

health & welfare

Aging and Health: More Information

By Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw

To continue from last month our listing of good sources of information about aging and how to improve your health:

Supernutrition, by Richard Passwater (New York: B.J. Publishing, 1975, \$2.50 paper). This book is seven years old and, consequently, somewhat out of date. However, it was a bit ahead of its time, so there is much of value remaining. For example, it contains cogent explanations for the layman of what free radicals are and how they cause much of the damage that produces aging, cardiovascular disease, and cancer, to name a few. This alone is worth the price of the book. There is also an informative discussion of why cholesterol-reducing diets usually do little, if any, good in preventing heart attacks. There are recommended nutrient regimens—somewhat conservative, by our standards—and uses for individual nutrients are generally well explained. One complaint we have is the rather dry, dull style in which the book is written. Two pages of references are included.

Vitamin B6: The Doctor's Report, by John M. Ellis, M.D., and James Presley (New York: Harper & Row, 1973; out of print, but worth looking for in the used book market). This is a book about clinical results obtained by a doctor with the use of relatively high doses of vitamin B-6 for symptoms of arthritis. The book focuses on practical use of the vitamin rather than explanations of mechanisms. (Vitamin B-6 is an important antioxidant nutrient. A deficiency of B-6 in persons consuming a diet high in meat, for example, can result in the development of atherosclerosis. That is because the methionine in the meat is converted to a substance called homocysteine, which is an oxidant that can promote the damage that causes atherosclerosis. Normally, homocysteine is converted to cystathionine, which is an antioxidant. However, the latter conversion requires plenty of vitamin B-6.) There are nine pages of references.

Vitamin E for Ailing and Healthy Hearts, by Wilfrid E. Shute, M.D. (New York: B.J. Publishing, 1972, \$1.95 paper). Anyone who plans to use doses of vitamin E of 200 IU or more per day, or

who plans to use vitamin E and has a damaged (particularly rheumatic) heart, should read this book. The famous Shute Clinic in Canada has treated about 40,000 patients with vitamin E, and much of the experience is reported here. The book explains how to use the vitamin and the side effects that may be encountered. For example, when vitamin E is first used there may be a transitory blood pressure elevation. That could be important if a person taking vitamin E has high blood pressure. Also, it is possible to get differential benefits in a damaged heart, so that some parts become stronger sooner than other parts, resulting in a strain on the weaker areas. It's all here in this book. There are five pages of references. Highly recommended.

The Healing Factor, by Irwin Stone (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1972, \$2.95 paper). This is an excellent book on vitamin C and its many uses. The bibliography (53 pages!) is a good one, with many references to the primary scientific literature. Stone even explains in the beginning how man and all other primates came to be dependent on the environment for their vitamin C (through the loss of an enzyme necessary to manufacture C in our bodies). Dr. Stone, who first interested Linus Pauling in vitamin C, explains how to use vitamin C for herpes and other viral infections, bacterial infections, cancer, heart attacks and strokes, aging, arthritis and rheumatism, allergies, ulcers, diabetes, hypoglycemia, stress, pollution, poisons, wounds, pregnancy, and even mental illnesses. Vitamin C, for example, has been found of value in the treatment of schizophrenia. And vitamin C is required in the brain's manufacture of many neurotransmitters (substances used by brain cells to communicate with each other). Highly recommended.

Nutrition against Disease, by Roger J. Williams (New York: Bantam Books, 1973, \$2.25 paper). This is an excellent introduction to the field of nutrition, with many references to original scientific papers, written by the scientist who first identified, isolated, and synthesized pan-

tothenic acid, vitamin B-5. He also did pioneer work on folic acid and gave it its name. There are 31 pages of references. Highly recommended.

Vitamins and You, by Robert J. Benowicz (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1979, \$5.95 paper). Robert J. Benowicz used to work for the Food and Drug Administration. He believed the agency's claim that most people can get all the nutrition they require with a knife and fork (in their diet). Benowicz decided to write a book exposing the use of vitamin supplements as a hoax. Being a real scientist, however, he did some literature searching on the subject and found, to his surprise, that the scientific literature didn't support the notion that all nutritional needs can be obtained from even a good diet. When Benowicz tried to bring these facts to the attention of his superiors, he was rebuffed. He quit the agency after that, calling it a "Kafkaesque organization." This book is a good survey of vitamins, as found in the diet and in supplementation. It has one and a half pages of references.

Regulating New Drugs, edited by Richard L. Landau (Chicago: University of Chicago Center for Policy Study, 1973, \$5.50 paper). This economic study provides an excellent analysis of the effects of regulations on drug innovation and production in this country. Of particular interest is Dr. Sam Peltzman's section, "The Benefits and Costs of New Drug Regulation." He found that, considering costs and benefits, consumers were losing at least \$250,000,000 per year (in late 1960s dollars) as a result of drug regulations requiring proof of efficacy (the 1962 Kefauver Amendments) using a set of assumptions that are incredibly charitable to the FDA. Dr. Peltzman has shown that these amendments, which have increased the costs of and delayed drug approval, have provided no significant increase in either safety or efficacy. He has also demonstrated that the health costs of a three-month delay in introducing a new drug exceed the health costs of a West German thalidomide maxi-disaster once each decade! This book is a real eye opener.

Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw are consulting scientists, authors, and TV personalities.

A list of scientific literature on this topic is available through REASON. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope and ask for H&W references, January.

We invite questions of general interest from our readers. Send your query along to REASON Health & Welfare, Box 40105, Santa Barbara, CA 93103.

(A limited number of reader questions can be answered in print; personal replies cannot be made.)

spotlight

Canadian Walker Makes Market Talk

By Patrick Cox

Canada is just to the north of the continental United States; its government, just to the left. In Canada, as in the United States, government is the occupation of a minority who enjoy the profession and does not necessarily reflect the views of the citizenry. The federal and provincial governments of Canada have managed to gain control over practically every aspect of Canadians' lives. Agriculture, medical care, housing, and banking are even more under the bureaucratic thumb in the land of the maple leaf than next door in the USA. And the government is aggressively encouraging nationalism, moving to rid Canada of foreign business interests as well as American television shows. But Dr. Michael Walker thinks that the Canadian people are beginning to assert their own individual sovereignties.

Michael Walker was born in Newfoundland to a man who went to work in the coal mines of Nova Scotia when he was orphaned at the age of 14. Walker says that his father decided after five years in the mines that "if they had to blindfold horses to get them into the mines, they were no place for him."

Young Michael went on to college, and it was in econometrics and monetary theory that he excelled. He earned his doctorate at the University of Western Ontario, where he worked on the cutting edge of econometric research. (For our readers who are not familiar with econometrics, it is a mathematical branch of economics using high-powered statistical methods to measure and analyze economic relationships.)

Walker was caught up in the general enthusiasm of the period. "It was believed," he says in retrospect, "that with a mathematical model of the economy, government could fine tune all the social problems out." Armed with his considerable econometric skills, he went to work for the federal Bank of Canada and later as a consultant to the Policy Branch of the federal Department of Finance.

Somewhere along the line, though, Walker began to lose faith in the very idea of mathematically controlling the multitudes of individuals who make up "the economy." He rejected his "mech-



Michael Walker

anistic" views of the economy, instead coming to see it as an "organic" system. He was ready when a former classmate, Csaba Hajdu, approached him in 1974 about the possibility of setting up an organization meant to counter the liberal economic ideas that have held sway in Canada since the election of the Trudeau government in 1968.

Along with economists Sally Pipes and John Raybould, Walker formed the Fraser Institute in 1975, with Walker as director. A group of businessmen put up the initial funds for the institute, and he managed to convince them that intellectual husbandry yields greater benefit than direct political involvement. The decision was made to locate the think-tank in Vancouver, British Columbia—far away from Ottawa, the Canadian version of Washington, D.C. As the institute has grown in prestige and influence, the Canadian government has several times offered to put the organization on the dole, but Walker has always refused tax monies because they are not strings-free.

As Walker and the group mapped out a strategy for attacking Canadian statism, they were blessed by a visit from Antony Fisher, England's foremost free-market spokesman and himself the founder of London's Institute of Economic Affairs. Having overcome obstacles similar to those facing the fledgling Fraser Institute, Fisher was able to offer expert guidance. "He knew more about our problems than we did," Walker says. Fisher also introduced many of his own large Canadian financial contributors to

the Fraser Institute. Today, the institute is operating on about \$600,000 a year and has registered as a nonprofit foundation in the United States.

As the free-market philosophy has gained in international respectability, Walker has come to represent it in Canada. He spends most of his time now giving speeches and his opinion to those who ask for it and has come to be called the "Milton Friedman of Canada." He does not sound exactly like the Chicago monetarist, though. He gives away his Canadian roots when he talks about the joys of getting his hands greasy and working on his 280 "Zed" or getting government "aoot" of the marketplace.

Much of the success of the Fraser Institute has come "aboot" through its 25 published books. It has pulled off a minor miracle with six Canadian bestsellers, all serious economic works. Most notable is the popular *How Much Tax Do You Really Pay?* Over 120 authors have been published under the Fraser label, including Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, Martin Feldstein, Thomas Sowell, George Stigler, Walter Williams, and Richard Lipsey. "Virtually every Canadian university is using some of our books," Walker says, "and many are using all of them." In the United States, too, *Oil in the Seventies*, for example, and *The Illusion of Wage and Price Controls* are in use. The institute also conducts workshops and seminars for academic, business, and government people. The media have taken notice; in the past year, 40,000-plus column inches and hundreds of hours of radio and television have been devoted to the think tank and its work.

Walker says that he is not interested "in fiddling with economic policy" in an attempt to change society a little bit at a time. "I'd still be in government if I was. I'm interested in the 'Big Change.' My view is that we have to do an end run around the whole process." Citing the growth in attention to and support for the free-market position, Walker is confident that the Big Change will happen in the not-too-distant future in North Americans. North Americans, he says, "have been mugged by reality. Reality has simply overtaken them," and they are no longer swallowing the liberal "solutions." "It's not so much a philosophical revolution as a utilitarian revolution. People are just learning what works."

Patrick Cox is a free-lance writer.