltered employment should be at least as thorough as that required for corresponding tasks in the open labour market.
5. The remuneration for work in sheltered employment shall be proportionate to performance, even if, from a strictly business-like point of view, the price of the manufactured product does not warrant this.

SEVENTH SESSION **Tuesday afternoon, August 4th, 1964.**

THE SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF THE AGEING BLIND IN THE MODERN WORLD

Chairman: **Mr. Gultekin Yazgan,** *Turkey.*

The Special Problems of the Ageing Blind in the Modern World.

By **J. C. Colligan,** *Director-General, Royal National Institute for the Blind, England.*

Of all the problems of the second half of the twentieth century which concern workers for the blind by far the largest in actual size and in my opinion, also in importance, is that of the changing character of the blind population so far as its age groupings are concerned. The general trend towards longevity and increased expectation of life affects the blind just as much as the sighted; indeed more so, because as people tend to live longer so may blindness become one of the attendant disabilities to which old age is subject.

At the Annual Meeting of The Royal National Institute for the Blind, on the 18th July, 1963, the British Minister of Health, the Rt. Hon. J. Enoch Powell, M.P., said:

> 'In the last few years the proportion of registered blind to the population has been falling. In the four years to the end of 1961 the blind under 65 fell by nearly 6 per cent. in absolute numbers and by 8½ per cent. as a proportion of the total; and though the numbers of blind over 65 rose by nearly 3 per cent. they too fell—though only by 2 per cent.—as a proportion of the total population over 65. This downward tendency of the proportion and perhaps even of the numbers of blind people in total does, however, throw into emphasis the special groups among them which are increasing, relatively or absolutely. The largest of the groups are the elderly. Indeed slightly more than two-thirds of all the registered blind are over the age of 65. We know that during the next two decades the numbers of the old and the very old will continue to grow: those between 65 and 75 will increase by about 28 per cent., those over 75 by more than 40 per cent. There can be no doubt that this general trend, which is due to the structure given to our population in the years around the beginning of the century, will reflect itself in a similar increase in the numbers of elderly blind.'

These figures are borne out by the fact that of the total blind population of the United Kingdom at the 31st December, 1962, of 112,000, approximately 73,000 or 65 per cent. were over the age of 65 years and, in many areas of our country where one might reasonably expect to find either a greater concentration of old people or a more definite trend towards longevity, the figures are even higher. As a random

example, in the County of Sussex a survey of 1,300 registered blind and partially sighted people revealed that only 19·2 per cent. of the whole were under 60 years of age and 8·18 per cent. were between 60 and 100 years of age, including no less than 26·7 per cent. between 70 and 80 and 29·7 per cent. between 80 and 90. These figures are confirmed by others available to us. There is no reason to expect that the percentages which now generally apply in Europe and North America will soon be significantly different in any other parts of the world. What may be our problem today will undoubtedly be yours tomorrow.

These then are the categories of blind people who provide the bulk of our problem and they are also the categories for whom least is done. Consider their predicament. They cannot now follow any gainful employment. They probably lack financial means in that their savings have become exhausted and their pensions are merely a basic minimum. Very often they are now alone—their husbands or wives, their brothers or sisters, are dead; their sons or daughters have either moved or grown away from them. Frequently they are unable to maintain an independent home of their own. At their age they cannot be expected to acquire the techniques of blindness, such as learning independent mobility or mastering the intricacies of braille, and indeed some of them who at one time may have done this because they have always been blind may now have passed beyond the care normally to be expected in a residential home for the blind. In other words, they have become too infirm for our blind homes but not sick enough to go into a hospital.

You may argue that this is not a problem of blindness, it is a problem of old age; you may, as I know some countries do, even refuse to register people who become blind over the age of 70, or even 65 years of age, but can we really close our eyes to this problem when science and modern methods of welfare and care of the ageing have extended our 20th century expectation of life far beyond the biblical three score years and ten.

Ten years ago I spoke to this General Assembly in Paris on 'Opportunities for the Additionally Handicapped Blind', and I said then that science was saving at the cost of some permanent gross disability many people who would not normally have survived and that the community had, therefore, a two-fold responsibility: to give and to gain. The community holds an equal responsibility for the ageing blind, for they too are additionally handicapped either by age itself or by some additional infirmity of old age such as deafness or general frailty and I cannot conceive that there is represented at this conference any enlightened community which would wish to evade such a responsibility, still less that a world organization such as our own should be unwilling to make some positive recommendations to grapple with the problem.

Broadly speaking, how can we best meet the needs of these millions of the blind citizens of the world?

Firstly, I should have thought, by regular visitation. Secondly, by ensuring that their need for accommodation is met. And thirdly, by seeing that they have companionship both in the practical and the physical sense of that word.

The main purpose of regular visitation of the elderly blind must surely be to ensure their comfort and health, to see that there is no isolation or actual neglect, that they are in surroundings where their needs are understood. Such visitation must of necessity be frequent and regular and here I think it is necessary to decide whether to use the services of a skilled Home Teacher for the blind (particularly when it is known that trained blind welfare workers are a scarce commodity in some countries and that their services should first and foremost be used for the benefit of those who are grappling with the problems of blindness in early and middle life) or whether some other form of trained social worker, either paid or voluntary, could equally well do the job.

The British Government, in 1959, produced the Report of a Working Party on Social Workers in the Local Authority Health and Welfare Services, which stated that there was a very strong case for the addition of a general purpose social worker in order to relieve trained social workers in specialist fields of the straightforward visiting and simple welfare duties so that the skill of the latter might be used to greater advantage.

So large a proportion of the blind population on our registers is incapable of being trained for any form of employment, unable to learn braille, perhaps uninterested in pastime or diversionary occupations; their main need is for understanding and neighbourly interest, sympathetic help with their small problems of daily living, and perhaps most important of all for social contacts with people similar to themselves. Much of this can be done by a less highly trained social worker than a Home Teacher for the blind and certainly the organization of social and recreational gatherings of elderly blind people does not call for more than a modicum of professional skill.

Where the trained blind welfare worker can more often help is in regard to the provision of the second part of this three-pronged programme for the aged blind, namely, the provision of accommodation. Very often this can be satisfactorily solved within the surroundings of the blind person's own family provided the family themselves can be made aware of the needs of an ageing blind person and in some cases dissuaded from the over-protective attitude, particularly towards the newly blind, with which we are all too familiar. Frequently it is possible and indeed desirable for an individual losing his sight between 60 and 70 years of age to undertake a short period of social rehabilitation, which can either be carried out in a normal rehabilitation centre or preferably in one which is set up for that purpose. Blind people who remain tied to the family circle often lose their chance of courageous independence. Many of them are extremely self-conscious of their handicap and become easily embarrassed socially. Rehabilitation is, therefore, best carried out away from home if it is to be a complete success. At a residential centre of social rehabilitation they can be brought to make the best terms they can with blindness on the home front, to a social adjustment to their new problem, to mastering the simpler aids to independence in daily living, and to making their own particular contribution to their own homes. By this means many

people who lose their sight after the age of 65 can be preserved for a good many years in the familiar family surroundings.

Those who have not the advantage of a family around them and who have indeed been blind for a much greater period of their lives are frequently accommodated in the generally accepted type of home for the blind and in many countries there is an increasing tendency to build on to homes for the blind a special annexe where some additional supervision and nursing care can be given in order to deal with the increasing infirmities of age.

There are too a great many blind people who have successfully lived their independent lives and supported themselves in their own homes. What should happen to such people when on account of age they have to retire from working life? In Britain our contribution to this particular problem has been to try and enable such people to remain independent for as long as possible and to provide the necessary support to that end. Sometimes it is necessary to establish blocks of flats or flatlets specially for blind people where there are special facilities and a certain amount of supervision. One such which comes to my mind was opened earlier this year in London by a private charity called' The Gift of Thomas Pocklington'. In the centre of a residential area largely composed of blocks of flats for able-bodied people there is a purpose-built block of 64 flats for the blind in which retired blind people, or married couples (only one of whom need be blind) are provided with unfurnished accommodation at rentals reasonable for those who are living on retirement pensions. There is a large communal dining room, which can also be used for social gatherings, in which on five days of the week at least a cooked midday meal is available for those who require it. Guest rooms are provided for visitors and the block includes a self-contained laundry room. Grounds have been laid out to provide ample opportunity for exercise or relaxation in suitable weather. The only staff necessary are, preferably, two married couples, one of whom would be designated Wardens and the other Sub-Wardens, and whose quarters are connected by electric bells to every resident's flat so that they may be summoned instantly in the event of any illness or emergency.

By far the most compelling of our needs and certainly the field in which least has up to the momemt been done is the provision of what, for want of a better word, I would describe as geriatric homes for the blind. In other words, special provision for that important and increasing section to which I have already referred, those who on account of their age and infirmity cannot satisfactorily be accommodated either in their own homes or in normal homes for the blind but who are not sick enough to go into hospital.

At the end of 1962 a private charity for the blind in Britain established Pocklington House, at Northwood in Middlesex, which is one of the first purpose-built establishments for this type of blind person. It accommodates some thirty residents whose ages range from 70 to 96. The Home, which stands in four acres of wooded grounds, has been specially designed to meet the needs of its blind residents. The whole of the accommodation for residents is on ground floor level, thereby

obviating the necessity for any steps or stairs at all, even when they sit out of doors on the sun terraces which lead from the sitting-rooms. All the bedrooms are either single or double rooms and in this way it has been possible to cater for a number of elderly blind married couples, some of whom had actually previously spent some years apart in separate homes either for the blind or elderly persons.

The rooms are tastefully furnished, most of the furniture such as wash basins, cupboards, chests of drawers, etc., being built in and the only individual variations are in the colour schemes of curtains, bedcovers and carpets. Each bedroom is provided with comfortable armchairs where residents can sit if they wish but there are in addition two public lounges, a small quiet room where residents may see visitors in private, a handicrafts room where much occupational therapy is carried out, and for those who need extra treatment to allay the ailments of old age, a physiotherapy room. Much thought has been given to such things as the positioning of door handles which are all at the same level to enable wheel chair cases to pass through without extra assistance. In the bathrooms and toilets, which are numerous, special rails and aids for infirm people have been fitted; in the same way rubber mats are placed at the base of baths, etc., to prevent slipping. These and many additional appliances mean that residents can attend to their personal toilet in privacy and in comfort for all rooms are warmed by radiators which in the bathrooms are fitted high on to the walls. Despite this respect for the individual and the need for privacy, residents are never left to feel that they are completely on their own. In the bathrooms as well as in the bedrooms a rediffusion panel incorporates facilities for residents not only to call for help but to know immediately from the nurses' sitting-room that help is coming. In their bedrooms, operated also by rediffusion press-button system, residents can choose their own radio programmes. Meals are served either in the bedrooms or in the public dining-room according to the individual and even daily requirements of the guests. There are walks laid out in the woodland grounds, and there is a service of volunteer helpers who come in daily to visit the residents, to read to them, and if necessary to escort them to the local blind clubs, to places of entertainment or worship, to take them for motor drives or even back with them for visits to their homes.

The staff is necessarily somewhat large and comprises a hospital trained Matron, trained nurses, nursing attendants, cooks, domestic staff, a handyman/gardener, as well as a part-time physiotherapist, a part-time occupational therapist and a medical officer who visits the Home daily.

It is hardly possible yet to see how far reaching the effects of this very special treatment will be on the residents who come to Pocklington House often after years in other places far less adapted to their needs but on the physical side it is sufficient to say that during the severe winter of 1963 there were no serious illnesses among the residents and furthermore, many of them have taken on a new lease of life in the very evening of their days.

It is hoped that by the time this paper is presented to the Congress in New York it will be possible to distribute some detailed documentation on one or two of the aspects of residential accommodation upon which I have touched and also to give delegates the opportunity of seeing a film which has been produced by the Royal National Institute for the Blind on the care of the ageing blind in Britain.

Last in this trilogy of special facilities to meet the needs of the ageing blind comes the question of companionship. Loneliness is the greatest ill from which the aged suffer and it is not limited to those who live in the towns or those who live in villages, isolated or otherwise, and indeed it can be experienced in Homes. So much depends on the right companionship —the right companionship for the individual. Wherever possible, therefore, full-time Centres, open every day, are needed where many elderly blind people can develop their special interests through a wide and interesting programme of varied activities. A Centre where they have a sense of belonging; a place of true friendship. A Centre where they can find new friends, share problems and discover fresh opportunities to enjoy life. Such a Centre needs to be convenient to a good public transport service and a plentiful source of voluntary helpers. The increased amount of leisure of the elderly gives rise to one of the tasks facing voluntarism today. How to utilize their time and banish loneliness is a problem for the aged. How much more so is it a problem for the aged blind.

I would also lay special emphasis upon the great importance to blind people of the companionship of radio which to so many of them can be at one time a newspaper, a theatre, a sports arena, a place of entertainment, a place of worship, and indeed a constant and never failing friend who is at all times at hand. Many years ago in making an appeal on behalf of the British Wireless for the Blind Fund, Sir Winston Churchill said that he hoped that it would soon become the custom of our country that no blind person who needed it would lack the means of wireless listening. Thanks to the efforts of the British Wireless for the Blind Fund, which makes a single appeal over our broadcasting services in Britain every Christmas night, this happy position has now been achieved and sets are issued by the Fund to any registered blind person who may need one on permanent loan. Such sets are by Act of Parliament exempt from the payment of purchase tax and in addition free wireless licences are given to every blind person in the United Kingdom. The Talking Book too is another great solace to aged and lonely blind people and the advantages of the British multi-track tape system of reproducer, with its adaptations for the infirm and arthritic, have become very obvious in the expansion which has gone on over recent years. It is not without significance that 57 per cent. of our present Talking Book readership is over 65 years of age.

Many elderly blind people can benefit enormously from the companionship and the change of environment which comes from an annual holiday, which very often also gives a welcome break to their sighted friends and relatives who have the responsibility of looking after them during the rest of the year. At one time the numerous special holiday

homes for the blind were designed primarily for those who were fit and active and often engaged in some form of regular employment. Today most of these people prefer, and indeed are actively encouraged, to take holidays under sighted conditions and the demand for places in holiday homes now comes primarily much more from the elderly and less ambulant and from those who are accustomed to spending the remainder of the year in more sheltered conditions either of employment or in the home. Consequently it is becoming increasingly necessary to adapt holiday homes for the blind to meet the needs of a new clientèle. It is little use offering to elderly blind people accommodation where they have to share a room with six or seven other people and where they may have to climb several flights of stairs in order to get from the dining or public rooms to their bedrooms. Older holiday homes are being increasingly adapted by the introduction of elevators and the division of large dormitory rooms either into single or double bedrooms or into private cubicles. New holiday homes are being built or adapted with the residents' accommodation confined to one or at the most two floors.

All of what I have said is intended to emphasize that the needs of elderly blind people are to some extent special, though they may still share many of their other requirements with the elderly in general. This is no argument in favour of any *avoidable* degree of separation or segregation and it is admitted that it may sometimes be possible to combine these services with provisions that are made for other elderly people. My plea is much more for a recognition of the fact that the problems of the elderly blind do exist and are very great and that we have a duty and an obligation to provide for those who spend the evening of their lives in darkness and to bring the light of compassion into their lives.

Because they are blind we have an obligation towards their welfare. Because they are old we have a duty towards them and because they are often lonely and helpless we must combine our efforts to their succour and help.

Special Problems of the Ageing Blind in the Modern World

By **Luiza Banducci Isnard,** *Director, Fundacao para o Livro do Cego no Brasil, Sao Paulo.*

The question of the ageing needs much study and offers broad fields for research in biology, psychology and sociology because we need data and a better slant on the problem of ageing.

In spite of his position in the animal scale and of his intellectual characteristics, Man is a biologic system with a life period determined by his species.

The word 'old age' is in a certain way very relative. When are people considered old? In a sense we start getting old as soon as we are born. The Seminar of Arden House held from October 30th to November 4th of 1960, in New York, to study the problems of ageing people and the responsibilities of social work in this field, concluded that in his process of ageing Man faces certain typical crises, the time when he must face

the declining years, and makes plans for the future (from 45 to 60 years old); the period of retiring with all its trials and traumas (from 60 to 75 years old); and the phase of adaptation to progressive physiological decline and its consequences (from 75 onwards).

For statistics in general, we consider included in the geriatric group the individuals of 65, although some of them at that age do not belong to this group yet, and others below 65 are already old. However, this is the time when, almost universally, people face the problem of retiring, of forced inactivity, irrespective of their physical, psychological, social and economic conditions.

Of course, each person handles his difficulties during this period of life with more or less skill, according to his potential and individual characteristics. It is commonly believed that, in normal conditions, a person strengthens his qualities as he grows older. Each ageing person though, is a separate individual and not a generalization.

Moreover, when we consider 'ageing', it is not enough simply to consider the capacity of each individual to survive, according to his chronological age, we must also consider his ability to adapt to several social environments and multiple situations a well as his aptness in fulfilling various social roles expected from him, within his 'status', habits, social group and position in the family. Thus implications of physical, psychological and social order are present in determining the ageing of human beings. The researchers in this field agree that the biological, psychological and social ages of Man can be separate and that studies must be undertaken to find out if there is a common process in these three. The psychological and sociological aspects of the ageing have strongly influenced our ideas about it.

But the truth is that ageing brings changes both in body and behaviour and like every other change it is threatening to the individual and his environment. Becoming old is a problem whose proportions have not yet been determined. This period of life is characterized by a certain degree of social isolation, loss or abandoning of roles, feelings of rejection, self-depreciation, economic unproductivity, narrowing of family circles, lowering or complete absence of income, and all these difficulties are many times aggravated by social and cultural factors.

In the urban and developed areas the span of life has been increasing, thanks to the development of medical science and higher living standards. This, however, brings new problems of a social type and a consequent change in handling these problems.

Family has always come first in every society and is inseparable from human existence. It has been, undoubtedly, all through the centuries, the chief promoter of the well being of men.

The precept of responsibility of children towards parents is well-known in human society, and is sometimes stressed by laws. 'Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' (Exodus, chapter 20, verse 12).

When ageing persons are kept within the family circle that accepts and understands them, such changes do not have an abrupt form, because the families take them as part of the individual himself. In

those homes he has the opportunity of living satisfactorily, finding outlets for his affective and creative capacities by means of participation in family life and community.

However, the demands of modern society do not allow such a simple view of the question. The children have their own parts to play and family does not always mean the old and traditional ways. Frequently people reach old age without children, relatives or friends; they are burdened with problems of physical, emotional and economic kind and are forced to become the responsibility of others.

Society has lately assumed the responsibility of providing people with the adequate means of adjustment to the ageing circumstances. This seems to be happening even in civilizations where, by tradition, the care of old people belonged to the family group. The assistance of institutions increases, as that of the families decreases.

Ageing is often accompanied by chronic physical problems such as: cardio-vascular, arthritic, rheumatic, cancer, orthopaedic, mental, loss of hearing, sight, and other disabling conditions. Such conditions impair or stop the activities of ageing people in various degrees, besides demanding constant medical care.

The adequate assistance to the aged population will depend mainly on the determination of the problem and on adequate social assistance. However, every measure should be taken to lessen the effects of age and to give ageing people opportunities for social functioning. These steps will cost less to society than the price of inactivity, deterioration and invalidism.

Programs should include medical assistance, housing plans, recreation and all services related to chronic illness and the disabilities accompanying them.

The subject of this meeting is the problem of ageing blind people. We believe that their problems and needs, apart from those specific ones added by blindness do not differ markedly from those of the aged group generally. The special problems of a person who is blind are comparable to those of a person troubled by paraplegia, hemiplegia, amputation, deafness or other disabling and permanent conditions that demand specific care.

Among ageing blind people, let us consider those who were born blind or became so early in life. For these, a happy old age depends mainly on the previous success they had in adjusting to blindness in their young years. If they were neglected and dependent from the begining, then, maybe they are already too deeply buried in a world from whence return is practically impossible. In these conditions their problems may very well become worse with the decline brought on by age. Their basic needs should have been looked after earlier. Nothing is left for them but to become an object of protection by family or society.

Persons who became blind because of physiological decline of old age will take blindness as one among several possible physical consequences or social losses. These losses are perhaps of greater importance to the individual. Maybe some persons already afflicted with old age ailments will suffer less when blindness comes than as a child,

youngster or adult will. Reverend F. Carroll says that the 'ageing have a different attitude towards blindness, because, if they are not already resigned to difficulties and privations, at least they are already accustomed to them'.

Indeed, blindness is less impairing for those persons who have already joined the elderly group. But we believe that the reaction of people faced with blindness depends greatly on the basic structure of their personality, life experiences, pattern of behaviour to which they are accustomed and other social realities.

There are, however, certain aspects of great importance related to ageing blind people that must not be forgotten. Most of the developed countries or those in process of development have a certain reluctance to giving opportunities of work, specially in industry, to persons more than 45 years old. In Brazil, for instance, it is not easy to place a person over 35 in industry, chiefly because of certain obligations forced on the employer by the labour laws. A blind person of that age, if unemployed though he is not yet included in the aged group, will have even greater difficulties in finding a competitive job. Besides the age limitations that affect any worker, he has to fight against liabilities resulting from his condition.

Specific measures like those already taken by some countries such as financial help and pensions, must be established to alleviate these difficulties.

In the United States, which has a blind population of about 400,000 people, at least two-thirds of them are over 45. But in countries with poor medical and economic resources it is usual to find among the blind a high percentage of people still young enough to work, and who need immediate attention so that they will not face old age already inactive and useless.

When we consider the problems of ageing blind persons, we want to emphasize the rehabilitation programs that will encourage a life as independent as it can possibly be. Such programs should deal with rehabilitation as a total process undertaken by well trained specialized personnel. Many aged persons (either blind or not) can by means of an adequate job of rehabilitation, be brought to very satisfactory physical and personal functioning. Unless we adopt a policy that may help the rehabilitation of these persons, we will have a future with institutions full of chronic patients and incapacitated people. An increasing number of dependents, even if there are institutes and assistance, is by no means a prospect of which a healthy society should be proud.

Adequate programs of rehabilitation should tend towards prevention of deterioration and to giving persons, if not complete independence, at least a reasonable self-sufficiency that prevents them from becoming a burden for relatives and friends.

It is true that in many countries where basic and essential needs of the population (even children) are not totally cared for owing to social and economic reasons, it would be hard to give priority to the problem of the ageing.

Not knowing the extent of the problem and all the difficulties that

delay its solution does not justify neglect in attending to the needs of the ageing person.

Government authorities, private agencies, persons of good-will must rally to find means of attending to that part of the human population, giving it outlets for its productive and creative capacity.

It is obvious that an adequate assistance to ageing people will include the blind. What we aim at is the reintegration and social functioning of the human being, blind or not.

The object of our work must be the 'ageing blind person' and not the 'blind old man'.

The Special Problems of the Ageing Blind

By **Capt. H. C. Robinson,** *Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Vancouver.*

How old is old? It has been said that 'to be seventy years young is sometimes far more cheerful and hopeful than to be forty years old'. It has also been said that 'to know how to grow old is the master-work of wisdom, and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living'.

The problems confronting the ageing blind are basically not too different from those confronting older people generally, except that the additional handicap of blindness does intensity their difficulties. Therefore, in considering the special problems affecting the older blind person we have to take a good look at those facing old people generally.

Medical science has found methods of expanding the average life span, and this is indeed a noteworthy achievement. Technological progress has created an economy which provides a long period of leisure for man after his working career has ended. The result is a rapidly increasing population of senior citizens in a society unprepared for the explosion.

The trend toward urban living, with its smaller houses and apartments, has meant important changes in living arrangements. The average family unit today consists of parents and their children. The time when three generations lived under the same roof is practically gone. Also, modern travel facilities have changed the employment picture, and old people are very often geographically isolated from their families.

As a result of changing attitudes and conditions, the state is assuming more and more responsibility for the aged, and the families less and less. This trend is apparent even in oriental countries where old people were revered and cared for entirely by the family. Now the State is beginning to assume responsibility. Ironically, the provision of State allowances for the aged and disabled has markedly changed the attitude of such peoples as the Eskimo and North American Indian toward their old relatives. No longer are they left to die 'by the trail' but have become a cherished asset due to their comparative affluence.

The increasing proportion of elderly people in the voting population

has developed political significance. The large number of votes involved can bring considerable pressure on political parties, and should result in improved state provisions for all old people.

The major problems of the ageing population are lack of personal health services; lack of adequate income on retirement; lack of adequate housing; lack of vocational opportunities; lack of suitable recreational and social outlets.

It will cost a good deal of money to meet these needs adequately. However, if they are not met, the long-term costs will be infinitely greater. It is common knowledge that lonely, idle, ill-housed old people tend to deteriorate physically and mentally, and the cost of institutional care represents a heavy financial burden on the community.

First let us consider the economic needs. Many of the problems of the ageing can be resolved, or do not arise, if an old person has an adequate income. It is gratifying to note that many countries are beginning to realize the necessity of providing a reasonable basic income for their old people through a variety of social security measures. A compulsory contributory pension plan is one solution toward the provision of adequate income.

If old people can carry on in their own homes this is an ideal situation, and some countries have a 'meals-on-wheels' program which makes this possible. A 'visiting home-maker' service also fills a need. However, a large proportion of the older population do not own their own homes, and for this group low-cost housing is essential. All levels of government, fraternal organizations, churches, etc., have sponsored developments which are as varied in character as they are in sponsorship. They include cottage type; apartment and hotel type; some for old people only; some for low-income families and individuals of all ages. Although a start has been made on the provision of low cost housing, there is still an acute shortage of nursing home and chronic hospital care in most countries. The present cost of such care is prohibitive for the average family, and governments will have to take the responsibility of establishing and maintaining such institutions.

Many countries provide adequate medical care for old persons in receipt of public assistance, and it is to be hoped this program will be expanded to cover all people financially unable to meet their own medical costs. The majority of working people have some form of medical insurance which, unfortunately, ceases upon retirement. Provisions should be made for this group to receive adequate medical care upon retirement at a cost within their means.

The overriding reason for unhappiness among senior citizens is not just the lack of health or money; it is a yearning for involvement—of being wanted and being useful. Compulsory retirement at a given age is a contributing factor because it often takes away a man's reason for living. However, it is encouraging to note that some businesses, universities, and even governments, are beginning to appreciate the value of finding part-time or specialized employment for their retired employees who are still able, physically and mentally, to render a worthwhile contribution. So long as people are employed they usually maintain

their social contacts. Some old people are fortunate in having their families nearby, and enjoy participation in family gatherings. Some couples have so many shared interests they are socially self-sufficient. Unfortunately, the majority of old people face a life of social isolation. The limited social and recreational programs now being pioneered by agencies, community centres, etc., will have to be enlarged and increased to provide opportunities for satisfying human relationships and a feeling of accomplishment. Lack of mobility is a problem of the aged, therefore planners of adult education and recreational programs should see that facilities are made available on a neighborhood rather than a centralized basis, and that means of transportation be provided. Churches might consider encouraging their members who are retired and have a car to organize transportation for old people who, due to loss of mobility, can no longer participate in church activities.

