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SCIENTIFIC AWAKENING

PROFESSOR A. V. HILL'S dynamic visit to twelve Indian cities between mid-November, 1943, and early April, 1944, gave much comfort to the scientific community, and he now gladly testifies to the great goodwill universally manifested towards his mission. This lay in acquainting himself with the state of scientific and industrial research in this country, and thus equipping himself to advise the Secretary of State on the organization of scientific endeavour as a part of Indian post-war reconstruction; and on its co-ordination with similar activities in Britain. His report* is rich in proposals directed towards development of Indian resources in men and material; its interest and importance are outstanding.

Immediately on his return, Prof. Hill procured an official invitation to a group of Indian scientists led by Sir Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar, Head of the Board of Scientific and Industrial Research, to visit British factories, laboratories and institutions concerned with linking scientific procedure to public needs. This embassy having later journeyed to the United States and Canada, returned to India in mid-February, and it is reasonable to hope that its members may come to be regarded as apostles of a new era; for their unique experience will authorise them to select and urge the adoption of such among Prof. Hill's proposals as they deem best applicable to Indian conditions.

The first of these relates to medical education, upon which as a physiologist Prof. Hill is highly qualified to judge, and his verdict is that the development of scientific medicine requires one first-class department of physiology at which teachers and research workers of a new standard and a new outlook will be neared, and thence distributed throughout the country. There is the same need for intensified "anatomy and pharmacology in the medical colleges; and there is little provision for psychology. Biochemistry is in rather better case because it has developed a certain independence of medicine, has had a special part to play in relation to nutrition and has connections with agriculture and industry. It will be a pity, however, if biochemistry is encouraged to develop mainly as a branch of chemistry in order to avoid the narrowness and penury of the medical connection. It should be just as closely in touch with physiology, pathology and medicine as with chemistry, agriculture and industry."

This proposal calls for an All-India Medical Centre, "an Indian Johns Hopkins", throughout staffed by the ablest people available anywhere, employed full-time and adequately paid. The selected students should be graduates in arts or science, and when requiring monetary help should receive enough to cover their long training with the aim of producing future leaders among medical teachers, researchers and practitioners. Moreover, selection should be regardless of all considerations other than quality, because "if any reason whatever were accepted for admission other than ability and character the project would lose at once a large part of its value." Greatly improved health being India's first need, the All-India Medical Centre should be established at a cost of Rs. 7 to 10 crores in the capital city, and might form a suitable national memorial to the Indian Forces, whose gallantry in World

* *Scientific Research in India.* Professor A. V. Hill, M.P., Sc.D., Sec.R.S. (Government of India Press, Simla), 1944, pp. 40.