

THE WORLD FEDERATION OF SCIENTIFIC WORKERS

THE first General Assembly of the World Federation of Scientific Workers was held in Czechoslovakia during September 21–25, as guests of the Czechoslovak Association of Scientific Workers. It was attended by thirty-three delegates and observers from thirteen countries (Austria, Britain, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Poland, South Africa and the United States). Observers on behalf of Unesco and the World Federation of Trade Unions were present.

The business sessions were held in the Castle Dobříš, the magnificent country palace belonging to the Czechoslovak Syndicate of Writers, which is about forty kilometres from Prague.

The Assembly was opened by the president of the World Federation of Scientific Workers, Prof. F. Joliot-Curie. Messages of welcome and greeting were received from the Czechoslovak Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Education and Information, Unesco, the World Federation of Trade Unions, the Czechoslovak Trade Unions, the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, and other personalities and institutions.

The chief business of the second session was the presentation and discussion of the secretary-general's report. The secretary-general, Mr. J. G. Crowther, reviewed the activities of the World Federation of Scientific Workers during the two years of its existence. He described how, at the end of the Second World War, associations of scientific workers had spontaneously come into existence in various countries. The formation of a Federation was desirable for the exchange of views, and the formation, so far as possible, of agreed opinions on all questions affecting scientific workers as such.

The World Federation now contains eighteen affiliated organisations, in fifteen countries drawn from all the five continents. The total membership of individual scientific workers is more than twenty-four thousand.

The World Federation has been recognized by Unesco as one of the non-governmental international bodies interested in its work. Accordingly, it was invited to send representatives to the Second General Conference at Mexico City, and to Unesco Commissions on the Popularization of Science and its Social Relations. These representatives proposed that Unesco should found fellowships for research on the social relations of science, an innovation that has been accepted.

The World Federation has initiated a new kind of international ceremony. These are celebrations of great men of science not in the country of their origin. The first was the London celebration of Langevin, the second was the Paris celebration of Rutherford. The third will be in 1949, on the centenary of the birth of Pavlov. The Langevin proceedings have been published, and those of the Rutherford ceremony are in the press.

The resolutions and proposals submitted to the first Assembly were analysed and discussed by four working commissions, dealing respectively with: (a) The Organisation and Social Responsibility of Scientists; (b) Atomic Energy, Secrecy and Peace; (c) Reconstruction, Colonial Countries, and Natural Resources; (d) A World Federation Journal, and Finance.

The reports of the four commissions, after amendment and verbal improvement, were accepted by the Assembly in plenary session. The resolutions dealt with the persecution of scientific workers, the unity of men of science against war, the co-ordination and improvement of abstracting services, international holiday camps for scientific workers, the control of atomic energy, secrecy in science, distribution of radioactive isotopes, scientific development in colonial countries, utilization of world resources, the foundation of a Federation journal, and other topics.

A special resolution was passed welcoming the formation of the Permanent International Committee for Peace by the Wrocław Cultural Congress, and wishing it all success in its struggle for a peaceful world.

The decision to launch a World Federation journal was one of the most important. It is hoped that publication will begin soon, and that the first number will be devoted mainly to a report of the proceedings of the Assembly.

The draft "Charter for Scientific Workers" was discussed in plenary session, and emendations from affiliated associations were incorporated. The Charter was then adopted. The Czechoslovak Minister of Education, M. Z. Nejedlý, who is also president of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, was present at this session. The chairman, Prof. J. Bělehrádek, remarked after the vote that the occasion was historical, for it was the first time in the history of science that scientific delegates from all quarters of the globe had agreed on a definition of their duties and rights as scientific workers.

On the night of September 22 a public meeting on "Science in the Modern World" was held in the Lucerna Hall in Prague. Two thousand persons bought tickets for this meeting. Speeches were delivered by Prof. F. Joliot-Curie (France), Mr. C. M. Liu (China), Prof. S. Maximos (Greece), Dr. K. Z. Bratanoff (Bulgaria), Prof. J. D. Bernal (Britain) and Prof. A. Kolman (Czechoslovakia). Several brilliant speeches were made; but one of the most remarkable was by Prof. Z. Nejedlý, in moving the vote of thanks to the speakers. He revealed an equal understanding in addressing the men of science on one hand, and wit and humour in speaking to the general audience on the other. After the meeting he gave a reception in honour of the Assembly, which was attended by Czechoslovak personalities, the British Ambassador and other members of the Diplomatic Corps.

The Czechoslovak Association of Scientific Workers entertained the members of the Assembly to a two-day tour of their country, in which no less than six hundred kilometres were covered by bus. The main visits were to the Bata works at Zlín, and to Hradec Králové. The famous boot and shoe factory, now nationalized, is at the base of high wooded hills. The architecture is in the most modern functionalist style. Extensions are being built at a great speed, floors being added to buildings at the rate of one a fortnight. The roof of the newest factory is to be a helicopter landing stage. Bata has its own twelve-story hotel. Many of its workers are housed in cubic villas on garden-city lines, and in flats. More than one thousand new flats are under construction. It was stated that Bata employs thirty-two thousand workers, and has a daily output of a hundred thousand pairs of boots and shoes—ninety per cent for export. There is a considerable research organisation, including consumer research. New styles are

tried out on a large scale by employees, who are given the footwear free, and are then asked to report on attractiveness, comfort, wear, etc.

