

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

908

P.P.

Commission on Human Resources

FROM: LFK

DATE: March 7, 1950

TO:

GIE		

COMMENTS:

JUN -3 1960

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY AGENDA FOR STUDY OF THE IHD

(1) General

- a) For various reasons the IHD seems to have escaped the detailed periodic re-appraisals accorded to the rest of the RF program. Probably through the process of amalgamation, the momentum of its original conception and purpose carried on without serious challenge.
- b) There can be no doubt but that the chapters of history written by the IHD are outstanding in the whole progress of human welfare.. Perhaps it is not too much to say that the international reputation of the RF has been built about the central core of the pioneering work in public health throughout the world.
- c) Nevertheless the future can never be justified in terms of the past and if there is any meaning to the notion of human progress or progress as applied to human creations, it is to be found in a continuous process of testing and adaptation to meet the challenge of new conditions.

(1) General (continued)

d) It seems abundantly clear that at an accelerating pace public understanding of the original IHD ideals and purposes has resulted in effective social machinery. Schools of public health have been established and are flourishing. The profession has attained status, the "know-how" is available and the lag one of public will rather than inadequate knowledge. Fellowships are available as never before. The World Health Organization has been set up to serve both as an international clearing house and a program catalyst.

e) One conclusion seems inescapable, namely, that in terms of relativity the IHD has been losing significance and that in its historical field the process will continue at an increasing rate. Surely there will come a point, possibly it has already been reached, at which the human and financial assets of the IHD could be re-focused and re-directed in order to continue to pioneer in human welfare and to be of the greatest possible social utility.

f) It is of significance that when Dr. Strode took over the direction of the Division, he himself developed a credo involving change and adaptation to modernize it as of that date. The moment of inertia, however, particularly in terms of staff, was so great that very little was accomplished.

g) Moving from the general to the particular, I would think questions should be raised and answered somewhat as follows with respect to the various program elements.

(2) The IHD Laboratories

(a) In studying any operation of the RF or any of its parts, three questions should be asked and in this order:

1. Is the work worth while?
2. Is it an RF job?
3. Is it the best use of our resources in relation to other opportunities?

b) There seems close agreement in the points of view of the Scientific Directors of the IHD and of scientists of other parts of the country to the effect that any program of action in the field of public health should be correlated with laboratory research. Agreement is almost equally unanimous in believing that such research would be specifically applied to field problems.

c) The work now carried on in the IHD Laboratories is largely basic research and in two parts:

1. A study of the metabolism of the Anopheles mosquito.
2. Research related to a dozen unknown viruses picked up years ago in Africa, but not specifically related to any present field work of the IHD nor to any other current interest in the whole field of public health.

It would seem therefore that the research is largely basic in character rather than applied. If so, it is no longer a companion piece to the activity phase of the IHD program.

There is rather prevalent in at least some scientific circles a notion that the IHD Laboratory work is accomplishing nothing of importance. There is moreover a feeling general throughout the staff of the IHD that the Laboratory has become a dumping ground for personnel not usable elsewhere. This ought to be discounted to some extent, but should not be ignored.

(d) Meanwhile, the cost to the RF totals \$288,000 a year, distributed as follows:

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH DIVISION LABORATORIES

Expenditures during the year 1949

Charged to designation IH 48027

Operating expenses of laboratories

Technicians

Salaries		\$79,562.32
Annuity premiums		2,181.65
Group Insurance	\$939.15	
Less - Dividends	<u>537.29</u>	401.86
Associated Hospital Service		220.48
Medical examinations		70.00
Workman's compensation insurance		888.20

\$83,324.51

Equipment	11,150.59
Supplies	18,856.66
Chemicals	1,740.93
Food and handling charges	6,814.05
Animals	4,793.64

Rockefeller Institute expenses and overhead	20,902.66
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Telephone	100.09
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Luncheons Official and difference between amount paid by employees (25¢) and charge by Institute (70¢)	1,830.70
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Travel	<u>76.61</u>
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\$149,590.44

Charged to I.H.D. Field Service budget

IH 48033

Salaries Drs. Anderson, Bugher, Clark, Johnson, Kerr, Smithburn, Taylor, Theiler and Whitman	\$81,100.00
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Annuity premiums	4,130.00
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Travel	1,905.70
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Group Insurance and Associated Hospital Service	<u>1,408.64</u>
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88,544.34

Charged to Appropriation RF 49014

Contribution to expenses of Institute in lieu of rent of laboratory space	<u>50,000.00</u>
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Total expenditures during 1949 . . . . . \$288,134.78

(3) Fellowships

a) To finance the program of Fellowships, \$250,000 was set aside and spent to within \$125.13.

b) Reduced to simplest terms, the RF purpose, I take it, in awarding Fellowships is twofold:

1. To develop man-power in underdeveloped areas

and

2. To forward our own fields of specific interest and thereby make our grants more effective in expanding our attack upon certain definite problems.