Plans and programs for a happy old age are useless unless old people are aware of them. The possibility of distributing a pamphlet—'How To Be Happy Though Retired'— through government channels might be one way to bring services to their attention.

In the more advanced countries the proportion of old people in the blind population is very high, and as I have said, their problems are more acute because of the additional handicap.

Take for instance the economic situation. When people lose their sight after forty-five years of age, it is seldom possible to continue former employment, or to obtain alternate employment. Therefore, there is little opportunity to acquire sufficient savings to provide for old age, and too often what savings they had are used up to pay medical costs in the hope of regaining vision. Usually there has been little or no opportunity to build up adequate retirement pension benefits. It is therefore vital that state allowances for the blind be established, taking into account the extra cost of living on account of blindness. A number of countries, including Australia, West Germany, and some Scandinavian countries, have already recognized this extra cost in their allowances to the blind, and it is under consideration elsewhere.

Low-cost housing is essential for most blind people. Some elderly blind persons are able to take advantage of subsidized housing for the general population where they can benefit from sighted companionship, guiding assistance, recreational opportunities, etc. Others can be accommodated in subsidized residences for the aged. Some require care in specialized residences for the blind, and of course there is the group needing care in chronic hospitals. Here again, the acute shortage of such accommodation is something which should be given immediate attention.

The need for a feeling of achievement through useful work or leisure-time activities is of the utmost importance to old blind people. A continual search for suitable hobbies, and recreational skills should be carried out. Older blind people should be encouraged to continue former social relationships, and should be assisted to participate in existing community social and recreational activities.

While every effort should be made to aid blind people to retain their

contacts with the sighted world, we must not lose sight of the large number of elderly blind persons who find it hard to move out into the community, and therefore existing specialized programs must be continued for their benefit, or new programs developed.

This group can find a good deal of satisfying activity through a well planned volunteer service of reading; help in pursuing religious, cultural, social or recreational activities through attendance at church, places of entertainment, or any activity designed to give them satisfaction in living. Volunteers should be trained to help blind persons by providing companionship, or assisting them to pursue interests and activities within their pattern of life.

Agencies for the blind have played a vital role in securing beneficial legislation, and developing general service programs when there was virtually no government aid for handicapped persons, However, with the state assuming more and more responsibility for handicapped persons, the role of the specialized agency for the blind is changing. They should take full advantage of services provided for the general ageing public, and should avoid duplication of such services as far as possible. For the 'new look' in welfare for the blind I would recommend that everyone working on behalf of our blind citizens read the McAllister Upshaw paper—'Statesmanship in Social Welfare'—published in the *New Outlook for the Blind*, September, 1963.

If the majority of blind people could use advantageously the services provided by public agencies for the general public, the private agency would be more free to develop highly specialized programs, such as promoting better economic security; better acceptance of blind people in industry; more intensive rehabilitation training to equip the blind person to take his place in the community, with all the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; further research in the fields of prevention of blindness; low-vision aids; guiding devices, and new vocations, all of which would have a beneficial bearing on the welfare of the older group in the blind population.

When I started research on problems of the aged I found that all levels of government, private agencies and a variety of organizations in many countries are making intensive studies on the subject, but the material is poorly co-ordinated. There should be national and international interlocking committees established to study data compiled from studies to date, together with existing provisions, to determine the gaps, and to produce a blueprint which would enable governments and voluntary agencies to work together in a comprehensive plan that looks at the total needs of the aged person, taking into account the economy and development of the country concerned.

Various philosophies and plans in respect to the special problems of the aged sightless population have been put forward by experienced and outstanding workers for the blind, but here again there appears to be little, if any, co-ordination. I would therefore suggest that national organizations concerned with the welfare of the ageing blind set up committees to study the suggested blueprint on the problems of the aged, and from that develop the additional necessary services so that

if the facilities are made available, and our older blind citizens have the willingness to try and the determination to persevere, there is no reason why their remaining years could not be productive and enriched by a variety of social, recreational and cultural activities.

EIGHTH SESSION **Thursday morning, August 6th, 1964.**

MODERN PROGRAMMES FOR BLIND PERSONS WITH OTHER DISABILITIES

Chairman: **Prof. Dr. Carl Strehl,** *President, Verein der Blinden Geistesarbeiter Deutschlands e.V., Germany.*

Modern Programmes for Blind Persons with Other Disabilities

By **Dr. W. Dolanski,** *Poland*

First of all I deem it my pleasant duty to thank the Program Commission for the honour of giving me the task of working out the present paper. At the same time, I should also like to thank all those delegates who have been kind enough to answer my questionnaire. I have sent out forty questionnaires, but—alas—only one-third of them have been answered, mostly in a very general form. I should like to believe that the reason was the too short a term given by me for collecting exhaustive data.

The problem of adaptation of blind people to an active life has been harassing all the workers in the field for more than one hundred years. The problem has acquired a great importance and impetus in the international sphere only in the period between the two world wars, particularly after the Second World War. Nowadays, one must say that, from the theoretical and practical angle, the problem of blind people as such has been mostly solved, because proper methods of training and rehabilitation have been worked out, work in new trades has been made possible for blind people and an adequate system of care of the latter has been created. One should add, too, that the majority of the blind are no more the former 'parias', but people fully conscious of their own possibilities.

It still remains a task to integrate them into the community of the sighted and to implement the methods mentioned, concurrently with the rising standard of living in the underdeveloped countries.

Another problem, a more difficult one, is coming to the foreground at present, namely that of the rehabilitation of blind persons suffering from various additional handicaps.

The scale of different handicaps and disabilities, their various incidence, as well as their impact upon blindness are so varied, that it is quite impossible to discuss them separately. The Royal National Institute for the Blind has very carefully drawn up a statistical table from which it becomes evident that in Great Britain there are twenty odd different handicaps additional to blindness, e.g. deafness, dumbness deafness-and-dumbness, physical and mental defects specific for the 22,023 cases out of 96,729 blind persons.

According to the Yugoslav statistics, among 19,156 blind persons, 6,769 represent cases of additional handicaps.

When preparing the present paper we have restricted ourselves to the three main types of handicaps connected with blindness. In many cases it has been evident that people suffering from them have been rehabilitated thanks to their own attitude, to proper methods of training and optimal conditions which have been created for them. Beside the loss of sight, to the physcal handicaps we should add, first of all, cases of the upper sensorial disabilities—deafness often connected with dumbness, and to the mental and emotional handicaps the inhibition of mental development.

As far as blind people who have lost some of their extremities are concerned, we lack adequate statistical data from abroad and therefore we can base our conclusions only on our own figures. According to statistics of 1957, got out by the Polish Association of the Blind under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the number of blind people with additional handicaps in Poland was the following:

Lack of upper extremities (439)

lack of both arms	*lack of one arm*	*injured arms*	*lack due to disease*	*lack due to work execut.*	*victims of World War*		*post-war period*		*other unknown*
					I	II	*mines*	*duds*	
30	149	260	80	35	20	117	68	75	44

Lack of lower extremities (179)

lack of both legs	*lack of one leg*	*injured legs*							
4	52	123	93	17	6	36	6	5	13

The data given above also include the children who have run on mines and duds in the post-war period and besides having lost their sight have injured their extremities, or the latter have been amputated. The majority of such children have found a shelter in the Institute for the Blind at Laski, near Warsaw. A group of those children from the first moment of their stay in the Institute, differed from their blind mates by a greater activity and self-sufficiency. Their technical training in various trades was experimental and formed the starting point of a rehabilitation method for blind adults who have lost extremities.

The initiator and propagator of this method of training is Mr. H. Ruszczyc, the Director of the vocational rehabilitation unit at Laski. He based it on the correct thesis that the additional handicap in the form of any amputation of upper extremities which in the life of a blind person play so important a part in the process of learning about the outside world through sense of touch, is a great handicap and causes extreme difficulties, but does not make away with the development of possibilities of a person and, given a proper training, it does not prevent him from undertaking vocational work. At the present level of development of technology there is almost no kind of disability which cannot be compensated to a certain degree, because every person has immanent

potential physical and psychological resources making his or her rehabilitation possible.

The statistics given above are, as it may easily be seen, of a very general character. They are limited only to the number of people, without stating the degrees of disability. However, the rehabilitation is complicated, and difficulties are aggravated with the additional lack of any inch of an extremity, especially the upper ones. There is a problem of adapting a prosthesis which should help at work and therefore any person with amputated extremities has his particular, individual needs. The Institute at Laski, when working out this problem, has had special tables illustrating the whole variety of cases of amputation and injuries of extremities.

The date at which the double physical handicap took place is important, whether in childhood or when the person was already adult. Both the child and the adult are subject to frustration and various complexes, in spite of the different reaction to the fact of disability in a child and in a grown-up, whose former personality has been in a sense destroyed.

The chief, often underestimated, factor in the process of rehabilitation in every case of handicap is the inner attitude of man and his real attitude towards the fact and the decision of overcoming the difficulties in order to adapt oneself to the new, changed conditions. The principal role is played here by the complex of factors forming the ego of the person; they are his or her physical and psychological vitality, energy, force of will, intelligence, orientation, ability to reach conclusions, etc. People having those innate dispositions, and able to benefit by them, will pass more quickly through the difficult period of adaptation. Such an adaptation to the changed life depends on the phenomenon of compensation emerging gradually as the mental work co-operates with the other analyzers which take over the activity of the missing ones. The structures of psychological character, forming themselves in this way, compensate afterwards for the losses due to the lack of one or more organs. The greater the dynamic force of a man bound to attain the given aim, the fuller the compensation and the quicker the process of de-frustration.

The first step in any action of rehabilitation of people with lost extremities are the tests carried out by a group of specialists, whose duty is to find out the state of physical health and psychological resistance of the given person. It is necessary to carry out such tests, because the rehabilitation in such cases is extremely difficult. It is similar to the acrobatics by which ambitious invalids try to manifest their will to attain at least a relative independence in the economic sense and self-sufficiency. The abilities and capabilities acquired formerly will be decisive as far as the program and the quality of rehabilitation work are concerned.

When giving technical training to a blind person who has lost an extremity, the difficulties should be overcome by degrees, and as the habitual lack of sight makes it impossible for the blind person to imitate the correct movements, the training should be supplemented with verbal

instructions. Any total activity is a synthesis of different movements which should be analyzed by the person one by one, gradually appropriated and finally stereotyped. The dynamic stereotypes thus created are the starting point for the future vocational work.

An important factor, too, is the maintaining of the disabled person's physical condition, the care and strengthening of the amputated extremity through warm baths, massages and special exercises improving the elasticity of the movements in the joints. Important also is the proper adaptation of a prosthesis and any kind of work-tools connected with the prosthesis, which are an integral part of vocational rehabilitation and a component of the work-place. One should stress that the aids should be strictly individual and proper from the scientific, psychological and physiological points of view.

The adaptation of the prosthesis should be done at a proper time. There are cases when because of a too long use of a remaining part of an extremity and because of habit, the person simply does not want to use even the best prosthesis; which, as a result must adversely affect his work efficiency.

Sometimes, the Krukenberg operation in case of blind people who have lost both hands may be very valuable if the remaining part of the arm is sufficiently long. Then the other arm usually is fitted with a prosthesis.

The Institute at Laski, as well as the Research Center of the Union of Co-operatives of the Blind in Poland have developed systematic research in order to improve the work of blind persons who have lost their extremities. In 1955 at Laski there were the first tests to adapt blind people with both hands amputated, fitted with proper prostheses, to work on properly fitted looms. Director Ruszczyc's attitude towards the different disabilities is that they demand different kinds of work, and the Director has always been seeking and experimenting with new trades, particularly those for which the physical work is accompanied by an increase of mental effort, which increases its interest and brings greater financial reward. There were trials with training at wood and metal-cutting machine tools of various types, e.g. electric boring machine, big grinding machine, revolving lathe, press and others.

The period of technical training necessary for full revalidation of those invalids who have passed their apprentice examinations lasted three to five years. In that period they had to pass through all the sections in their work-establishment, thus attaining to maximum fitness to two trades.

At present in all branches of co-operative and home work there are more than 150 blind persons with additional injuries of the upper extremities. Their wages are more or less at the same level as those of the other blind workers. Only in some cases there are paid 25 per cent. compensatory wages. The State-owned industry has recently given work to four trained, one-armed, blind turners.

The work of blind people who have suffered an additional handicap in the form of amputation is, however, connected with extreme physical effort and nervous tension, but it is absolutely necessary for

them because it guarantees relative self-sufficiency. The latter raises their self-respect and eliminates the sense of lesser value for the community. It is, besides, the main means of resocialization so deeply longed for by these people.

A handicap much more burdensome for blind persons in comparison with physical disability is the sensorial handicap, e.g. the total or partial loss of the sense of hearing, the most important element in the process of compensation in blind persons. The impossibility of communicating with the environment gives a sense of complete solitude.

Thomas J. Carroll in his book, *Blindness*, compares the loss of sight to the death of the personality of man and the period following it to the mourning. How much more fitting is that metaphor in the case of deaf-blind persons, who have been isolated.

Luckily the cases of congenital deafness and blindness or of deafness and blindness dating from early childhood have been rare. One of the letters of the great enthusiast, the founder of a school for deaf people, the Abbé de l'Epée, in 1774, expresses doubt about the existence of such a handicap. He wrote, 'plaise à la miséricorde divine qu'il n'y ait jamais personne sur la terre qui soit éprouvé d'une manière aussi terrible . . . mais s'il en est une seule, je souhaite qu'on me l'amène et de pouvoir contribuer par mes soins au grand ouvrage de son salut.'

It was only several scores of years later that the first who had an opportunity to take care of the education of such a severely handicapped child was Dr. Samuel Howe. He laid down not only the basis of pedagogy for the deaf-blind but he also pointed to the possibility of their social and vocational rehabilitation. That gave a stimulus to similar pioneering work in other countries, which have often been successful. Laura Bridgman, Helen Keller, Marie and Marthe Heurtin and Olga Skorochodowa are the most eminent persons mentioned in the literature of the education of the deaf-blind.

The Industrial Home for the Blind and the Royal National Institute for the Blind have been making research into the ever increasing problem of deafness and blindness and aiming at uniformity of methods of working in the international field. The result of this was the creation by the Paris Congress of W.C.W.B., in 1954, of a Service Committee for deaf-blind people. The Committee at the Brooklyn Conference in 1957 began working out the very important, universal system of manual communication with deaf-blind persons. The further phase of this co-operation was the organization by the R.N.I.B. of a conference of teachers and educators of different children, in 1962, at Condover Hall, in which representatives of eleven countries participated.

The questionnaire sent out by us has brought very fragmentary and probably incomplete data from which it becomes evident that the number of different deaf-blind persons in the total of the blind is small:

Great Britain	353	Spain	9
Western Germany	342	Sweden	200
Ireland	200	Switzerland	250
Malaysia	84	Tunisia	35
Poland	198	Yugoslavia	142

In the answers received from other countries there are no data concerning deaf-blind persons.

We know, too, that together with the progress of medicine the number of blind and deaf children, mostly victims of the most dangerous meningitis, will be slowly but constantly decreasing, but the danger of losing the senses of sight and hearing will be growing because of the ever greater life expectancy and the continuous stepping-up process of biological ageing in older people.

When analyzing the most complete data of the R.N.I.B. one learns that Great Britain, besides the above-mentioned number of completely deaf and blind people, has 1,875 blind inhabitants who do not use their sense of hearing at all, but are still able to speak; in Yugoslavia, 276, and the number of the so-called hard-hearing blind amounts to 5,305: in Yugoslavia, 65.

The problem is the following: everywhere where there are persons in situations similar to that of the latter group, one should take better care of them, grant them not only specialist medical care enabling them to preserve the very valuable residual sight or sense of hearing and at the same time make it possible for them to establish contact with appropriate agencies whose duty will be the rational directing of the life of those persons.

The phenomenon of compensation in the deaf-blind is a subject which is continually being investigated by various agencies and scientific institutions dealing, among other things, with that subject, too.* Greater possibilities and achievements are possible for agencies having, besides adequate funds, also a skilled team of workers of various disciplines. One such agency is the I.H.B. which has published the results of studies carried on for many years, in the form of a collective work, 'The Rehabilitation of Deaf-Blind People'. Among other persons co-operating and consulting in these studies were deaf-blind persons holding responsible posts, R. Kinney, Dr. Gerrit van der Mey, A. R. Sculthorpe, R. J. Smithdas.

The process of adaptation to life and work of the people with double handicaps is very complicated: the more so, as it is reasonably put by Dr. P. Salmon, that the quality of being deaf and blind is by no means tantamount to two different handicaps; it is not deafness plus blindness but a third, quite different kind of disability. The training of such a man is influenced not only by physical and psychological factors and by the innate emotionality mentioned above, but to a higher degree, it depends on the age at which the double handicap took place. The influence is different if the loss of the two senses is simultaneous, or if one of the senses is impaired earlier and when the destructive influence of the loss of one sense is more acute.

*The State Institute of Special Pedagogy carries on research, under the supervision of Dr. M. Grzegorzewska; similar investigations are also carried out at the Chair of Special Pedagogy, University of Warsaw.
In 1963 was published the book, 'Obserwacje nad rozwojem gluchociemnej Krystyny Hryszkiewicz' ('Observations concerning the development of Krystyna Hryszkiewicz the deaf-blind girl'), by Emmanuela Jezierska.

If a blind person having vocational training loses the sense of hearing, he can however carry out his work with a greater effort, basing his actions on the sense of touch but he cannot do work based on the sense of hearing. Knowledge of braille enables one to establish a relative contact with the surrounding world. If a deaf person loses his sight, the rehabilitation and adaptation to life and work as a blind person is much more difficult.

Persons who cannot work and at the same time are physically weaker have to resort to their own home and family or to a home for the blind, where the good will of people and work therapy will lessen the difficulties of their situation. Others who are more fit should enter a sheltered workshop. People having a potential of psychological forces and who, besides, have been prepared to carry out vocational work, have today possibilities of employment in plants sometimes even alongside sighted workers.

Let us not delude ourselves into thinking that the problem of overcoming various obstacles and difficulties, the objective ones and those connected with one's own character or with the environment, are easy to overcome. However, the problem can be solved. One should take into consideration that every case of deafness connected with blindness has its peculiarities, is unique and, therefore, that rehabilitation should be carried out in a highly elastic way. All handicapped persons should be integrated into the life of the environment. An atmosphere of good will and friendliness should be established because for the handicapped they are 'a ray of sunshine in his prison', according to Bernard Ruez, the deaf-blind from Poitiers.

An important part is played by skilled home teachers or caseworkers, skilled social assistants, helping the client on behalf of a rehabilitation agency, or departments of the institutions for the blind.

Their task is first of all to establish personal contacts with the client and to awaken in him the will to take advantage of his own possibilities to bring about a constructive change of his personal situation. The caseworker should be really interested and should also influence the family environment and the work-place environment of the client. The responsible position of the caseworker demands of him not only selflessness but also much specialized knowledge and the will to do the work efficiently.

The scale of mental and emotional disturbance is very broad and it reaches from cases of backwardness in the normal mental development to oligophrenia and to the lower levels of debility, imbecility and idiocy.

Those handicaps, mostly hereditary, are very often met with in addition to blindness. Only those blind people whose initial development was backward, those who are physically and mentally dull, and some defectives, can be rehabilitated if they have a possibility of going to a special preparatory school. The more will to attain their aim they show, the quicker they will be able to make the effort necessary to overcome the difficulties involved.

We must take it for granted that—because of their lower mental capacity—such people will never be able to perform more intensive mental work, to come to correct general conclusions and to think in

abstract terms. Nevertheless, thanks to certain habits acquired in their vocational work by multiple repetition of the movements, they can perform numerous simple, mechanical actions, which in the course of time form in them proper, dynamic stereotypes.

The time of the adaption to work is naturally slow and the period of rehabilitation is longer and should be realized individually, following the opinion of doctors and psychologists. Pathological changes in the nervous system of such a patient, congenital or acquired due to various diseases, are often the cause of some marginal psychological states, of extreme sensibility to impulses, or of inertia. Changes of the mental state cause a quicker general exhaustion and at the same time lead to an incapacity to co-ordinate bodily movements.

Therefore, the employment of mentally retarded blind people is greatly opposed by employers, the blindness being the most incapacitating factor. One should combat the opposition as effectively as possible, because work is one of the basic therapeutical means in the case of a complicated handicap. Skilled people can fulfil their tasks when they are treated in friendly fashion by the management and by their colleagues, and when the work is suited to their strength and possibilities. Such people will gradually lose their sense of frustration and become integrated into the community when the results of their work are evaluated positively. Their sense of being resourceful and useful will also be increased.

We know cases of blind persons working in a brush-making co-operative in which they developed and increased the scope of their interests and were useful workers in spite of being formerly treated as mentally under-developed and inert. They developed because of work, and one of them, thanks to the discovery of his abilities, graduated from a high school, although he was a psycopathic and his critical faculty was impaired.

In one of the schools for the blind eleven mental defectives have graduated so as to be able to carry out work on their own, nine are fit for sheltered work, eight can work only at home, sixteen could not be rehabilitated because of a deeper handicap and nine under the adverse influence of their environment after they left school showed regression and came back to their former state of mental retardation. The limited resistance of the nervous system of those individuals is very sensitive to the psychological influence of their environment. An incorrect attitude towards them may destroy the relative mental balance acquired with much difficulty during the period of rehabilitation. Therefore the part played by the social caseworker is extremely helpful. The caseworker's task is to enquire into the internal conflicts of the client, to lessen them and to help him to solve the problems of life.

The constant general development of the economy makes it necessary to employ the latent resources of people suffering from various handicaps. Thanks to the achievements of science and technology, people living until now outside the community have new prospects of realizing their aspirations and hopes.

In addition to the humanitarian aspect, the introduction of the blind

to productive work has other aspects: their work will contribute to the increase of goods for the market and, at the same time, the State budget will no longer need to use financial funds earmarked for their support.

Here are three additional points which emerge from the study of this topic as most desirable:

1. Every blind person with an additional handicap should be rehabilitated according to his possibilities so as to be able to work.
2. The World Health Organization should take the necessary steps to work out proper prophylactic measures with a view to eliminating cases of hereditary blindness.
3. In connection with the celebrations to be organized by the United Nations in 1968 of the 20th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, an amendment to Article 26 should be introduced concerning the right to vocational rehabilitation of all those people who have been victims of a disease or an accident.

Amputees work at the following metal working machines

Center Lathes
Turret lathes
All types of milling machines
All types of drilling machines
All types of presses
Power saws
Electrical shears

Locksmith work

Chipping of the surface with chisel
Cutting off
Square cutting-off without using cutting jig
Filing of the rectilinear planes
Recticular filing
Parallel filing
Workshop measurements
Checking the workpieces on the bench plate
Tapping and threading
Riveting
Bending the wire
Bending the rod
Bending the Tubes
Profiling
Peening
Surface quality making
Parts fitting
Rounding off
Filing after welding
Assembling of telephone sub-assembly
Spring coiling
Assembly
Parallel cutting

Coiling the springs in the machine
Ornamentation cutting
Filing of the planes
Filing by pattern
Tube bending on tube bending machine
Sharpening
Filing the cones
Twisting the wire in the jig
Cold forging
Straightening the rods
Setting of the turning tool

Modern Programs for Blind Persons with Other Disabilities

By **Dr. Peter J. Salmon,** *Executive Director, The Industrial Home for the Blind, New York, U.S.A.*

Many of us can still remember a time when blindness, *per se*, was considered an almost insurmountable handicap. Today, for the most part, blindness constitutes a less awesome challenge. Indeed, in the United States, blindness, unaccompanied by complicating intellectual, emotional, or physical conditions, falls well within the competency of numerous rehabilitation programs set up for the visually disabled, but the trend in American caseloads is away from blindness as the sole disability. As a result of blindness due to serious accidents and the improved survival rate of premature infants, we are increasingly called upon to serve individuals for whom blindness is only one aspect of a more complex and difficult disability configuration. Thus, the client population served by such agencies as The Industrial Home for the Blind tends to contain a growing number of blind persons who are also mentally retarded, deaf, emotionally disturbed, and/or physically disabled.

This client population once was considered virtually hopeless in so far as rehabilitation was concerned. I can still recall, for example, when a deaf-blind person was almost automatically destined to live a life characterized by idleness and helplessness. Fortunately, the tide is gradually turning in favor of the deaf-blind. In the United States, The Industrial Home for the Blind, assisted by a grant from the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, is demonstrating that deaf-blind individuals in a large and varied geographical region can benefit from rehabilitation services and can take their rightful places in the community. The same possibilities exist for blind persons who have complicating disabilities other than deafness. In our experience, we have formulated a set of principles to govern our work with the blind individual with multiple disabilities. These principles are:

1. The presence of complicating physical, intellectual, or emotional disabilities in a blind person does not necessarily contra-indicate successful rehabilitation.
2. A proportion of these individuals can be helped to become economically and socially self-sufficient; but others, owing to

special problems, can be expected to achieve only partial independence, a level of adjustment that can still be satisfying and productive.

3. Existing programs for blind persons, if supported by agencies specializing in the other disability areas, can make an effective contribution to the eventual rehabilitation of the blind person who has other complicating disabilities.
4. There are many variables in the situation of the blind person with other disabilities, all of which have to be diagnosed and considered in serving him. This principle suggests a critical need for a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach that explores and programs for all ramifications of the compound disability. In the United States, we have found that such a comprehensive service is most effectively offered in the context of a rehabilitation center for blind persons.

In considering how these principles may be applied in actual practice, our first concern must be the development of favorable attitudes toward the provision of effective service to this group. If professional persons and community members are uninformed about the potentialities of blind persons with other disabilities and if widespread prejudice exists against them, rehabilitation programs on their behalf will be slow in developing. Our experience with the deaf-blind confirms this essential point. As part of the I.H.B. Anne Sullivan Macy Service for Deaf-Blind persons, our research staff experimented with changing the attitudes of members of the lay public toward deaf-blind persons. When such efforts were successful (as they usually were) the community members concerned became important allies to the cause of deaf-blind persons. Not only did they feel moved to give more of themselves to the multi-disabled group, but they formed a nucleus of enthusiastic advocates for improved services to deaf-blind persons. We have found, as we imagine you have too, that certain current attitudes of apathy and rejection are barriers to the provision of effective service to blind persons with other disabilities and that such attitudes do not disappear automatically. At our current stage of research into services for deaf-blind persons, we believe that deliberate and planned efforts must be launched to modify public attitudes and to create a more favorable community climate for the multi-disabled blind person.

