

Plan. It appeared to the Conference that many of the scientific specialists now required were of types already scarce in all countries. At the same time the positions under the Technical Assistance Schemes were frequently of short duration and would, therefore, only appeal to scientists if on the termination of their work overseas they could return to normal duties. It was accordingly suggested that scientific insti-

tutes in the Commonwealth countries should deliberately provide an extra number of posts for specialists in subjects much sought after for overseas work, on the assumption that this would be a continuing demand and that a proportion of their staff would normally be overseas. The Conference recommended that a thorough study of this problem should be made on a Commonwealth basis.

BCG CAMPAIGN IN INDIA

THE annual death roll due to tuberculosis in India works out to about five lakhs. This means that one person dies of the disease every minute in this country. Over and above this the disease disables others at five times that rate.

Mass BCG vaccination campaign has been accepted all over the world as one of the most important measures for fighting tuberculosis. Over 50 million persons have been vaccinated with BCG all over the world. In India alone 13.1 million persons have been tuberculin-tested and 4.2 million BCG vaccinated upto the end of December 1952.

But it is estimated that in India there are about 17 crores of persons below the age of 20 years, most of whom need BCG vaccination. For covering this population, the Government of India has entered into a tripartite agreement with the World Health Organisation and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. According to the agreement, the World Health Organisation will provide certain

international staff for starting mass campaigns in the various States. The UNICEF will provide supplies consisting of transport vehicles, publicity equipment and vaccination equipment.

The Government of India will provide a Central BCG Organisation for co-ordination of public education and statistical work, meet the subsistence allowance and travel expenses of international personnel engaged in BCG work and will distribute the tuberculin and the vaccine required for the project free of cost to the States. The State Governments on their part will have to step up the number of BCG teams in the field, and carry out the field work in their areas.

The BCG vaccine and tuberculin solution used in the campaign to-day come from the BCG Laboratory set up by the Central Government in the King Institute, Guindy, Madras, staffed by experts who received specialized training at the State Serum Institute, Copenhagen.

VIOMYCIN, NEW ANTIBIOTIC AGAINST TUBERCULOSIS

A NEW antibiotic, viomycin, has proven effective in treating tuberculosis cases which have become resistant to streptomycin, according to Dr. Howard Payne, Professor of Medicine at Howard University, Washington, D.C.

Reporting on the treatment of 35 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis with a combination of viomycin and PAS (*para*-aminosalicylic acid), Dr. Payne observes that streptomycin-resistant organisms are sensitive to viomycin, and patients harboring such organisms improve under intermittent viomycin treatment. Even in cases not resistant to streptomycin, he found the new drug clearly effective. Its toxicity was found negligible in the dosages used.

As a control to the group of 35 patients,

Dr. Payne maintained 24 others on the widely used combination of PAS and dihydrostreptomycin. After observing both groups over a period of from six to ten months, he concluded that while improvement was more marked in patients treated with streptomycin-PAS, the effectiveness of viomycin-PAS is definite and demonstrable. This was particularly noticeable in seven streptomycin-resistant cases.

The development of resistance to streptomycin by tuberculosis organisms is one of the chief stumbling blocks in current therapeutic research on the disease. The clinical use of viomycin would therefore seem to be particularly welcome, if it proves as good as it promises to be.