

July 9th-1953

Made a special trip to Boston to see Dr. John Gordon and Dr. Wyon at the Harvard School of Public Health; discussed for about four hours further developments in their population study project in India. (MCB Diary Nov. 26, 1952) JG returned recently from his second trip to India; this one was also as a member of the WHO teaching mission which visited Delhi, Madras, Bombay and Poona. JG spent a week at the Ludhiana Medical College, which included four days camping out in a village of the Punjab. With Dr. Carl Taylor, who knows the language and people, he observed village life, morning, noon and night, even visiting the houses to see how and where the people slept. Although four days is little enough time it is really much more than the average visitor or surveyor learns about rural Indian life. The experience demonstrated to JG the primitive nature of village conditions and he grasped apparently some of the difficulties inherent in any village study. More particularly, he concluded that general motivations and certainly the sex behavior of villagers are little known. Consequently he has modified his ideas about a population field study to include an exploratory stage.

JG is now working full time on the final draft of his project; subject - "The world population problem with special reference to India". The four parts of it represent the combined ideas and efforts of Gordon, Taylor and Wyon and will cover -

- (a) Public health aspects - the rationale of population study and control, making a case that PH workers have a basic responsibility in this field.
- (b) The epidemiological approach and methodology as applied to the population problem.
- (c) A specific plan of study for India.
- (d) Personnel and budget requirements on a five-year basis.

Although MCB heard much in the past two years about this project, nothing has been available in writing. Copy of their memo is promised some time in August; obviously serious preparation is going into this long-term proposal.

In discussion, as well as observed in the memo, JG proposes four stages for the study -

- (a) Preparatory organization and exploration; one village; Oct. '53 - Dec. '54.
- (b) A pilot study in one village; January - August '55.
- (c) The main field study in eight villages and controls - four years.
- (d) Follow-up observations during subsequent years.

The scheme of cooperation which JG contemplates comprises three parties, (a) Harvard University, which has solely a research interest, (b) Ludhiana Medical College, interested in an important field investigation and training of personnel,

(c) Government of India - to learn technical methods and operations for their broader application. Dr. Raja's memo of August 17th is his record of their conferences in Delhi.

Some points of discussion: (a) MCB feels that the exploration and the pilot study may merge or overlap a good deal, (b) a critical question is, "What methods are available for contraceptive trial?" JG proposes studying only "biological methods" now broadened by the Minister Rajkumari to include simple methods such as concentrated salt soaked pads or jelly; foam tablets. In his write-up JG includes rhythm and perhaps coitus interruptus (partial continence) though apparently he isn't strong for these. In spite of the limited number of methods MCB is keen to see the project get underway. Re the rhythm experiments of WHO and C. Chandrasaker, JG agrees their study may not provide the needed answers.

While in Delhi JG had it seems considerable influence on the Minister of Health. He reports that Government of India wishes to see the study pursued and is willing to support it. Wisely or not JG hesitates to accept government funds but agreed to a token 10% grant. Clearly he wishes to have full control in planning, selection of personnel, and execution. To some extent this attitude may be justified but MCB favors at least 30 - 40% government support.

MCB questions whether the group wouldn't need some support of social science observers such as a social anthropologist who knows India. Without spelling it out, I gather that JG doesn't want to clutter up the project with too many people or disciplines. He believes his personnel are competent; they will call for others when needed.

August 17 - 31

MCB received two copies of the proposal on August 17th and has circulated them to AJW, HHS and JBG. Personally he finds the proposal an example of excellent writing and thinking. MCB would favor action to provide funds for the first two years with the understanding that favorable results would justify further support. Further comment re budget details and the the field study will be made if there is a "green light". Although one can find some flaws in Part I, it is a good presentation of the PH aspects. Part II on the epidemiological approach is written by one who knows his business. There are points in Parts II and III which will bear discussion. MCB hopes this project will be implemented and supported from one source or another. It was submitted to MCB, through the DMPH, as a preliminary inquiry to find out whether we will consider financial support. The basic question is perhaps one for Central Administration to decide whether this is a worthwhile and justifiable field for us to enter.

August 18

Paul Henshaw of Planned Parenthood called on MCB. As a friend of JG, having mutual interests in the project, he has also seen the proposal and discussed it with JG. As an individual, I take it, Henshaw would like to see the project implemented and mentioned a private source of funds which may be available. However, all parties are awaiting the DMPH re action.