

In the same manner when one comes to a city to which he is a stranger he should consider its situation, how it lies to the wind and to the rising sun, for its influence is not the same whether it lies to the North or to the South, and these things one should consider most attentively. Concerning the waters which the inhabitants use, whether they be marshy or whether they be soft or hard and running, whether they are from elevated situations or saltish and unfit for cooking. And the ground, whether it be naked and deficient in water, or wooded and well watered, or whether it lies in a hollow and the mode in which the inhabitants live and partake of it.”

A newcomer to a practice area might take that as the text for his appointment, but if each of us applied the same principle of objective study to the population within our medical care then we would take a great step forward.

THE WORLD WE WANT OUR CHILDREN TO LIVE IN (SUMMARY)

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I envisage the hostile environment as being one of earthquakes, floods, droughts, plagues, tidal waves and blizzards, but today we have been talking about the debit side of man's attempt to modify his environment to his own advantage. We have been talking about his ignorance, indifference and arrogance in many respects.

Evolution is progress either by mutation or by choice. Until humans arrived, progress was by mutation or apparently random changes which were occasionally for the better but more often for the worse. As evolution progressed, more and more of the changes were for the worse.

Man's progress has been largely by choice or deliberate decision, because man differs from other creatures in two ways. Firstly he is creative and can make things, and secondly he is a moral creature with a sense of right and wrong, and good and bad. He can choose between the two and can use his creations for good or for evil. The progress of man is erratic but by and large he moves a little further forward each time, very often solving one problem by creating others. An example is air pollution, which is the direct result of the industrial development which has contributed to our material prosperity.

Most of us are fairly grateful, but we must find out how to go on enjoying our prosperity without having to enjoy the pollution. When food becomes more readily available undernutrition or starvation disappears, but too many people overeat. You close your clinics for the undernourished and you create the 'weight-watchers' instead.

In the developing countries where disease is rife, you can drain the malarial swamps and start immunisation campaigns, which result in far fewer child deaths, and then find that there is not enough food for them to eat. Similar considerations may apply to clinical problems. We know that by the active, aggressive surgical treatment of spina bifida, some children who would have been severely handicapped will survive with a lesser handicap. It is also true that some babies who would have died in the first weeks of life will, with treatment, survive with quite severe handicaps.

Correcting mistakes

Man learns by his mistakes and he usually avoids making the same mistake twice or introduces a correcting factor to minimise the consequences. If we like a diet that induces tooth decay our correcting factor may be an increase in the fluoride content of

our water. Man will go on making mistakes and it is vital that he should recognise this and deploy the necessary resources to avoid or correct them. We can afford to do whatever we regard as most important. If air pollution, water pollution, soil pollution, and a poor diet are sufficiently important then we can spend our money to put them right.

The title of my lecture *The world we want our children to live in* suggested that I was going to look into a crystal ball and describe the Utopia that lies ahead. I am not going to do this because the world is already a very much better place for children. Infant mortality is decreasing, life expectancy is greater, education is improving, and the opportunities for children to broaden their horizons both at home and abroad are considerably better than they ever have been. The major problem is that some children are deprived of these opportunities. Children have different potentialities and it is disturbing that many children do not get the opportunity to realise their potentials.

More opportunities

What are the opportunities that the world should provide? The child's world is his home, his neighbourhood, his school, and his own relationship to people. I would like to see a world in which all children could achieve their maximum physical potential by having good health, a good diet, shelter from the really hostile environment, and their maximum mental potential by having stimulation, encouragement, play material, and constructive guidance.

There is an opportunity for us to do more in this field by providing more nursery schools, day nurseries, and play groups. The children who usually enjoy these facilities are the ones who least need them, while those in real need often do without.

As well as helping people to get the best out of life we must also help them to put something into life. Man is a moral as well as a creative being and we must not forget the danger of failing to teach moral values. There is no point in advancing our technological knowledge and educating our children without at the same time teaching them values. For our children the greatest risk in the hostile environment of the future is an environment without values.

DISCUSSION

Dr D. L. Crombie

Fish protein has been said to be safe because it is a food with a balanced fat content. Can the same not be said for Welsh lamb and mutton?

Dr Michael Crawford

It is perfectly true that fish is the one natural food resource which has not been over-manipulated other than by cadmium and mercury pollution, mainly in Japan and in the Baltic areas. The latter is a very serious problem because of the unpleasant effects during pregnancy. There are oily fish and lean fish, but both are very valuable with regard to the structural fats.

Animals are a slightly different problem. We did buy a pig from a Welsh farmer who said that he was producing lean pigs but when we dissected it we found that it was as bad structurally as the ones in the supermarket. On investigating further we found that he fed his pigs on exactly the same foodstuffs that all the other pig farmers are using. This attitude to animal feeding is fairly universal in so far as a high energy diet is used.

Lambs raised on the hills can be very good, but the beef from the Welsh hills is not of such good quality. While the cattle roam free they get plenty of exercise and are quite lean with all the correct types of fat. The farmers then take the cattle and for three to four months put them on a high energy diet to fatten them before market. This is the