

THE FUTURE OF SCIENCE IN INDIA

IN a message to the Thirty-fourth Session of the Indian Science Congress, held at Delhi, during the first week of January 1947, Sri. C. Rajagopalachari, Education Minister, Government of India, declared :

"India has in recent times produced eminent men of science, some of whom have found places in the front rank of world scientists. Young men are working in several research institutes in India at problems of first-rate importance. We may be sure that the genius of India will once again find expression in scientific research as it did in ancient times.

In no country in the world did intuition come so near to the discoveries and hypotheses of modern science as the intuition of the philosophers of ancient India. If there is any one centre which we could treat as the earliest starting point from where systematic scientific knowledge spread to all parts of the world, ancient India is entitled to that honour. The amount of astronomical and mathematical knowledge that we find in Sanskrit books is a matter for wonderment. There are some who, instead of tracing the current of knowledge from India through Greece to Arabia and to Europe, would prefer to treat Greece as the source from which India borrowed. Even if this theory should be accepted, it would not be a small achievement for India, for it would mean that the astronomers and mathematicians and men of medicine in India of those days could accept and assimilate such a volume of knowledge from a distant country like Greece. The wave of scientific interest and the application of Indian talent in the progress of

science in the present times are, therefore, in accord with the ancient genius of India.

India's acknowledged political leaders also are scientific in their outlook and approach. Those who know Gandhiji intimately will see in everything that he does an uncompromising scientific attitude. He is impatient with inaccuracy and looseness of thought or inference. Even in what may appear to be unmodern in his activities, the true scientists would find in Gandhiji a brother-searcher of truth, who works with such tools as he has in strict accordance with scientific method.

The same is the case with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It is not merely his position in Government that qualifies him to preside over the Delhi Session of the Indian Science Congress. His heart and his intellect throb in resonance with modern science. His taking the chair at the Science Congress and laying the Foundation-Stone of the National Physical Laboratory will give increased stimulus to original scientific research in India concurrent with political rebirth. It will be a source of inspiration and strength to all the young men in the universities who are devoting their talents to scientific studies.

Science, art and culture are not less important than politics. As long as a foreign Power had imposed its rule on us, and a struggle had to be carried on, politics had an inflated value. With freedom, things assume their real proportions. Henceforth politics will not be an obsession dominating and corrupting everything. Science as well as art and culture will be more important than Government or the controversies of politics."

SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL CONCORD

WELCOMING the Delegates to the 34th Session of the Indian Science Congress at Delhi, Sir Maurice Gwyer, Vice-Chancellor of the Delhi University and Chairman of the Reception Committee, said :—

"Your visit this year takes place in more than usually auspicious circumstances; first, because this is a moment of great importance in the history of India, when the eyes of the whole country are turned towards Delhi; and secondly, because among those who are joining in our discussions is an exceptionally distinguished body of scientists from other lands; and for these two reasons alone the present session of the Science Congress will always be regarded as a historic event.

I am told that never before have scientists from so many foreign countries met together on the soil of India. They have come from the United Kingdom and the United States, from Canada, from Russia, from France, from China, and from Australia. This is itself a very noteworthy thing, and we in Delhi, appreciate the compliment which it implies. But above all, it is the greatest proof which could be given of the essential unity of science and of the common ground on which men of science, no matter what their race or nationality, are able to meet.

That there is a sphere in which such a common ground exists is no small thing at the present day, and we may all be grateful to the scientists for affording us so inspiring an example of international concord and co-operation. It is a happy augury that it comes to soon after the U.N.E.S.C.O. meeting in Paris, at which the delegates from India, some of whom are here to-day, took so prominent and effective a part.

We have seen in Delhi this week three gatherings of learned men, we have welcomed a Congress of Philosophers, a Congress of those engaged in the study of politics, and to-day we welcome the Science Congress, which embraces them all. All these gatherings, have for their object the pursuit of truth in one form or another; and it might be hard to say which body finds its material the most intractable. Some might say that in the case of the science of politics truth lies at the bottom of a deeper well; but the students of that subject do not regard this fact as presenting any insuperable obstacle to their researches. And it has been an inspiring spectacle to see gatherings of so many men searching for truth in all its many-sided aspects, not for gain or glory, but because truth is to them the most important thing in all the world.