

SCIENCE NOTES AND NEWS

S.-E. Asia Science Office

A Science Co-operation Office to serve as an information bureau for the nations of South-East Asia is being established in New Delhi by the U.N.E.S.C.O.

Dr. Alexander Wolsky, Hungarian Zoologist, will be in charge of the office which will serve India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, Singapore and Indonesia. An office in Nanking will cater to the interests of the Far Eastern countries.

The organisation will seek to bring scientists of South-East Asia into contact with one another and to make available to them the findings of scientists elsewhere in the world. The office will also serve as a bureau for the exchange of information and publications. Data will be available on scientific apparatus.

The Science Co-operation Office will work through institutes of science, universities and appropriate Government Ministries. The set up will comprehend all branches of Natural Science—physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, geology, geography, mineralogy and related subjects.

Development of the Forest College at Coimbatore

An expansion of the Forest College at Coimbatore which, at the moment, provides only a Ranger's Training course, is contemplated by the Government of India. So far, Dehra Dun Forest College was the only centre in India, which provided facilities for higher training and research in Forestry. Officers for the Indian Forest Service were recruited from among the students of the Dehra Dun College. According to the present scheme, Coimbatore will have similar facilities and enjoy a higher status. The Institution will cater to the needs of South India and extend its hospitality to students from Ceylon, Malaya and Burma. It is hoped that Coimbatore which has built up a strong tradition for agricultural research and development will develop a strong school of research and tackle problems pertaining to economic products like sandal which constitutes an exclusive forest crop of the Deccan Plateau.

Nuclear Physics at the Calcutta University

Early in 1940, the Dorabji Tata Trust, Bombay, generously donated Rs. 60,000 towards the cost of installing a cyclotron and at the time great hopes were entertained that radio-active isotopes would be made available to biochemists and medical men. For some reason or other these hopes have not yet been realised, and we are happy to learn that there has been revival of the proposal which, this time, appears to be taking a more practical shape.

The progressive Government of West Bengal have sanctioned a grant of 2 lakhs of rupees

for an Institute dedicated to fundamental research in nuclear physics under the auspices of the University of Calcutta. Laying the Foundation Stone of the Institute, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee declared that India could not remain a mere spectator in the grand drama of human achievement, particularly when she had all the raw materials in plenty for the development of atomic energy. He hoped that within their own life-time, discoveries in this field might influence every phase of human life.

In a project of this kind it is not the funds nor the availability of raw materials which matters, it is the lack of trained personnel with practical knowledge and experience. The most effective way of meeting this deficiency and the one which is usually adopted by all progressive countries, is to invite a few eminent scientists from abroad for initiating and organising these studies. Such men are available and would be willing to accept such responsibilities for a short period. It is, however, a matter of some satisfaction that a good number of Indian scholars are now obtaining the necessary experience in the experimental aspects of nuclear physics, biochemistry and medicine, and it is hoped that these young and enthusiastic workers will constitute a brilliant team and build up a school of nuclear studies in this country.

National Central Library for India

The Government of India have appointed an Expert Committee to consider and report on the advisability of establishing a National Central Library in India. It is proposed that one of the sections of this Library should be a Central Copyright Library to which a copy of all publications published in India will be sent.

Dr. Tara Chand, the Educational Adviser to the Government of India, is the Chairman of the Committee, and Mr. B. S. Kesavan, Librarian, Imperial Library, Calcutta, is the Secretary of the Committee.

The terms of reference of the Expert Committee are to consider and report on (a) the scope of legislation, if any, for establishing a National Central Library; (b) the functions of the Library; (c) the administration and staff, building, etc., needed; (d) finances; and (e) the relation of the National Central Library with (i) the Imperial Library, Calcutta, (ii) the Central Secretariat Library and other Central Government Libraries, and (iii) Provincial Libraries.

The Committee held its first meeting in Delhi in the first week of April.

Drug Museum for India

A number of crude drugs of vegetable origin as well as a number of fixed and essential oils have been collected for the work of the

Indian Pharmacopoeial List Committee of the Government of India. This collection with proper labelling and the herbarium sheets of most of them has been sent to the Director-General, Indian Medical Service, by Mr. S. N. Bal, a member of the Committee, to form the nucleus of a drug museum, according to the report of the Botanical Survey of India, for 1945-46.

