

## INDIAN SCIENTISTS' DELEGATION ABROAD

**CURRENT SCIENCE** (December 1944) briefly noticed the activities of the Indian Scientists' Delegation in the United Kingdom and recorded its arrival in Washington on the 11th December 1944. Recent press messages indicate that the Delegates had completed their eight-weeks' programme in the States and private advice since received expect the Delegation back in India sometime during the third week of this month (February).

An extensive tour for the Delegation had been arranged by the State Department and the Indian Agent-General whereby the members visited the leading American Laboratories of the Industrial Establishments, the Universities and of Government Departments. The general impression of the Delegation may perhaps be best summarised in the words of Sir J. C. Ghosh who, at the conclusion of this countrywide tour, commented as follows to a press representative at Washington: "The scientific research laboratories of the United States appear to be the best equipped by men of outstanding ability and high distinction. Fifty years ago, young Americans of great ability were sent in large numbers to scientific laboratories in Western Europe for training and research. To-day, America is outstanding in the field of scientific discovery and the trend is in the other direction. We were particularly impressed with the research laboratories in the United States' industries. Much of the work done there is of a fundamental nature although a considerable portion of the work relate to immediate industrial problems. The equipment in the science laboratories and the men in charge of them and the funds at their disposal are far superior to what we have seen in other parts of the world. As a matter of fact, in no laboratory we visited was the annual expenditure less than five million dollars."

It is specially gratifying to learn from the leader of the Delegation, Sir S. S. Bhatnagar (who told reporters in New York) that the Mission was "particularly successful in contacting big business and in seeing the most advanced modern research laboratories in the world" and that they had "collected information which will be of great interest to Indian industry and Government".

The case for American assistance to Indian economic expansion was succinctly put by Dr. Nazir Ahmad in his speech at the Lunch given to the Delegation by the Advertising Club of New York which includes some of the most outstanding American industrialists and business executives. Dr. Ahmad gave three reasons: "First, the world is a small place to-day and an undeveloped country remains a potential source of economic disruption. If developed, it will become a profitable market for highly industrialised countries. Secondly, India and America have been brought close together by bonds of commonly shed blood in

defence of liberty and human rights. These bonds must not be allowed to break. Thirdly, the United States recognises the necessity of living with the rest of the world as equal members of one community."

The successful conclusion of the Mission's visits to the United Kingdom and the United State should not blind one to the fact that practical results of immediate consequence to Indian science and industry will depend on the action taken by the authorities here after the Delegates return home. The members have had exceptional opportunities of seeing what is being done by two of the leading Nations in the world in fostering science. They have also acquired first-hand knowledge of the possibilities of training our own men in the renowned scientific institutions of these two countries. And they do know in great detail the exact requirements of Indian science and the lacunæ in our scientific organisation. It is therefore but natural that great hopes should be raised by these visits of the Delegation. May they soon come to fruition!

These hopes are strengthened by evidence pointing that Indian authorities have already begun taking action in some directions. Thus recently there appeared a press communique announcing the outlines of a scheme by the Government of India to train 500 students abroad in several branches of science and technology. Again, Sir A. V. Hill, speaking at the Royal Society (31-1-1945) stated that "It seems likely that the Government of India will set up an Indian Scientific Office in London. Possibly even an Indian Scientific *Liaison Service* will be established with its headquarters in Delhi, its main overseas office in London and branches in other countries."

These schemes no doubt cost money. In this connection, it is interesting to recall the suggestion made that part of the Indian accumulation of sterling in England should be utilised for this purpose—the *Manchester Guardian* going so far as to say "... But if Indians are wise they will take as much payment as they can in coin of knowledge. Education and training of Indian research workers and technicians abroad is an essential condition for the success of the great industrialisation plan."

The outlook for Indian science thus appears to be very bright indeed. Public opinion in India was never more keen than to-day in reorganising the role of science in contributing to the welfare of the country. The money required to finance these schemes is, as the *Manchester Guardian* points out, available. And, in the best traditions of the internationalism of science, the authorities in both the United Kingdom and the United States offer their fullest co-operation in this matter to India. *Current Science* hopes that the visits of our scientific ambassadors abroad will enable Indian science to take the fullest advantage of these propitious circumstances and formulate and translate into action a scheme for the planned development of Indian scientific research.