

Dr. Hrdlička on Early Man.

AT a special meeting of the Royal Anthropological Institute held on September 29, when Sir Arthur Keith, ex-president, was in the chair, Dr. Aleš Hrdlička, of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, gave an account of his recent journey to India, Java, Australia, and South Africa for the purpose of visiting the sites upon which discoveries relating to early man had been made, and exhibited bones and other relics from the cave at Broken Hill in which the skull of Rhodesian Man was discovered. These remains are to be deposited at the British Museum (Natural History) at South Kensington. Dr. Hrdlička said that on his arrival in India he was surprised to find that, in addition to the new species of fossil apes from the Siwalik Hills already known, two or three more new species had been discovered and were in the Calcutta Museum, but had never been described. Their discovery had been made by Dr. Pilgrim, superintendent of the Geological Survey, and there was a risk that these important investigations in the Siwalik Hills, where fossil remains abounded, might not be continued. In Java he had visited the site on which *Pithecanthropus erectus* had been discovered. Here again there was a great field for discovery; but priceless material which might bear upon the history of man was being lost for ever as it washed out of the deposits and was thrown away or destroyed by the natives. From Australia, perhaps, a great deal was not to be expected. The Talgai Skull was so nearly akin to those primitive specimens, the Australian skulls, that it may not be very ancient; but definite conclusions are not yet possible.

In South Africa, within the last four years, two discoveries of the greatest importance had been made—Rhodesian Man and the Taungs Skull. On the position of research in South Africa, Dr. Hrdlička had a great deal to report and a great deal that was favourable. In the matter of the finds themselves, some very important details were not yet known and had not been mentioned. Broken Hill itself, the kopje in which Rhodesian Man had been found had now disappeared, owing to mining operations, but nearby was a similar hill, which, like Broken Hill, was honey-combed with fissures and caves in which it was hoped that further discoveries might be made. Dr. Hrdlička then described the mining operations which, in digging out the material of the hill from the top, had cut across a section of the cave. In clearing out this cave, which was full of refuse highly consolidated, it had been found that the upper and nearly level part before the steeper slope began, was nearly choked

with animal bones, which have now been smelted down. Here and there were softer spots from which the material had been thrown out into dumps. In the lower part of the cave were deposits which were nearly pure lead and of the consistency and colour of brown sugar. Near the cul-de-sac in which the cave ended, a miner named Zwiegler, working with a native boy, had brought to light the Rhodesian Skull resting on its base on a shelf as if placed there. No bones of any kind were near it. Under the skull was something which was described as a bag of "petrified" skin. This had now disappeared. From 3 to 6 feet further in had been found a human tibia, and still further a skull of a lion. Dr. Hrdlička had himself worked over the dumps which still remained and had found a stone implement, possibly part of a knife, a stone ball similar to some found before in the cave, a number of animal bones, some of which had been split as if to extract the marrow, and part of a humerus. Both the humerus and the femur, of which fragments were found, had been fractured in the same way and as if for the same purpose as the animal bones. The fracture of the humerus was undoubtedly ancient, and cannibalism would be no matter for surprise.

The discovery of the Taungs Skull, like that of Rhodesian Man, was wholly unlooked for in this part of Africa. It was an anthropoid of a new type, and it came from a site that was only partly exhausted. From pockets of soft pink limestone due to the filling in of caves which had formed in a hard ferruginous limestone plateau, large numbers of skulls of baboons were to be, and had been, obtained, and also in some cases where the skulls had perished, brain casts had been obtained. Dr. Hrdlička himself had found five skulls, of which he had succeeded in extracting three unbroken. These baboons had apparently crawled into the caves and fissures to die and had then been covered up by the deposit. Among these the Taungs Skull, the skull of a young anthropoid of a new species, had been discovered. It had been cleared of the deposit in a month's careful labour by Prof. Dart, and it was a tribute to his skill that the skull had not suffered a scratch in the course of the process. Arrangements had been made for a careful watch to be kept for any further discoveries and for Prof. Dart to be summoned at once should anything be found, so that it might be seen by him *in situ*. This skull was not the "missing link," but only one of many missing links, but in view of these remarkable finds, it was impossible to say what South Africa might not produce in the future.

Library and Information Service.

THE second annual conference of the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux was held at Balliol College, Oxford, on September 25-28. Nearly two hundred delegates attended, which was more than double the number present at the first meeting. The diversity of interests attracted to the conference was surprising; scientific and research institutions, industry and commerce, and public affairs all being strongly represented. The marked variety of the professions of those attending caused widespread comment as to the real source of interest which was taken in the proceedings. A heavy, almost overloaded, programme of papers, numbering more than thirty, fully occupied the conference during the whole of the session.

Undoubtedly, the common link is the collection and the distribution of fact information. Special

organisations for assembling and systematically storing literature in limited fields of knowledge, and still more those for distributing information therefrom, for the service of their members or others, are found to be much more numerous than was previously recognised. The Association has done much good by demonstrating this, and is now engaged in pursuing some obvious developments which arise from the discovery. Most of these organisations are quite distinct from ordinary libraries; in fact, in some cases their own collections may be limited to indexes, or other aids to rapid contact with scattered outside library resources.