In 1949, 130 fellows included only 47 physicians and also 32 nurses and 41 rather miscellaneous, including laboratory workers, industrial hygienists, vital statisticians, and so forth. This is undoubtedly good work, but I am not nearly sure that it is RF work, particularly as a little closer scrutiny discloses two ideas which have been moot within the Division itself. First, there is the question as to whether or not we are accomplishing the most good by insisting on American standards throughout the world rather than adapting our techniques to local conditions. Even in the United States, I have twice heard the statement "the RF has done damage to schools of public health by imposing on them the IHD pattern of separateness from other allied often parallel and contributing disciplines." A second notion which has gotten into our work in granting Fellowships to nurses is that we also have a responsibility "to elevate the position of women." --- Perhaps a laudable aim, but scarcely an RF responsibility!

c) A glance at the listing of fellows by country of appointment would seem to indicate that appointments are parceled out so many to each field office rather than a more strict relationship to man-power needs. This

should probably be checked in detail in order to escape the danger of having RF funds used for "charitable" rather than leverage purposes.

d) Finally, under this heading I would raise one more critical question with respect to the Nursing Program. The Division of Medical Sciences is greatly concerned with the complete lack of competent psychiatric nursing. Do we justify our sizable nursing program under public health simply because there is available money under that label, or do we believe it is a better expenditure of RF money than the equivalent applied to the field of psychiatric nursing, which is after all a much newer horizon?

(4) IHD Projects

I believe that a careful comparison running back through several years would disclose a much higher degree of selectivity with respect to RF projects proposed by the other divisions as against those sponsored by IHD. The process of clearing projects through the Board of Scientific Directors has not resulted in very careful scrutiny, but rather an almost unavoidable tendency to put faith entirely in the recommendation of the local officer. Furthermore, it would seem that the availability of funds occasionally prevailed over strict adherence to program. Possible illustrations are grants in the field of mental hygiene, of nutrition, grants and of for the study of syphilis, tuberculosis in the United States, a grant to set up a taxonomic center in Johns Hopkins, and so forth. A much more careful screening of projects should result from the organizational changes contemplated by the President.



(5). IHD Officers and Field Staff

a) The officers and the field staff are costing the RF just about \$1,000,000. a year. Certainly in the past this international network has resulted in a world-wide consciousness and a concerted attack upon certain specific diseases. Two factors, however, would now seem to indicate a change in point of view:

1. The extent to which IHD has been successful in selling its bill of goods, the advent of WHO, the creation of state authorities in almost every country in the world, should all cause the IHD to rejoice in a job well done, but also to re-appraise its own position.
2. The second factor is of course a vastly smaller differential in terms of available IHD funds. They are hopelessly inadequate to do a respectable job everywhere and the same principle of selectivity which the RF must now apply to its projects and to its fields of interest should with equal logic be applied in deliberate geographic delimitation.

Indeed, at a recent meeting of the Scientific Directors of IHD and in consideration of the 1950 budget several of the men raised the question as to priority between personnel and funds available for grant. A man with no money is not very effective. Would it not be better to work in half the number of places with twice or three times the impact?

(6) IHD As An Operating Division

The IHD is and always has been the operating division of RF. In agricultural work the Division of Natural Sciences has taken on operations. Certain things seem clear:

- (1) If the RF is to expand its operations, it should be done through an operating division rather than overburdening our granting machinery to the point where it can no longer be effective in discharging its own responsibility as a technical and highly specialized arm of the RF. As an incidental consideration, there is probably no officer in Natural Sciences competent to carry on this particular activity other than the Director of the Division. The staff has not been recruited with that responsibility in mind.

2. IHD as an operating Division need in nowise confine itself to public health doctors, but could of course bring together any essential spread of skills. However, unless the Foundation is determined to expand its agricultural work or to undertake further operating responsibilities, I would see no particular point to transferring this one operation to IHD.

(7) An Interesting Proposal

There are two courses of action possible with various shades of differences in between:

- a) The IHD might be re-tailored to give it increasing relative significance in the contemporary scene. The lines of such tailoring seem to be rather plainly indicated.
- b) The IHD might conceivably fulfill a completely new role. The RF has a new interest in problems of human ecology. It likewise has an interest in a new approach to area studies and in the new emphasis placed upon the cooperative attack of several disciplines upon specific human problems. Suppose the IHD were to resign the field of public health in favor of an interdisciplinary area attack upon human ecology. Would that be worth considering? Even without going that far, the IHD might well consider an area attack on its own problems, that is, instead of working with a few specific diseases, why not determine the area in which it wished to make itself effective and then attack the indigenous health problems whatever they might be? This line of thought seems to hold out interesting possibilities.

(8) CONCLUSION

The conclusion is certainly implicit in the questions asked. The social backdrop against which the work of the IHD is projected has changed greatly in recent years. Sheer momentum of philosophy of program and perhaps most of all staff has carried the IHD along on a course chartered under wholly different world conditions. New sailing directions appear to be in order.

LFK