

THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE

Monday, Oct. 14, 1991

Acceptance Remarks

By

Dr. Nevin S. Scrimshaw, 1991 World Food Prize laureate

A.M. ADDRESS

WFPACCEPT

October 10, 1991

REMARKS UPON ACCEPTING THE 1991 WORLD FOOD PRIZE

by Nevin S. Scrimshaw

IT IS A VERY GREAT HONOR TO BE SELECTED FOR THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE, HOWEVER, THE INDIVIDUAL SELECTED FOR THIS PRIZE IS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MANY WHO HAVE BEEN INDISPENSABLE AND INTEGRAL CONTRIBUTORS TO THE ACHIEVEMENTS RECOGNIZED. IT IS PARTICULARLY GRATIFYING AND SIGNIFICANT THAT THIS YEAR'S PRIZE IS AWARDED IN THE FIELD OF NUTRITION. IT IS A RECOGNITION THAT WORLD FOOD PROBLEMS CANNOT BE SOLVED BY FOOD PRODUCTION ALONE, FOOD DISTRIBUTION AND FOOD CONSUMPTION ARE ALSO A CONCERN AND THESE ARE THE DOMAIN OF THE NUTRITIONIST AND FOOD SCIENTIST. PERSONS CONCERNED WITH THESE DISCIPLINES, PARTICULARLY THOSE STRUGGLING WITH THE MALNUTRITION AND HUNGER IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, WILL BE GREATLY ENCOURAGED BY THIS RECOGNITION OF THEIR EFFORTS.

I MUST ACKNOWLEDGE FIRST A REMARKABLE GROUP OF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AT INCAP WHO WORKED WITH EXCEPTIONAL DEDICATION AND COMPETENCE FROM THE EARLIEST DAYS. IT WAS GUILLERMO ARROYAVE WHO DEMONSTRATED THE STABILITY OF POTASSIUM IODATE IN SALT AND WHO WORKED WITH THE SALT MANUFACTURERS TO MAKE THE IODATION OF SALT IN GUATEMALA A REALITY. ADELLA CABEZAS IN EL SALVADOR AND WERNER ASCOLI IN GUATEMALA SHARED IN THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF POTASSIUM IODATE FOR ELIMINATING ENDEMIC GOITER IN SCHOOL CHILDREN.

IT WAS ROBERT SQUIB WHO TESTED THE FIRST FORMULA FOR INCAPARINA IN RATS, CHICKENS, AND PIGS AND MOISES BEHAR WHO SHARED IN THE CLINICAL TRIALS. RICARDO BRESSANI RETURNED WITH HIS DOCTORATE FROM PURDUE UNIVERSITY AND IMMEDIATELY DEVELOPED AN IMPROVED FORMULA AND FURTHER DEMONSTRATED ITS SAFETY AND NUTRITIONAL VALUE IN EXPERIMENTAL ANIMALS. MOISES BEHAR AND I THEN TESTED IT, FIRST IN HEALTHY, THEN IN SEVERELY MALNOURISHED CHILDREN, AND FINALLY IN VILLAGE HOUSEHOLDS. CARLOS TEJADA AND RICHARD SHAW HELPED CARRY INCAPARINA TO COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION.

MOISES BEHAR AS A PEDIATRICIAN AND GUILLERMO ARROYAVE AS A CLINICAL BIOCHEMIST WERE ESSENTIAL PARTNERS IN THE STUDIES OF KWASHIORKOR AND MARASMUS, AS WELL AS IN THE NUTRITION SURVEYS OF COMMUNITIES AND THE CONTROLLED TRIALS OF VARIOUS INTERVENTIONS TO OVERCOME MALNUTRITION. LATER THE PEDIATRICIAN, DOROTHY WILSON MANAGED THE METABOLIC STUDIES. EMMA REY AND MARINA FLORES LED THE DIETARY SURVEYS, AND RACHEL FLORES BUILT THE BEST NUTRITION LIBRARY IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD.

