

There are certain other features in timber utilisation which are of importance in our country. Timber is the material *par excellence* for construction by the villager. Thus, for example, the low first cost and easy workability of timber must be exploited to the utmost in the solution of our rural transport problem. In these areas, the traffic does not warrant the heavy outlay on steel bridges to span the innumerable streams which often maroon entire villages. Treated, prefabricated timber bridges would offer a solution. Suitable type designs could be prepared; and the small timber members going into such a structure could generally be had in the neighbourhood of the site itself. The carpentry and the labour for erection could be provided by the village community itself. The preservative material and the fasteners are the only materials to be "imported". Unlike in steel construction, the greater part of the material and labour would be indigenous and thus contribute largely to its total low cost, and keep even this little money within the community. If the traffic should develop beyond the capacity of such a modest structure, or at the end of its normal life—which need be no more than ten to fifteen years—another bridge could easily be built.

In India, institutions designed and devoted to timber research are woefully few. And these few are doing pioneer work, often against odds. They can no more than touch the fringe of the problem. But, their work has already succeeded in putting some "condemned" species on the utilisation map

of the country. Such, for example, is the gradual replacement by indigenous timbers of imported ash and hickory handles. They have done a great deal to educate the public on timber preservation. They have also been directly responsible for the starting of a few timber industries. This should be viewed as no more than a promise of what could be done. Japan, for example, has transformed the humble bamboo into a prime constructional material. The same can and must be done for Indian timbers. Unlike in temperate climates, the number of species in Indian forests are bewildering and neither are the crops homogeneous. The country is so vast that not only do the species differ from region to region but the properties of the same species vary according to its habitat. These complications necessitate sustained research in laboratories devoted to forest products and strategically located all over the country. The work of these institutions has to be planned and translated into industrial practice through a *liaison* agency. And finally the innate conservatism of the consumer and any of his prejudices against timber must be combated by intelligent and sustained propaganda coupled with readily available instruction on the most effective and modern methods of using timber. Such a planned programme does involve considerable outlay. Experience in other countries has proved such expenditure to be good investment. There is no reason to believe that it would be otherwise in India.

MR. D. N. WADIA, M.A., B.Sc., F.G.S., F.R.A.S.B., F.N.I.

WE have very great pleasure in announcing the award, by the Council of the Geological Society of London, of the LYELL MEDAL to Mr. D. N. Wadia, Government Geologist, Ceylon. According to the conditions of the 'Lyell Geological Fund', this Medal is awarded annually by the Geological Society "as a mark of honorary distinction and as an expression on the part of the Governing Body of the Society that the Medallist has deserved well of the science", and the award of this medal to Mr. Wadia this year is an honour which he richly deserves. Mr. Wadia is well known as one of the foremost Indian geologists in the country, and both as a teacher of Geology as Professor in the Prince of Wales College at Jammu, and later, as an active and enthusiastic field geologist on the staff of

the Geological Survey of India, Mr. Wadia has contributed in no small measure to the promotion and progress of geological studies in India. Apart from this, he has all along taken considerable interest and played a prominent part in the work of the various scientific bodies in India, in recognition of which honours and distinctions have been freely conferred upon him. Ever since its inception, *Current Science* has been fortunate in securing Mr. Wadia's wholehearted support and co-operation; and we take this opportunity of offering him our sincere felicitations on the signal honour that has now been conferred upon him by the Geological Society of London. We wish Mr. Wadia many more years of active service in the cause of science in India.