

commiseration into that of bounden duty. By this one observation, the Congress was called upon to decide whether one of "the strongest and soundest links of Empire", in the Prince's words, should be the universities of that Empire.

The question of the financial support of the Bureau arose out of the proposals formulated by the executive committee of that Bureau for its reconstitution. The amended articles of association circulated for consideration by Congress were directed to the creation of a central institution which should be a genuine university organisation. Three main principles were enunciated in these draft articles: that the Empire universities should be the members of the reconstituted Bureau; that these members should pay a fixed annual subscription, the amount of which is to be determined by the members themselves acting through their representatives at the first annual general meeting held after the adoption of the articles; and that the policy and the administration of the Bureau should be controlled by a council composed of twenty-one of these representatives selected by regional groups of university representatives. In considering the proposals of the executive committee, the question that excited the greatest interest at the Congress business meeting was whether the fourteen individuals representing, but not directly responsible to, the Empire universities, who at present constitute the association known as the Universities Bureau, should continue to control and direct its administration; or whether the time has come to express a resolute faith in the solidarity of the universities of the Empire, to create an organisation which shall be truly representative of these universities, and to provide funds which will enable these members to give effect to the late Lord Balfour's policy of "promoting greater co-ordination and power of mutual consultation". A third possibility, which was indirectly raised but was rejected, was whether the Universities Bureau, which has been the creation of the universities themselves, should or should not be dissolved.

Doubt was cast by a few, dwelling in a past of fond imaginings, upon the new form of constitution, and it was even suggested that the scheme promulgated by the committee should be referred back for further consideration by the universities. It is significant, however, that Congress refused to accept this suggestion of flinging the work of two years again into the melting-pot, and satisfied the apprehensions of the ultra-orthodox with the assertion of the principle that the powers of the Universities Bureau of the British Empire should not be exercised in any such way as to restrict the powers and duties exercised by the constituent members under the several charters, statutes, regulations, and other instruments of their self-government.

This discussion finally asserted the view—a view

which was unquestionably a distinctive feature of this Congress—that the Bureau has a definite place in the hegemony of Empire universities. The recognition by the Prince of Wales of the invaluable work done by the Bureau in publishing the "Universities Yearbook", a compendium which, since Sir H. Frank Heath assumed the office of editor, has become of ever-increasing value—by its administration of trusts, by its organisation of congresses and conferences, and by its centralised machinery, was affirmed by Congress itself. Indeed, during the subsequent sessions of Congress, it was frequently suggested that the Bureau might be of greater utility to overseas universities in many more directions than has hitherto been contemplated as feasible.

The addresses delivered by the Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh, in which he hinted at the citizens' pride in their university; by the Marquess of Linlithgow, which in its insistence on the value of the trained mind was tinged with the sage reflections of an administrator; by Lord Meston, who as a layman prescribed not panaceas but useful and suggestive 'dietary' regulations and denounced illusions, clap-trap and clichés, and by Sir Donald MacAlister, who from a wealth of experience warned universities of the dangers arising from overcrowding, directed attention in different ways to some of the more important questions with which universities are faced severally and collectively.

The discussions on the university graduate in commerce and industry, the Ph.D. degree, the conditions of admission to universities, general honours courses, post-graduate study in medicine and surgery, and facilities for overseas students, were all followed with interest by delegates from the universities both at home and overseas. The members of Congress had facilities provided for them to visit the Universities of Oxford, London, Reading, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, their colleges and their departments, and also visited a number of London County Council and other educational institutions, and two of the largest new schools in Edinburgh. The hospitality which was extended to all throughout their stay in London and Edinburgh has left an indelible impression of friendliness and goodwill.

This Congress will have more than served its purpose if it has helped to eradicate that feeling of isolation in which many of the overseas universities have to discharge the trust imposed upon them as repositories of organised knowledge, and to create in them a sense that the kinship of universities is not a localised relationship but is world-wide. It has also served to suggest, and perhaps this is its most remarkable achievement, that it is through a centralised agency that information of value to all parts of the Empire may best be distributed and that a community of interest may be created and maintained at full strength.

Annual Conference of the Museums Association.

THE forty-second annual conference of the Museums Association was held at Plymouth on July 6-11, by invitation of the Mayor and Corporation, who kindly placed at the disposal of the delegates the ancient Prysten House of St. Andrew's Church, now being restored under the name of the Abbey Hall. Here some two hundred delegates assembled under the presidency of Sir Henry A. Miers, whose address dealt with the recent and the impending work of the Association.

The chief event of the year has been the legal incorporation of the Association as a "company limited by

guarantee", and this has led to the recognition of the Association by the Government. A directory of all museums in the British Isles, to which the public has access, has been issued. With the co-operation of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees, a short school for curators was held in London last October, and schools for this autumn are being organised in both London and Edinburgh; to interest educational authorities in the work done by museums in connexion with schools, an exhibition of circulating cases and collections was arranged at the London County Hall; grants to a total of £1220 have been made to six museums to aid

them in reorganising their exhibited collections, and other applications are being considered; to accomplish all this work a permanent office with a paid secretary and staff has been provided.

