

The All-India Museums Conference.

TO consider what can best be done to improve the condition of the museums of the country the Government of India arranged for a conference of museum curators, which was held in Delhi early in December 1937. An inaugural address was delivered by Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Education, Health and Lands, who entertained the delegates to tea in his garden at the close of the conference, after which facilities were provided for the delegates to visit the museums of either Lahore and Taxila or Dehra Dun. While in Delhi excursions were arranged to archaeological museums and places of historical interest, Rao Bahadur K. N. Dikshit, Director-General of Archaeology in India, entertaining the delegates to tea in the Fort. Dr. F. H. Gravely, Superintendent of the Government Museum, Madras, was elected Chairman of the Conference, which was a large and representative gathering.

The calling together of the Conference at this time was due to the publication of the report on "Museums in India" which formed the subject of our leading article for April 1937, and the resolutions passed, which have recently been received, naturally follow in the main the recommendations of that report, the only important deviation being in regard to means for the better co-ordination of the work of different museums in future.

Resolution I suggests means for stimulating and maintaining public interest in museums. Resolution II deals with the position and training of curators, referring this important but difficult matter to a proposed continuation committee for detailed consideration. Resolutions III and XIV deal with the question of funds. Resolution IV makes concrete proposals for a continuation committee. Resolutions V and XII deal with educational activities. Resolution VI emphasises the position of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, as the national museum of India and advocates its further development as such. Resolutions VII and VIII refer to museum buildings and the desirability of museum legislation respectively. Resolution IX stresses the need for more thorough conservation work, especially on the part of curators themselves.

Resolution X deals with relations between museums for particular sites and those for wider purposes. Resolution XI appeals for the removal, in the case of scientific publications, of the restrictions that have been placed by certain governments on exchange of publications, a system on which scientific libraries are largely dependent for their proper development. And resolutions XIII and XIV refer to the work of Messrs. Markham and Hargreaves, thanking the Carnegie Institution for making it possible and thanking the Government of India for their arrangements for the Conference.

As already mentioned, the only resolution that departs widely from the recommendations of Messrs. Markham and Hargreaves' report is the one dealing with means for continuing the work for which the Conference was called together, *i.e.*, resolution IV. The Report recommended two agencies for this purpose, an Inspector-General of Museums to be appointed by the Government of India, and a Standing Committee on Museums to be re-established with provision of sufficient funds to meet its cost, including travelling allowances, etc. A Museums Association for India is also mentioned as obviously desirable, but dismissed as impracticable at present. The appointment of an Inspector-General of Museums having found favour neither with the Government of India nor with the Museums, the Conference found it necessary to consider whether a Museums Association might not after all be possible, especially as some of its members were already trying to form one in connection with the Oriental Conference, of which the Trivandrum meeting was then to be held in the very near future. Though the wish for such an Association was shared by all members, the difficulties in the way of establishing it immediately were equally apparent and it was finally resolved that "This Conference is of opinion that a Museums Association of India should be established as soon as possible and with this end in view it appoints a Standing Committee to devise ways and means for bringing it into existence, or for making such interim continuation arrangements as may prove to be necessary. This Committee will become the Council of the Association on the formation

of the latter. The Conference considers that it should as far as possible be representative of the different Provinces and principal States." This Committee was instructed to meet immediately in order to appoint an Executive consisting of not more than five members and one secretary, which was done, Mr. S. H. Prater, M.L.A., of the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, being asked to be Secretary. And it was further pointed out that this Committee would not be able to carry on its work without funds for a clerk, type-writer, stationery, etc., as well as for occasional travelling expenses, for which the Government of India was asked to arrange. Such expenses should obviously not be great, however, and could presumably if preferred be contributed by all the various agencies responsible for the upkeep of museums throughout the country, in which case the individual contributions needed would be very small indeed.

In the course of his inaugural address Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai said to the

Conference, "You may rest assured that I have not been sent here to read out what some historian of the future, with a turn for irony, might truthfully describe as the official epitaph of the Markham-Hargreaves' report. The Central Government are genuinely anxious to do whatever in them lies to remedy the defects to which that document has given just prominence." As the first step towards remedying them must clearly, if there is to be no Inspector-General, be the establishment of a small and efficient expert committee to devise ways and means of improvement and to take such further steps as seem most practicable for getting them put into practice, these words can only mean that the Central Government are fully prepared to take the necessary initiative in establishing such a committee on a sound basis. And in the interest of a powerful but much neglected means of developing education and general culture throughout the country we urge them to do so without further delay.

Postulates in the Relativity Theories of Gravitation.*

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SINCE Thomson and Tait published their celebrated work which was known at Cambridge, as the Natural Philosophy of T and T', there have been many theories of gravitation and many relativities. The first noted rebel against Newton was Mach and his clearer conceptions of space, time and inertia have considerably influenced modern research. During the last thirty-five years we have had mathematical relativities due to Einstein, Milne, Synge, Page and Sir Shah Sulaiman. To this list may be added the relativities propounded by philosophers like Broad, Levy and others; but these relativities belong to a different region of thought as a remark from Alexander's work will show, *viz.*, that 'Space is the Body of God and Time is His Soul'. During the last few years and particularly the last few months much basic work has been done on relativistic gravitation from

the mathematical point of view. Important papers have been published by Milne, Robertson, Walker, Hoffmann and Whitrow. Although the treatment in some of these papers is obscured by unfair criticism a few of the conclusions reached go very deep and they explain the interconnections between different theories. One is amazed to see how results proved in the theory of groups more than thirty years ago come out useful in this connection.

In the Newtonian theory gravitation means attraction. In Einstein's theory gravitation is interpreted in terms of Gaussian curvatures for a Riemannian space-time. In Milne's theory gravitation is to be understood from the kinematical consequences of the cosmological principle. The fact is, as Eddington and Milne have stressed, that there is probably no such thing as a law of gravitation: but there are a number of gravitational situations. The gravitational situations are provided by

* From a lecture delivered at the Mathematical Conference, Lucknow, March 16, 1938.