Attitude change is, at best, a slow and difficult process and service cannot mark time until optimum attitudes are created. Thus, while conducting an intensive campaign on this front, agencies for the blind can simultaneously make a real contribution to the multi-disabled blind group by conducting programs for them which involve the community even at its current level of understanding and acceptance. Our experience has been that the more opportunities that multi-disabled persons have to demonstrate their capacities to the community, the more rapid is the emergence of favorable public attitudes toward them. In one instance in its broad program of public education, the I.H.B. studied the effect of having a deaf-blind person address some

1,200 high school students in New York City. The example that this deaf-blind individual set for these students coupled with their first-hand contact with the coping behaviour of a multi-disabled person led to a measurably greater readiness on their part for additional experiences with deaf-blind persons. Furthermore, a related program which brought employees of a large corporation into contact with deaf-blind persons led many of these employees to become active volunteers in a program for deaf-blind persons. In consequence of these findings, it seems likely that when we place capable multi-disabled persons in the community, we stimulate progress toward attracting additional community support for this group.

In serving the multi-disabled individual, agencies for the blind may function very much as they usually do with one major exception. When working with individuals whose disability is limited to vision, the field of service to the blind tends to provide all or most of the broad gamut of services needed by the client. Thus, medical, social, vocational, psychological, and recreational services are the usual components of a total program for blind persons. The advantages of this type of comprehensive approach are widely recognized, receiving almost universal acceptance in the form of the rehabilitation center concept. However, in working with blind persons who have other complicating disabilities, we are likely to find ourselves confronted by problems which demand resources not usually available in programs for blind persons. For example, agencies for the blind are not likely to have specialists in mental retardation, cerebral palsy, psychiatric problems, crippling conditions, and other areas of disability. Yet, effective service to blind persons with these disabilities often depends upon the availability of such specialized skills.

The solution to the problem seems to be the community team. Most communities which offer rehabilitation services for blind persons also offer rehabilitation services to the intellectually limited, the emotionally ill, and the physically disabled. A partnership between the agency for the blind and these other agencies seems to offer the brightest promise for a unified and successful program of service for the multi-disabled blind client. Thus, through a case-by-case procedure, which provides for the individuality of each client, our agency co-operates with other agencies, each providing him the services that it is best equipped to offer. In this way, in the still relatively small number of cases where it is indicated, the client receives the assistance he needs in each of the disability areas concerned in his problem through joint rehabilitation programs involving two or more agencies.

In addition to satisfying a broad spectrum of client needs, this approach produces important side effects. For example, co-operative relationships of this type help to educate other agencies about blindness, remind them of the community's responsibilities in cases of blind persons with complicating disabilities, and inform the community about the practicality of inter-agency co-operation in all rehabilitation matters.

Co-ordination within a multi-agency program for blind persons

with other disabilities need not be a major problem. At the I.H.B., we have found it useful to enter into a joint consideration with co-operating agencies concerning the degree to which each disability is contributing to the total client problem. If this analysis reveals that blindness is the most limiting of the multi-disabilities, the I.H.B. co-ordinates the inter-agency program. If some other disability seems to take precedence in degree of seriousness, the agency serving individuals with that disability assumes the co-ordinating role. However, this decision is a flexible one. From time to time, as the client progresses in his program, his situation will be re-evaluated and, as a consequence, the co-ordinating role may shift to another agency. This plan, combining clarity of function with flexibility of operation, seems to offer the most feasible approach to the rehabilitation problems of this group.

Even under the best of circumstances, multi-disabilities constitute a challenge to rehabilitation services. Thus, rehabilitation programs for this group may be costly, comprehensive, and time-consuming and may require a degree of individualized service that goes beyond our already highly personalized approach to our regular clients. Yet, our experience has been that if the attitudes of professional workers are favorable, if the community supports our efforts, and if co-operating agencies share the responsibility with us, the task of helping this group is well within our capabilities.

In our work with multi-disabled blind persons, we have been inclined to stress the professional aspects of the situation. If I may, I would like to share some thoughts with you on a more personal basis. For more than forty years I have been urging groups all over the world to extend more assistance to deaf-blind persons and other blind persons with complicating disabilities. Our present level of success in working with these groups and the prospects for the future are professionally gratifying indeed. However, I must say that my own relationships with deaf-blind persons and other multi-disabled blind persons have given me particular personal satisfaction and happiness. I think that they have done more for me than I for them. They have taught me humility, an appreciation of the courage and almost limitless capacity of human beings to endure privation, and an understanding of the real meaning of rehabilitation. I am in their debt and I know that those of us who undertake to serve them not only enjoy a professional sense of achievement, but we also come away from our relationships with them more competent to do our everyday jobs on behalf of other blind individuals.

Modern Programmes for Blind Persons with other Disabilities

By **A. D. Lloyds,** *Secretary of St. Dunstan's, London, England.*

The development of blind welfare over the past forty years or so has done much to show that blindness is a handicap which can be overcome, and the blind themselves have proved that with adequate education, rehabilitation and training, they can take their rightful place in the life of the community and that they are in fact normal individuals except that they cannot see.

It is an unfortunate fact, however, that there are blind persons who have a disablement additional to blindness, and it is the purpose of this paper to show what can be done to assist with their problems and how they can achieve maximum independence and usefulness.

The paper is concerned with those who may be termed as falling within the working age group (roughly 18-64 years); it does not deal with the elderly, nor with the blind child, and the problems of the deaf-blind are covered in the papers of Dr. Peter J. Salmon.

Rehabilitation and Training

The importance of according the fullest rehabilitation services to blind persons with other disabilities cannot be too strongly stressed; this should preferably be undertaken at a centre for the blind where, by meeting with and learning from others, the process of 'learning to be blind' and re-adjustment is likely to be the better accomplished. It is desirable that these persons should receive, within the limits of their handicap, the rehabilitation and training given to the ordinary blind, the main object at this stage being to induce in them the will and desire to overcome their handicaps and to make them as fully independent and capable as possible. In cases where special assistance is necessary because of the additional disability and this cannot be readily provided by the blind centre, advice and help should be obtained from sources appropriate to the particular disability.

An early start should be made with reading and writing, typewriters and other aids being adapted to meet individual requirements; the equipment used whilst training and to which a handicapped person will have become accustomed should be retained by him after he has left the centre, for use in his daily routine. Practical work in hobby crafts, such as carpentry, should be provided as this helps to restore confidence and encourages a general ability to be able to undertake tasks with the minimum of assistance. Later, and whenever practicable, every effort should be made to instil in the doubly handicapped a desire to acquire the ability to take up some form of occupation, bearing in mind that the type of employment which it may be possible for them to achieve is likely to be akin to that followed by the ordinary blind.

Everyone differs in his temperament and aptitude and the degree of a similar disability can vary greatly as between one person and another, and consequently individual consideration requires to be given to each case and a functional study made of their separate needs; throughout it is the courage and determination of the individual, with the help and guidance of his instructors that will eventually stand him in good stead. When, after completion of rehabilitation and training, a person has returned to his own home and possibly taken up an occupation, it is essential that periodic visits should be made to him to ensure of his well-being and that any equipment provided functions efficiently.

In the Home

Self-reliance within the limits of the disability is important and the home surroundings should be made as convenient as possible in order

that a maximum degree of independence may be attained. Much can be accomplished by careful designing and by adaptation, and it is of interest to note that the Royal Institute of British Architects has recently published a manual entitled 'Designing for the Disabled', which contains comprehensive information on all aspects of building design for domestic and other homes for the disabled, including the equipment that is considered most suitable. Some of the information in this manual could be of help when homes are being designed or altered to meet the requirements of blind persons who have additional disabilities; for example, bathrooms and toilets need to be specially designed with appropriate equipment for self dependence; lever type door handles should be fitted to assist amputees.

A blind woman amputee can be assisted in carrying out routine household tasks by, for example, fitting lever-type controls instead of press buttons on a modern laundering machine and special arm clips to a vacuum cleaner.

Two 'household' items which are proving helpful to the doubly handicapped men of St. Dunstan's may be mentioned:

(a) A sanitary unit called the 'Clos-o-Mat' has meant for handless men a degree of independence hitherto unknown. Simply, the unit is a combination water closet close coupled with an electrically operated bidet and warm air dryer. We have installed this device, which is Swiss manufactured, in the homes of our handless men during the past year after an exchange of information with the League of the War Blinded in West Germany. It is interesting to note, however, that ahead of this production unit we had ourselves produced a device embodying the same basic principles and a prototype installation at our Home proved efficient and acceptable.

This development has stimulated much interest amongst hospital authorities faced with problems of cross-infection and in post-polio rehabilitation and homes for the aged.

(b) An upholstered chair with a hydraulic jacking system underneath the seat, has been designed for those who are able to stand or walk a little but have difficulty in rising to a standing position from a chair in which the greater part of their day may be spent. When a lever at the side of the chair is pumped, the seat and back support gently raises the occupant to the near vertical position; on returning to the chair a button is pressed and the user's weight lowers the seat to its normal position. The first prototype of this design is currently being tested in the home of one of our St. Dunstaners, who tells us that it has greatly eased his daily round.

Social and Recreational

Every encouragement should be given to take up some hobby or interest outside normal work and routine, and to broaden a person's outlook, as for example by persuading him to join a local club or society and where possible to take part in any activities in his locality. A

number of St. Dunstan's men, although additionally disabled, are members of their local councils and other organizations; some become interested in craft competitions and horticultural shows; two who are handless are amateur singers.

Games and other items have been adapted for the recreation of handless men; these include darts, dominoes, bowls and musical instruments; small modifications have enabled them for many years to operate without assistance, the telephone, the disc Talking Book, a record player, etc., and more recently St. Dunstan's Research Engineer devised a modification for the new tape Talking Book, enabling this also to be operated by a man who had lost his hands. Though designed for the handless this modification for the British Tape Talking Book system is also suitable for others with damaged or arthritic arms.

It can be helpful if periodical gatherings of the doubly handicapped can be arranged from time to time, so that problems of mutual interest can be discussed. In Great Britain both St. Dunstan's and the civilian blind arrange such meetings or reunions for the deaf-blind and St. Dunstan's holds an annual reunion for their handless men. Similar opportunities are available in the German Democratic Republic, where in addition there is a special home for the double disability blind at Rochsburg.

Occupational

Employment, as in the case of other blind persons, should be within the capacity of the individual and on merit, for where there might be a feeling of patronage or charity on the part of an employer, or a job is obtained on sufferance, this can, particularly in the long run, give rise to disillusionment and despair, with the possibility of difficult psychological problems arising.

St. Dunstan's has been particularly concerned with a group of blinded men and women from the Second World War who have been deprived of one or more limbs or who suffer some form of paralysis, for whilst the British Commonwealth casualties of the First World War had been generally so much higher than those of the second, the proportion who were seriously wounded in the latter was greater; in the instance of the British war blinded about 3 per cent. of the First World War, but nearly 12 per cent. of the Second World War, suffered other injuries in addition to being blinded.

Varying types of additional disability and the steps taken by St. Dunstan's for the re-establishment of these cases are discussed in the following paragraphs.

(a) *The one arm or one hand amputee.* Whilst the loss of one hand or one arm can be a limiting factor it is usually possible for a blind person with this disability to take up that kind of occupation he would have wished to follow had he not been so disabled. A number of single hand and/or arm amputees have been placed in factory employment, undertaking such work as automatic machine operating, and inspection. Many occupy posts as telephone operators; in these instances the private branch exchange may

require some slight modification, as will the braille writer and braille shorthand machine. Others who, because of their health, have required a quieter occupation in home surroundings, have been enabled to undertake a home-craft occupation, such as basketry, wool rug making, etc.

(b) *The foot or leg amputee.* These cases should present no undue difficulty so long as they can be seated at the work they are doing and have convenient means of getting to and from their places of employment.

(c) *Head injury or internal injury or disease.* It is not easy for these cases to undertake employment in ordinary conditions as they can often be subjected to temporary periods of indisposition and frustration. A number of large industrial concerns in Great Britain maintain a special unit within their main works for disabled operators of all types, where the workers are in quieter surroundings and are under periodic medical supervision; for the above categories these special units can often be suitable and St. Dunstan's has been fortunate in that a number of their war-blinded men have been employed in them.

In some cases it is possible that a person with a head or similar injury may be capable of working, but for only a few hours each day; every endeavour should be made to find for them part-time occupation as it is possible that this may give rise to a general improvement in health and the man may be able subsequently to take up full-time work.

(d) *The paralytic.* St. Dunstan's has had many cases of men suffering from some form of paralysis, mainly disseminated sclerosis and ankylosing spondylitis; where the paralysis is in its early stages it has been possible for these men to undertake a normal occupation, but with the progressive nature of the condition they have subsequently had to relinquish their work and take up some form of hobby craft in their own homes.

Whilst there are many instances of paralysed chair cases amongst the sighted undertaking full-time employment it is not often possible for those who are blind as well, to do this; usually, however, some interest or hobby at home can be provided and this should be aimed at whenever practicable.

Typewriters and other articles can be modified to enable them to be used by a person with limited use of the hands and arms.

(e) *The double hand amputees.* For those who have lost one or both hands or whose hands have been so damaged as to be virtually useless, St. Dunstan's has undertaken much research to enable them to attain a maximum degree of independence, and to follow an occupation successfully. Of the twenty-three handless St. Dunstaners (including two women) who were disabled in the Second World War, over one-half are following a remunerative occupation and some of the ways in which this has been accomplished are as follows:

Travel Agent—This man, who is also partially deaf, can, with

the aid of a specially adapted dictating machine and telephone, attend to all the telephone business of the agency; with a shorthand typist he also deals with the correspondence. The volume of business is such as to justify the employment of a full-time sighted assistant and it is most successful. In his spare time he is an enthusiastic amateur radio operator, using equipment developed by St. Dunstan's engineers.

Guide at historic castle—The lay-out of the castle and its surroundings were learned during training from a specially constructed model on which all the buildings and special features could be distinguished by feeling with the arm; tutors gave an intensive three months course on the history of the castle.

Shopkeeping—This is in the nature of a joint occupation, requiring assistance from a wife or other sighted person but coin identification machines, change-giving machines and racks each holding a particular brand of a packaged commodity have been devised to enable a man without hands to take an active part in running a shop selling cigarettes, tobacco and confectionery. Three ex-Servicemen have been set up in this way, and one of them subsequently studied for and obtained his M.A. and B.Com. degrees and is a member of several committees in the town where he resides and has his business.

Telephone operating—Research by Post Office engineers and by St. Dunstan's produced a special switchboard supplemented with foot-operated pedals and with push buttons which the operator could locate and press with a metal striker fitted into his artificial arm; provided the traffic was not unduly heavy it was found that a board of ten exchange lines and fifty extensions could be operated. Messages are taken on a dictating machine.

Proof Reader—One man who has lost his right hand, the left arm and leg being practically paralysed, is a proof reader for the Talking Book Library. He is also a composer of crossword puzzles, selling them to newspapers and magazines all over the English-speaking world. Having thought out the puzzle in his head he sets it down on a specially adapted typewriter operated by a metal stiker located in a leather gauntlet on his right arm.

Joinery—Simple wooden articles can be made without the use of a prosthesis. A considerable variety of operations can be carried out by attaching a ring, through which the stump can be thrust, to the following tools: wood rasps, hammers, chisels, ram-punches for inserting nails, screwdrivers with a plunger action which can also be used for boring small holes, a plane with blades which can be renewed cheaply and so eliminate the need for regrinding, motorized sanding wheel with a jig attachment for regrinding chisels, etc., small electric drill with a foot-operated switch—this same drill can be used with a lathe attachment for wood turning. Simple wooden jigs also help.

Weaving—Specially constructed mechanical looms have enabled handless men to undertake weaving and hand looms have

also been used; a drawback to this work is that sighted assistance is required fairly frequently during the course of the operations and this may not always be readily available.

It should not be thought that all the services which have been mentioned in the preceding paragraphs have been elaborate or are expensive in terms of research and production. A number of items which can alleviate day-to-day living, and also those which can make possible the pursuit of employment or of some hobby are relatively simple and not too costly to produce. Differing types of homecraft such as woodwork, basket and rug making, can be accomplished without great difficulty by those confined to a chair, and by the introduction of various jigs it is quite practicable for the one- or two-hand amputee to undertake this type of work, though naturally much can depend upon an individual's own aptitude and keenness. In countries where craft work is customarily followed by normal blind persons every effort should be made to encourage those with other disabilities to occupy themselves in a similar way.

Double disability cases in Germany

(a) The League of the War Blinded in the Federal Republic of Germany has 130 handless men, some of whom are also deaf, among its members; about 25 per cent. of them are in work and they are employed in enquiry offices at government departments, as announcers for the railways or parliament and as telephonists in hospitals, whilst some occupy administrative posts with public bodies and in legal departments after taking academic studies; one who is particularly gifted is occupied with the invention of new technical aids for other handless persons; some keep small shops with the assistance of their wives. Their houses are furnished and equipped for their particular needs and special provision is made for holidays at one of the League's Homes.

(b) In the German Democratic Republic, blind persons who have other disabilities are assisted into occupations in various sections of commerce and industry by the General German Blind Association, whilst others are employed in the workshops of Blind Rehabilitation Centres and in a special workshop at Spremberg where brushes and metal products are made. A considerable number of one-armed amputees work as telephonists with special adaptations to their equipment, and one who lost both hands as well as his sight in a mine explosion subsequently obtained a Doctorate degree in Political Economy and now holds a responsible administrative position—he travels to work daily with his guide dog; another who has a mutilated right arm and damaged hearing is, apart from his work in an industrial company, an active sportsman with many prizes to his credit.

The Krukenberg Operation

In two or three countries, notably in Germany, the problem of blind amputees has been approached by means of the 'Krukenberg' operation on the forearm, thereby restoring in considerable measure the grip function usually associated with the hand. Tools and devices in variety

can be attached and controlled in a standard socket fitting and tools especially with a pincer action can be manipulated with considerable dexterity. Many have learned to operate typewriters tactually and with little modification to the keyboard and a wide range of other tasks in the daily round can be performed by those who become well adapted.

Whether a man with a Krukenberg stump is able to do more than with a prosthesis will depend upon the skill with which he uses either, and the type of work of which he may be capable could be important, together with the diligence with which he applies himself to the task in hand; a retention of tactile sensation could be of value in the case of blind persons.

Research

Many countries have active research projects concerned with the alleviation of all forms of disability, and in Europe an important stage has already been reached on powered prostheses, especially artificial hands and arms. To date it does not seem that any of these developments offer immediate promise for the blind for as a general rule the early prototypes are intended to have a considerable degree of visual direction or control in normal usage. Perhaps the most important single requirement for a powered hand for the blind to succeed is the provision of sensing facilities and associated 'feed-back' to indicate proximity to the object to be touched. Additionally there is the further problem of discriminability if selective touch is required, as for example in pressing one of a number of switches, though it seems that the more recent designs employ control systems that are initiated by amplified nerve commands which in turn actuate miniature electronically controlled motors or pressure sensitive valves, thus making possible in the foreseeable future, spontaneous movement.

Summary

The main points of this paper and those to be borne in mind in the formulation of programmes for doubly handicapped blind persons can be stated as follows:

1. Rehabilitation should be undertaken at a centre for normal blind persons.

2. Special studies should be made of the additional disabilities in relation to individual needs, the problem being approached not from the point of view of what a person has lost, but by finding out what senses and faculties he has left and proceeding from there.

3. Independence, with the provision of prosthetic and mechanical aids, should be aimed at whenever possible.

4. Selection of an occupation will depend upon the aptitude of the individual, bearing blindness in mind, and the aids that can be provided.

5. In any country where prosthetic aids are being developed for sighted disabled persons research should be undertaken to ascertain if such aids can be of help to those who are blind but have similar additional disabilities.

6. In countries where it is customary for blind persons to attend a communal centre for occupation, it may be desirable to provide work at such centre for those with an additional disability.

7. As with the rehabilitation and training of normal blind persons and in spite of the greater difficulties, the aim should be to enable the doubly handicapped to take their part as fully as possible in the life of the community.

NINTH SESSION **Thursday afternoon, August 6th, 1964**

UTILIZING GENERAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES TO MEET THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF THE BLIND

Chairman: **Mrs. E. de Stahl,** *President, Comite Nacional pro Ciegos y Sordomudos, Guatemala.*

Utilizing General Community Resources to Meet the Special Needs of the Blind

By **Dr. M. Robert Barnett**

At the outset, it is both necessary and important that I qualify the remarks I am about to make with two prefaces. The first is an honest admission of probable provincialism and the second is a declaration of principle.

As in the case of many other speakers on the program of this 1964 General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, I wish to make it clear that my observations undoubtedly are heavily influenced by the practices and philosophies of my own national environment, in my case, the United States of America. While admitting, therefore, that my opinions may be provincially oriented, I do humbly suggest that our countries and geographical areas are not basically so very different. With appropriate alterations—sometimes simply a matter of semantics—but for differing economic and social attitudes, these opinions are applicable anywhere to some degree. Furthermore, this speaker has had the privilege of at least brief visits to many other parts of the world and the opportunity to discuss these matters with many friends and colleagues in other countries, and I trust that these observations are tempered by that fact.

The second part of my preface, as I said, has to do with underlying principle. I intend to advocate the active use by our specialized agencies of the services of community resources for the general public. I will try to give some concrete examples of how blind persons might well, and more effectively, be aided by those agencies. It is important, however, that we remember that special organizations or at least specially-trained personnel are vital and cannot be eliminated from an ideal pattern of effort by voluntary or governmental structure in the community's approach to a resolution of problems caused by blindness. In short, and this will probably prove to be the main thesis of this paper, citizens of any community who suffer blindness or severely defective vision must be accepted by general agencies in education or social welfare as citizens first and blind persons secondarily. Even with complete acceptability, such persons need the information and counsel of organized sources of aid that specialize in those facts of the problem which are peculiar to blindness.

As a matter of fact, our special agencies or our specially-trained

personnel, if you come to think of it, never see these citizens until and unless they do become blind, or are disabled by eye disease that threatens blindness. It undoubtedly is true that these people might never have otherwise required the services of any community agency, and might well go on through life on their own. The onset of a visual disability seems almost inevitably to cause, for example, vocational dislocation. This can seriously influence one's everyday life, family relationships and participation in the community. On the surface, these are practical problems, but as we all know, there is an inevitable psychological complication.

The individual blind person seeks aid and guidance from the agencies that have been established to meet the special problems of the blind. He may or may not find the answers to his problems there, but he has every reason to think so. I suggest that he will, if the agency is properly and adequately staffed, but not necessarily through its direct service. The special agency should know what else exists in the community to meet his needs, should know how to arrange for him to secure those services and supplement his personal and their general resources with the kind of special information or assistance that the special agency exists to render.

For example, the question of locating job opportunities presents in many individual instances a circumstance where the blind person may use a general community resource. Assuming that he has learned to get about and to meet his normal daily needs, with or without the help of the special agency, he must have a trade. Special agencies can and often do offer training in particular trades, but there are also normal vocational training schools that can do so with a litle persuasion and guidance. The special agency is often in the best position to help the individual convince an employer that he can do the job, but special agencies cannot hope to maintain a file of all available jobs at any given time. The individual should avail himself of other community agencies—some privately operated and some at public expense—to locate job openings. In the United States, what is called the employment service of our Labor Department, not only is co-operative, but is eager to accept handicapped people for referral to selective placement.

In the case of blind children, it is becoming a generally accepted principle that those who can, should be encouraged to enrol for their schooling in the normal community's school system. This is not a simple achievement, and the normal school personnel need much special assistance. Schools of the residential nature must, of course, be maintained for children whose physical, emotional, geographical or family circumstances make their integration impossible.

Regardless of school placement, we also advocate the participation of blind young people in regular youth groups, such as those in scouting, camping, recreation and the like. Groups of only blind boys or girls serve a good purpose, and I do not mean to say that they should be abandoned where they exist, but if each member could be entered into a regular group, we believe the experience would enhance their development immeasurably.

When it comes to the case of the elderly blind person, we seem to have a continuing diffusion of opinion. There still seems to be an impulse in various communities to establish special homes. Such homes are expensive, especially if they attempt to provide the kind and number of personnel required to render a full social service program, as well as simple shelter and food. I would strongly advocate the seeking out of regular residential or convalescent homes who, with a little guidance, often will accept the blind individual.

Above all, we should remember that in many communities there are sound agencies serving the general public and who should not be permitted to exclude from that public persons with defective vision. When a family is in trouble, they provide an array of services ranging from financial assistance to counselling of all types. The family that suffers blindness, whether it be grandparents, father, mother or children, definitely is in trouble, though hopefully only for a temporary time. Just how temporary this time may be will depend a great deal upon the sensible use by him or his special adviser of those community resources that exist for him as a person, a resident, a tax payer and an acceptable brother in the community family.

Utilizing General Community Resources to Meet the Special Needs of the Blind

By **Frank Y. Turley,** *Executive Director, Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, Melbourne, Australia.*

Blindness causes many special needs.

For example, there is a need for emphasis on mobility. There is a need for solutions to problems presented by otherwise simple activities of daily living. The development or re-development of confidence also produces needs of an exceptional kind. At any age the need for maximum independence creates problems exclusive to blind people.

Most men seek financial security according to their ambitions, their social status and their ability. A blind man, in his search for financial security, can encounter circumstances and conditions unique to him. He is likely to experience frustrations of a special kind, born perhaps of a deepening knowledge of the limits of his choice of job or of the unthinking emotional bias which sometimes shows through the polite veneer of a potential employer.

The effective employment of leisure time poses problems of a particular kind. So great can these problems be that, like his sighted colleague, a blind man may find himself seeking the solace of alcohol in the vain hope that this is the way to relieve his tensions or his boredom.

No one would question the special need for companionship—of congenial and acceptable associations which are essential for people generally. Most humans are gregarious—very few are hermits. Blindness can contribute so greatly towards personal social isolation that more exceptional needs appear.

And so a frightening catalogue of special needs can be developed—

each calling for attention of a particular kind—and in degrees as varied as the personalities of the individuals concerned. In attempting to meet these needs the blind man may use many general community resources including those providing education, transport, scientific research facilities, financial, medical, legal skills and public utilities. The church of his choice may well play its part also.

There is, however, one element which underlies efforts to solve many of the special human needs inherent in the grievous handicap of blindness.

Let us examine this element, which flows through the general resources of the community—and its application to blind people. It is a truism to say that a well organized community requires an effective system of communication. But it is also the truth to say that effective communication is a specific need of blind people. The collection and collation of information make far greater demands on the blind man than most sighted people appreciate. In the whole range of communication media, whether person-to-person conversation or a nation-wide radio broadcast, from a personal letter to a record-breaking best seller, there are particular areas which warrant our re-examination and action.

The General Manager of the Royal Bank of Canada once said: 'No greater good could be achieved by humanity today than the ability to communicate ideas. If we know what others are thinking, and if other people—in business and social life, nationally and internationally—understand what is in our minds, what we are striving for, many misunderstandings will be avoided.' I believe that this is fundamentally true and highly relevant to our consideration of special needs of blind people.

For the purpose of this discussion communication may be taken to include the sending and receiving of information by any means. Therefore our thoughts will embrace communication in groups from two people to millions. The telephone, television, radio and press come readily to mind in this context. Recording and playback devices also have a part in the vital pattern of communication.