Other matters on which Sir Henry Miers commented were "the growing magnitude and importance of the *Museums Journal*"; the discussion with the Library Association of needed new legislation for public libraries and museums; the federations of museums in Lancashire and Cheshire and in Yorkshire; the re-organisation of various museums in the direction of local education, as at Portsmouth, Salisbury, Port Sunlight, Wisbech, Norwich, and Aylesbury; and the recent visit of the secretary, Mr. S. F. Markham, M.P., to the United States. More in the future were the suggestions made by the Association to the Standing Commission on Museums; the preparation of a survey of museums throughout the British Empire, and the completion of the directory by a volume including them (this is with the help of the Carnegie Corporation of New York); the growing realisation by the educational departments of the British Government and by the World Institute of Adult Education of the educational possibilities of museums, long since realised by the Association.

The meeting was noteworthy for the increased time devoted to papers and for the animated discussions. Following the president's address, Dr. W. T. Calman, while approving modern attempts to illustrate the problems of biology, urged that on one hand they should be kept distinct from the systematic series, and on the other that there should be an exhibit definitely explaining the principles and main outlines of taxonomy. Mr. J. Bailey, formerly head of the Circulation Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum, complained that the 1924 and 1931 Loans Acts had not been put into operation, at least so far as the Bloomsbury departments of the British Museum were concerned; his view that the national treasures should be more widely lent out did not find much support from subsequent speakers. An instructive talk on "Plymouth Porcelain", illustrated by the epidiascope, was given by Mr. A. J. Caddie, curator of the Plymouth Museum. "Why do we use Plate-glass in Museums?" was the provocative title of Mr. Lency's account of his proposals for an unenclosed reconstruction of the county's natural scene in the Norwich Museum; while sympathising with their colleague's bold and beautiful dream, the practical curators present supplied satisfactory replies to his question.

On Wednesday morning an account of the Courtauld Institute of Art by its director-elect, Mr. W. G. Constable, set at rest doubts that had been raised by the letters of Lord Lee of Fareham and other notices in the daily press. A fluent and witty speech by Mr. S. C. Kaines Smith, director of the Birmingham Museum, on "Art Museum Problems", provoked much applause and some criticism. After this, "A Suggested System of Museum Registration", by Mr.

K. de B. Codrington, of the Indian Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, fell a little flat, though it was clearly the fruit of experience and careful thought; there would doubtless have been more discussion had the author not been prevented by illness from attending. The important but somewhat dry subject of paper for museum labels was made interesting by Dr. L. J. Spencer, Keeper of Minerals in the British Museum.

On Thursday, Lieut.-Col. J. M. Mitchell, secretary of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, expounded the principles of the Trust's action as laid down by its founder, and thus showed what kind of help museums might expect to receive; this was a revelation to many of those present. Mr. H. J. M. Maltby, of the Salford Museum, showed, perhaps unintentionally, that the "Present-Day Problems of Provincial Museums" are much the same as the problems that have vexed curators ever since the Association was founded; among them the local town council looms large.

Friday produced three very diverse papers. Mr. J. H. Iliffe, recently professor at the University of Toronto, in charge of classical archaeology at the Royal Ontario Museum, spoke on "The Museum Situation in Canada", and urged the importance of personal contact between Canadian curators and their colleagues in the home country, so that the latter might realise the great diversity of outlook and the distinctness of the several regions in the Dominion. Dr. C. Hay Murray, of the Liverpool Museum, recounted his attempts at estimating the value of the Museum to the public by the length of time spent in the building by visitors; he had found that the average duration of a visit had notably increased of recent years. The final paper, an account by Mr. C. A. Raleigh Radford of the Roman remains discovered at Exeter by excavation, was a valuable contribution to archaeology, with no obvious bearing on museum questions.

The only exception that could be taken to the number of papers was that they left little time for visits to museums. Members would gladly have given up the walk round Devonport Dockyard for more opportunity of studying the Plymouth Museum and the recently restored Elizabethan house. They were, however, hospitably and instructively entertained at the Marine Biological Laboratory, and were courteously received at the Athenæum, where is a museum said to be one of the oldest in the country and an excellent example of a learned society's museum in the day of our grandfathers. Too short a stay was made among the delights of Cotehele, visited by kind permission of Lady Mount-Edgcumbe. Other grateful entertainments were a luncheon offered by the Mayor, a Mayoral reception and dance at the Guildhall, and tea at the Abbey Hall on the invitation of Lady Astor, who at the annual dinner proposed health and prosperity to the Museums Association.

Imperial Sugar Cane Research Conference, 1931.

THE first Imperial Sugar Cane Research Conference, which was opened on July 20 by Dr. Drummond Shiels, M.P., is the second of these conferences of overseas research and administrative men convened by the Empire Marketing Board on a crop rather than on a science basis. The first was the Wool Research Conference held last year. The object is to get a clear picture of research in widely scattered countries, so that the gaps can be clearly seen and a general programme of research for the Empire worked out.

The Board has already made grants for research in

Mauritius, where a Cane Research Station was started last year, and in Barbados, and it supports the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad, where a beginning has been made in fundamental research on cane genetics. Other applications have been received, and the Board decided to consider the broad questions of research policy and of where the work could best be carried out. Besides delegates from home organisations, such as the Imperial Bureau of Plant Genetics at Cambridge (the director of which, Sir Rowland Biffen, attended the Conference), there