Members of the Assembly also visited the new Medical Faculty, created at Hradec Králové in 1945. The building, which had been a military school, and had been occupied by the Red Army, was vacated

by the Soviet Commander in order to provide accommodation for the new school, with the comment that it was fitting that Mars should make way for Athene.

After visiting the Medical Faculty, the members were received at the Institute of Glass Technology, a research and consulting centre for one of Czechoslovakia's chief industries. J. G. CROWTHER

NEWS and VIEWS

Experimental Zoology at Manchester :

Dr. Ralph Dennell

THE science of zoology underwent a profound change at the end of the First World War. The orthodox approach to the subject through a study of comparative anatomy was largely abandoned, and all energies were devoted to the new outlook afforded by experimental zoology. Despite this complete change-over, no new academic posts were created to cater for this new method of approach. For a short time, there was a readership at Cambridge, but that was all. Now, to fill this obvious want, the University of Manchester has established a full chair in experimental zoology, to which Dr. Ralph Dennell has been appointed. Dr. Dennell has the advantage of having made his name first of all as a functional morphologist. He commenced work on the feeding mechanism of various Crustacea, and later turned his attention to the luminous organs of certain deep-sea prawns. During the Second World War, he undertook a study of the feeding mechanism of the grain weevil, and this led him to an experimental investigation of the process of hardening of the insect cuticle, a problem which he is extending to the whole of the Arthropoda. At present, he is in Bermuda, with a Leverhulme fellowship, studying deep-sea luminous forms.

Assyriology at the British Museum :

Dr. Sidney Smith, F.B.A.

It has been announced that Dr. Sidney Smith has retired from the post of keeper of the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities at the British Museum, and has been succeeded by Mr. C. J. Gadd, formerly deputy keeper of the Department. Dr. Sidney Smith entered the British Museum in 1914 and has been keeper since 1930. There are probably few living Assyriologists who can speak with authority, as he does, not only on textual and philological matters, but also on every subject connected with Near Eastern and Egyptian archaeology. He was one of the first to correlate the complicated stratigraphical and epigraphical data yielded by recent excavations in Syria and the Hatay, and his new scheme of chronology published in 1940 is being accepted by an increasing number of scholars. He is a controversialist who does not tolerate loose thinking; but serious students have always had reason to be grateful to him for his constant readiness to place the fruits of his learning at their disposal. It is understood that as professor of ancient Semitic languages and civilizations at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, he hopes to have more time in future for his own researches.

Mr. C. J. Gadd, F.B.A.

MR. C. J. GADD, who in terms of service in the British Museum is only five years junior to Dr. Smith, is an Assyriologist of no less eminence than

his predecessor, and is a profound and erudite scholar, whose deep understanding of the ways of thought of the Babylonians and Sumerians is exemplified in his Schweich Lectures, recently published under the title "Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient Near East". With his generous and self-effacing personality, he brings to his new appointment the goodwill of his staff and of all who know him.

Festival of Britain, 1951

GENERAL LORD ISMAY, chairman of the Council of the Festival of Britain, 1951, presided at a meeting on October 14 to announce progress in the plans for the Festival. Mr. Gerald Barry, director-general, emphasized that it is hoped to mark 1951 in three ways: by events centrally organised and financed by the Festival organisation itself; by events organised by other interests, which may be associated with and assisted by the Festival authorities; and by unofficial events throughout Great Britain. There is to be a central exhibition in London on the south bank of the Thames between the County Hall and Waterloo Bridge; the river front is to be cleared and a concert hall built on the site. The exhibition itself will be in temporary fabric structures of a new type; it will be on a small scale and an attempt will be made to tell the story of British life and achievement. It was emphasized that it will not be a trade fair. The Council of Industrial Design will be responsible for selecting contemporary industrial exhibits. A Council of Science and Technology, specially created for the Festival, will ensure that scientific achievement will be adequately represented both in the central exhibition and in other ways. An Architectural Exhibition, elsewhere in London, will take the form of a full-scale cross-section of a residential area in various stages of building, which can be completed and handed over for actual use after the Festival closes. There will also be one or more travelling exhibitions visiting the principal cities of the country; and it is hoped to co-operate with bodies holding annual meetings, such as the British Association. Finally, the Vice-Chancellors of the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London have been invited to arrange special vacation courses in the summer of 1951 in subjects relevant to the main theme of the Festival. In this way, it is hoped to demonstrate the contribution of British thought in philosophy, literature, religion and science to the progress of civilization.

Research and Recovery

MR. HERBERT MORRISON, Lord President of the Council, addressed the chairmen of councils and directors of the industrial co-operative research associations at a conference in London on October 15. The express purpose of this conference was that the delegates should acquaint the Government of their progress and difficulties in research so that the