It is not difficult to appreciate the necessity for correct and adequate information. Every administrator knows the vital importance of an informed staff for a well conducted organization. A well informed community is more likely to be a contented community than one which is left a prey to imagination and fear.

We share a responsibility towards blind people to help combat loneliness by companionship, to add zest and enjoyment to life in every possible way and to increase understanding and knowledge in blind people about the world at large; and in the world at large about blind people.

Certainly, as a recent survey conducted by the American Foundation for the Blind confirms, blind adults find mobility and financial security to be their two most important problems. The same report suggests though, that their isolation from the community is one of the most serious challenges we face.

It is here, for example, that radio can be made to play an even more significant role. Throughout the world there seems to be an increasing

awareness of the need for radio programmes especially designed to meet some of the particular communication needs of blind listeners. Information, guidance and instruction through interviews, discussions, and talks can be slanted to the requirements of blind people without loss of general listener appeal. In this way two major needs can be met. First, specialized communication with blind people of all ages; secondly, there can be a worthwhile contribution to public education.

It is recognized that commercial radio, by its very nature, must concern itself with the highly practical aspects of its presentation. To-day, at least in Australia, young people from 14 to 20 years of age make up more than 90 per cent. of radio audiences. This is a highly sensitive and numerous community segment. A poor programme will not only confront a radio station with listener-loss during its time on the air, but will create pre- and post-programme losses in rating. The necessity for stressing programme quality and acceptability therefore needs little emphasis. Commercially the prospect of addressing a minority group, however deserving, has little appeal. In countries which have radio stations operated as by England's B.B.C. it can be easier to arrange suitable programmes. In fact, a B.B.C. programme called 'In Touch', which has been heard once a month in the United Kingdom since October, 1961, is a first-class example of practical action in this matter. The question of whether this is frequent enough for such a programme is another problem. However, the programme does present items of particular interest to blind people and, because of a high standard of production, it has a wide general appeal.

In considering the challenge of public education your attention is commended to an excellent summary, 'The Goals of Public Education', which appeared in the 131st Annual Report of the Perkins School for the Blind. A brief excerpt from this summary will serve to excite your interest, and here it is:

> 'All educational processes involve dangers of misunderstanding and this is particularly true when an audience is the remote public. There is a border line between emphasis and over-emphasis which is generally invisible to the teacher. In stressing normality it is very easy to give the impression that blindness is a relatively unimportant handicap. In doing so we can do blind persons a serious disservice. We can also do a disservice in emphasizing, as all of us tend to do, the successes of outstanding visually handicapped persons. This can create problems and set impossible standards for the great majority of blind people, who, like the the great majority of those of us who have sight, are congenitally average. There are grave dangers of over-simplification and over-generalization yet an attempt to educate the public must be made in spite of these difficulties.'

Radio has much to recommend it as a medium of mass communication able to reach a specific audience of blind people and a general public audience. Sometimes, in the past, there is no doubt that radio has been used principally to play on the emotions and solicit charitable donations for blind welfare work. It is doubtful if such programmes

have contributed much to public education or to any special needs of blind people.

It could repay us all to ask ourselves some questions. For example, 'Is it possible to use radio more effectively in my area for communicating with blind people?' 'In the important field of public education on blindness have I explored every possible use of radio?' Naturally we will not want to duplicate facilities already provided by radio. For instance, in Australia, there is a very adequate coverage of most sports, and it is not hard to be over-informed by radio about horse racing, football or cricket.

Radio, used well, offers rapid topical mass communication facilities in which it is our responsibility to see that provision is made for the special needs of blind people.

The press and television are other media which afford wonderful opportunities for public education. It is open to doubt if we use them with maximum effect.

The gulf of ignorance and suspicion must be spanned so that the blind man may be better understood by the sighted majority.

Public hunger for sensationalism makes this a formidable task, but it must not serve as an excuse for inaction.

Our own experience shows that we have no difficulty in placing a photograph of a blind boy performing a back dive into the swimming pool at our school. A factual article designed to present information of a generally useful kind requires journalism of a high order to gain acceptance.

Blind girls engaged in gymnastics make acceptable subjects for television news films—but such a film as 'The Long Cane', for example, has not yet found a sponsor or a time slot on an Australian TV programme. From time to time we pay for space in the press and on television as part of a programme of public education.

As well, and for example, we have placed, and paid for, large posters in 300 trams in Melbourne offering information to guide the public in better understanding of blindness and blind people.

The same posters are displayed in areas where crowds congregate or pass.

The Australian press, radio and television are extraordinarily generous with time and space—provided the test of news-worthiness is passed. Conceivably this attitude is common throughout the world.

Agencies cannot escape a serious responsibility for public education. It justifies the use of the general public resources of press, radio and television, advertising and public relations consultants and other specialized knowledge availed of today by commerce and industry.

The telephone is another aid which can be used for the better distribution of information. There is evidence, including reports from parts of Australia and New Zealand, that the telephone may be used more effectively. The steps seem to be elementary as yet, but the facilities so far established provide for blind people to ring a number and hear a pre-recorded 'News-behind-the-news' session, including topical items of local interest. On radio news sessions which are normally available to me there is often an abnormal emphasis on details of road accidents,

fires, murders and lesser crimes. It could well be that the recorded telephone news service would fill out some of the blanks.

The telephone's role in easing loneliness is well known but often overlooked. There are several programmes of organized telephone calling for this very purpose which recommend themselves in appropriate cases.

But there is another function which the telephone can fulfil, and in my own country its potential has yet to be exploited. The telephone is a powerful sales aid. In trained and capable hands it can put the blind operator on level terms with his sighted counterpart. For some blind people telephone sales promotion, public opinion polls and telephone selling are avenues of rewarding employment. It would seem that this aspect of communication can be developed greatly. In our own organization a totally blind man is responsible for telephonic liaison with industrial companies which use our services for packaging and assembly. From time to time he also makes personal visits, but he relies on the skilled use of the telephone for the successful conduct of his task. In addition, in our school there are simple telephone switchboard installations to help familiarize the children with the uses of the telephone as an antidote to loneliness, as a source of information or as a tool of trade.

Another aspect of communication manifests itself as a special need for certain blind people in particular circumstances. I refer now to the need for quick and complete communication of specialized material. For example, in common with many in this audience, we receive literature from all corners of the world. Some of it, of course, is not directly related to our own broad field of activity. Much, however, is interesting and valuable. The problem is to make important material available simply and quickly to those senior blind members of staff to whom it will be of particular use. We now use small transistorized cassette-loaded tape-recorders for this and other purposes. They are about pocket size and each self-winding cassette holds twenty-five to thirty minutes of conversation. They permit the recording, by non-technical people, of any written material which ought to find its way accurately and quickly to blind people. They allow a non-technical blind person quick and accurate access to worthwhile information relevant to his occupation. We are able to import these instruments from Japan at a cost of about £20 Australian each—less than 50 U.S.A. dollars. It is reasonable to expect rapid development in the field of self-loading cartridges or cassettes of tape or wire, and the further steady reduction in size of the playback machines. We call them our tape memo pads—because they expedite the transmission of relevant information as soon as it is received. They create audible writing with a minimum of time and trouble.

These devices are helping to fill a gap between direct verbal communication (which is not always practicable) and braille (which is not always available with sufficient speed).

The communication needs of blind people have produced a body of literature throughout the years. Your attention is drawn particularly to the Rev. Thomas J. Carroll's book, 'Blindness—What it is, What it

does, and How to live with it', and especially to his chapters on Losses in Communication and Restoration of Ease of Communication.

There is much supplementary evidence of the importance of communication. For instance, in our own Residential Rehabilitation Centre there have been practical indications that debating can help in the development of confidence and communication skills. This is being extended by organizing debating teams for open competition.

Similarly, professional coaching in public speaking has been used with success. Ten pin bowling, swimming and weight lifting are activities which involve the use of neighbourhood resources and general instructional skills.

Our Rehabilitation Centre's regular morning news session highlights the hunger for information experienced by the blind people in residence there.

The successful conduct of all these activities depends finally upon effective communication as a major factor in general community resources.

I have restricted the scope of this discussion intentionally so that we could think together of the importance of using all communication media within the community in the interests of blind people.

You may recall a quotation from Pierre Villey which I read recently in the *New Outlook for the Blind.* Here it is:

> 'Before anything else, it is necessary to establish the fundamental truth that blindness does not affect the individuality but leaves it intact. Its sources remain healthy; no mental faculty of the blind is affected in any way, and all of them, under favourable circumstances are susceptible of blossoming out to the highest degree to which a normal being can aspire.'

I submit that, unless general community resources are used to achieve maximum effective communication, the favourable circumstances to which Villey refers cannot exist.

The propagation of better understanding of the special needs of blind people is a universal responsibility—transcending local or national boundaries.

It could be that the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind will want to inaugurate an annual programme of public information.

The possibilities for using global communication resources during a yearly 'World Blind Welfare Week' may well appeal to you.

This could be a very practical way for us to join hands across the world in helping to remove the dark veil of ignorance and misunderstanding that shrouds the public mind. It is likely that all communication media would be more readily at our disposal if we demonstrated our unity during 'World Blind Welfare Week'.

It is of course not possible to predict the impact of 'World Blind Welfare Week'—but it certainly has exciting possibilities.

Let us therefore make greater use of the communication factor in general community resources—locally, nationally and internationally—to help meet some of the special needs of blind people.

Utilizing General Community Resources to Meet the Special Needs of the Blind

By **J. M. Woolly,** *Superintendent, Arkansas School for the Blind, U.S.A.*

The special needs of the blind seem to have such characteristics that society has felt throughout the geographical regions of the world—for almost as long as society has existed—that these special needs must be met by highly specialized means. For instance, in the United States alone there are more than two hundred volunteer agencies providing direct services to the individual adult who is blind. This does not take into account the services provided by state as well as national governmental agencies, nor does it include the many child-centered agencies such as residential schools.

I shall discuss the question of Utilizing General Community Resources to Meet the Special Needs of the Blind from the point of view which has developed as a result of my experience in work for the blind in the United States, primarily as an educator. However, I have been privileged to participate in professional meetings in other parts of the world and to learn first-hand something of the patterns of service which have developed in other countries and shall attempt to base my observations on a world viewpoint.

My colleagues this afternoon have discussed the subject from two points of view, both of which primarily concern the adult blind. I should like to deal with the topic from the point of view of service to the school age blind.

Since 1784, when the first organized educational program was begun in Paris by Haüy, by far the greater number of blind boys and girls have been educated in residential schools throughout the world. However, a program of educating blind children in the public schools in the United States was begun in Chicago, in 1900, and has continued to grow such that in the 1963-64 school year 55·5 per cent. of the school age children registered with the American Printing House for the Blind for quota purposes were enrolled in regular public schools while 43·5 per cent. were in residential schools. Although I have no source of figures for other countries, I am sure that a significant number of children are being educated in community schools throughout the world. During the I.C.E.B.Y. Conference in Oslo, in 1957, the interest evidenced in public school education for children was relatively minor, both from I.C.E.B.Y. program content as well as in discussions with individual educators who were in attendance. However, when I.C.E.B.Y. again convened in Hanover, Germany, in 1962, I found far greater interest, as well as the recognition that formal education for blind children simply could not be accomplished, or was extremely difficult, in any other manner in some sections of almost all countries of the world.

If blind children are to utilize the general community schools in order to secure an education, whether singly or in fairly large numbers, how are the special needs of these children to be met by the schools? How are textbooks in braille or recorded form like those in use by

sighted children in the school to be secured? What provisions can be made to provide teachers who have the skills necessary to teach reading and writing as well as other specialized skills which blind children need? Many more specific and highly important questions could be posed, but perhaps these three are the most important—the answers to which will serve to illustrate that blind children can be educated in the community school.

These schools can meet the needs of blind children in highly developed countries and even in many of the emergent countries in a variety of ways. In areas where several children may be brought together in one school, a so-called resource teacher who teaches blind children their many basic skills may be best. If the school is not able to provide transportation to bring together all of the children of the area perhaps volunteers can be utilized. In some instances, a parent or several parents may be able to help; while elsewhere the church can be the agency which provides transportation. In this so-called resource plan, pupils spend a part of the day with the special teacher and the remainder with the regular teacher and class.

Another common plan is the itinerant teacher plan where a qualified teacher travels from school to school teaching children the specific skills made necessary by blindness. On occasion, the itinerant teacher may serve as a consultant to the regular teacher who may then be able to handle the task of teaching the one or two blind children whom she may have. Obviously this plan is most logical in sparsely settled areas.

Textbooks for children who are blind are difficult to secure for a variety of reasons. In some countries it may simply be that there are few books for any school children, much less for blind children, while in other countries the multiplicity of texts available to all sighted children produces the problem of being able to always have the right book available in braille or recorded form. Braille texts are to be preferred over those recorded on discs or tape, but for blind children in public schools, taped books are often more easily secured. In any country, the secret of securing texts for the blind is to interest, develop, and utilize volunteer braillists or recorders. With the growing availability of tape-recorders it is usually possible to work out the details necessary to have the text in question recorded.

In the United States, the American Printing House for the Blind, Howe Press, The Jewish Braille Institute of America, and literally hundreds of volunteer braillists turn out textbooks in braille. The National Braille Press and Recording for the Blind produce sound-recorded books for high school and college students. I would like to emphasize that the success of blind children in public schools depends in a large measure on the success any country has in organizing a corps of volunteers to produce the necessary textbooks. If a braille press is available, of course the volunteer program then is a fine supplement to the embossing program of the press.

It is well established that the teacher of blind children, whether in a residential school or in the type program we are discussing, must have a knowledge of the methods and techniques for teaching blind

children. The ability to read and write braille, an understanding of the structure and function of the eye, and the educational implications of eye pathology are essential if the teacher is to be of maximum help to the child. Finally, the teacher should have some knowledge of education and psychology of all exceptional children. The task of providing the resources for the education of the teacher is sometimes almost insurmountable, but if institutions for the preparation of general teachers are readily available, it is generally possible to interest such colleges or universities in developing the necessary courses for prospective teachers of the blind. Perhaps the only alternative in the absence of such potential is to attempt to recruit successful public school teachers who will spend some months abroad in a country that does have preparation facilities. Such prospective teachers should always be willing to return to their home country if such preparation is provided abroad.

Although some blind children have been accepted into regular schools which have no special provisions for them and many have received a good education, it is not recommended as a good practice since only those youngsters who have the top level of ability are likely to succeed in such a situation.

However, it is probably an acceptable substitute in the absence of a comprehensive community school plan or a residential school facility. It seems to me that when a choice is possible as to how a blind youngster is to be educated all factors should be considered and then the child placed in the optimum situation. Among the factors to be considered are emotional stability of both the child and family, travel distances, mental ability of the child, quality of the school program; and of considerable importance, the degree of real acceptance of the blind child by the proposed school faculty and the pupils.

It should be pointed out that blind children who need nursery school experiences and kindergarten training can be integrated into the general community program with very little difficulty. At this early age there is little need for the great mass of technical materials which are needed in the formal education process and the nursery school and kindergarten workers do not need the skills nor the degree of knowledge required for teachers. In the United States the general community agency is meeting the need of blind children in many instances.

Finally, I would like to stress the need for all blind children, regardless of where educated, to have the opportunity to participate in the youth activities which are an integral part of the community in which they live. Many opportunities exist for blind children to live a far richer, fuller life by being able to be a part of Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, their own church activities and many more, depending upon the part of the world in which they live.

In closing, I would like to urge that every blind person, whether child or adult be allowed to develop to his full potential by being a part of the general community activities wherever possible.

TENTH SESSION **Friday morning, August 7, 1964.**

THE PLACE OF WORK FOR THE BLIND IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PLANNING FOR REHABILITATION OF THE HANDICAPPED.

Chairman: **Mr. Leonard W. Mayo,** *Chairman, Conference of World Organizations Interested in the Handicapped, U.S.A.*

Should the Disabled be Segregated?

By **Donald V. Wilson,** *Secretary-General, International Society for Rehabilitation of the Disabled.*

The broad question of segregation versus desegregation is very much in the minds of Americans these days. It is also the problem that the United Nations has confronted with varying degees of success.

In the more positive and humanitarian fashion, workers in the field of rehabilitation have argued the pros and cons of separating individuals with a particular disability from those with a different handicapping condition. Each group is vociferous and each group feels that it has excellent reasons for arguing as it does.

Traditionally, services for the blind have been separated from services for the orthopaedically handicapped. That the compassion of society for the handicapped was first extended to the blind is indicated by the fact that most of the original institutions for the blind were established in the nineteenth century and in France, England, and Scotland much earlier. In nearly all countries of Western Europe the first institutions for handicapped persons were those for the blind. It has been my experience in the countries I have visited to find that though even the most primitive services for the orthopaedically handicapped existed, frequently a well-developed, long-established program for the blind was already in effect. Unquestionably, the blind and those who work with them and for them have much to be proud of. The excellence of their work and the extent of their accomplishments have served as a guide-post to those of us who have been professionally engaged in establishing programs for individuals with other disabilities.

But the blind have also paid a price for their achievements, and the price is isolation. Because of their obvious and proven ability to become better educated, better trained, more employable than other handicapped people, they have created an *élite* society of their own, and in many instances they have knowingly broken down the channels of communication between themselves and those who could contribute much to their adjustment and to whom they have so much to give.

Are the workers in the field of rehabilitation responsible for providing services for all the disabled without regard to the nature of the disability? We are constantly confronted with the question whether

it is preferable to develop services separately for each category of the disabled or whether general programs for all handicapped are better. It is true that certain groups of the disabled, among them the blind, do have special needs which can best be met by special programs. When a comprehensive service is developed, however, there is a tendency to segregate one disability not only from another disability, but also from non-handicapped individuals. By doing this the essential communication with the total community is frequently lost. It must be admitted that the welfare of the disabled is correlated with the total health and welfare services available to the entire community. Two related problems, therefore, must be considered when we are planning national and international programs for the handicapped:

1. What is the relationship of a particular group of the disabled such as the blind or the deaf, to the total program of services available in the community or the nation for all the disabled?
2. What is the relationship of services for the handicapped to programs designed for the welfare of the total population in the community or nation?

Wise social planners are keeping these questions in mind as new programs are being established and old programs are being re-evaluated and re-designed. The tendency among rehabilitation workers is to integrate services for the disabled whenever possible, not only by disability, but also with services for the non-handicapped.

Special Education

In developing educational programs for all the disabled, a special education program must be a part of the total education system. The idea, of course, is for handicapped children, as far as possible, to participate in regular classroom instruction. Because of the need for additional equipment and carefully trained teachers, it is necessary for blind children to receive special academic instruction, but emotional isolation can be avoided only if integrated recreational and vocational programs go side by side with academic learning.

Employment for the Handicapped

In most countries it is the responsibility of the government to provide some type of services within the Ministry of Labor to aid individuals to secure employment compatible with their physical and mental capacities. Special counseling is needed, however, for some categories of the handicapped such as the blind. This technical help is frequently provided by voluntary agencies outside the government. In other instances special help is provided by technical personnel employed within the general framework of the over-all employment services.

I suggest that the services for the blind will improve more rapidly and on a sounder basis if it is acknowledged that the welfare of the blind is interrelated with the welfare of all the handicapped, as well as with the welfare of the total population. In any sound, healthy welfare program the needs of the entire community—old or young, able-bodied or handicapped—must be taken into consideration. Equal

attention must be given to each group. A well co-ordinated, comprehensive program will consider only ability and not disability.

Programs for Special Groups

Some years ago in a review of the history and status of the social welfare programs of the United Nations, the following comment was made which is applicable to rehabilitation program for the disabled as well as to other special groups:

> 'Co-ordinated progress in the social welfare field has been slow and painful, largely due to the confusion of ideas and concepts, aggravated by the enthusiasts of special interest groups and their desires to obtain international sponsorship for particular projects.' (*The United Nations and the Promotion of General Welfare*, Brookings Institution, 1957, p. 501.

Since agencies interested in the handicapped are one of the 'special interest groups', they must consider whether their enthusiasm for special projects has hindered or advanced total progress in the social welfare field. Rehabilitation programs should, if properly planned and administered, advance rather than delay other welfare programs.

A rehabilitation service for one group of the physically or mentally handicapped depends for its success to a large degree on the utilization of any other existing programs, particularly services in the medical, social, educational, and vocational fields.

Programs Serving the Total Population

As social welfare programs develop, greater attention is given to broader programs designed to promote higher levels of living for the population as a whole. The reports of the Social Commission of the United Nations in recent years indicate a greater concern with these broader programs and less concern with special groups. There have been some views expressed, however, indicating a concern that the special groups should not be forgotten.

The blind and all the handicapped should benefit from those programs which benefit the population as a whole. It is frequently difficult, however, to comprehend the relationship of the needs of the blind to such broad programs that deal with such matters as community development, urbanization, and maintenance of family levels of living.

Emphasis on broad programs for the total population raises questions regarding the place for programs for those such as the blind who have need for special services. Such questions are of concern not only to the organizations and individuals especially interested in rehabilitation programs for the disabled, but also to those sponsoring programs for other groups such as migrants and delinquents.

Basic Questions

People interested in special categories of the disabled as well as expanding health and welfare services for the total population are confronted with three basic questions:

1. Will the needs of the special group be recognized and met by the broad programs being planned?
2. Within the broader programs what priority will be given to the needs of special groups such as the blind?
3. Are the economic and other resources available, particularly in less-developed countries, adequate to maintain these broader programs?

The Question of Priorities

Although the need for services for special groups continues to be recognized, this need is competing with requests for funds for programs serving the population as a whole. The question is not 'either or'; the two are not mutually exclusive.

We can now understand that it was probably a mistake in the early years of the United Nations to give so much attention to special groups and so relatively little attention to programs serving the total population, but unquestionably the exigencies of the times justified the action taken. The question now is whether the pendulum is swinging so far the other way that the priorities assigned for projects for special groups will be so low that little or no practical help will be provided from the limited funds available.

A better understanding is needed of the relationship of programs for special groups to the services which serve the population as a whole. It should be understood by those with a particular interest in certain groups that the total program, if properly executed, will benefit those groups. Those interested in the 'total approach' must see clearly that the bedrock on which these programs are based is the existing services for special groups. The enthusiasm for the total program sometimes becomes difficult to maintain, and adequate appropriations are hard to secure unless continuous interpretation is made as to how such programs are improving family and individual welfare.

Conversely, those interested in special groups, such as the handicapped, must at times accept a higher priority for the programs that serve the total population including the handicapped. The foundation stones on which the total programs are built are frequently the services for special categories. The leaders, as well as the public as a whole, frequently have a better understanding and comprehension of the need of services for special groups. The non-governmental organizations, with their national affiliates, can be of tremendous help in discussing these questions and securing public understanding and support for the programs serving the population as a whole. To do this, co-operation and understanding must exist between the two approaches to community problems. There may be competition for priorities within the nation and within the international agencies, but this competition should be carried out in such a manner that the persons who need the services will receive them. The ultimate aim of providing services must be the criterion for determining priorities rather than the administrative structure through which the services are provided. In some cases the funds available can best be spent through programs serving the total

population; in other countries and other communities a program for a special group can be the service to receive the priority for the funds available.

In planning and developing programs for the handicapped, we are confronted with the constant dilemma of specialization versus integration. As our society becomes more complex, there is a natural tendency for each of us to become specialists. As specialists in a certain sphere, it becomes more difficult for us to integrate our own interests into the needs of the total community.

I hope that organizations devoted to the welfare of the blind can provide leadership in recognizing this basic conflict of integration versus specialization. Because of the unique position which the blind hold in society, they are well equipped to give leadership in developing services for all the handicapped. The broad interests and life work of Helen Keller are an excellent example of what can be done by one person.

A developed society, however, recognizes a much longer list of the disabled, all of whom are entitled to special services from the community. A mere listing of the causes of disability about which the International Society is concerned is too long to read without boring you, but this is the way to emphasize the extent of the problem. We use broad terms to describe some of the disabled, such as 'crippled children', 'orthopaedically handicapped', or 'neurologically impaired'.

Consider the fact that separate organizations and specialized services exist in many countries for the following disabilities:

- Blind
- Deaf
- Hard of Hearing
- Multiple sclerosis
- Cerebral palsy or spastic
- Poliomyelitis
- Rheumatism
- Arthritis
- Tuberculosis of the lung
- Tuberculosis of the spine and joints
- Leprosy or Hansen's disease
- Paraplegia or spinal cord injury
- Cardiovascular ailments
- Epilepsy
- Congenital malformation
- Amputations
- Cystic fibrosis
- Haemophilia
- Speech defects
- Mental retardation
- Mental illness
- Orthopaedically handicapped

Such a variety of organizations and services must necessarily water-down leadership, duplicate services, cause the community sometimes unnecessary expense, emphasize disability, and generally confuse the public.

No individual or organization survives in isolation, and we are at last coming into the realization that socially we are not independent beings and that our survival depends upon the strength and support which we can give to others and which they can give to us. Many groups of the disabled have not as yet, however, recognized the interdependency of one group to all other groups.

Isn't there a danger, if we go too far in specialization, for one group of the disabled to withdraw from the community? By our very strength we may sow the seeds of failure. Special services provided for the blind

and some of the orthopaedically handicapped are frequently superior to the schools and other special institutions available for the total population. Although we may be proud of the specialized programs, the result may be the very opposite of what we hope to achieve, and we could find ourselves isolated by our own superiority.

We are beginning to realize that the survival of one nation depends upon the survival of all nations. Similarly, we must recognize that the welfare of one group of the disabled depends upon the welfare of all the handicapped, and in turn the future welfare of the handicapped depends upon the total welfare of the people of the community, the nation, and the whole world.

The Place of Work for the Blind within the Framework of the Rehabilitation of the Handicapped

By **John E. Jarvis,** *Secretary-General, World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.*

The Programme Committee of this General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind deserves a generous tribute for its wisdom in including the topic assigned to this session within the overall programme of the Assembly. As recently as twenty years ago, few would have appreciated its relevance, for work for the blind had been developing for a century and a half with very little recognition of the needs or the aspirations of other handicapped people. A number of sporadic attempts had, of course, been made to link it with work for the deaf, usually in the educational field, efforts which were in my view doomed to failure, since they were based more on administrative convenience or on ill-conceived theory rather than on any real and proven identity of interest between the two groups. If any lesson for the future needs to be drawn from these attempts, it is surely that our work has its own very distinct identity, which must always be respected even when, in certain sectors, it is incorporated into the wider setting of work for the handicapped.

Between the two World Wars, some countries, particularly at government level, began to think in terms of such incorporation. An outstanding example is that of the United States, where such an approach led eventually to what is now the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, but happily its leaders have never lost sight of the distinctive character of work for the blind, but have always provided machinery designed to ensure the continuing development of our work. Even if they had been tempted to ignore it, Joseph F. Clunk, their first Head of Services to the Blind, would never have allowed them to do so, and indeed he set a pattern of regard for it which continues to this day in the person of Louis H. Rives, the present distinguished holder of that office, during whose reign the influence of this Administration has extended far beyond the frontiers of the United States, in the form of most welcome support for such projects as rural training and re-settlement of the blind in India, and an experimental talking book service in the same country, the placement of the blind in the textile industries of Israel, and so on.