THE WHO MONOGRAPH ON NUTRITION AND INFECTION GREW OUT OF THE SHARED WORK WITH MOISES BEHAR ON KWASHIORKOR AND LATER THE INSIGHTS OF JOHN GORDON INTO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SECOND YEAR DEATH RATE AND THE CONCEPT OF WEANLING DIARRHEA. JOHN GORDON ENCOURAGED ME TO WRITE THE MONOGRAPH AT A TIME WHEN ITS THEME WAS NOT AN ACCEPTED CONCEPT. HE ALSO CONTRIBUTED NOT ONLY TO THE DESIGN OF THE NOW CLASSICAL THREE-VILLAGE STUDY IN GUATEMALA BUT ALSO GUIDED ANALYSIS OF THE DATA AND EDITED EVERY SENTENCE OF THE RESULTING PUBLICATIONS.

IT WAS MIGUEL GUZMAN, WHO FROM THE EARLIEST DAYS ANALYZED THE DATA FROM FIELD STUDIES AND WHO LATER ENSURED THE RELIABILITY OF DATA COLLECTED IN THE FIELD. JOSE MENDEZ DE LA VEGA WAS A KEY MEMBER OF THE ORIGINAL INCAP TEAM. AFTER THE INITIAL YEARS FERNANDO VITERI, IN CLINICAL NUTRITION, AND LEONARDO MATA, IN MICROBIOLOGY, JOINED INCAP AND CONTRIBUTED IMPORTANTLY TO ITS GROWING SCIENTIFIC REPUTATION. THE ANTHROPOLOGIST, RICHARD ADAMS, BROUGHT THIS DISCIPLINE TO INCAP.

I MUST ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THE FIRST DIRECTOR OF THE PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION, WHO HAD THE CONFIDENCE TO SEND ME TO GUATEMALA AND THE DIRECTOR FOR THE NEXT 20 YEARS, DR. ABRAHAM HORWITZ, WHO CONTINUALLY SUPPORTED INCAP AND REMAINS A CLOSE FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE.

THE EARLY SUCCESS OF INCAP ALSO DEPENDED HEAVILY ON A DEDICATED SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE WHO CAME TO GUATEMALA ONCE A YEAR FOR AN ENTIRE WEEK. THE ANCHOR MEN WERE HENRY SEBRELL AND WILLIAM DARBY

WHO HAVE EACH CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO MY CAREER. SO DID PAUL GYORGY, LEONARD MAYNARD, CHARLES GLEN KING AND ANTONIO PENA CHAVARRIA. AMONG CONSULTANTS WHO HELPED THE VERY JUNIOR STAFF AND DIRECTOR TO GET STARTED WERE HELEN BURCH, PHILLIP JEANS (WHO DIED WHILE HE WAS HELPING INCAP), O.P KIMBALL, RICHARD WITTENBERG, BERTRYN BOSLEY, AND CHARLOTTE YOUNG.

AT MIT THE EARLY SUCCESS OF THE NUTRITION ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT THAT I INITIATED WAS AGAIN DUE TO AN OUTSTANDING INITIAL FACULTY WHO HAVE ALL HAD DISTINGUISHED CAREERS. THEY INCLUDED PAUL NEWBERNE, GEORGE WOLF, ALFRED HARPER AND THEN HAMISH MUNRO, SANFORD MILLER, JOHN STANBURY, AND VERNON YOUNG. WITH VERNON I SHARED SCIENTIFIC EXCITEMENT, RESEARCH DESIGNS, GRADUATE STUDENTS AND PUBLICATIONS. EDWINA MURRAY MANAGED OUR OUTPATIENT METABOLIC STUDIES FLAWLESSLY FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS. THE SUCCESS OF THE DEPARTMENT WAS ALSO DUE TO SUPERB GRADUATE STUDENTS AND POSTDOCTORATE FELLOWS. THE INTERNATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION PROGRAM AT MIT DEPENDED ON ERNESTO POLLITT, BARBARA UNDERWOOD, LANCE TAYLOR, MITCHEL WALLERSTEIN, AND OTHERS. FOR

MY PUBLICATIONS I OWE AN IMMEASURABLE DEPT TO MY EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS, AMALIA RAMIREZ DURING ALL OF MY TIME AT INCAP AND JANE DITTRICH DURING MY YEARS AT MIT.

