

PROVISION OF HYGIENE OFFICERS, HEALTH INSPECTORS,
HEALTH ASSISTANTS, ETC.

PROPOSED INSTITUTE OF HYGIENE

I. Extracts from Report of the National Health Services Commission :

32. If national health services are to be developed in accordance with the modern conception of health, the provision of this class of personnel is the most important of the National Health Service - more important than the provision of doctors, nurses, etc., for upon them will depend the efficiency of the non-personal and educational services which should form the very foundation of the health of the future. At present the facilities for training this class of personnel are totally inadequate and, where present, unsatisfactory. Adequate training of this class of personnel should be undertaken by the National Health Service itself at an Institute of Hygiene.

33. An Institute of Hygiene: Under the Transvaal Republic the persistence of one enthusiast, the late Sir Arnold Theiler, induced the Government to establish a central veterinary institution. This was expanded under Crown Colony, and later Union Government, until it has become a model institution famous throughout the world. It was realised that there were many problems of veterinary medicine and agriculture which were peculiar to South Africa. Here research has been combined with the training of personnel who have thereafter entered the public Veterinary and Agricultural services with great benefit to the welfare of the Union. It is strongly urged that the special problems of hygiene which have long confronted us - problems peculiar to the Union on account of climatic, geographical and ethnic circumstances - should likewise be regarded as of sufficient importance to the welfare of the country to justify the establishment of one, or perhaps several, Institutes of Hygiene at which research and the training of health personnel will be combined. Such subjects for research as types of housing suitable for differing climatic conditions and racial groups, cheap and efficient methods of privy construction, methods of composting, and many other problems await investigation by competent teams of workers, who would also be the teachers of those who are in training for inspectorial and health educational services. The types which could be trained in part or whole at such an Institute would be hygiene officers (medical aids), health inspectors, health assistants and health visitors. The Institute of Hygiene could also be used for the training in preventive hygiene of other categories desirous of educating the public, and even keen members of the general public itself.

A start might well be made with the establishment of such an Institute at or near Durban. It should be under the control of the National Health Service, and should be linked with general laboratory services on the bacteriological side, with the Housing Board on the constructional side, and with the veterinary and agricultural services in connection with meat and milk inspection, vector control and compost manufacture.

The provision of Institutes of Hygiene might later be extended to other areas with peculiar problems.

II. Resolution of Conference on National Health Services held under the auspices of the South African Institute of Race Relations at Cape Town on January 20, 1945:

(19) The Conference urges the Government to implement the recommendation of the National Health Commission that there be established an Institute of Hygiene, and that the Institute be equipped --

- i. For research into technical problems of :-
 - a. sanitation, water supplies, housing, and village planning;
 - b. production, storage, distribution, and utilisation of foodstuffs;
 - c. health education and propaganda among rural communities, with special reference to the needs of Non-Europeans; and
- ii. For the training of African health assistants and other auxiliary personnel.

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