

## BRITISH COUNCIL

## REPORT FOR 1944-45

THE report of the British Council for the year ended March 31, 1945, states that at the end of the year the Council had offices in thirty-one foreign countries and British Colonies. Ninety-nine British Institutes and similar centres were operating, and re-establishment was planned of those existing before the War in Greece, Yugoslavia and Italy. Through the Council's agency, thirty-seven British professors and lecturers were appointed between March 1941 and March 1945 to foreign universities and centres of higher education; 161 scholars, mostly post-graduates studying scientific, technical and medical subjects, and teachers of English, brought to the United Kingdom with British Council scholarships, were carrying on their studies at the end, as compared with 83 at the beginning of the period. The outstanding feature of the year was the commencement of work in liberated Europe, and urgent calls for the Council's services led to the appointment of representatives in France, Greece, Italy and Yugoslavia, a preliminary visit to Belgium and the choice of representatives for the Netherlands and Czechoslovakia. Elsewhere the work of the Council was consolidated, in particular in Persia, where teaching activities developed on a substantial scale; in China, where the exceptional activity of the British Council Cultural Scientific Office developed further under Dr. Joseph Needham, and the staff was strengthened by the appointment of Prof. P. M. Roxby of Liverpool as representative; in the Argentine, where several new Argentine-British institutes were established, and in Spain. Sir Angus Gillan visited Australia and New Zealand to measure the support which might be expected for development there, and an institute was opened in Gibraltar. An Agricultural Section of the Science Department in London was established, advised by an Agricultural Panel of the Science Committee under Dr. J. A. Scott-Watson as chairman.

The foregoing general sketch will indicate how closely related is the work of the British Council to the immediate activities contemplated by the Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation of the United Nations, and at the present time its work is also attracting some attention in connexion with the future of British propaganda and the termination of the Ministry of Information. The report supplies a good deal of material for appraisal of the Council's work in relation to the needs of the future. The section of the report dealing with functional activities relating to science will be examined with particular interest by scientific workers. The Council's facilities are often used to establish or re-establish relations between British institutions and the corresponding bodies abroad, and with Sweden the traffic has been particularly lively and opens up interesting relations in the agricultural field. Much work is being done to re-open scientific relations with France, and, omitting China and the U.S.S.R., which are handled by separate sections of the Science Department, scientific transmissions in the last half-year exceeded a hundred. A specialized Information Section is being set up under the direction of Mr. A. A. Gomme, formerly librarian of the Patent Office, and memoranda have been prepared on such subjects as agricultural education in Britain (for Turkey), organisation of scientific research in Britain (for the Argentine) and technical training in university organisation (for Uruguay and

Brazil). A French edition of *Monthly Science News* has commenced circulation in France, and the journal is being distributed in Greece. Circulation is also rapidly increasing in India and the Dominions. *Science Comment* is a stencilled monthly selection of scientific book reviews and abstracts from the learned and professional Press, and fifty bodies now permit reproduction of material from their publications. Of the 1,000 copies now duplicated, 250 go to Spain, 195 to Palestine, and 100 to France. Sweden reduplicates its own edition of more than a thousand, and Chile reduplicates a small edition in Spanish. A section was added recently on the development of scientific films, and the circulation doubled between November 1944 and January 1945. A brief survey was undertaken by the Council of the films which have been made for exclusively scientific purposes, and the first of a series of Council film strips on scientific subjects (Science Series No. 1; Division of the Cell Nucleus) was produced with the co-operation of Dr. C. D. Darlington. The provision of scientific supplies for China continues to increase; about 2,500 books were received from London and distributed, and the number of microfilmed journals reaching Chungking greatly increased. The transmission to British scientific journals of original scientific papers by Chinese authors has continued.

Other activities referred to in the report are the opening of the premises of the Society for Visiting Scientists at Old Burlington Street, London. The circulation of the *British Medical Bulletin* reached a total in all languages of 10,930, and in May 1944 sufficient paper was made available for a limited circulation in the United Kingdom. Many requests continue to be received from abroad for information on medical subjects. The sub-committee on medical films on the Council's Advisory Medical Panel was reconstituted and now includes representatives of the British Medical Association, the Medical Research Council and the Ministry of Health and members with special experience of medical films. A centre has now been established in the Argentine to act as a focus for Argentine-British medical relations.

## RESEARCH COUNCIL OF ALBERTA

THE annual report of the Research Council of Alberta, 1943 (King's Printer, Edmonton, Alberta, 5 cents) states that the present policy of the Council is to submit only brief annual reports to the legislature but to publish, from time to time, detailed reports on specific subjects. The present report is the first in a new series, and gives a general account of the work of the Council during the calendar year 1943. Two investigations in progress on bituminous sands are reported: in the first of these, the study of the hot-water process of separating the oil from bituminous sand has been renewed, but although success has been obtained in the laboratory, large-scale plants have given disappointing results in the production of separated oils free from sand. Tests in the Research Council's laboratories indicate that although ichthyol can be made from the oil, it is unlikely that bituminous sand oil will be a profitable source. In the second investigation, on the vis-breaking of Alberta bitumen, progress was slow, due to difficulties in obtaining equipment.

The Research Council has appointed a compiler to collect and organise the data on the natural resources of the Province, and the main work of the year has