In Czechoslovakia, too, where the handicapped themselves have, within a remarkably short space of time, organized into a national union whose broad aim is to press the government for the introduction of a wide range of services, and then to be allowed to administer them itself in the interests of all its members, the distinctive needs of the blind component of that Union have never been forgotten, and the latest instance of this is the decision to provide residential rehabilitation for the newly-blinded, quite separate from similar arrangements for other handicapped groups, though with full recognition that these are of equal importance.

In the United Kingdom, the pioneer organizations responsible for the spectacular development of industrial employment of the blind during the past two decades, notably the Royal National Institute for the Blind, were obliged to fight a long and worthy battle to prevent this work from being submerged in the general field of resettlement of the disabled, and did not transfer it to government management until they were assured, beyond any reasonable doubt, that its distinctive character would be permanently preserved when it was in government hands.

A number of factors contribute to this separate identity of work for the blind, whether it be conducted without regard for other work for the handicapped, or in the increasingly close co-operation with the wider field which now seems to be the likely setting for it in the immediate future. Some are inherent in the work itself. The braille magazine and the talking book have little value to the totally deaf man who has sight enough to read normal print, and the guide dog is of no value to the lady with no legs. In rehabilitation the medical aspect is of practically no specific consequence, for artificial eyes have by no means the same function as substitutes for vision as do synthetic legs or hands in relation to mobility or manual competence.

Other factors lie in the sphere of the relations of the blind with the rest of mankind, and demand an amount and a continuous intensity of public education to counteract the strongly-held but so often mistaken assumptions of family members, prospective employers and the public generally, that loss or absence of sight deprives the blind person irrevocably of so much that in fact he or she can still perform.

All this, and much more evidence which must be springing to the minds of everyone in this Assembly as they attend this session, leaves me in no doubt of the urgency of preserving the separateness of our work, in whatever context we are called upon to operate, whether as home teachers in some remote village or as administrators of United Nations programmes. And not only is it separate, but it is still right out in front, in many countries and in many of its aspects, as compared with what has so far been done for other handicapped groups in the community. Not only, then, is our work possessed of its own distinctness, but its place is also one of leadership and example, built on more than a century of solid achievement. Surely none of us would wish for a moment to deprive other handicapped men and women of any of the fruits of our victories which they can appropriately enjoy, nevertheless it seems to me that our prime concern at this Assembly, and in all our day-to-day ac-

tivities in our own countries, is to preserve that leadership for continuing to drive forward to new conquests for the blind, and to keep our work in the vanguard of rehabilitation without stopping to look over our shoulders to see whether the deaf or the physically handicapped, or some other group, have overtaken us in this aspect or in that.

This does not mean that our experience should not always be readily available to our colleagues whenever it might be of some value in the advancement of their work, and indeed I would hope that the literature in which we record our successes and our failures, our conference reports, and our professional journals, will be offered to them whenever they wish to use them. I hope also that our colleagues will be given constantly increasing opportunities to see at first-hand what we are doing, and that this may help many of them to do much better work for other handicapped people. But surely we ought not to relax our endeavours in our own particular field. This changing world is continually creating new and difficult problems for the blind. The best work for the blind is that in which the maximum number of these problems are solved with the minimum delay after their first appearance. In the long run I belive our own leadership and example will do far more, not only to raise the level of our own work to a decent minimum standard everywhere, but also to leaven the whole loaf which we all have to share. We ourselves still need more and better rehabilitation centres for the blind, more diversified training courses and employment services for the blind, better recreational facilities and more comfortable living arrangements for the blind, more comprehensive social services of all kinds to help the blind; and I would imagine that one of our main reasons for associating our countries with the World Council and for taking the time and trouble, and incurring the heavy cost, of travelling to New York is that we may all help one another to provide more help for our blind people throughout the world.

Neither St. Dunstan's, nor its civilian counterpart in Torquay, nor Father Carroll's centre in Massachussetts, nor Migdal-Or in Israel, would ever have attained their present quality of service if they had not been allowed to devote themselves to the particular problems of the blind. Nor can they, and other centres like them in the emergent countries, go on to still greater achievements unless they continue to concentrate on the particular problems and needs of the blind and resist any attempt of tidy-minded administrators or of misguided experts to persuade them to disperse their efforts in a vain attempt to be all things to all the handicapped. The German Federal Republic would not now count its blind telephonists by thousands and its stenographers by hundreds if they had been trained in the same classrooms as other disabled people.

In these new days we have to take part in the formulation and in the operation of new administrative relationships, but let us start by getting them right. We know we can no longer count on our governments to confine their assistance to the blind alone, nor would this be desirable or ethical; but we must be ever watchful that they do not simply rob Peter to pay Paul. Peter and Paul may often have to make

joint representation to them to safeguard the interests of both. Sometimes we may even have to represent Paul's needs as well as Peter's in order to elicit any attention to the needs of either, as in the case of our present negotiations with UNESCO, where our claims would be neither needed nor met unless we were to speak on behalf of all handicapped children. But what I think we must never do is to accept, without further negotiation, a situation in which Peter receives nothing because Paul might ask for a share as well. This is the main argument which still robs us of any success in our repeated endeavours to secure, on international rail journeys and on the airlines, those facilities which so many of us already enjoy when using our national surface transport because its authorities had never even heard of Paul when Peter asked for them.

Only if the distinctive needs of our own group are never overlooked, and only if we continue to exercise that measure of leadership and example which has been our contribution for so many years, shall we deserve any place within the general framework of work for the handicapped. Let us maintain and strengthen our identity and our leadership, and so retain our place of honour!

The Place of Work for the Blind in Planning National and International Rehabilitation Programmes

By **Sara Telson,** *Rehabilitation Unit, Bureau of Social Affairs.*

Since the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind first began its activities, the international community has witnessed far-reaching changes in the entire area of rehabilitation. A practical, realistic attitude is being adopted by national governments. On the one hand, industrialized countries are continually broadening existing programmes and expanding the scope of legislation on rehabilitation. On the other hand, the developing countries, with the consultation and co-operation of the United Nations and specialized agencies, are incorporating programmes on rehabilitation of the disabled into their social policy. Everywhere, governments, voluntary organizations, the public at large and the disabled themselves have come to a vital conclusion: a disabled person is not and shall not be an object of charity and a burden to his community. He can be a self-sufficient, active and productive member of society, contributing his skills and talents to the common pool of human resources.

This attitude, as all of us here are aware, has brought about a most crucial development in rehabilitation: a change in the very concept of rehabilitation. Emphasis has now shifted from disability *per se* to the individual himself, and the aggregate of his physical, psychological, emotional, social and vocational needs. The relationship between the satisfaction of these needs and the demands of a given society has become the focal point of the rehabilitation process.

In the hierarchy of needs, the need for work is paramount. In terms of self-acceptance and acceptance by others, work for the disabled individual has a dual value: a means of satisfaction in personal accom-

plishment; and a means for entry into the productive life of his immediate social group. Work has another special function, apart from contributing to economic improvement through active participation. It tends to mobilize psychologically the individual, the family and the entire communal system, thereby enhancing the self-esteem and status of all.

The key element in rehabilitation is this: unless the individual as a whole is rehabilitated, with his need for work assured of satisfaction, the rehabilitation process falls short of its purpose. A programme whose express aim is to integrate the blind person into the fellowship of his society, must take as its guiding principle the basic component of reality—the capacity of the person to perform work consonant with the values of his society; to compete and co-operate with peers in pursuit of common goals. In any social setting, work serves a therapeutic purpose—the ultimate well-being of the human person. A programme geared only to a partial solution—the overcoming of the disability itself—if it by-passes the work-reality situation and its therapeutic value, must inevitably rebound upon itself. No matter how well designed the programme, no matter how encouraging the successes in training and mobility, the handicapping situation will remain. And its ramifications will extend to every area of the blind person's life. The loss of a specific function may then involve the loss of a series of functions intimately related to the original deprivation, and it is the whole person that bears the impact. In terms of physical restoration and in terms of educational and vocational development, a rehabilitation programme serves to correct, to modify and to enhance the blind person's image of himself. But he must test this new self-image in terms of productive work.

Rehabilitation has come a long way from its beginnings as immediate material assistance and custodial care. It has become a distinct discipline combining the twin approaches of science and applied art. It has developed a degree of organization involving planning at the professional level, and at the level of the blind person, evaluation, training and placement. To be most effective, this organization must take into account the many regional and national differences in attitudes towards blindness and towards work for the blind. It must be guided by practical consideration of the differences in custom, tradition, language and culture. It must also take cognizance of the attitudes of individual communities as reflected in the various sectors of the economy on the one hand, and in the type and extent of the legislation in force, on the other hand. It is within this attitudinal framework that maximal results can be achieved by a rehabilitation programme, in the light of dynamic social and economic conditions. For example, in industrialized countries automation has reduced the number of technical skills the blind person can usefully learn. Increasingly, many repetitive tasks previously accessible are taken over by machines, thus limiting the blind person's sphere of action. Paradoxically, in the developing countries, it is the machine which provides the blind person with opportunities for productive activity. Mechanization is the instrument of compensation for the rural labour shortages caused by rapid industrial-

ization and urbanization. Some of the simple machinery used in rural farming is easily mastered by the blind.

A tremendous impetus to the morale and productivity of the blind individual lies in his appreciation of the fact that his work is productive, not only in terms of self-maintenance but also in terms of participation in the over-all economic and social progress of his country. In developing countries, in particular, with their strong emphasis on self-sustaining, independent economic status, rehabilitation programmes for the blind could usefully be oriented towards national social and economic development as well as towards specific individual needs. This fresh viewpoint might help us discover new economic opportunities for the blind which had previously been overlooked, because rehabilitation was strictly in the context of individual problems and not in the broader context of national needs.

Thus, the planning of national rehabilitation programmes must be in harmony with the present and future economic needs of the country in question. Examination and evaluation of these needs must involve continued *ad hoc* consultation with representatives of all sectors of the economy. Knowledge of the prospects, problems and needs of industry, commerce, agriculture, etc., would delineate areas of concentration for employment possibilities. And, therefore, logically it would pinpoint the most appropriate areas of training for the blind. The task of the planners at the national and local levels must be extended (1) to modify programme goals to coincide with changing needs, and (2) to promote understanding, and thereby ensure the full co-operation of the economic community in providing openings for the trained blind individual.

On the international level, a crucial aspect of rehabilitation is the exchange of information. What is needed here is ever more rapid and accurate translation of publications and documentation so that experience gained in one area of the world can be quickly shared with another in a similar stage of rehabilitation work. To this end, it is imperative that information about available sources be disseminated through the intermediary of international organizations. For example, the United Nations, with its continually expanding facilities for collecting and distributing technical information makes a most useful contribution as a great international clearing-house. In addition, through its Bureau of Social Affairs, and in close collaboration with specialized agencies, the United Nations serves to focus international co-operation in the field of rehabilitation. At the request of governments, it provides assistance in various forms: advisory services; fellowships; preparation of research studies and publication of reports and monographs; organization of seminars, conferences, study groups and specialized courses; establishment of rehabilitation centres and provision of equipment and training of personnel.

The World Health Organization with its aim of promoting the health of the international community, and concentrating its efforts on the prevention and control of communicable diseases, has launched a programme for the ultimate eradication of trachoma and tropical river

blindness—a major cause of blindness in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

UNICEF is conducting similar activities in the developing countries and in addition provides basic equipment for schools for the blind, as well as training of qualified teachers. For example, in Malaysia, a programme has been initiated for the training of teachers, for the establishment of a central braille library, and for the integration of blind pupils into the normal school system. In India, UNICEF has provided equipment for a model school, for two vocational training centres for the blind, for a Braille Press and workshops, and also training stipends for teachers of the blind.

The International Labour Organization bears the major responsibility for the vocational aspects of rehabilitation. With the acute need for trained technical workers in developing countries, the I.L.O. is turning its attention increasingly to the possibilities of developing the vast potential of blind persons through programmes of rehabilitation. In India, a large majority of the two million blind are either in or entering what could be their most productive years. The I.L.O. has provided to the Dehra Dun Centre an expert on industrial training and employment for the blind, whose activities are concerned with problems of placement and the introduction of light engineering as an occupation for the blind. In Ethiopia, I.L.O. has sent an expert to assist in organizing a vocational rehabilitation programme. It has supplied the requisite equipment and it is planned to provide a vocational training instructor. I.L.O. experts are also assisting the Government of Tunisia in establishing a vocational rehabilitation programme for the blind.

While technical assistance—expert consultation, provision of equipment, materials and teaching aids—must continue to play its immensely vital role, the training of qualified professional rehabilitation personnel should be recognized as a key problem. With the growing emphasis on primary and secondary education for all, there must be a corresponding increase in the number of qualified special education teachers, so that blind students will be as equipped for educational and professional pursuits as their sighted peers. In industrial training, there must be an increase in the number of specialized instructors in trades and skills. Training in mobility is a major factor in developing independence and self-confidence in the blind person and therefore constitutes the *modus operandi* in seeking and retaining employment. To facilitate independence during the rehabilitation process, mobility instructors must be included on the staff of rehabilitation centres. And for the final implementation of the goal of work, for the final integration of the blind individual into the reality of independent, self-enhancing working life, there must be qualified placement officers trained in the task of harmonizing needs, abilities and job opportunities.

The work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies in rehabilitation is moving forward with the active co-operation of interested and informed governments and of various international bodies —the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, the International Society for the Re-

habilitation of the Disabled, and of course, the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. This Congress is a graphic illustration of the significant role of international organizations in bringing together interested, dedicated and experienced people from all parts of the world, so that views and experience can be shared and pooled together in a common attack on a problem so close to us all.

Our concern and our dedication have already been translated into concrete action in many positive ways, but we must continue to strive for the ultimate synthesis of all conceptual and practical aspects of rehabilitation. In this synthesis, work is the primary welding agent, whose economic, social and psychological effects will expand the universe of the blind individual, so that blindness, while still a part of life, need not be a way of life.

ELEVENTH SESSION **Friday afternoon, August 7th, 1964**

THE IMPACT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ON TECHNOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF BLINDNESS

Chairman: **Mr. H. Amblard,** *President, Union des Aveugles de Guerre, France.*

The International Research Information Service

By **Leslie L. Clark,** *Director of I.R.I.S.*

It is not often the case, in research as in most other human endeavour, that we have an opportunity to second-guess ourselves. The opportunity is particularly welcome when it arises after an exploratory program designed to amass old information and to establish ways in which new information can be used effectively. Our Division of Research now has been given this opportunity. We are grateful for the small respite it has given to consolidate our thinking, to plan rationally for the future, and to ensure the maximum usefulness of our efforts to those we intend to serve: the research community.

In 1960 the American Foundation for the Blind undertook a project entitled 'An International Survey of Technical Devices Designed for the Education, Rehabilitation, and Personal Aid of Blind Persons'. The title is somewhat misleading. An international inventory of so-called 'aids to the blind' quite quickly expanded to include a complication of research and development in a wide variety of disciplines, physical science and an equally wide variety in basic research on the several sensory processes. Yet this rapid expansion of scope and interest was not altogether unplanned, and it may be useful to quote from that project proposal to illustrate what is meant. 'The desired end result of this program', we said, 'is:

(1) to analyse the results of existing and past avenues and basic premises on which technical research has been founded;

(2) to establish the avenues of the physical sciences through which research and development show the greatest potential for the material of technical devices for the assistance of the blind;

(3) to collect for purposes of dissemination to all present and future scientists and engineers a comprehensive library of existing research and technical devices with (in so far as possible) objective evaluations of their respective merits and shortcomings;

(4) to provide for an intensive and concentrated exchange of scientific opinion and information through national and international symposia and conferences;

(5) to provide a base for more effective co-ordination among all researchers, through a continuing system for collection, evaluation and dissemination of development in the field, anywhere in the world.'

We are just beginning, three years later, and with a good deal more experience behind us, to plan for meeting fully some of these original objectives.

The International Survey was also responsible for planning one major scientific conference. The International Congress on Technology and Blindness was held in New York City, in June of 1962. The *Proceedings* of that Congress comprise four volumes, and stand as a fair summing up of our knowledge of such things at the time of its completion (in February, 1963).* They comprise a 'state of the art' report on technological development applied to the problems arising from sensory impairment, with a fairly heavy emphasis on visual impairment. For example: The papers in Panel I (Man-Machine Systems) and Panel II (Living Systems) of the Congress have gone far toward an adequate analysis of past and present avenues of research. In the Panel I papers some attention was also directed toward the premises upon which current and future efforts will depend. In Panel II something of an exploratory survey of sensory research was made.

The avenues leading from applied research in the physical sciences to the actual accomplishment of devices to assist the blind have now been reasonably well mapped out. Some of the papers in Panel IV (Adapted and Special Purpose Devices) did deal in fact with practical realizations of applied research and development activity of direct utility to the visually impaired. In our technologically-oriented culture, I have no doubt that further realizations will occur as a matter of course.

The International Survey and the Congress initiated a collection of documents containing descriptions and evaluations of research conducted in the past and currently under way.

The Congress was also the initial step of an intensive effort to promote international exchange of scientific information through symposia and conferences. A series of these has been planned for the future (see below).

Finally the exchange of information crystallized by the Congress and the preparation for the Congress provide a base for the efficient coordination and exchange of data among members of the research community. We have a very long way to go before we can satisfy everyone in this effort, but at least a start has been made.

The original formulation of our 'mission' looked several years into the future. In spite of strenuous efforts we have come, perhaps, only halfway toward their realization. Our immediate objective is of course to 'tie up the loose ends' in these several categories of activity.

The 'loose ends' can be found in each of the published 'progress reports'. Among the necessary remedial measures may be included the following: First, a more intensive effort to collate information from many sources on the essential nature of the sensory processes. The reason for this goes much deeper than a mere need for completeness or 'closure.'

*The four volumes of the Proceedings appeared in October, 1963, and were published by the American Foundation for Blind.

It is prompted, rather, by an hypothesis: that among other reasons for the failure of very refined and well-engineered innovations developed in the past which were intended to alleviate the consequences of sensory impairment, the most important has been our lack of understanding of exactly what the device was intended to accomplish. The field of development of sensory aids is strewn with the remains of devices which operated beautifully but which did not provide information a human being could utilize; or informed him of changes in his environment at too great a rate; or used a coding which he could not interpret in real time; and so on. No one knew, for example, what parameters of the visual or auditory or kinesthetic field were essential information and what parameters were redundant; which were stored until a time-bound field pattern was developed in memory; or which were used primarily in conjunction with data from other modalities concurrently. The tutorial session on Vision in Panel II of the Congress was an attempt to redress this oversight, and the relatively large number of papers was meant to highlight some salient features of the visual process in the hope that it would stimulate cross-disciplinary thinking among the participants. Less attention was paid to the equally enormous literature on audition in Panel II by our severely restricted scope of presentation (largely the limit of time): the papers presented were meant to be outstanding representatives of current research-oriented thinking in the field of audition. One could make similar remarks about some other areas only touched upon in the meetings, including the construction of models of neurological behavior, models of sensory information processing in the brain, electro-encephalographic research, and so on. Only the limitations of time prevented us from going much further into some rather fascinating boundary crossing, too—to consider, for example, the influence of individual differences on perception, or the relationship of character and sensation, or the possibilities in what Dr. Grey Walter so felicitously described as the 'feeling-hearing space' developed by feeding in selected data from the environment to stimulate or supplement visual processes.

Second, the problem of the translation of advances in basic research into suitable hardware, or programs of action, or training procedures, or still other applications was hardly considered—beyond the almost universal complaint that there is currently in this country no suitable vehicle for translation of laboratory 'breadboard' devices to the research prototype stage, to the production prototype stage, and to actual line production. Surely there is need for better co-ordination of funding and management here, and we can note this need while admitting there is little we at A.F.B. can do to meet it. Yet there are other measures we can develop to help, including adequate (and adequately controlled) surveys of markets, incidence and prevalence studies of the sensorily-impaired subpopulations, attitudinal studies of usage and/or predispositions toward usage (or non-usage) of devices, and so forth. These matters begin to lead us in directions we did not consider appropriate for inclusion in the Congress, namely an intense preoccupation with behavioral research, including sociological, demographic, social-psycho-

logical, and other studies. It will also involve us in the collection, and what the Europeans call the 'rationalization', of statistics of sensory impairment: standardization of data-gathering methods, the format for data collection, procedures for handling data, and consistent consensus in the interpretation of such data.

Third, the collection of documents already amassed—and which multiplies every day—is another loose end which, we pray, we shall never be able to tie up tightly. The explosion in scientific knowledge which has provided us with more information in a decade than all we learned previously in a century ensures a continuing flow of data which must be gathered together in meaningful ways. It is our responsibility in part to help interpret these data so that progress can build on fresh turns in knowledge. The chronic situation faced in all the sciences—of a cornucopia of knowledge from which flows an endless stream of new data, much of which stimulates further work, and so on in a geometric progression—does not, we know, guarantee that we can schedule the moments when really fundamental reshuffling of knowledge into new patterns, characterized by a small number of assumptions and a tight, theoretical calculus will take place. What we can do, realistically and at the moment, is to organize our knowledge with a consistent and easily understood system which is open-ended, capable of handling large amounts of material, and adapted to future modification with automatic retrieval machinery.

Fourth, the summing-up provided by the Congress helped to limn quite clearly those areas of research and application wherein we felt secure in our knowledge, those we knew needed much more work, and finally those which made us uneasily aware of areas to which we *should* pay attention but don't *want* to because they involve so much complication and such painful thinking-out. Although we concur with our scientific colleagues in the prejudice that the best cross-disciplinary integration occurs within the skull of individual scientists, we also believe that national and international meetings of various kinds offer an unusual opportunity for stimulating new trends of thought and for lifting us all occasionally from the well-trod paths of thought to which we become committed in working alone and relatively isolated from one another. Such meetings are also the quickest way to transmit information within the research community. There is much yet to be accomplished in a series of meetings of rather more limited scope than the International Congress, which are devoted to a small range of topics and which call together a small group of specialists (within or without the context of professional societies) for common consideration of unsolved issues in sensory research and applications.

Finally, we have much to do in implementing our desire to promote the most effective exchange among researchers of actual data and documents, to keep 'current awareness' current in fact as it is in intent. We must also face up to the task of finishing what we have already started in some spheres. One of the more important examples of this is the collection of data on devices contained in Volume IV of the *Proceedings* of the International Congress. This volume contains informa-

tion not only on devices drawn from every supplier, but also descriptions of 'one-offs' and other laboratory or experimental devices which never saw the light of day for common use. The examples of such latter devices are at present only a partial representation of this class of devices and we believe it is not mere curiosity or mere historical interest which prompts a desire for more complete information. Indeed, it is amazing the number of times one or another device is discovered, invented, or adapted, found unsuitable, dropped, and reinvented, over and over again. There are also very valuable historical materials, often buried in long Teutonic exegeses or multi-volumed autobiographies, which show not only that there is very little new under the sun, but moreover that some mistakes have a very long tradition.

We have not only not finished an inventory of hardware; we have hardly begun an inventory of techniques (that is, ways of doing simple tasks in everyday life, in one's job, and during one's recreation) which may obviate the need for a special aid or appliance or device. In this area there is a simply enormous literature, most of it diffuse, prolix, widely dispersed, poorly organized, often amateurish, usually poorly written. Yet there is a desperate need for a catalog of techniques for persons who cannot afford hardware, for the developing nations with little capital, to suit the temperament of those who wish as few impedimenta as possible, and so on. We have made a start in collating such knowledge, but our baby effort will require a more sustained drive than that devoted to the problem so far if, even within five years, we can hope to present even a stripling youthful version for public consideration in print form.

These considerations have all played some role in the decision to provide a locus within the Department of Research for a complex pattern of activities tailored to do the work implicitly and explicitly described in the preceding sections. These activities have now been given a housing, a guarantee of minimum support, and a sponsor: the International Research Information Service (I.R.I.S.).

The activities of I.R.I.S. center around a diversified publication program, a certain amount of administration and liaison work, some documentation research, and a modest amount of interpretative and explanatory writing. Perhaps it might help simplify explanation somewhat if we were to consider the former classification of 'loose ends' once again, this time from the point of view of ameliorative efforts directed toward tying them up, or at least strengthening the knots.

As a first step, we have taken the *Research Bulletin* of the Division of Research as the responsibility of I.R.I.S. In making this journal a more frequent publication, we intend to continue its evolution. The *Bulletin* will try to focus on one general area of research for each issue; it will range, issue by issue, over the whole front of research under way; it will feature reprinting of valuable papers from the past to jog our memory and stimulate our thinking; and it will provide an open forum for discussion of proposals for research interests. The contents of the *Bulletin* also will include some of the tutorial material needed for nonspecialists in sensory research, akin to the information on Vision in

Panel II of the International Congress. We hope also to incorporate a quarterly or semi-annual progress report on current research in all the fields under our purview. Finally, it will contain occasional materials relative to the continuing cataloging operation for devices as these become available; data on techniques will be similarly treated.

To supplement the information in the *Bulletin*, a series of separate publications will try to keep researchers informed of data at hand for our use. Among these publications will be special bibliographies, each dealing with a specific area of research and/or development (the first of these was prepared by J. K. Dupress, on mobility research, and is now available). Future bibliographies will deal with the areas of reading machine research, audition, information processing in the human being, and so on. Another publication series will attempt to bring together the sets of recommendations made in the past in many conferences, symposia, congresses, and the like, regarding research needed in the amelioration of sensory impairment, together with an estimate of what has been done to meet the recommendations and what remains to be done. Also included here is a series of 'state of the art' reports on several sub-areas of sensory, behavioral, and technological research which will help keep knowledge of advances in the field current. Finally, the proceedings of such conferences as we become involved in from time to time on special sub-areas of research will be published; the first will be the papers and discussion of the Mobility Research Conference proposed for The Hague next year.

Another area of activity of I.R.I.S. will be the refinement of classification, coding, and retrieval schemes with which we can make more accessible a wide variety of data, from information on specific devices, aids and appliances, to fundamental research information. For dealing with the actual hardware (i.e., 'devices') of which we must keep track we have been fortunate indeed in obtaining the co-operation of the Royal National Institute for the Blind (R.N.I.B.) for the beginnings of a joint program to consolidate the information. A duplicate information file will be kept in New York of R.N.I.B.'s data, while we in turn will supply the R.N.I.B. in London with copies of material in our files of research data. It is expected that in approximately two years a revised version of Volume IV of the *Proceedings* (the Catalog Appendix) will be published by the R.N.I.B. to eliminate the gaps left in the present volume. The matter of techniques will be a joint concern of R.N.I.B. and A.F.B., and we hope to have more definite word on a method of collating this information within a year or so.