Though the gallery of the Industrial Section of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, was closed to the public during this period, the Department continued to supply information regarding the botanical products of India to Military and Civil Hospitals, Medical Institutions and Industrial concerns.

The Botanical Society of Bengal, Calcutta

The Annual Report for 1947-48 records the activities of the Society during the year which includes the presentation of seven original papers and the holding of a special symposium on the "Scope of Cultivation of Indigenous Medicinal Plants in India". The Society issued its first bulletin in April 1947 but due to "financial limitations", the second issue could not appear. We are afraid that the multiplication of journals in India in the present stage of our science, is undesirable; it is far wiser to make use of the existing journals, and extend our support to them. Individual societies can always obtain reprints of their contributions for distribution among their members. This procedure, if adopted, would prove economical and serve to consolidate the position of existing scientific journals in India.

Zoological Society of India

The following Members of the Executive Council were elected at the annual meeting held at Patna in January 1948:—*President*: Dr. S. L. Hora; *Vice-President*: Prof. D. R. Bhattacharya; *Secretary*: Hon. Major Dr. M. L. Roonwal; *Editor*: Prof. K. N. Bahl; *Treasurer*: Dr. B. S. Chauhan; *Members*: Dr. N. K. Panikkar, Prof. M. A. Moghe, Dr. B. N. Chopra, Dr. Bhattacharya, Dr. G. D. Bhalerao, Dr. D. V. Bal, Dr. T. J. Job. It is intended to bring out the first volume of the *Journal of the Zoological Society of India* this year. Papers intended for publication, which should either be original contributions or critical reviews of current researches, not published elsewhere, should be sent either to the Editor (at the Zoology Department, Lucknow University, Lucknow) or to the Secretary (at the Zoological Survey of India, Benares Cantt.). Persons intending to become members should contact the Secretary.

International Congress of Food and Agricultural Industries

The Seventh International Congress of Food and Agricultural Industries will meet in Paris

between the 12th and the 18th July 1948, at the invitation of the French Government.

Monsieur André Mayer, Professor at the College de France, who is Chairman of the Executive Committee of the U.N.O. for Nutrition and Agriculture, will speak on "The Importance of Technical Developments in the Agricultural Industries in the Fight against Malnutrition". Monsieur Bossaert will deal with the problem of stabilising world prices of agricultural raw products.

The Congress will comprise more than thirty sections, dealing with problems of special urgency at the present time. Further details may be had from the Commission Internationale des Industries Agricoles, 18, Avenue de Villars, Paris; 51, Route de Frontenex, Geneva.

Standardisation of Textiles

A delegation of Indian experts, led by Dr. L. C. Verman, it is understood, will be shortly attending a meeting of the International Committee on Textiles, which is an auxiliary body of the International Organisation for Standardisation (I.S.O.). The meeting of the Committee will be held at Buxton (U.K.) on June 14, a day prior to which the Indian Delegation will participate in the Annual Convention of the British Textile Institute. Dr. Verman is also expected to extend his tour to the U.S.A., and Canada with a view to studying at first hand the standardisation activities of the National Standards Bodies of these countries.

Aerosporin for Whooping Cough

Recent work on Aerosporin, isolated from bacillus aerosporus, has shown that this antibiotic is more potent against whooping-cough than streptomycin and sulphonamides. The clinical dosage of Aerosporin has no apparent toxic effects, and the bacteria develop very little resistance to the antibiotic. This is a great advantage not possessed by most other antibiotics. The drug is being now manufactured in Britain.

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan

The British Council has invited Dr. S. R. Ranganathan to visit the United Kingdom as its guest for two or three months this year. Dr. Ranganathan, who will be leaving India at about the end of May, will also visit France and the Netherlands.

While in England, Dr. Ranganathan will visit the most important British libraries and will study the National and County Central Library schemes in operation. He will also teach at the UNESCO Library Summer School, to be held in Manchester in September.