

BARLEY AND BREWING

THE European Brewery Convention belongs wholly to the post-war period and, in retrospect, it is surprising that, prior to its inception, no organization existed for the regular international exchange of scientific information and experience in relation to malting and brewing. There were of course various journals of high repute, but the differences in standards, industrial methods and laboratory procedures from country to country were not widely appreciated. Consequently, valuable though many published investigations were, they tended more to describe particular experience than verifiable fact. With the present volume in mind*, it can be still more clearly seen that the selection of barleys and of malting methods even in a single country could scarcely have been done scientifically so long as the lack of properly documented experience made it impossible to co-ordinate the economic and material requirements of the farmer, maltster and brewer.

The tenth annual report reveals that these earlier deficiencies have been largely remedied by a degree of integration in international investigation never before achieved in this connexion. For example, it gives, mostly in tabular form, the results of trial comparative cultivations, often with relevant malting and brewing trials, of some 12 new varieties of barley the majority of which were grown under highly controlled conditions in 14 western European

* European Brewery Convention. *Rep. Barley Committee, 1959*. Pp. 170. (London: Institute of Brewing, 1960.)

countries. The data extend far beyond the expected facts on such matters as yield, nitrogen-content, dormancy, grind characteristics of the malts and head retention of the final beers making up the series of part-reports, each under separate authorship. Thus they include numerous details of the lay-out of each trial, the nature of its location, agricultural conditions, field observations and meteorological data. The report is therefore a reference work rather than a book to be read cursorily. There can be no doubt that it reflects what is, in its way, an exceptionally important step to find improved varieties of what is the basic raw material of an unusually widespread industry.

It may seem strange to some that this effort is so disseminated when much of the work could apparently be carried out centrally. Actually, however, this type of inquiry is unexpectedly complicated because it involves comparison not only of barleys as such but also of the conditions under which they are grown and processed. Broadly, therefore, the question arises as to whether the differences between varieties can outweigh the differences arising from varying methods of treatment, for example, of malting method. The European Brewery Convention Barley Committee is in an unrivalled position to sponsor investigations of this kind, and its report has therefore a scientific value beyond that of a factual record of a unique but continuing international exercise.

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ADMISSION TO UNIVERSITIES IN BRITAIN

THE third report of an *ad hoc* Committee on Procedure for Admission of Students to Universities, appointed by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of Universities of the United Kingdom in January 1958, has now become available*. The Committee was set up to consider what steps need to be taken to reduce difficulties experienced by candidates for admission and by the schools. The report contains the findings of a working party established under the chairmanship of Dr. A. W. Chapman to report on the methods and techniques by which the multiplication of applications for admission and the consideration of candidates could be reduced, the kind of central organization involved and any changes of principle as regards relations between universities and candidate. The Committee has been forced to conclude that the time has come when universities must consider the establishment of a central organization and a central office in connexion with applications for admission, and it was this conclusion which led to the establishment of the working party. Further, having been satisfied as to the technical feasibility of such central arrangements, the committee also concluded that it must

* Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom. *Third Report of an ad hoc Committee on Procedure for Admission of Students*. Pp. v+41. (London: Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom, 1961.) 2s. 6d.

now make recommendations which would cause the universities as a matter of urgency to consider the rapid establishment of co-operative arrangements, and this is the whole burden of the report.

The working party quickly recognized that it would be essential to have some kind of central office with information about every candidate and every institution, but equally that a candidate must have liberty to apply to a reasonable number of institutions of his own choice, and that the choosing of their students must remain entirely a matter for the universities.

Three schemes were submitted by the working party for consideration by the *ad hoc* Committee. One scheme looks to the maintenance of the present system, and the central office would only act as an information centre, as a means of checking candidates stated priorities and acceptances of places, and, in so far as time permitted, as a clearing house. Acceptance of this scheme is not recommended.

The other two schemes provide for a central office, equipped with data-processing machines, to which each candidate would make his or her application, naming a limited, but reasonably generous, number of institutions, to which he or she wishes to apply. It would be the duty of the central office to distribute the applications to the institutions concerned, to act as the channel through which all offers, whether firm or provisional, or rejections are conveyed to the