Research data from the technological, physical science, behavioral science, some medical, and demographic/statistical areas will be the concern of I.R.I.S. We have already initiated a classification and coding system based on the use of Uniterm-type coding, dictionary handbooks for the coding system, the Scan-Column Index of Dr. J. J. O'Connor (University of Pennsylvania)—and several filing cabinets—during the International Survey. The multiform problems of organization of the International Congress kept us from making very much progress in this direction until quite recently. It can be expected that

within the present year we will have the coding and retrieval scheme operational, and it is hoped that several small documentation and retrieval experiments can be carried out soon thereafter. We regard the successful conduct of this effort as essential to the conduct of I.R.I.S. itself, for it is on the basis of coding and classification schemes that any hope can be entertained to exert control over a constantly increasing pool of documents. The basic principle in the operation will be to keep information flowing to those who need it and can use it, rather than making any attempt merely to have 'complete' information at some central locus.

Finally, I.R.I.S. will be intimately involved in a series of international conferences, each devoted to some special sub-area of research, each scheduled one-year-at-a-time ahead. The intention is to provide that opportunity for face-to-face contact which seems to catalyse significant advances in research through mutual stimulation among specialists. We are presently engaged, in fact, with the first-stage arrangements for a conference on mobility research to be held at The Hague in August of 1964. Each conference will seek to report on the current stage of development of laboratory devices, exchange information across lines of thought and practice to the benefit of both groups, and consider the context within which research in that particular area takes place—including the prospects for development work and the prospects for incorporation of new knowledge into training or other action programs.

Our fundamental bias, it is clear, is that the most chronic need in the development of new departures in the amelioration of sensory impairment is for information. We hope to ensure that the information we gather and disseminate will be *useful* information, by applying the same canons of rigor, parsimoniousness, and internal consistency as obtain in any scientific work. While recognizing and accepting the chronic and pressing needs for information and for reliable data in the many areas with which we deal, we intend to make haste slowly and to learn consciously how to do our job better as we become more experienced in doing it. Our confidence is based on the marvelous co-operation given us by the scientific community, and in an exciting range of talent and capability made available to us through its selfless and generous help.

I.R.I.S. starts with a responsibility for measuring up to very high standards established by the participants to the International Congress, and by our many consultants and correspondents. No less an effort is required of us all if we expect to advance our ability to ameliorate the consequences of visual and other sensory impairment in the foreseeable future.

Technical Developments in Talking Book Programmes. The British Multi-Track Tape Cassette System.

By **H. J. F. Adam,** *Director, Talking Books, R.N.I.B., London.*

A Talking Book Library for the Blind has existed in Great Britain since 1935. For many years this service was provided through the medium of long-playing discs and several countries in the British

Commonwealth acquired machines and recorded books from the Royal National Institute for the Blind. There was in addition an interchange of disc recordings between Britain and the United States.

Despite a number of ingenious devices which were incorporated in the disc reproducers it became apparent after some years of operation that a Talking Bookservice on disc had many disadvantages; perhaps the most serious of these was the relatively rapid deterioration of the disc itself, this not only spoiling the readers' pleasure in the recording, but requiring large stocks of replacement discs to be held at the library, thus increasing the storage space required. Each book on return from the reader needed thorough checking to ensure that the discs were in correct order and that none was damaged. The stylii on the reproducers needed regular replacement and repair. These are only a few of the disadvantages of a disc service and by the end of the last war it was appreciated that an alternative system should be devised as soon as possible.

With the advent of magnetic tape recording such an alternative seemed possible and for some years after the war many commercial systems were examined and assessed as to their suitability for use as a Tape Talking Book for the Blind. It became apparent that there were many factors which made any of the products available unsuitable for our specialized use. The principal factors that decided us against the adoption of any of the commercial systems available were:

1. Any *exposed* tape was liable to damage by the blind reader.
2. The threading of tape through relatively complicated tape guide assemblies was more than most (particularly the elderly) blind people could manage.
3. The machine inevitably lent itself to use by unauthorized people, frequently resulting in damage, or even accidental erasure of the recording.
4. Such machines were complex pieces of equipment and were not always easy to get serviced in the field.
5. The cost of a good robust machine was considerably higher than we felt reasonable.

As a result of these conclusions a research project was initiated in the laboratories of the R.N.I.B. with the object of designing a talking book specifically for use by the blind.

Having decided that magnetic tape would be the medium to be used certain basic principles were kept constantly in mind.

1. It should be extremely simple to operate.
2. There should be *no* exposed tape.
3. No tape loading or threading by the blind reader should be necessary.
4. It should be impossible for the tape to be pulled off the spool.
5. It should be of sturdy construction without being cumbersome.
6. It should be possible for libraries large or small to produce recordings quickly, simply, and in quantity, as and when required.

Many designs were produced and tested but it was not until 1959 that a prototype of the present cassette and reproducer was made.

After careful consideration it was decided to carry out a field test and 100 reproducers were issued to blind readers; these readers were selected so as to provide a good representative cross-section of our members.

Some 300 recorded cassettes were circulated to these readers over a period of six months and at the end of that time the participants were requested to complete a questionnaire on the new system. The result was extraordinary, ninety-seven of the hundred readers involved preferred the new cassette system to the old disc system on all counts; of the remaining three readers one preferred the disc system but gave no reasons; the other two thought the tape system better but had certain reservations.

With this considerable encouragement it was decided to go into full production.

The Tape Cassette.

It is the cassette which is the novel, indeed the revolutionary part of this sytem. It contains up to twenty-one hours of recorded material—enough for two average books, and certainly enough for all but the very longest ones.

Unlike the domestic tape-recorder which uses two or four tracks on one-quarter inch tape, the cassette uses one-half inch tape having up to eighteen separate recorded tracks, each of up to one hour and ten minutes duration.

The metal shell of the cassette is a strong protective cover for the entire tape, spool, and replay head assembly. This means that the tape is completely enclosed and it is impossible for it to be touched or handled in any way by the reader. Not only does this eliminate all the complications of tape loading by the reader but it makes any damage to the tape almost an impossibility. Thus the original quality of the recording willl be retained almost indefinitely.

The tape is loaded at the library on to two superimposed reels and when the cassette is first placed on the reproducer all the tape is on the top spool. The drive spindle on the reproducer causes the tape to be taken up on the bottom spool and in so doing it passes the replay head. Brakes are provided so that the spools are locked until the cassette is actually on the reproducer. Thus all risk of tape spill is eliminated. The track change is controlled by a push button in the front of the cassette. Each time the button is pressed the replay head moves through one of eighteen positions.

The Standard Reproducer.

The standard reproducer is rented to the blind reader for £2 ($5.60) per year and no other charge is made. The machine is extremely simple, having only three controls—an ON/OFF volume control, a tone control, and a START/STOP switch. A socket is provided so that headphones may be used, in which case the loudspeaker is muted. On

the playing deck is a driving spindle which revolves at 15 r.p.m., and at the rear are two rounded locating shoulders. The reader has merely to switch on the machine, place the rounded part of the cassette against the shoulders on the reproducer, and lower it on to the deck. When the start switch is operated the drive spindle will automatically engage. At the end of each track an announcement is made, followed by a high-pitched tone of 4 kc/sec. which causes the drive to be automatically switched off. Thus if the reader has perhaps fallen asleep or been called away, the tape cannot be pulled off the spool. But in the unlikely event of this failing to function, an additional precaution has been built in, in the form of a 'slipping clutch' on the drive spindle. This gives a loud clicking sound when the end of the tape is reached.

So much for the *standard* reproducer and cassette.

Modifications to the Standard Reproducer.

Considerable thought has been given to making this sytem particularly suitable for student use and also making it more easily used by rheumatic, arthritic or even handless blind readers, or by the elderly blind, and as a result certain optional accessories have been devised.

A rotating cage is provided in the lid of the machine into which the cassette is loaded. The cage is so designed that the cassette cannot be wrongly positioned. In the case of the additionally handicapped reader this loading might have to be done for him.

The lid of the machine is spring loaded so that a minimum of strength is required to operate it. Any slight pressure allows the lid to be lowered and in so doing the cassette automatically engages the drive spindle. The START/STOP lever has been extended and here again only a gentle movement is needed to operate it.

At the end of the track the 4 kc/sec. note will switch off the drive. The lid is raised—if necessary using the forearm rather than the hands—and the cage turned. The lid is lowered and the track change button, now extended to the front of the lid, is pressed. Switch to start, and the next track plays.

For student use, a speedy means of back reference is obviously essential and by the provision of a slot immediately above the track change sprocket one can rapidly select any track desired. If one wishes to listen to, say, track three, all that is necessary is to turn the sprocket to track one, then press the button the appropriate number of times. Thus we have almost immediate access to any one-eighteenth part of a book.

By means of a fast rewind attachment which can be easily and quickly fitted to any reproducer it is possible to rapidly locate any part within that track. The facility therefore exists to go easily and quickly to any predetermined part of a 21-hour book. This facility I think compares very favorably with anything in the commercial field today.

The Special Copying Machine.

I have so far described to you a reproducer and tape cassette which despite its extreme simplicity offers quite surprising facilities for the blind reader.

We now come to the question of quantity production of recorded cassettes. The original master recordings for this system are made on standard two track one-quarter inch tape at a speed of $3\frac{3}{4}$ in./sec. We already have some 1,000 titles recorded and are producing about 250 new titles each year. These master recordings are placed on to a copying machine. This piece of equipment is quite original in conception and design, and was developed in the laboratories of the R.N.I.B. Cassettes loaded with the requisite amount of tape for the recording time required, are loaded on to spindles of the copying machine which can have as many as twenty-four cassette positions—(the minimum number is eight).

The operator has the facility of copying from the master tape to the cassettes at six times normal speed, editing the book into roughly eighteen equal parts during the process. The second master tape on the deck is a recording of track beginning and ending instructions, and simply switching on the control unit enables either tape to be brought in when required.

The recorded cassettes (as many as twenty-four) produced in little more than one-sixth of the time it would take to read one, are put into their metal shells and then into a postal container and placed on the library shelves—available to the library members just a few hours after the original recording of the book was completed. Should further copies be required, no further editing is needed. One of the cassettes already recorded is now used as the master and a straight six-to-one speed copying operation is all that is needed.

The copier can also serve as a rewind machine. Cassettes returned to the library need merely be placed on the spindles and are rewound to the beginning of the book, in a single high speed operation. It can also be used for the initial loading of the cassettes with blank tape; the required quantity can be calculated quite accurately to fit the length of the book to be copied and thus eliminate tape wastage. The length can be estimated to within fifty feet. Only 1,500 feet of one-half inch tape is required for a 21-hour book. Obviously in a large library separate machines for rewinding and tape loading would be required.

The operator need not be highly technically qualified. All that is needed is a certain manual dexterity and common sense. After only a few days of instruction operators become confident and efficient.

It will be seen then, that having produced the master recording, copies may be produced rapidly at short notice to meet the requirements of the moment. This system is ideal for small editions. If the demand has been underestimated further copies can quickly be made, thus obviating a large initial stock of copies (as was usually the case with disc) and easing the library storage problem. This in turn means that a large number of titles can be stocked.

It is equally ideal for large editions. Heavy initial demand for a popular book can be satisfied without the risk of carrying a big stock which will lie idle on the library shelves after the first rush of requests has subsided. Redundant recordings can be bulk erased and the cassettes re-recorded with new titles.

The machine may be used in any room with a domestic power outlet. No soundproofing or special preparation is needed.

While it is desirable to have a competent technician in over-all charge, the actual operation of equipment at the library can be carried out with comparatively unskilled labour.

One of the great advantages of this scheme is its eminent suitability for all types of talking book libraries, large or small. Production of recorded cassettes is simple, speedy, and entirely within the control of the library, which can produce an infinite variety of books to suit local taste. By the interchange of cassettes with other countries using this system, the whole field of recorded foreign literature can be made available to the blind reader in Boston, Bristol or Barcelona. It is not necessary for the operator to know the language in which the recording is made since all the necessary editing will have been completed at the library of origin.

The initial cost of installing the basic equipment is extremely modest and well within the reach of most organizations for the blind. The major item—a 12-spindle copying machine—costs only £997 ($2,232) and having installed such a basic unit, expansion is a simple matter and can be adjusted to suit the finances available. Several organizations have started with as little as fifty reproducers and 150 cassettes and are adding to this number month by month.

Any relatively small library, serving from a few hundred up to two or three thousand readers could function quite efficiently using one 12-spindle copying machine, but a conservative estimate of the production capability in a five-day week, using two copiers, would be as follows: With the first copier occupied copying cassettes from original master tapes, production would be about twelve or thirteen titles per week on 150 to 160 cassettes. The second copier would be used to produce additional copies from a master cassette selected from the first run and would produce about 200 to 240 copies per week. This gives a total weekly production of 350 to 400 cassettes per week. These figures are on the basis of 12-spindle machines and could of course be increased by adding spindles which are provided in four position units.

It is estimated that to maintain a satisfactory turnover of books—considering that some are with the reader, some in transit, and some on the library shelves—a ratio of three cassettes to each reproducer is needed. Therefore it will be seen that a library with two copying machines would serve between 116 and 133 new readers each week, or something over 6,000 new readers each year.

Before readers are issued with machines it would of course be necessary to build up a basic library stock of recorded titles, which would be available immediately the scheme became operational. Here an interchange of master cassettes between organizations operating the scheme would be invaluable.

In Britain, in order that considerable stocks of disc machines should not become obsolete, a gradual change-over is taking place. The new tape machine is being issued to those readers who have read all or nearly all the disc titles available. The disc machine is withdrawn, overhauled,

and reissued to a new reader who still has the whole of the disc library at his disposal. About 25 per cent. of all disc machines recalled are scrapped. When all existing members have been issued with the new tape machine no further disc issues will be made and the change-over will then be complete.

As a result of an appeal which we made through various technical journals we now have a panel of several thousand volunteer helpers throughout the country who, when the machine is issued to a new reader, undertake to visit him and instruct him in its use and ensure correct installation. If at any time the reader needs help with his machine he contacts his local volunteer helper who goes to the reader's home and does whatever might be necessary.

After nearly two years of operation we in Britain and, what is more important, our blind readers, are delighted and very satisfied with the new tape system. We feel that with this cassette system we can offer a simple, reliable, and flexible service which because of its simplicity of cassette interchangeability and its eminent suitability for all types of libraries might well be considered as a standardized talking book service throughout the world.

Considerable progress has already been made in this direction since the following countries are already using this system:—Argentina, Australia, Rhodesia, South Africa, New Zealand, Canada, Spain, El Salvador, India, Great Britain. A pilot project has also been established in Virginia, U.S.A., and a certain amount of equipment, including a copying machine, has been shipped to Russia.

Future Development.

It is appreciated that no system is perfect, therefore research is constantly in progress with a view to improving and developing what is already a most efficient and satisfactory service. It is felt that a number of developments are possible including perhaps a reduction in the size of the cassette and an increase in the duplication rate. It is hoped that by the time this paper is presented some of these developments will be in a sufficiently advanced stage to permit demonstration.

Technological Developments in Talking Book Programmes.

By **Robert S. Bray,** *Chief, Division for the Blind, Library of Congress.*

In making any observations on the subject of 'Technological Developments in the Talking Book Program,' I felt that I might as well go back to the very first one of any permanent significance. In 1878, Thomas E. Edison wrote an article in the *North American Review*, describing his invention of the phonograph. Many of you are familiar with his statement, 'Books may be read by the charitably-inclined professional reader, or by such readers especially employed for that purpose, and the record of such book used in the asylums of the blind, hospitals . . .' etc.

From 1878 to 1934, the use of the phonograph as a practical talking book was an idea rather than a reality. Then the 12-inch, $33\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m.

disc which had fifteen minutes of recording on each side became sufficiently well developed in this country that Congress appropriated funds for the production of talking-book records for the blind. During the thirty years since 1934, a number of refinements enabled the amount of recorded time to be gradually increased till it reached twenty-seven minutes on each side of a 12-inch disc, which was lighter in weight and far less fragile than the early talking-book records. In the meantime, slower playing speeds were being tested, and about two years ago the Division for the Blind of the Library of Congress found that it could comfortably switch to a new standard—10-inch discs playing at $16\frac{2}{3}$ r.p.m. For the blind reader, this change provided a smaller, lighter book with forty-five minutes of recorded time on each side of a record. For the Library of Congress, it meant that the production economies of the slower speed enabled more copies of more books to be provided with available funds. Diamond needles are now standard on all talking-book machines, so that record wear is kept to a minimum, and replacement of needles is an annual rather than a frequent necessity.

Even before the transition to $16\frac{2}{3}$ r.p.m. discs was actually put into effect, the feasibility of $8\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. talking book records had been demonstrated. Because of purely administrative reasons, $8\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. discs could not then, and still cannot now, be issued in large quantities. The economies of slow-speed recordings can be realized only when suitable playback equipment is available at a cost which will not cancel out the savings. As of today we have very few talking-book machines which can play $8\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. discs, and they are for testing purposes only. There are almost 80,000 talking-book machines in the field which operate at only $33\frac{1}{3}$ and $16\frac{2}{3}$ r.p.m. speeds. Until appropriate playback equipment is available on a large scale, the widespread use of $8\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. discs must be postponed.

We have now reached the stage where, for the first time, our annual contract for the production of new talking-book machines, awarded within the past few days to Westinghouse Electric Corporation, calls for a machine which will play the 12-inch, $33\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. discs of which we still have a large, active collection; the 10-inch, $16\frac{2}{3}$ r.p.m. discs on which new talking books are recorded; and $8\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. discs of any size up to 12 inches in diameter. This contract is for the manufacture of 10,000 machines, and we are planning to convert, during this fiscal year, several thousand two-speed talking-book machines so that they will also be able to play $8\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. discs. If all goes well, within a very few years every blind reader of talking books will have a machine capable of playing all existing records we have issued and any $8\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. discs which we may issue in the future.

Any change brings with it problems, and I believe that a change is justified only when the benefits far surpass any difficulties it may cause. We are considering a change to $8\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. discs because it may improve library service to blind persons by enabling us to provide a substantial number of popular magazines in recorded form while they are still current. The useful life of most magazines is relatively short, so that it makes sense to provide large editions on economical records. Books

have a longer useful life than periodicals so that each copy is read by a fairly large number of persons. *Gone With the Wind*, for example, was recorded in 1940, and all copies were finally worn out from use. It was then re-recorded in 1956, and again practically all copies are worn out. A third edition, recorded on $16\frac{2}{3}$ r.p.m. discs, was distributed last month. I know of no magazine for which we have had more than isolated requests after the original recordings were discarded. Books, then, may well continue to be issued on $16\frac{2}{3}$ r.p.m. discs, since the economics of repeated use may far exceed the economies of slower recording speeds. But this remains to be seen, and I can only say, at this time, that all such factors will be closely watched. As an administrator I have the dual responsibility of providing the best possible library service to this country's blind readers and getting the best possible value from the funds appropriated by Congress to carry out the program.

Of course, the magic words in today's thinking on recordings of any type are 'magnetic tape'. I have heard it said, and I know that some of you believe, that magnetic tape will eventually eliminate talking books on discs. For many years I have heard people say that talking books would eliminate braille, yet we are being asked to provide more braille than ever before. I would like to go back to 1878 again for a moment, and read a sentence from an article entitled 'The Phonograph and Its Future', which appeared in the magazine *Nature:* 'Then as to books, there seems some chance that, ere long, the printer's if not the publisher's occupation will be to a great extent gone, and the present unwieldly form of communication between an author and his readers be abolished.' Without commenting on that prediction, I simply want to state my belief that magnetic tape is here to stay as an important part of any talking-book program, but that it will not completely replace discs in the talking-book program of this country.

The advantages of magnetic tape are obvious, and for the past three years the Division for the Blind of the Library of Congress has been providing books of specialized interest, recorded by volunteers, on standard 7-inch reels of tape recorded at $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches per second, using two sound tracks consecutively. We now have more than 2,000 titles in this form and will be adding 500 or so titles each year. This tape service was provided as a supplement to the talking-book disc program to make available titles which, for budgetary reasons, could not be furnished on discs. No playback equipment is provided for tape, so a recording standard had to be determined which would make our recorded tapes accessible to as many blind individuals as possible. It was found that a sufficiently large number of persons owned tape-players which accommodated 7-inch reels recorded at $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches per second, dual track, that we could safely adopt those features for our national service. Approximately 2,500 blind individuals who own such tape-players are now regularly reading books on standard tape. Only a few of the Regional Libraries for the Blind are now providing tape service. However, any eligible person who cannot obtain tape-recordings from his designated regional library is being served directly by the Library of Congress. Some localities in this country use smaller reels, slower

speeds, and four tracks, particularly in school programs, or for intra-agency use. They represent, however, special cases where compatible playback equipment is provided to relatively few persons by the agencies which issue their material recorded on that basis. In general, the national tape service which we offer resembles the tape programs of continental Europe.

Some of the disadvantages of magnetic tape can be overcome by the use of a tape cassette and suitable playback equipment. The British system was studied for possible use in this country on a national scale, but the Library of Congress felt that it did not provide all the features required in a program of the size and scope of our present talking-book service. Commercially available cassettes were also tested and were also found to be inadequate in terms of our national program of recorded books. A few years ago work was started on a special design to meet the special needs of our constantly growing service, and we now have units undergoing field tests which are encouraging.

Simply described, our cassette is roughly the size of an average printed book and will hold a book recording of more than twenty hours. It encloses a 5-inch reel of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch tape and a 5-inch take-up reel, one above the other. The tape will play at either 15/16 inches per second or at $1\frac{7}{8}$ inches per second, depending on the length of the book. The change in playing speed is automatic, being achieved by the cassette itself without any action on the part of the user. It is recorded on four tracks which can be played consecutively, or can be jumped at will by a turn of a switch, without touching the cassette. While being played, the cassette is locked into position so that it cannot be removed while the tape is against the playing head. Yet it can be stopped at any point and safely removed, enabling the reader to start a different book. The first cassette can then be placed back at any time and reading resumed without the loss of a single word and without hunting for the proper place in the text. The playback unit includes fast forward and fast reverse with the tape remaining against the playing head, so that indexing of chapter headings and even page numbers is practical. The unknown factors at this point are cost of the cassettes in large quantities, cost of the playback units in large quantities, and cost of duplication of tapes on the scale needed for a broad, national service.

A few minutes ago I stated my belief that magnetic tape will not completely replace discs in this country's talking-book program. I have been a librarian for a good many years, and I have seen new media or processes such as microfilm, microprint, multilith, and others add a wealth of information to libraries which was not possible before their widespread use. None of them have replaced the book, but all have, instead, found their rightful places and are making tremendous contributions. I am convinced that the virtues of a low cost disc played on a low-cost phonograph are particularly suited to materials of ephemeral interest, such as magazines. The presentation of short books, such as those for young children, can be more advantageous on discs. I feel confident that technology will continue to improve both the capacity and the performance of discs so that uses now considered im-

practical will be accepted as routine. The same, of course, will be true of magnetic tape. The two will complement each other so that, hopefully, when we speak of library service for blind persons we need not feel apologetic about the extent of available resources.

Braille and Talking Book Library Services

By **F. G. Tingen,** *Executive Director, Vereniging Het Nederlandse Blindenwezen, Amsterdam, Netherlands.*

It is not possible for me to compile a review from the information I have on hand of the state and the development of the talking book in several countries. I despatched enquiry lists to about forty countries; twenty-five lists were returned to me, more or less extensively filled out. Among the countries which did not send the required information there were some of which we know that the talking book has an important place there. Moreover, the received information turned out to entail difficulties when making comparisons. All that follows here therefore cannot be more than a rough impression. Nevertheless there are some main lines and problems to be described.

In nineteen of the twenty-five countries that gave information there are talking book libraries, whereas it is known that among the European countries that did not answer, there are three where good-running talking book libraries exist. So as to twenty-two countries we know for sure that the talking book is being used besides braille for providing blind people with reading. In most countries the talking book has already assumed large proportions. Only in the countries where the production of talking books started only a short time ago, this is not the case. With the exception of Ireland, which country is for the greater part depending on England as to reading material for the blind, in the five countries the work for the blind is still in such a primitive state of development that there are even hardly any braille book libraries or sometimes none at all. Further, it may be supposed that apart from the European countries mentioned above, just those countries which have not to mention anything positive, have abandoned answering.

The idea of putting a new medium at the disposal of the blind besides braille books, will certainly originate from the consideration that many blind people, especially those who get blind at an advanced age, either do not learn braille, or learn it so insufficiently that they cannot read braille books. This fact was undoubtedly the starting point when in the middle of the years 30, books were systematically recorded on slowly rotating gramophone records in the United States, England and some countries of the Commonwealth and in France. The term 'talking book', which got such a significant tenor since then, dates from those years.

The new medium soon turned out to satisfy a very strong need and it was to a large extent due to the fact that the Congress Library in the U.S. and the National Library in England took the new project under their protection, that innumerable blind people for whom literature had been unapproachable until then, could be supplied with books. It

stands to reason that this new development was watched with great interest in all cultural developed countries. However, the production of talking books of this kind (viz., on gramophone records) was so expensive that countries with a limited range as to the language could not use this medium. Even Germany, where the language together with Austria and the German speaking part of Switzerland covered a considerable territory, did not make use of gramophone records for talking books.

The situation changed when the development of magnetic tape was advanced in such a way that countries with a limited spread of the language could use tapes for providing the blind with books. From 1954 till 1962, thirteen countries started recording and distributing books on tapes, two countries are about to make a start now. Everywhere the talking book made its entry, it took the world of the blind by storm. People who had been deprived from reading since several years, became readers again. It has to be observed that not only non-braille-readers eagerly make use of the talking book. Many experienced braille readers alternately like to use both ways of reading. There are some causes for this fact, of which we mention: especially in the smaller European countries where the number of blind people is often very small, not only absolutely but also relatively, the issuing of periodicals in braille presents insurmountable difficulties. Magnetic tape means a solution for that problem, because the tape on which a magazine is recorded, can be used again for further issues. Of the twenty-five countries which gave information, there are nineteen where there are magazines in braille and thirteen countries have also magazines on tape. In six countries there were no magazines for the blind at all. There are talking magazines of all kinds and the patterns of the contents show a great resemblance in most countries. There are weeklies for general news, magazines especially treating with matters concerning the blind, professional journals (this is especially very important in the more developed countries, where blind people have their work among sighted colleagues); semi-scientific (for the general public) and hobby journals (e.g. for chess players), religious magazines, etc. In Denmark a talking newspaper is issued twice a week.

For students and to those who have an intellectual profession, the combination of braille and tape gives very favourable opportunities. Especially in the smaller countries, where the number of blind students working for the same examinations is very limited, it is a great advantage that the students can have recorded studying and documentary material for their own use, whereas institutions which are especially established for that purpose, also make available such material on tape. Moreover, there are courses on tape, often combined with reading in braille, which open up new possibilities for study and education for the blind.

We may certainly be rejoiced in this development. Nevertheless it raises a problem, to which we must pay attention. It is to be feared that especially those who get blind when they are grown-up already, may neglect braille, as a result of the possibilities the talking book offers them.