One of the first objects in view is the preparation of a "Directory of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux" in Great Britain, for which the support of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust has been

obtained. This directory is intended to place on record the existence of all these bodies, and by suitable annotation to show clearly the field covered by the individual organisations and their facilities for a thorough command of their territory, even when their services are limited to the private needs of their members.

Another almost equally important object is the encouragement of an improved supply and a better distribution of scientific and other periodical literature, the vast extent of which has only just been clearly demonstrated by the publication of the World List of Scientific Periodicals, which will be referred to later.

The support of the movement for co-operation, nationally and internationally, in improving the service of abstracts in different branches of science, was discussed at the conference; and although there is no intention of such a youthful organisation venturing to interfere with matters which obviously belong to older and more specialised institutions, it is clear that a body of this sort provides a useful forum for diffusing knowledge of the results of experience in different branches of science.

The international outlook of the conference was demonstrated by the presence of M. Otlet, of the Institut International de Bibliographie, Brussels, and visitors from Germany, Holland, and the United States. The goodwill and friendly interest from the United States, where a Special Libraries Association has been in existence for sixteen years, was demonstrated by the reception of a presentation set of their journal and other tokens.

Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, Minister of Labour, welcomed the delegates in an opening speech, and strongly urged the national importance of the work of the Association to enable Great Britain to maintain its position in the industrial field. He feared that both the U.S.A. and Germany were more diligent than was Great Britain in keeping track of the results of pure and applied research, and in providing the means for their record and diffusion.

Prof. Gilbert Murray dealt with the work of the Intellectual Co-operation Committee of the League of Nations, in a contribution of particular value, since so little is known in Great Britain of this branch of the League of Nations. Foremost in its activities was the support of bibliographical enterprise, and only the lack of funds limited the extension of this work, which was considered so important for reconstruction. "It is by reading one another's books that we get into one another's minds. It is by co-operation in scientific and philosophical research, it is by co-operation in building up literature and art of the countries that we can hope to get the minds of the different nations moving again in concord, and working towards something like a common end."

Dr. Chalmers Mitchell spoke of the "World List of Scientific Periodicals," which has just been published with the help of the British Museum authorities, and which discloses the existence of nearly 25,000 separate periodicals issued between 1900 and 1920. He explained fully his suggestion for a central library to contain a complete file of all periodicals publishing scientific research, the library to be kept available for abstractors and indexers, and to retain the periodicals for at least two years after publication. This library would be in no sense a rival to existing libraries, which would continue to form the permanent home of their own collections. In the past, many institutions had been proud of their possession of a few hundred or a thousand periodicals, the "World List" should encourage a wider view of the situation, and stimulate

co-operation and a pooling of resources so as to render available a better aggregate provision of literature for the scientific worker.

Sir Horace Plunkett described the Co-operative Reference Library, which it is hoped to transfer from Dublin to London. The conference passed a special resolution welcoming this proposal, as it was thought likely to be of great assistance in developing the agricultural progress of the country.

Miss A. L. Lawrence, of the British Medical Association, provided an interesting review of the "Co-ordination of Medical Information," describing work in the U.S.A., France and this country; which was usefully supplemented by Dr. O. Kentish Wright, with an account of the service of the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Langdon-Davies (Labour Publishing Co., Ltd.) explained that the relatively small editions of scientific books were not necessarily a drawback if some clearer forecast of the demand could be arrived at. In another direction, he hoped libraries and publishers would not overlook the extraordinary thirst for knowledge of the manual workers, and the resulting need of clear and simple exposition of scientific and literary subjects.

Engineering science was fully represented by papers from Brig.-General Mowat, with an account of the library of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, and Major Simnett on engineering and transport intelligence.

The conference greatly appreciated the opportunity of hearing from Dr. A. E. Cowley, Bodley's Librarian, something of the work of that great institution, the Bodleian, which is more and more tending to departmentalise its collection to meet the growing specialisation of knowledge.

The session on Sunday morning was devoted to a series of papers by leading representatives of the library service of the three main political groups. The description of their organisation and work showed that a high standard of intelligence service is aimed at, going far beyond any narrow party need of the moment. The information sections of such government departments as the Board of Education, Ministry of Health, and Imperial Institute were described, and certainly widened the knowledge of most of those present as to sources available in this direction.

The field of general library administration is fully covered by the chartered "Library Association," and the friendly relations between this older body and the present gathering were demonstrated by the presence of several members of the Council of the Library Association, who contributed papers and took part in the discussions. An attempt is to be made to explore the possibility of closer relations between the two bodies, but it is clear that they function to a large extent in different directions, and the newer body mobilises, probably for the first time, the interests of library users.

Perhaps of even more importance than the formal discussions was the opportunity which the conference afforded for personal intercourse between specialists engaged in such diverse callings. Without the conference many of these might never have come in contact with one another for the discussions of the few, but important, matters which their professional interests have in common.

The immediate future task of the Association, the preparation of a Directory of Special Libraries, can be materially assisted by the goodwill and support of scientific bodies in response to a questionnaire which will shortly be issued by the organising secretary, Mr. G. W. Keeling, from the Association's office at 38 Bloomsbury Square, London, W.C.1. R. S. H.