

NOTES

SOLIDARITY AGAINST DISASTERS

In the face of disasters such as the earthquake at Friuli, the floods in S.W. France, Torrey Canyon-type oil spillages, etc., Europe should be able to move fast and efficiently to deal with them. The European Commission has drawn up some concrete measures for the consideration of the Council of Ministers, which should enable all emergency and humanitarian aid to be better coordinated (see Fig. 1).

When there is a disaster, action has to be

taken quickly. The first step in coordination is to distribute rapidly all information concerning the circumstances and needs. A virtual instantaneous inventory of action to be taken by various bodies has to be drawn up in order to distribute tasks and prevent duplication of effort. The second step is basically to ensure the coherency of the actions being taken.

In the Commission's proposal, a coordinator equipped with telex and direct telephone lines will be in contact with one person in each country who will centralize all national information concerning aids.

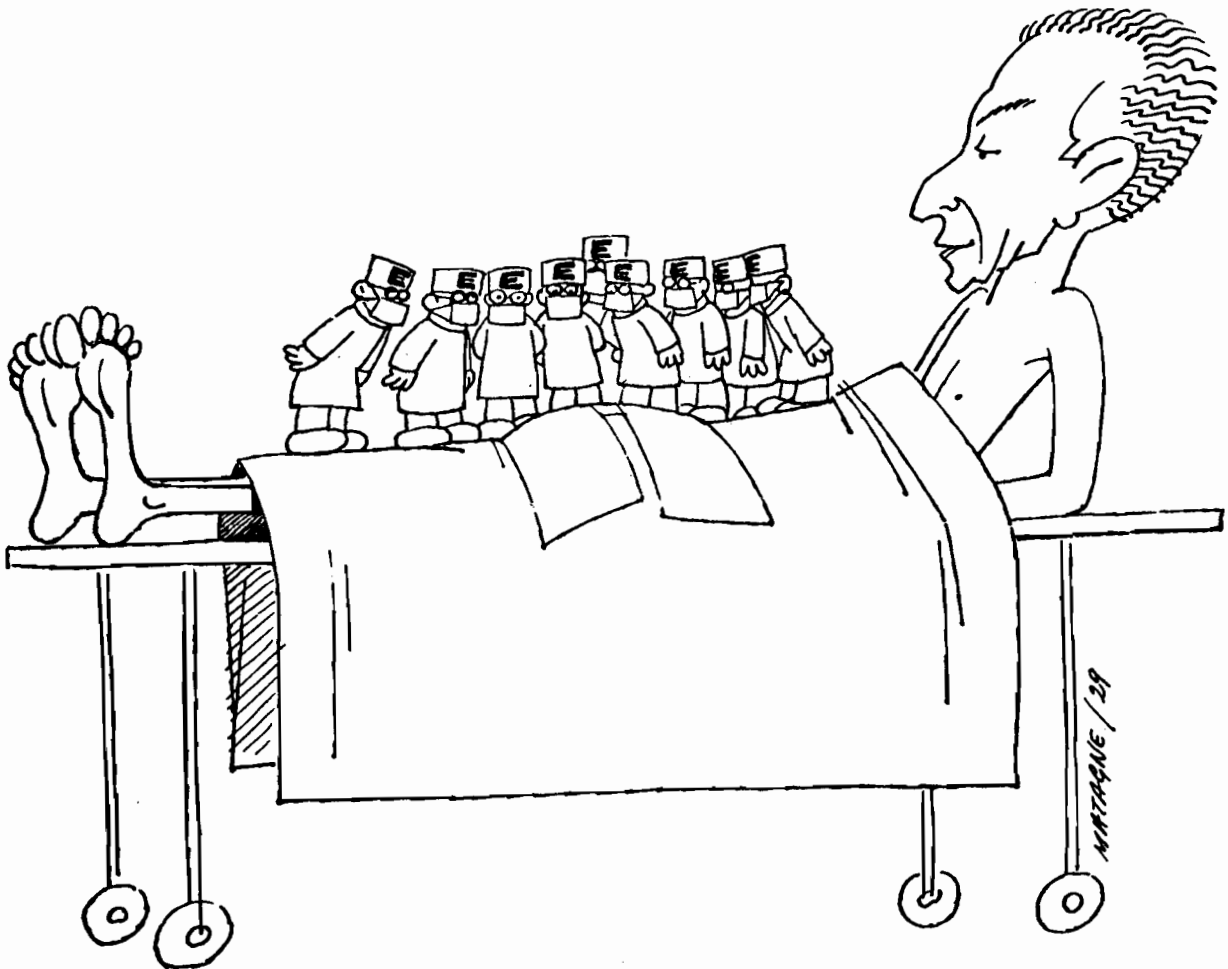


Fig. 1. Nine heads are better than one. The Community's first medical research programme should have a healthy future. Source: Euroforum (1977) No. 32.

RESEARCH ON COORDINATION OF RESPONSE IN EMERGENCY PLANNING

The Institute for Environmental Studies of the University of Toronto has received funding from Emergency Planning Canada (EPC) for two years, FY 77/78 and FY 78/79. It is proposed to establish a special research unit within the Institute for Environmental Studies to examine a range of problems concerning societal response to emergency or crisis situations. The project proposes three component activities: (1) preliminary case studies of up to four recent emergency situations; (2) comparative analyses of monitoring indicators and prediction capability between different emergency-generating situations; and (3) a review and critique of the present emergency planning structure.

Priorities and selections within these three activities would be made by the Principal Investigators, Professor Ian Burton and Professor Anne Whyte, with the advice and agreement of Emergency Planning Canada. Further information may be obtained from Professor Burton at the University of Toronto, Institute for Environmental Studies, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

CONFERENCE ON THE SMALLER CITY AND REGIONAL COMMUNITY

The First Annual Conference on the Smaller City and Regional Community will be held March 30–31, 1978 at the University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point. It is an interdisciplinary, research as well as practice oriented conference dealing with the multidimensional aspects of life in smaller cities and regions. Persons wishing to obtain further information should immediately contact Robert P. Wolensky, Department of Sociology/Anthropology, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, Wisconsin 54481.

HAZARD WARNING RESEARCH

Professors Robert Leik, T. Michael Carter and John Clark of the University of Minnesota have received National Science Foundation funding for a three-year study of “Dissemination of and Response to Natural Hazard Warnings”. They point out that individual, organizational and community-wide response to warnings vary largely as a result of the character of the warnings issued and the readiness or preparedness of the endangered population to react appropriately to such warnings. Whereas considerable sophistication has been achieved in the technical aspects of natural hazard detection and warning dissemination, notably modest gains have been made in the development and implementation of social policy regarding effective individual, organizational and community-wide planning for and response to extreme natural hazards. They propose to conduct research on how the character of extreme hazard warnings is related to the responses they elicit and on how the state of community, organizational and individual preparedness is related to the nature of their responses to warnings of possible natural disasters.

Data will be generated from three closely integrated projects: (1) the community organizations study, (2) the community households study and (3) the laboratory study. After initial phases consisting of the intensive study of four communities with varying degrees of exposure to natural disasters, data will be gathered systematically (both pre- and post-warning) from approximately 24 more. Simultaneously, laboratory studies will be carefully constructed to obtain depth of understanding of individual and group decisions regarding response to warning messages (Project 3).

Inquiries should be addressed to any of the principal investigators at: Natural Hazards Warning Systems, 2001 Riverside Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55454.