The question how the talking book influences the lending out of braille books, was answered as follows: seven countries stated that the use of braille is stationary; seven even mentioned an increase of the demand for braille books and five mentioned a decrease. In Sweden the demand for braille books even decreased by 50 per cent. since 1953, the year when in that country the distribution of talking books made a start. In this connection from Belgium the remark came that the number of braille readers is increasing, but that the number of braille books that was lent out is decreasing. An investigation in this field will probably indicate that this is the case in several countries, because of the fact (pointed out above) that a considerable part of the definite braille readers is spending part of the time they have available for reading, on listening to talking books and magazines. This fact may in a way reassure us, but nevertheless we are of the opinion that everything possible should be done, at least in those countries where written culture has become common property, to keep furthering the knowledge and application of braille type. We are namely of the opinion that braille has not lost anything of its importance in the blind person's striving after individual and social independence.

It goes without saying that the developments of techniques of sound recording, which is still going on, gives new problems every time. Especially in the U.S. and in Great Britain enormous capitals were invested in records for the talking book and in the reproducers used by the blind. This fact made it difficult for these countries to switch over to tapes when this medium indeed turned out to offer better possibilities. This switching over is meanwhile carried out gradually, although it is being done at a quicker rate during the last few years. The situation at the moment is that in the six countries which introduced the talking book on gramophone records about the year 1935, the tape-recorder and tape are also used now. However, a new problem is arising already. Most countries which started recording books on tapes about 1955, make use of apparatuses which can also be bought in the normal trade for listening. So these apparatuses dispose of recording as well as reproducing functions. A special reproducer for talking books was developed in England, This apparatus is adapted to reproducing only and differs from most tape-recorders used up to now in that way, that the tape is packed in a cassette. Whereas tapes for common tape-recorders have two or four tracks, the cassette for the English reproducer has an 18-track tape. This British standard cassette system undeniably has some advantages. The reproducer is very easily to be handled. With one motion of the hand the cassette is placed on the apparatus. With the common tape-recorder the tapes may easily be damaged, but this is practically out of the question with the new system.

However, there are also disadvantages, which should be taken into consideration. The possibility of making records for yourself, which is as we saw above, very important for the blind students and workers, is falling out. In those countries where people have been using conventional tape-recorders for a considerable time, many blind persons who really are frequent readers of the talking book, turned out also to

appreciate very much the further possibilities the tape-recorder offers in connection with spending their spare time. In England and perhaps also in the U.S. there may be a tendency to underestimate this fact, because historically people are accustomed there to a kind of talking book which can only be listened to by means of a special reproducer. In other countries where the blind learned to know and appreciate the possibilities a completely functioning tape-recorder can offer them, the situation will certainly be different. Neither can it be denied that the possibilities for spending their spare time for blind people are much more limited than for seeing persons, so that it may be considered an advantage that this fact is met with together with the supply of talking books. The possibility to take a course on tape not specially meant for the blind is also eliminated when the blind are exclusively assigned to an apparatus which is only meant for reproducing talking books. The same goes for correspondence on tape, nationally and internationally, also with sighted people.

Let us suppose for a moment that the development of the talking book should go into the direction of the cassette system with special reproducer. Then it would be a curious freak of history that the countries which are adapted to the conventional tape recorder, are then meeting with the same problems as the countries which had to switch over from the gramophone records to tape. What that would mean can be illustrated by a single example. In Holland more than 3,500 tape-recorders are distributed among the blind. These represent a value of about Hfl. 1,500.00. We cannot value the capital which is invested in tapes, but we know that one library spent an amount of Hfl, 150,000 the other day for the purchase of a new copying apparatus, of course for the reproduction of conventional tapes. It is clear that under these circumstances serious practical objections stand in the way of changing the system, apart from the principal question we mentioned above, viz. if it would be advisable at all to take away from the listeners to the talking book all advantages which the present system offers.

Finally a word about finances.

It is not possible to give exact figures about the numbers of libraries in the twenty-five countries. The reason is that some reporters could not mention all libraries of little importance and further a central library with departments in various places is sometimes mentioned as a whole, whereas in other cases all institutions which play a part in lending out braille and talking books, are considered a library. Under this restriction we can estimate that there are 232 braille and 98 talking book libraries in the twenty-five countries which gave information. Of these 98 talking book libraries 80 may be considered departments of the braille libraries.

The question how many libraries are governmental and how many private, cannot be answered precisely. This is due to the fact that the words 'private institution' are differently interpreted in various countries. When asking this question we presumed that there are only two categories, namely governmental and private institutions and that libraries which are controlled by the blind organizations are 'private'.

Yugoslavia, however, answered that libraries in that country are conducted by the Yugoslavian League for the Blind, that these libraries are not private, but are social institutions and that they are organizations of the State. This difference of interpretation means that the question regarding the number of libraries which is in some way subsidized by some governmental authority, cannot be answered precisely. It is namely possible that there are libraries which are not directly subsidized but are managed by the organizations for the blind which do receive a governmental subsidy.

So we have to make a reservation again when saying that 86 libraries of the total number of 250 are directly managed by the government or governmental instances and that there are 164 private institutions in the sense I had in mind when asking the question. At any rate there are 87 of these private institutions which are receiving governmental subsidy to a more or less important extent.

The way and extent of subsidizing is very variable from country to country. It varies from 100 per cent. to a very small contribution. The complaint that governmental subsidy is unsufficient and that the libraries have to spend heavily, is often heard. It is certain that there are still countries where nothing whatever is done in this field by the government.

Summarizing, we think that we can draw the following conclusions:

1. Besides braille the talking book is very valuable for the blind and it should be stimulated as much as possible by or with the aid of the Governments.

2. The quickly increasing demand for talking books should not lead to underestimation and neglect of braille and tuition of braille to blind adults should be promoted by all available means.

3. When making a choice between the system of the open 2- and 4-track tape and the cassette system with multi-track tape the pros and cons of both systems should be considered seriously and further it should be examined if and to what extent the interchangeability of talking books which are or will be taken up in the libraries for the blind everywhere in the world, can be promoted.

4. The World Council for the Welfare of the Blind should consider one of its tasks in co-operation with the member countries to promote the accomplishment or the improvement of governmental subsidization for providing the blind and the weak-sighted with reading-matter.

TWELFTH SESSION **Monday morning, August 10th, 1964.**

BUSINESS SESSION

Chairman: **Colonel E. A. Baker,** *President, W.C.W.B.*

Report of the Budget and Planning Committee (Finance Committee)

By **Henri Amblard,** *Treasurer*

The Budget and Planning Committee made its report to the 1964 World Assembly and recommended the following budget for the next five-year period:

Income at $13,000 per year	$65,000
Unmet liabilities	9,000
Total expected income	$56,000
Back dues anticipated	1,800
Total assets	$57,000
Estimated expenses	$71,000
Total estimated deficit	$13,200

The estimated expenses are made up as follows:

Staff salaries and Secretariat expenses	$30,000
Secretary-General's office and travelling expenses	4,000
Committees (at $3,000 p.a.)	15,000
I.C.E.B.Y. at ($400 p.a.)	2,000
Meetings of the Executive Committee	20,000
	$71,000

Three ways of reducing the estimated deficit were suggested by the Committee, which favoured the third solution:

1. To reduce activities.
2. To increase membership dues.
3. To ask various associate members to pay $500.

The Treasurer reminded the Assembly that our reserves of $4,000 in Paris and $12,000 in New York had not been touched, and suggested that as a last expedient we could use these reserves to meet the deficit.

The report was then moved and formally adopted by the General Assembly.

Constitutional Amendments

The Assembly then proceeded to discuss proposals for constitutional amendments. MR. COLLIGAN moved, and MR. MACKENZIE seconded, the adoption of the 1964 draft Constitution as circulated by the Secretary-General, which incorporated the amendments adopted at the 1962 meeting of the Executive Committee, in Hanover. This was carried unanimously.

The Assembly then discussed and adopted the following additional amendments to the 1964 draft Constitutions with certain minor modifications.

ARTICLE III, *Section 1.*

The term 'honorary members' to read 'honorary life members' throughout this section and elsewhere in the Constitution.

ARTICLE III, *Section 2—Representative Members.*

After the word 'Council' in line 2, add the following:

'always providing that their nomination shall be supported by resolution of their national nominating body and that this must be in the hands of the Secretary-General at least three months prior to the General Assembly. Except in the case of illness or other unavoidable cause, delegates shall consist of those persons on the Secretary-General's membership list.'

After the words 'representative members' in line 8, add the following:

'Where in any country there exists a substantial group of blind persons organized into associations and where there are blind persons occupying leading positions in agencies for the blind, adequate provision should be made for their representation in the national delegation.'

The final sentence of the first paragraph to be amended to read:

'All Representative Members should hold or have held responsible positions in the direction or administration of recognized organisations of or for the blind.'

ARTICLE III, *Section 3—Associate Members.*

This section to be amended to read:

'Upon payment of an annual membership fee of fifty dollars ($50.00) in the currency of the United States or the equivalent of such amount in French francs, any person or organization may be admitted by the Executive Committee to be an Associate Member of the Council. Individuals who are Associate Members may become Representative Members if so nominated by their respective countries and may be eligible to serve as non-voting members of the Council's committees other than the Executive Committee.'

ARTICLE IV, *Section 1— The General Assembly—Composition.*

Delete the last sentence of this article and replace by the following:

'The General Assembly shall normally meet at intervals of five years but may meet at greater or lesser intervals of time if it so desires.'

ARTICLE V, *Section 1—The Executive Committee—Composition.*

Delete lines 5-14 and replace by the following:

'seven (7) representative members from European countries, five (5) from North and Central America, two (2) from South America, five (5) from the South and East Asia area, two (2) from the Middle East area, one (1) from Oceania, three (3) from Africa and such other individual members up to a maximum of three (3) in number as may be elected by the General Assembly, also the Chairmen of all Consultative Committees, also the President, Hon. Treasurer and Secretary-General, who shall be *ex-officio* members. They shall not hold territorial status during their terms of office and their seats as Representative Members shall during such time be available to other persons elected to the General Assembly by the countries concerned.'

The first sentence of paragraph 3 of this section to be amended to read:

'The representatives of member countries of each specified area shall be responsible for designating the individuals to represent them on the Executive Committee.'

The last sentence of paragraph 4 to end with the words:

'shall be responsible for naming a substitute.'

The two sentences in the final paragraph of this section to be amended to read:

'In the event of a vacancy occurring through death, resignation or other cause of a member. . . .'

'In the event of a vacancy occurring through death, resignation or other cause of any other member. . . .'

ARTICLE V, *Section 2—Function.*

The last paragraph of this section to be amended to read:

'Between meetings of the General Assembly questions which in the judgment of the Executive Committee lie outside the powers committed to it may be decided by letter ballot of all Representative and Honorary Life Members.'

ARTICLE VI—*Officers.*

Delete lines 3-7 of the second paragraph of sub-section (a) and replace by the following:

'The President, Secretary-General and Treasurer during their terms of office shall not hold territorial status and their seats as elected

representative members of the Executive Committee during such time as they shall serve as President, Secretary-General and Treasurer, shall be available to other persons elected to the General Assembly by the country or countries concerned.'

Amend the last sentence of sub-section (b) to read as follows:

'The President shall hold office for one term of five years. He must thereafter be succeeded by a member of another national delegation, following which he will become eligible for re-election.'

ARTICLE VII—*Committees.*

This article to be amended to read as follows:

'The World Braille Council, the International Conference of Educators of Blind Youth, and any other international organization which may be designated for that purpose by the Assembly, shall have the status of Consultative Committees of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. The Executive Committee may appoint a Finance Committee from its members to carry out specific financial duties, and any other Committee as it deems necessary to carry out such duties as it may delegate to them. The Executive Committee is responsible for the selection of members of these committees. Committees other than the Finance Committee may, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee, co-opt any persons who may be of help to them in discharging the duties delegated to them.'

ARTICLE VIII, *Section 2—Membership Fees.*

The first paragraph of this section to be amended to read as follows:

'The membership fee shall be two hundred dollars ($200) annually for each country having a general population less than twenty million; four hundred dollars ($400) annually for countries having a general population between twenty million and forty million; six hundred dollars ($600) annually for countries having a general population exceeding forty million. In each instance, the equivalent amount may be paid in French francs. Membership fees shall be payable on the first day of January of each year. Members whose annual fee has not been paid within six months after the beginning of the financial year may be declared by the Executive Committee to have forfeited membership.

The second paragraph of this section to read:

'Savings made on the annual budget shall constitute a reserve fund which shall be banked and/or invested.'

ARTICLE IX, *Section 2—Dissolution of the Council.*

The final sentence of this section to be amended to read:

'In the event of dissolution, any funds or other assets owned by the Council shall be liquidated in accordance with recognized legal procedure.'

The present text of the W.C.W.B. Constitution, after incorporation of all adopted amendments, now reads as follows:

CONSTITUTION

of

THE WORLD COUNCIL FOR THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND

(*Revised, New York Assembly, 1964*)

ARTICLE I

NAME AND LOCATION

Section 1. **Name.** Under the name of the WORLD COUNCIL FOR THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND (ORGANISATION MONDIALE POUR LA PROTECTION SOCIALE DES AVEUGLES) an association is hereby formed in accordance with the law of 1st July, 1901, between the representatives of organizations of and for the blind.

Section 2. **Location.** The Headquarters of the Council shall be located in Paris, France, at 14 rue Daru. It may be transferred by decision of the Executive Committee to any location in the Seine Department.

Section 3. **Duration.** Its duration shall be unlimited.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSES

The purposes of the Council shall be to work for the welfare of the blind and the prevention of blindness throughout the world by providing the means of consultation between organizations of and for the blind in different countries, and by the creation of co-ordinating bodies where necessary, and for joint action wherever possible towards the introduction of minimum standards for the welfare of the blind in all parts of the world and the improvement of such standards.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. **Classes.** Membership of the Council shall be open to nationals of all countries of the world and shall consist of:

(*a*) Representative members,
(*b*) Associate members, and
(*c*) Honorary life members.

Section 2. **Representative Members.** Representative members shall be those members nominated by each country participating in the Council, always providing that their nominations shall be supported by resolution of their national nominating body and that these must be in the hands of the Secretary-General at least three months prior to the General Assembly. Except in the case of illness or other emergency, delegates to the General Assembly shall consist of those persons whose

names appear on the Secretary-General's list three months prior to the opening of the General Assembly. Countries having a general population of less than twenty million shall be entitled to name two Representative Members. Countries with a general population between twenty million and forty million shall be entitled to name four Representative Members. Countries with a population exceeding forty million shall be entitled to name six Representative Members. Where in any country there exists a substantial group of blind persons organized into associations and where there are blind persons occupying leading positions in agencies for the blind, adequate provision should be made for their representation in the national delegation. Countries having non-self-governing territories under their administration should, wherever possible, arrange for the views of such territories to be expressed by their Representative Members. In the event of a country being unable to agree on the nomination of any Representative Member or Members, the Executive Committee has power to invite such person or persons from within the country concerned as it considers best qualified to represent that country's interests. All Representative Members should hold or have held responsible positions in the direction or administration of recognized organizations of or for the blind.

Providing the terms of this article are complied with, any individual whose permanent residence and professional employment is located within a member country shall be eligible to serve as a Representative Member of that country's delegation regardless of the nationality of such individual.

Section 3. **Associate Members.** Upon payment of an annual membership fee of fifty dollars ($50) in the currency of the United States or the equivalent of such amount in French francs, any person or organization may be admitted by the Executive Committee to be an Associate Member of the Council and may be eligible to serve on its committees other than the Executive Committee as non-voting members. Individuals who are Asssociate Members may become Representative Members if so nominated by their respective countries.

Section 4. **Honorary Life Members.** Any person proposed by the Representative Members of any country as having rendered outstanding services to the Welfare of the Blind in any part of the world may, with the approval of the General Assembly, be elected an Honorary Life Member of the Council. The reasons for such election shall be fully stated at the time of election.

ARTICLE IV

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Section 1. **Composition.** The Representative, Associate and Honorary Life Members shall constitute the General Assembly, which shall be convened by summons posted in Paris not less than two months before the date of meeting. In the event of any participating country being unable to send a representative entitled to vote at the meeting it may

give its proxy or proxies to a representative of any other country within its geographical region. Any country which is entitled to send more than one Representative Member may authorize one of its representatives who attends to exercise a proxy on behalf of each representative who is absent. Notice of such proxy must be given in writing addressed to the Secretary-General before the meeting of the General Assembly at which it will be exercised. The General Assembly shall normally meet at intervals of five years but may meet at greater or lesser intervals of time if it so desires.

Section 2. **Function.** The General Assembly will determine the general policies to be adopted by the Council towards achieving its purposes and shall elect the Executive Committee as provided for in Article V, Section 1, of this Constitution. The General Assembly shall also consider all recommendations put forward by the Executive Committee, receive the report of the work of the Executive Committee and the Treasurer's accounts, and approve them. It shall vote on the budget and appoint the officers of the Council.

Section 3. **Voting.**

(a) Only Representative and Honorary Life Members are eligible to vote at meetings of the General Assembly, but Associate Members may participate in the discussions in a consultative capacity.

(b) All questions shall be decided by the majority of those Representative and Honorary Life Members voting, whether present or by proxy, with the exception of amendments to the Constitution.

(c) Voting may be viva voce, by show of hands, or by ballot, which may be secret, as may be decided at any meeting. Between meetings of the General Assembly questions which in the judgment of the Executive Committee lie outside the powers committed to it may be decided by letter ballot of all members of the Assembly.

Section 4. **Assemblies.** Assembly meetings shall be ordinary or extraordinary.

Extraordinary meetings of the Assembly may be convened by the President in exceptional circumstances. When attending meetings of the General Assembly, delegates will be responsible for their own travel and maintenance expenses.

ARTICLE V

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. **Composition.** Until otherwise determined by the requisite majority of the General Assembly there shall be an Executive Committee elected to serve from the conclusion of one General Assembly until the conclusion of the next General Assembly. The Executive Committee shall consist of seven (7) representative members from European countries, five (5) from North and Central America, five (5) from the East and South East Asia area, two (2) from South America,

two (2) from the Middle East area, one (1) from Oceania, three (3) from Africa, and such other individuals up to a maximum of three (3) in number as may be elected by the General Assembly, also the Chairmen of all Consultative Committees; also the President, the Secretary-General and the Treasurer who shall not hold territorial status during their respective terms of office, and whose seats as Representative Members shall during such time be available to other persons elected to the General Assembly by the countries concerned.

At any meeting of the Executive Committee a majority of the elected members shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting business.

The representatives of member countries of each specified area shall be responsible for designating the individuals to represent them on the Executive Committee. All members of the Executive Committee shall be eligible for re-election.

Should a member of the Executive Committee serving as an elected representative of a regional area be prevented by good cause from attending any meeting of the Committee, the representatives of the member countries of that area shall be responsible for naming a substitute. A substitute member acting for a member who is unable to attend any meeting shall have full speaking and voting rights during that meeting.

In the event of a vacancy occurring through the death, resignation or other cause of a member of the Executive Committee serving as an elected representative of a regional area, the representative membership of that regional area shall be requested to elect a replacement to serve until the next General Assembly. In the event of a vacancy occurring through the death, resignation or other cause, of any other member, the Executive Committee shall have power to name a replacement, provided that the person so named shall be in good standing with his own association. Provided his election is agreeable to his national delegation a substitute shall enjoy exactly the same rights as those held by the person he replaces.

Section 2. **Function.** The Committee shall have power of decision and be directly responsible to the General Assembly for interpreting and carrying out in detail the general policies agreed upon by the Assembly for the administration, management and control of the property and affairs of the Council.

The Executive Committee shall have the widest powers to do and authorize any action not specifically reserved for the General Assembly. It shall supervise the administration of the Officers of the Council and has the right at all times to ask for an account of their actions.

Meetings of the Executive Committee of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind shall be held concurrently with meetings of the General Assembly, with one further meeting being held at a time to be selected between the General Assembly meetings.

The World Council for the Welfare of the Blind shall be responsible for the maintenance costs of members of the Executive Committee and

the guides of blind members, attending interim meetings between General Assemblies. The W.C.W.B. shall likewise be responsible for the travel costs of members of the Executive Committee, as well as for the travel costs of guides of blind members either in whole or in part, provided that such assistance towards travel costs of guides shall not be less than 50 per cent.

The President shall have power, if he deems it necessary, to ask for decisions on specific matters by postal vote of all members of the Committee.

Between meetings of the General Assembly questions which in the judgment of the Executive Committee lie outside the powers committed to it may be decided by letter ballot of all Representative and Honorary Life members.

Section 3. **Voting.** All questions shall be decided by the vote of the majority of those voting.

ARTICLE VI

OFFICERS

(a) Officers of the Council shall be elected by the General Assembly from among those already elected to the Executive Committee. The officers shall serve from the conclusion of one General Assembly until the conclusion of the next.

They shall consist of a President, not more than five (5) Vice-Presidents, a Secretary-General and a Treasurer. The President, Secretary-General and Treasurer during their terms of office shall not hold territorial status, and their seats as elected Representative Members of the Executive Committee during such time as they shall serve as President, Secretary-General and Treasurer shall be available to other persons elected to the General Assembly by the country or countries concerned.

(b) The President shall preside over meetings of the General Assembly and Executive Committee and shall represent the Organization in all civil actions. The President shall hold office for a period of one term and must thereafter be suceeded by a member of another national delegation following which he will become eligible for re-election.

(c) The Vice-Presidents shall perform such duties as may be assigned to them by the Executive Committee and those delegated to them by the President. Any one of them may preside over meetings of the General Assembly and Executive Committee in the absence of the President.

(d) The Secretary and the Treasurer shall perform, under the direction of the Executive Committee, the duties properly appertaining to those offices.

ARTICLE VII

COMMITTEES

The World Braille Council, the International Conference of Educators of Blind Youth, and any other international organization which may be designated for that purpose by the Assembly, shall have the status of Consultative Committees of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. The Executive Committee may appoint a Finance Committee from its members to carry out specific financial duties, and any other Committees as it deems necessary to carry out such duties as it may delegate to them. The Executive Committee is responsible for the selection of members of these committees. Committees other than the Finance Committee may, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee, co-opt any persons who may be of help to them in discharging the duties delegated to them.

ARTICLE VIII

FINANCE

Section 1. **Financial Year.** The financial year of the Council shall coincide with the calendar year.

Section 2. **Membership Fees.** The membership fee shall be two hundred dollars ($200) annually for each country having a general population less than twenty million; four hundred dollars ($400) annually for countries having a general population between twenty million and forty million; six hundred dollars ($600) annually for countries having a general population exceeding forty million. In each instance, the equivalent amount may be paid in French francs. Membership fees shall be payable on the first day of January of each year. Members whose annual fee has not been paid within six months after the beginning of the financial year may be declared by the Executive Committee to have forfeited membership.

Savings made on the annual budget shall constitute a reserve fund which shall be banked and/or invested.

Section 3. **Expenses.** It shall be the duty of the Executive Committee at all times to keep the expenses of the Council strictly within the income thereof. If, by reason of deficit in the anticipated income or for any other cause, the income is insufficient for work in hand or contemplated, the Executive Committee shall have power to raise additional funds by any legitimate means after consulting and with the approval of the representative membership of the country or countries in which such fund raising activity is to take place.

Section 4. **Records.**

(a) The Executive Committee shall cause proper accounts to be kept. Account books and all Council documents shall be held at the office of the Council.

(b) The accounts of the Council shall be examined and audited each year by qualified auditors. A statement showing the financial position of the Council shall be published, and a copy sent to each Representative Member within six months after the end of the financial year.

ARTICLE IX

AMENDMENTS

Section 1. This Constitution may be amended at any meeting of the General Assembly, or, if in the opinion of the Executive Committee urgent action is necessary, by a postal vote of all members of the General Assembly, provided always that not fewer than two-thirds of the members who vote on the matter are in favour of the proposed amendment or amendments. The Executive Committee shall place before the General Assembly or take a postal vote on any amendment proposed in writing by five or more representative members of the Council. The exact text of the amendment or amendments proposed shall be placed before the General Assembly or members of the Council entitled to vote thereon. Any proposal for a constitutional amendment must be in the hands of the Secretary-General three months before the opening of any Assembly.

Section 2. **Dissolution of the Council.** If at any time a dissolution of the Council should prove necessary or desirable, proceedings therefor shall be taken in the same manner as provided in Section I of this article, except that such proceedings may not be initiated upon the request of any five or more members of the Council, but only on the recommendation of the Executive Committee. In the event of dissolution, any funds or other assets owned by the Council shall be liquidated in accordance with recognized legal procedure.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 64-1—Asian Plan

Having heard from the Standing Committee on Far East, South, and South-East Asian Affairs, the General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, meeting in New York, in August, 1964

1. Expresses its profound gratitude for the extensive assistance rendered, during recent years, to governments by the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies towards the development of more adequate services for the education, rehabilitation and employment of the handicapped, including the blind.

2. Appreciates the opportunities that have been extended to this Council for consultation and advice in the planning and implementation of activities relating to rehabilitation of the blind within the co-ordinated programme for the handicapped.

3. Expresses the hope that the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies will maintain their active interest in and support of programmes in all countries designed to bring greater opportunities for the handicapped, including the blind.

4. Recommends that, wherever possible, the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies should encourage the development of well-conceived regional programmes within the accepted geographical areas of the world, with a view to the more rapid development of such opportunities for the handicapped, including the blind.

5. Draws the attention of the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Rehabilitation of the Handicapped to the Asian Plan for the Blind unanimously adopted by the Second Asian Conference on Work for the Blind, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in May, 1963, with the representation of Asian Governments, non-governmental organizations and representatives of certain specialized agencies.

6. Urges the Inter-Agency Committee on Rehabilitation of the Handicapped, and its component agencies, to take all appropriate action to encourage governments and appropriate national non-governmental organizations in Asia to take early steps for the implementation of the Asian Plan for the Blind, and

7. Requests the United Nations and its specialized Agencies to extend all possible advisory and supportive services to governments requesting such assistance towards the early achievement of the goals outlined in the Asian Plan for the Blind.

Resolution 64-2—Latin American Plan

The General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, meeting in New York, in August, 1964, wishes to submit, through appropriate channels, to the Government of the United States and the Governments of Central and South American countries, an earnest request for serious attention to the following matters:

1. The Alliance for Progress is a hemispheric plan for the improvement of social and economic conditions in Central and South American countries, and there is no group in these nations more in need of social and economic improvement than the blind.

2. The Governments of Central and South American countries recognize the need of improving programmes for the welfare of their blind citizens and are independently seeking to bring about such improvement.

3. It is therefore appropriate and of the utmost importance that the Alliance for Progress and the independent efforts of the Central and South American Governments should co-ordinate and extend their mutual efforts to bring about improvement in the economic well-being and educational, rehabilitative, and employment opportunities of the blind men, women and children of Central and South America.

