

you leave out health.” “Of course, health is important,” Mead snapped at her fragmented questioner. “Do I have to list everything every time?” Apparently, yes. People think in terms of their special fragments.

If fragmentation of approach is one problem, the very breadth of Habitat is another and Mead spoke of it with respect to Habitat’s lack of active constituents. “A problem that is not properly recognized,” she said, “is that we don’t have large numbers of people who care.” She pointed out that at the U.N. conferences on food and population and environment, for instance, people knew about and cared about the issues. Not so with Habitat. The conference is intended to be geared toward solutions but, Mead observed, there is not much evidence that the people who implement solutions will be there. “Where,” she asked, “are the builders? Builders build buildings and roads, not bureaucrats and politicians. Builders should be part of Habitat.”

The question of who should be part of Habitat, and how, was one that dominated many discussions at the A.U. symposium and subsequent interviews with persons taking an active interest in Habitat’s preparation. Actually, there will be two Habitats. One will be the official conference to which governments will send delegations. The second Habitat, to take place in Vancouver at the same time as the official conference, is known as Habitat Forum and is a gathering of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)—organizations that have official status as accredited observers to the U.N. and include such groups as Zero Population Growth, the Audubon Society, the Environmental Forum, and the International Institute for Environment and Development. It is the NGOs that are complaining most about U.S. preparation for Habitat, largely because they feel they are being left out.

One aspect of U.S. participation in Habitat that has made the NGOs particularly unhappy has to do with what is called our “national report.” Habitat requests each government to prepare a report on its national problems with human settlements and its approaches to solving them. The NGOs see in this a golden opportunity for government and citizens groups to get together to produce a first-rate analysis of the situation in the United States. Instead, the Department of State, which is coordinating U.S. participation, is planning to submit an updated version of a biannual report that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has been writing for Congress since 1970.

The NGOs have been lobbying for a fresh report and, inasmuch as they feel they have real expertise on issues such as

land use, population growth, and energy, they have been calling for public meetings at which they can be heard. But they have had to settle for regional meetings—held in late October and early November on very short notice—on the updated HUD report—the 1976 Report on National Growth and Development.*

Last August, the Environment Forum wrote to the Department of State and the U.S. advisory committee on Habitat to state its “conviction” that the growth report, “however updated to 1976 it might be, is inappropriate and unacceptable as a substitute for an official United States National Report to the Habitat Conference.” The forum particularly objects to use of the growth report in light of the fact that the government is going to spend about \$600,000 on it. “If that amount of money or any amount of money is available, it is all the more inexcusable to propose using a routine domestic report of limited scope.” The forum said the report was “not in keeping with the dignity of the nation.”

Although the 1976 growth report has yet to be completed, a reading of the 1974 report tells why the NGOs would like to see the United States prepare a separate national report for Habitat. The 1974 report is an optimistic little document some 100 pages long that is utterly devoid of specific recommendations about planning policy. Apparently the original draft of the report contained 128 recommendations that were deleted somewhere along the way. Instead, the sterling 1974 document tells us right off that “However the individual may define quality of life . . . he would have to conclude that life has generally improved in quality.” In case you are not sure how to measure quality, the report offers this definition. “People share a common interest in the quality and privacy of their housing, in being able to drive the highways of their country or walk the streets of their cities without fear. People want readily available and affordable health services. They want equal access to job opportunities which offer fulfillment. They want a chance to improve their lot through education, and they want free time to enjoy the pleasures of an affluent society.” According to the government, life has improved in these regards during the past few years. According to the NGOs, the United States would look pretty silly taking such a position before the world.

Habitat, if it comes off, is meant to put aside cosmetic rhetoric and address problems squarely. Whether that will happen, of course, remains to be seen, but it ap-

pears that Secretary General Penalosa is doing his best to set a realistic tone to the proceedings. Speaking at the A.U. symposium, Penalosa talks about the possible, not the ideal. Referring to future policy recommendations from Habitat, he said, “We may have to foster substandard housing because it is better than subhuman,” and pointed out that many of the things Westerners consider “standard” simply are more than the governments of developing nations can afford. “It is absurd,” he said, for example, “to think that the Indian government can provide a two-room house for every family” or that every dwelling in a developing country can be expected to have running water. One solution to world problems, Penalosa suggested, “may lie in scaled down expectations. If we cannot bring water to every home, maybe we can bring it to every community. If we can’t bring doctors, maybe we can bring paramedics.”

The “solutions” side of the Habitat conference is designed in part to address this kind of problem by creating a showcase in which governments can show what they and their people have done for themselves. Considerable emphasis is being placed on audiovisual presentations at Habitat that are meant to show specific examples of solutions (or attempted but unsuccessful solutions) to specific problems. More than 100 nations are preparing 230 films and slide shows that are meant to be an integral part of the conference, not just a minor distraction as the exhibitions at scientific conferences so often are. The point is to inform nations about what others are doing in the hope that someone will learn something useful and applicable back home.

—BARBARA J. CULLITON

RECENT DEATHS

Herbert M. Bergamini, 85; former associate professor of traumatic surgery, Columbia University; 23 October.

Raymond T. Carhart, 63; head of audiology, communicative disorders department, School of Speech, Northwestern University; 2 October.

William B. Kouwenhoven, 89; professor emeritus of engineering, Johns Hopkins University; 10 November.

Alfred Lande, 86; professor emeritus of theoretical physics, Ohio State University; 30 October.

Oliver C. Lockhart, 96; former professor of economics, Ohio State University; 28 October.

Stanley G. Palmer, 88; former dean of engineering, University of Nevada, Reno; 31 October.

*The Report on National Growth and Development, required by a 1970 law, is prepared by the Department of Housing and Urban Development under the direction of a committee of the Domestic Council.