

## Sixth International Botanical Congress

### AMSTERDAM MEETING

**A**BOUT nine hundred members, including delegates from more than fifty countries, attended the sixth International Botanical Congress at Amsterdam in the first week in September. The much-regretted death of Prof. F. A. F. C. Went had, a few weeks previously, deprived the Congress of its president. His place was taken by Prof. J. C. Schoute, who, in welcoming the members at the opening meeting, referred to the great loss to botany and to their regret that the directing hand had been unable to carry the work to completion.

The papers in the various sections were given by invitation of the executive committee, and were grouped under headings. A great variety of subjects were included, of special and general interest, the latter often affording combined meetings with other sections. Thus the evolution of angiosperms interested palaeobotany and taxonomy, flower morphology attracted taxonomists as well as morphologists, and "Taxonomy and Genetics" had an obvious dual interest. Joint discussions were indicated between cytology and genetics, between each of these and mycology, between agronomy and phytopathology or physiology and so on. The programme, a marvel of condensation in three languages, informed members as to subject, date and place of meeting, and a volume of abstracts of the papers provided a useful handbook. Members interested in special studies found opportunity for informal meeting and discussion.

The Nomenclature Section of Taxonomy, under the presidency of Dr. Merrill, worked through a series of proposals, the main purpose of which was to clarify points, where desirable, in the recent edition of the "Rules of Nomenclature". Certain additions suggested by the palaeobotanists to meet difficulties, arising especially from the fragmentary character of the material, were accepted.

An admirable "History of Botany in the Netherlands" had been prepared by the senior secretary, Dr. M. J. Sirks, and a pamphlet by Prof. Leeuw described in detail the Netherlands as an environment for plant life.

Linnaeus was a student at Leyden, and his early botanical work was done in Holland. The bicentenary of the publication of his "Systema Naturæ" (Leyden, 1735) was commemorated by an appropriate exhibit of Linneana at Amsterdam during the Congress.

Days reserved for excursions gave opportunity for visiting botanical laboratories and gardens, as at Utrecht, Leyden, Baarn. Special care was taken by those in charge to make the visits instructive and interesting. The botanical garden at Leyden is one of the oldest in Europe. Founded in 1587, it was laid out under the supervision of Clusius in 1594, and members were shown a replica of his garden recently prepared from an original plan and inventory. More than 1,000 species and varieties were represented, and it showed a character, novel for the time, of a botanical, not merely a medical, garden. At Baarn, the extensive collections of pure cultures of fungi, amounting to 5,000 units, under the care of Dr. Joh. Westerdyk, were visited and at Lisse the admirably equipped bulb research laboratories.

A drive along the old Zuyder Zee and on the dam which now holds back the North Sea was an object lesson in the essentially Dutch art of converting sea-flooded areas into cultivable polderland. Various stages in conversion were seen, culminating in a polder bearing crops and two new villages which five years ago was open sea.

Pleasant social functions were evening receptions by the Netherlands Botanical Society, and, at the Rijksmuseum, by the Netherlands Government; the latter gave opportunity of inspecting the famous picture galleries.

At the final plenary meeting, an invitation from Sweden to hold the meeting in 1940 at Stockholm was accepted. An invitation to meet in South Africa had been withdrawn.

The executive committee is to be congratulated on its successful organisation; special mention is due to the senior secretary, Dr. M. J. Sirks.

A. B. RENDLE.

## Twelfth International Congress of Zoology

### LISBON MEETING

**I**N view of the restrictions on foreign travel imposed in several European countries it was expected that the number of members attending the Congress of Zoology which was held at Lisbon on September 15-21 might fall short of that reached at some previous meetings of the Congress. In the event, however, the number proved to be little, if at all, less than that of the last meeting at Padua in 1930. Under the presidency of Prof. Arthur Ricardo Jorge, some five hundred members took part, and the programme showed about two hundred separate communications to be read either before the full Congress or at the sessions of the twelve sections into which it divided.

At the opening meeting, presided over by the President of the Portuguese Republic, the Minister of Public Instruction welcomed the Congress and delivered an address on the place of biology in education, in which he advocated instruction in the principles of biology as a necessary preparation for the teaching of ethics, civics and even politics.

It is not possible here to enumerate even the more important of the communications made to the Congress, but one or two may be mentioned which, for different reasons, happened to interest members of the British delegation. Prof. R. Anthony (Paris) gave an address on the evolution of the molar teeth in mammals, in the course of which he criticised