

900
P+P
Population

WW

MB

GRP		GRP
WFL		WFL
PCM	JCM	
HMM		HMM
WW		WW

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So far I have only read this twice, with a relatively brief period in between for contemplation; but my reactions to date lean towards a desire to argue with you, rather than any very satisfied feeling about agreeing with you.

It is almost certainly true that any substantial activity connected with human ecology would involve some operating activity. But I am not at all convinced that the one word "operating" constitutes any very complete or any very satisfactory link between the characteristic activities of the IHD and those dreamed-of but as yet ill-defined activities in a very much broader area. In the case of a specific disease which one wants to try to eliminate in an area, so many things are clear and easy, quite regardless of what the practical difficulties may be. It is perfectly clear that before going into the field, individuals should have some experience and training which prepares them for what they need to do in the field; and the character of this preparation and training is extraordinarily easy to define. It is not necessary to go around asking people whether they wish to be cured of the disease. That can be safely assumed. Nor do we ordinarily question whether it is, taking everything into account, a good idea to cure them of the disease. Whether correctly or incorrectly, we always assume that the answer here is affirmative. It is, on an exceedingly advanced and competent level, just like having plumbing fixed. Everybody thinks it is a good idea to have plumbing fixed, everybody whose plumbing is bad wants to have it improved, and it is pretty clear how and where you go about finding and making plumbers.

It seems to me, however, that the situation in human ecology is very much more complicated. There is involved a whole range of very basic questions which involve essentially all of the intellectual disciplines, even counting ethics, philosophy, and religion as intellectual disciplines for the purpose of this statement. These issues are all interrelated in complicated ways. One of the most basic problems is the problem of finding out what it is we are trying to accomplish.

Under such circumstances, I just cannot envisage the tidy workshop to which we send individuals for apprentice training. Although I have the highest admiration and respect for such individuals, it does not seem to me at all likely that a program which initially centers around local public health officials would have the scope, the insight, the scholarship, and the imagination to deal with over-all problems in human ecology. Although public health certainly plays an exceedingly important role, I am not at all convinced that it "should be the central core around which to build such a program." Maybe it should be. I couldn't even argue the point very intelligently at this stage, and for the very good reason that I do not know as yet what is meant by "such a program."

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