THROUGHOUT MY INTERNATIONAL CAREER, I HAVE RECEIVED STIMULUS AND SUPPORT FROM DOZENS OF OTHER COLLEAGUES IN MANY COUNTRIES. I CAN MENTION ONLY A FEW. I HAVE LEARNED FOR 20 TO 30 YEARS FROM GEORGE BEATON OF CANADA, JOSE MARIA BENGEOA OF VENEZUELA, MOGENS JUL OF DENMARK, DARWIN KARYADI OF INDONESIA, FERNANDO MONKEBERG OF CHILE, ALBERTO PRADILLA OF COLOMBIA, MAMDOUGH GABR OF EGYPT, V. RAMALINGASWAMI OF INDIA, FRED SAI OF GHANA, HISATO YOSHIMURA AND NORIO SHIMAZONA OF JAPAN, JOAQUIN CRAVIOTO AND ADOLFO CHAVES IN MEXICO, JOHN HANSEN OF SOUTH AFRICA, AREE VALYASEVI OF THAILAND, JOHN WATERLOW AND ROGER WHITEHEAD OF THE U.K., AS WELL AS MARK HEGSTED IN THE U.S. AND MANY OTHERS IN THE U.S. AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. I VISITED GEORGE HARRAN IN MEXICO EN ROUTE TO GUATEMALA IN 1949 AND RECEIVED VALUABLE SUPPORT FROM HIM ALL THROUGH THE YEARS UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 19--. IT IS NOT A COINCIDENCE THAT HE WAS ALSO A MENTOR TO THREE OF THE FOUR PREVIOUS

WORLD FOOD PRIZE LAUREATES AND TO THE FOUNDER OF THIS AWARD.

IT WAS MY WIFE, MARY, WHO STRONGLY SUPPORTED MY CONTINUING ON TO MEDICAL SCHOOL AFTER COMPLETING MY GRADUATE STUDIES AT HARVARD AND ENCOURAGED MY GOING TO GUATEMALA WHEN WELL MEANING PROFESSORS AND COLLEAGUES ADVISED AGAINST IT, RAISED A FAMILY WHEN I WAS SELDOM AT HOME, ENTERTAINED ENDLESS VISITORS, AND LATER AS AN ANTHROPOLOGIST ENRICHED MY UNDERSTANDING. IT WAS SHE WHO DEMONSTRATED TO ME THE FEASIBILITY OF APPLYING ANTHROPOLOGICAL METHODOLOGIES TO THE QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF NUTRITION AND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE ON HOUSEHOLD BEHAVIOR. MY FOUR BOYS HAVE SUCCESSFULLY SURVIVED THEIR FATHER'S UNINTENDED NEGLECT THANKS TO HER NURTURING. MARY ALSO ENCOURAGED OUR DAUGHTER, SUSAN, TO BECOME AN ANTHROPOLOGIST, NOT QUITE ANTICIPATING THAT SHE, TOO, WOULD CONTRIBUTE IMPORTANTLY TO THE APPLICATION OF ANTHROPOLOGY TO NUTRITION AND HEALTH.

FINALLY, I WANT TO EXPRESS MY ADMIRATION AND APPRECIATION OF MR. JOHN RUAN FOR HIS VISION OF A WORLD WITHOUT HUNGER AND FOR TAKING ON THE HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE WHEN ITS FUTURE WAS IN DOUBT. IT IS THE SAME KIND OF VISION THAT LED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NOBEL PRIZE FOUNDATION AND I HOPE THAT THE RUAN FOUNDATION BECOMES AS WELL RECOGNIZED. AS FOR MYSELF, I CAN ONLY REPEAT MY GRATITUDE FOR A PRIZE THAT HAS RECOGNIZED THE ROLE OF NUTRITION AND FOOD SCIENCE IN THE CONQUEST OF WORLD HUNGER AND FOR BEING CHOSEN AS A SYMBOL FOR THE MANY NUTRITIONISTS AND FOOD SCIENTISTS WORLD-WIDE WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO THE UNDERSTANDING AND IMPROVEMENT OF HUMAN NUTRITION.

THANK YOU