4. A first step would be to gain official sponsorship for the organization of an over-all hemispheric plan after the model of the Asian Plan.

Resolution 64-3—African Plan

The General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, meeting in New York, in August, 1964, believes that it is useful to approach the solution to the problems of blindness on a basis of the geographical regions of the world. Accordingly, in addition to an Asian Plan and a Latin-American Plan, it is feasible and desirable to foster and stimulate work looking to an African Plan. Such a Plan should include prevention of preventable blindness; relief of the distresses of poverty among the blind; provision for their education orientation and rehabilitation; opening up of channels for remunerative employment; and instituting programmes for the special care of the aged blind.

The Assembly directs the Executive Committee and Officers of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind to take such steps as they find appropriate and possible in these premises to carry out the principles of this resolution.

Resolution 64-4—The Rural Blind

The 1964 General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, recognizing the magnitude of the problems of education, rehabilitation and economic resettlement of the ten million rural blind of the world; and, recognizing the absence or inadequacy of existing facilities and the very meagre financial resources available for planning and executing short-term and long-term programmes for the rural blind; and, further recognizing that a gigantic effort on a very massive scale alone can ensure progress for this colossal number of rural blind in the foreseeable future, resolves that

1. A world-wide massive drive should be launched to make the magnitude of the problem better known and appreciated in all countries having rural blind populations, and programmes evolved for the education, resettlement and welfare of the rural blind.

2. Specialized Agencies of the United Nations, governments of all countries and all national and international voluntary agencies working for the welfare of the blind should be urged to plan for the training and resettlement of the rural blind in the rural areas, and, with this object in view, to set up model rehabilitation projects covering all aspects of training, rehabilitation and resettlement for all age groups of the blind, and make substantial funds liberally available for this purpose.

3. Short-term and long-term rural programmes should be introduced in all countries having a predominantly rural economy, and each such country should have at least one well-planned centre for training in agriculture and allied pursuits.

4. Every effort should be made by governments to allot suitable plots of land to the landless blind, and to make available adequate financial aid to help the blind to be successfully resettled economically.

5. Where possible, an integrated approach should be made, and training should be imparted in the normal institutions obtaining in the rural areas.

6. Greatest possible emphasis should be placed on sound training and in research in locating all avenues of rural employment, resettlement, and follow-up; and programmes should be instituted for the training of blind women, particularly in domestic science, care of children, cooking, laundry, and other household duties, and in agricultural and allied pursuits.

Resolution 64-5—Prevention of Blindness

Recognizing that much of the world's blindness is preventable and that, without decisive action, the number of blind people will continue

to increase with the increasing world population generally, the 1964 General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind Resolves

1. That W.H.O. and UNICEF, in association with appropriate non-governmental agencies, be urged to continue and intensify the inspiring effort they have made in recent years to draw international attention to the facts about blindness and its prevention and to take every opportunity to promote international programmes for the control of major eye diseases.

2. That in areas where trachoma and river blindness (onchocerciasis) are major problems, governments should be urged to take the action which is now in their power to control these scourges.

3. That F.A.O. and the organizations concerned with famine relief and with the promotion of the Development Decade should be asked to take note of the fact that blindness among young children is one of the major health problems associated with malnutrition and should take urgent action to relieve this problem within those general programmes of famine control and improved food production and distribution.

4. That W.C.W.B., in co-operation with the International Association for the Prevention of Blindness, should review the adequacy of arrangements for the training of eye specialists and should publish a report with recommendations on this subject; it is also desirable that W.C.W.B. should maintain closer contact with eye-banks throughout the world.

5. That in countries where the extent and causes of blindness have not been thoroughly investigated, governments, in association with appropriate national voluntary organizations and with international aid where necessary, should be encouraged to promote effective surveys using an acceptable definition of blindness for that purpose.

6. That a close relationship should be established between the W.C.W.B. Prevention of Blindness Committee and the International Association for the Prevention of Blindness, and that national agencies and organizations for and of the blind should be requested to take an active interest in the prevention of blindness in their own countries, and, where necessary, seek new constitutional authority for this purpose.

Resolution 64-6—Integration of the Blind into the Community

The General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind meeting in New York in August, 1964.

The objective of all public and private programmes for the blind should be in so far as possible, to integrate blind persons into the normal

life of the community. To do this, at least the following steps should be taken

1. All blind persons should have an opportunity, through orientation, rehabilitation and general education, fully to develop their abilities and to realize the best that is in them.

2. It is important to inform blind people of the facilities available to them related to this over-all purpose, and to encourage them to make full use of such facilities.

3. Those interested in the welfare of the blind, and particularly administrators of programmes for the blind should, of course, assist in finding employment opportunities for blind persons who are professionally qualified. At the same time, due emphasis must be given to the fact that the overwhelming need is to find competitive employment opportunities in public services and in the industrial, agricultural and workaday world for the vast majority of blind people during their productive years of life.

4. The family of the blind person plays an important role in his life and, therefore, in his rehabilitation and integration. Accordingly, services should be made available to the family to assist its members in understanding the problems of blindness and in helping to elevate and/or restore the blind member to his rightful place in the family and in the community.

5. Many of the problems of the blind arise out of misconceptions of the sighted world about blindness. Accordingly, programmes should be instituted and steadily maintained to correct these misconceptions, thus enabling blind people to take their rightful place in the family, in employment, and in the community as normal and accepted persons.

Resolution 64-7—The Aged Blind

The General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, meeting in New York, in August, 1964, draws attention to the increasing population of blind persons who fall in the older age groups, and urges that special and immediate attention be given by member nations, and particularly by the Regional Committees of W.C.W.B., to their needs for adequate food, shelter, medical attention, recreation, and companionship.

Resolution 64-8—The Blind with other Disabilities

The 1964 General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind recommends that

1. The rehabilitation and training of blind persons with other disabilities should be undertaken at regular centres serving blind

persons without additional disabilities, special studies being made of the additional disabilities in relation to individual needs.

2. Self-reliance and independence and full utilization of the residual potential of the individual should be the aim to enable multiple-handicapped blind persons to take their part in the life of the community.

3. Selection of an occupation should depend upon the aptitude of the individual and the aids that can be provided. In any country where prosthetic aids are being developed for sighted disabled persons, research should be undertaken to ascertain if such aids can be of help to those who are blind and have similar additional disabilities.

Resolution 64-9—Employment Opportunities

The 1964 General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind asks

1. That the public authorities of the different nations help the blind to acquire normal professional activity, by organizing training centres, granting scholarships to pupils and students, instituting loans for equipment and settlement of craftsmen and shopkeepers as well as those who have a profession, and providing opportunities for remunerative jobs of all kinds.

2. That there be developed for those blind people who cannot achieve a normal output, sheltered workshops, granting a remuneration at least equal to that of a sighted worker of the same category.

3. That a systematic search be made for new activities accessible to blind people, and the best be made of those already in existence but not now used in some countries, such as physiotherapy which has proved to be successful in a number of countries.

Resolution 64-10—Exhibits of Aids and Appliances

The Programme Committee of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind is directed to arrange for an exhibit at the next meeting of the the General Assembly of aids and appliances which are designed to make social and occupational life easier for the blind. All member countries are invited to participate in the exhibit.

Resolution 64-11—Use of Spanish

In view of the number of Spanish-speaking persons at this 1964 Meeting of the General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, and the likely increase of Spanish-speaking representatives

in the future, it is agreed that Spanish shall be adopted as an official language of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, to be used at its meeting and in its documents.

(Passed to Finance Committee for decision)

Resolution 64-12—World Blind Welfare Week

Whereas, the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind recognizes that it has responsibility to help develop a better understanding of blind people throughout the world, and

Whereas, in the course of deliberations of the 1964 General Assembly in New York several references have been made, in papers submitted and consequent discussions, to the need for wider and more effective dissemination of information directly and indirectly concerning the welfare of blind people; and

Whereas, the possibilities of a global approach to this important matter are recognized by the delegates;

The World Council for the Welfare of the Blind now agrees to organize a programme of public information throughout the world during one week of each year, and that that week shall be known as 'World Blind Welfare Week'.

Resolution 64-13—Braille Notation

The 1964 General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, having heard the report sent by Sir Clutha Mackenzie, Chairman of the World Braille Council, applauds the work accomplished through the generous efforts of Sir Clutha and his Committee, which has as its purpose the realization of a universal Braille system.

1. Total agreement, however, not yet having been reached as to the Braille Music Notation as developed by the Paris Conference on Music of the World Braille Council in 1954, the World Braille Council is asked to appoint a committee of a few experts on Western Music to work further towards the objective of a universally acceptable system of World Braille Music Notation for Western Music.

2. The General Assembly also asks that a similar Committee be appointed to evolve a world-wide Mathematical Notation.

3. The General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind asks further that the World Braille Council consider and report upon problems of the availability and use of Braille in the underdeveloped and emerging countries. Special attention should be paid to problems arising out of the cost and unavailability of

facilities for the production of Braille in such countries, the problems of multilingual patterns in such countries and the problems arising out of the reading or non-reading habits of the adult populations, as well as instruction in the schools.

Resolution 64-14—Exchange Programmes

The 1964 General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind instructs the Executive Committee to do what it can to obtain financial support from foundations, corporations, etc., whereby leaders in the fields of blind welfare and the prevention of blindness from developing countries may visit developed countries and in turn, be visited by experts from such developed countries. In this way, knowledge of the problems of these countries may be better assessed and remedies on a practical basis be evolved.

It is further requested that the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind should, as a matter of urgency, establish a pool of experts in various fields (administration, education, technology, etc.) from which member countries can draw for their development programmes.

It is also resolved that the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind should establish an Information Bureau at its official headquarters for purposes of disseminating information to member countries, organizations of and for the blind, and individuals, concerning matters relating to blind welfare.

Resolution 64-15—Lions and other Civic Clubs

The 1964 General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind wishes to place itself on record as expressing its appreciation for the valuable work done by Lions International, Rotary and and other service organizations in distributing Braille Equipment and Appliances to the blind people of the world. We ask that the Executive Committee of W.C.W.B. communicate our gratitude to Lions International and Rotary, and to express the hope that they will find it possible to expand their services to the blind and to carry them out on a wider basis. Such communication should also be conveyed to other civic and service organizations active in the field of work for the blind.

Resolution 64-16—Organizations of the Blind

Based on the proposition that those who experience blindness are likely to understand its problems and to be able to suggest methods of overcoming them, organizations of the blind have been created and now exist in many nations of the world. Such organizations generally make a significant contribution to the well being of their members and to the improvement of programmes for the blind. Accordingly, the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind adopts a policy of encouraging the development of independent organizations of the blind.

Resolution 64-17—Financial Assistance

The attention of member nations and of all other nations is called to the urgency of providing financial assistance to blind persons in need thereof.

Programmes of financial assistance should be addressed to the over-all objectives of dignity, of economic independence and social interdependence as well as of meeting the elementary needs of subsistence and health. The items of need and the standard of assistance should commensurate with the habits of life and the social and economic patterns of the community.

In the achievement and implementation of this over-all objective the following general principles should be given recognition :

1. The financial assistance to the individual should be sufficient to cover (a) common human needs for food, clothing, shelter, medical assistance and family life; (b) needs common to all members of the group arising out of or relating to blindness including additional expenses incurred in daily living and technical aids and appliances developed for the use of blind persons; (c) the additional special needs of individuals.
2. The amount of financial assistance to the individual under categories 1 (a) and 1 (b) should be a specified minimum determined on a basis of group needs rather than on a basis of individual needs. The amount of assistance in category 1 (c) should be individually determined on the basis of the special needs of the individual.
3. Under the plan of financial assistance, blind persons should be helped out of distress and not merely in it. Accordingly, pauperization should not be a condition of the grant. Eligible persons should be allowed to retain resources and income useful in the process of rehabilitation gaining self-support. The plan of financial assistance should be adapted to rehabilitation and employment, incentives to self-care and self-support. This should be done through the provision of incentives, such as permitting the recipient to retain some of the rewards of effort and activity, rather than through the use of compulsion, reduction of the grant, or increasing hardships.
4. A self-reliant spirit and independent activity should be encouraged by preserving to the individual freedom in the management of his own affairs including living arrangements, choice of consumption items, occupational objectives and leisure-time activities.
5. The conditions of eligibility and the terms of administration of financial aid should be clearly specified in the basic legislation so that administrators, social workers and recipients may know their rights, duties, and relationships.
6. Blindness is a distinct disability, different in its nature and in its social consequences from other physical disabilities, from old age,

or from the condition of dependent children. Just as the substantive provisions of the financial aid plan should take account of this fact, so should the administration. To the extent feasible, persons should be employed to carry out the plan who are knowledgeable about the special problems of the blind.

Resolution 64-18—Instruction of Workers for the Deaf-Blind

Whereas, the ability to communicate is essential to the provision of services to any handicapped individual, and

Whereas, the lack of this ability among many workers for the blind, who are responsible for serving deaf-blind persons as well as hearing blind persons frequently prevents the recognition of the needs and potentialities of deaf-blind persons,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Committee on Services for the Deaf-Blind of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind in meeting assembled at the Statler Hilton Hotel in the City of New York, August, 1964, strongly recommends that all curricula of training for Home Teachers and other workers concerned in the serving of blind individuals incorporate, as a required course, training in the use of the Manual Alphabet and an introduction to other common methods of communication as well as an orientation to the needs of such persons and the resources and techniques available to help meet these needs.

Resolution 64-19—Papal Support of Work for the Deaf-Blind

Whereas, the Chairman of the Committee on Services to the Deaf-Blind of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, Dr. Peter J. Salmon, was received in a special audience by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on September 21st, 1963, and

Whereas, Dr. Salmon stated to His Holiness, 'May I bring to your Holiness the greetings of Miss Helen Keller, now 83 years of age, who has devoted her life in service to people who are both deaf and blind—one of the most tragic of all afflictions. Helen Keller says they are the loneliest people in the world. We implore your Holiness to bless deaf-blind persons and urge the peoples of the world to open their hearts to them, and to provide services to bring these deaf-blind back into the warm stream of humanity', and

Whereas, His Holiness expressed deep concern for the problems of deaf-blind persons and compassion for those so handicapped throughout the world; and

Whereas, it would be of immeasurable benefit to the deaf-blind of the world if their plight could be brought to the attention of peoples everywhere; and

Whereas, a special pronouncement by His Holiness Pope Paul VI would bring this lonely group to the attention of the world:

Therefore, be it resolved, that the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind consisting of representatives from forty-one nations, assembled here in New York City this 10th day of August, 1964, does hereby direct the Secretary-General to express to His Holiness Pope Paul VI the World Council plea for a pronouncement by him to the people of the world, and especially to those concerned with humanitarian works, for their help, for their sympathy and compassion, and for their support of works in the interest of deaf-blind persons everywhere; and

Further, be it resolved, that he express for us the hope that in his own great compassion, His Holiness will offer his blessing not only to those who help, but to all deaf-blind people everywhere.

Resolution 64-20—Declaration of the Rights of the Disabled

Whereas, the United Nations has summoned the people of the world to strive for the protection and advancement of human rights and the rights of the child through the formulation and adoption by the General Assembly of a Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and

Whereas, a similar purpose could be served were the United Nations to undertake an identical function with respect to a large body of deprived and underprivileged persons throughout the world,

Now therefore be it resolved, that we take appropriate action for the purpose of securing the formulation and adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations of a Declaration of the Rights of Disabled Persons. Appropriate action would include at least calling this matter to the attention of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and requesting our respective Governments to initiate proceedings in the United Nations.

Resolution 64-21—Expressions of Appreciation

The General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind meeting in New York, August, 1964, wishes to place on record its very deep appreciation of the many messages of goodwill and encouragement received from the Heads of State, Prime Ministers and Ministers of State of a number of countries, from organizations and private persons, on the occasion of this, its Third Quinquennial Assembly.

It also wishes to record its deep appreciation and express its thanks to the following agencies, associations and individuals which have done so much to provide for the success of this Third Quinquennial Assembly and for the pleasure and convenience of its members:

The United Nations World Headquarters for making available a Conference Room and facilities for two days of our meetings.

The Organizing Committee, composed of Eric T. Boulter, George E. Keane, Mrs. Sidney E. Pollack, Wesley D. Sprague, Neil Reiser, Julian G. Stone, Irving M. Selis, Jacqueline Dwyer and Oscar Friedensohn.

Dr. Peter J. Salmon, Chairman, and the members of the Host and Sponsors Committees, including Albany Association of the Blind; American Association of Workers for the Blind, Inc.; American Foundation for the Blind Inc.; American Foundation for Overseas Blind, Inc.; The Associated Blind, Inc.; The Industrial Home for the Blind; the Jewish Guild for the Blind; National Industries for the Blind, Inc.; The New York Association for the Blind; New York State Commission for the Blind; New York State Federation of Workers for the Blind, Inc.; The Seeing Eye, Inc.; United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.

This General Assembly also wishes to place on record its deep appreciation of the excellent services rendered to the Assembly by the members of the staff of interpreters and by the secretariat. The work of the members of these staffs has contributed much material assistance to the general conduct and progress of the Assembly throughout its sessions.

THIRTEENTH SESSION Monday afternoon, August 10th, 1964

FINAL BUSINESS SESSION

Chairman: **Colonel E. A. Baker,** *President, W.C.W.B.*

Report of the Nominations Committee
By **Capt. H. J. M. Desai,** *Chairman.*

On recommendation of the Nominations Committee, the following members were unanimously elected as Honorary Life Members of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind:

Colonel E. A. Baker (Canada), Past President
Sir Clutha Mackenzie (New Zealand)
Mr. K. Dassanaike (Ceylon)

On recommendation of the Nominations Committee, the following officers were elected:

President:	Mr. Eric T. Boulter
Vice-Presidents:	Prof. P. Bentivoglio (Italy)
	Mr. Hideyuki Iwahashi (Japan)
	Mrs. Dorina de Gouvea Nowill (Brazil)
	Prof. Dr. Carl Strehl (Germany)
	Mr. S. Uzelac (Yugoslavia)
Secretary-General:	Mr. John Jarvis
Treasurer:	Mr. Henri Amblard

On recommendation of the Nominations Committee the following members were also elected to serve on the Executive Committee.

Regional Representatives

Europe	Prof. P. Bentivoglio (Italy)
	Mr. J. C. Colligan (United Kingdom)
	Mr. Trygve Kasin (Norway)
	Mr. A. Nicolle (France)
	Prof. Dr. Carl Strehl (Germany)
	Mrs. Maria Teresa Tulio (Portugal)
	Mr. Stevo Uzelac (Yugoslavia)
South America	Mrs. D. Nowill (Brazil)
	Mr. Pradilla-Cobos (Colombia)
North and Central America	Dr. M. Robert Barnett (U.S.A.)
	Miss M. Hooper (U.S.A.)
	Mr. A. N. Magill (Canada)
	Dr. P. Salmon (U.S.A.)
	Mrs. E. de Stahl (Guatemala)

South and East Asia	Mr. R. Alagayiwanna (Ceylon) Captain H. J. M. Desai (India) Mr. H. Iwahashi (Japan) Mrs. H. Lee (Malaysia) Begum M. H. Tyabji (Pakistan)
Middle East	Mr. S. Dajani (Jordan) Mr. A. R. El-Rikaby (Syria)
Oceania	Mr. W. Christiansen (New Zealand)
Africa	Dr. Cookey-Gam (Nigeria) Mr. A. Kebede (Ethiopia) Mr. M. Rajhi (Tunisia)

Chairman of Consultative Committees

World Braille Council	Dr. Walter Cohen (South Africa)
I.C.E.B.Y.	Dr. E. Waterhouse (U.S.A.)

CLOSING REMARKS

By **Colonel E. A. Baker,** *Retiring President, World Council for the Welfare of the Blind,* to the General Assembly in New York, on August 11th, 1964.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to make a few remarks as your retiring President. You have done me a great honour in electing me as your first President and in re-electing me to this high office at two subsequent Assemblies and it has been a great satisfaction to be of some service. The office of President will now be ably filled by Mr. Eric Boulter, my successor and, with the Officers and Executive who will be working with him for the next five years, I am sure the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind will continue to make progress towards attainment of the purposes for which it was established. From my point of view, I have enjoyed and deeply appreciated the interest of the members of the Council, their patience and understanding, their efforts to do a conscientious and effective job of promoting the welfare of the blind and their keen interest in the prevention of blindness. More than ever, I have realized the importance of prevention of blindness. While we can do much to alleviate the problems of the blind, it is tragic that throughout the world there are so many who are blind who could have their sight restored if facilities were available. We must reduce the number coming into the world of the blind by every means possible.

In looking back over thirteen years, I can see much progress. Thirty-three years ago, in this same hotel, then known as the Pennsylvania Hotel, efforts were made to establish the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. That meeting was attended by delegates from some thirty-seven countries. It was under the leadership of Dr. R. B. Irwin,

Executive Director of the American Foundation for the Blind, and was substantially financed by Mr. William Nelson Cromwell and Major Richard H. Migel. At that time great hopes were expressed, but unfortunately the depression and a world war prevented action. The next effort was made in 1949 at the International Conference of Workers for the Blind in Oxford where many prominent workers for the blind and the prevention of blindness gathered. I look back to those days when Dr. R. B. Irwin and Dr. Gabriel Farrell of the United States and Mr. Georges Raverat of France, with representatives from Europe and the United Kingdom, hoped that the World Council would be an effective organization in dealing with the problems of the blind and the prevention of blindness. As a result of their efforts a Committee was set up there and within two years a Constitution had been prepared and the first meeting of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind was held in Paris in 1951.

Since then a great deal has been achieved. Not long after that inaugural meeting, prevention of blindness was taken up by the ophthalmologists and we now have more ophthalmic specialists trained and continuing to come into the field. The International Association of Ophthalmologists is beginning to show results. A study of the causes of blindness has been made in some areas, new treatments have been inaugurated in certain cases, including corneal transplants and treatment to check the results of epidemics which frequently cause blindness. In all this we are moving in the right direction.

The Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind and the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, operating as they do in many countries with a number of other organizations and through United Nations agencies, have achieved a great deal. But it would seem only the surface has been scratched and much must still be done to accomplish more widespread coverage in order that every possible means of preventing blindness will be developed and employed. The monetary savings thus made would enable us to give even greater assistance to those who have lost their sight and who do need help, especially in those countries where services have not been organized or yet become effective.

I do want to thank every member of this organization for the part he has played since we were established thirteen years ago. Some of us are growing older in the service but then many new recruits are coming into the field. With their vigour, their unimpaired energies, what we can pass on to them from our experience, what they have received from their training and indoctrination, I feel the future holds high promise. With the help of Governments and others, of the United Nations, and those concerned with the control of epidemics, we must look for greater progress in the years to come.

I shall follow with very keen interest the further progress of the Organization and of member nations in promoting ever more effective services for the prevention of blindness and services for the blind. It will be a great pleasure and satisfaction to help your President, Executive members and the general membership in any way I can to further greater achievements in such a humane and important cause.

I think that, in brief, covers any comments I have to make to you, except to express thanks for the co-operation you have accorded me, the harmony which has prevailed and assisted in our deliberations and the evident precedence which our cause has taken over personal matters. I am hoping you will give your full support to Mr. Boulter, his Officers and Members of the Executive during the next five years, and that this organization will gain not only greater recognition throughout the world through ever broadening contacts with health and welfare developments by the Governments of the world, but as well recognition of the fact that you will be leading the way for other types of disabilities which need help.

It is a humanitarian cause and I hope everyone will give of her and his best on behalf of all. Thank you for very many kindnesses which I have deeply appreciated; my only thought has been how we can do a good job and an even better job in the field to which we have dedicated our efforts, abilities and hearts.

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Mr. Juan de Guruceaga,
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*Mr. Stevan Uzelac,
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N.B. Members whose names are preceded by * are members of the Executive Committee.

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La Croisade des Aveugles,
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The Hague, Netherlands.

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Bundesministerium des Innern
(Ministerialrat R. Schaudiens),
Rheindorfer Str. 198,
Bonn, 53, Germany.

CONSULTATIVE AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Elected by the Executive Committee at its meeting held on Tuesday afternoon, August 11th, 1964.

Consultative Committee on Braille (W.B.C.)
Chairman: Dr. Walter Cohen (*South Africa*).
Members: to be appointed after consultation.

Consultative Committee on Education (I.C.E.B.Y.)
Members: present committee confirmed until 1967.

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Chairman: Mr. J. C. Colligan (*United Kingdom*).
Members: Mr. H. Amblard (*Treasurer*)
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Mr. Nardekar (*India*)
Mr. Hans Seierup (*Denmark*)
Mr. I. Satrustegui (*Spain*)

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Vice-Chairman. Mr. C. Hedkvist (*Sweden*)
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Mr. H. Iwahashi (*Japan*)
Mr. A. N. Magill (*Canada*)
Lt. G. L. Nardekar (*India*)
Mr. A. Nicolle (*France*)
Mrs. D. Nowill (*Brazil*)
Mr. J. P. Royappa (*India*)
Mr. Hans Seierup (*Denmark*)
General Sotillos (*Spain*)
Prof. Dr. Carl Strehl (*Germany*)

Committee on Rural Activities
Chairman: Captain H. J. M. Desai (*India*)
Members: to be appointed after postal ballot.

Committee on Prevention of Blindness
Chairman: Mr. John Wilson (*U.K.*)
Members: Mr. Suresh Ahuja (*India*)
Dr. Akingbehin (*Nigeria*)
Major R. D. Bridges
Mr. E. Jorgensen (*Denmark*)
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Mr. R. El-Rikaby (*Syria*)
Dr. Saens (*Peru*)
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Begum N. Jivanji (*Pakistan*)
Mrs. H. Lee (*Malaysia*)
Mr. T. Torii (*Japan*)
(The matter of seat for Ceylon to be decided by the Ceylon National Council for Deaf and Blind).

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Members: Dr. M. Robert Barnett (*U.S.A.*)
Mrs. D. De Gouvea Nowill (*Brazil*)
(A further member to be elected to replace Mr. Florentin of Venezuela).

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Members: Mr. A. Shimalis (*Ethiopia*)
Dr. W. Cohen (*South Africa*)
Mr. M. Rajhi (*Tunisia*)

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Members: Mr. H. Gauvrit (*France*)
Mr. R. Kinney (*U.S.A.*)
Dr. G. Van Der Mey (*Netherlands*)
Mr. A. R. Sculthorpe (*U.K.*)

Committee on European Affairs
Chairman: Mr. H. C. Seierup (*Denmark*)
Members: to be elected in consultation with members of the Organizing Committee.

Louis Braille Memorial Committee
Chairman: Mr. H. Amblard
Members: Rev. Father Boury (*France*)
Mr. L. Lecogne (*France*)
Mr. A. Nicolle (*France*)
(additional members to be appointed)

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AUTHOR

TITLE

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME
~~4-11-6-70~~	~~L C Pet~~
~~2/1~~	~~Hunt~~
~~2-3-72~~	~~T Snyder~~