

Mr. G. A. Robinson's paper summarized the information he had obtained during two visits to the United States. His first visit was made as Page scholar, when he was able to go to certain universities with faculties of engineering and to examine their departments of industrial administration, in addition to ascertaining the progress made by summer schools (technical education) of the Oxford type. On that occasion he visited a few trade and vocational schools, but his main objectives did not lie in that field. During his second visit, in 1938, he had three objectives, namely, to attend summer schools for vocational and other teachers; to attend the Seventh

International Congress on Scientific Management, and to renew the technical contacts he had made in 1936. His paper included his comments on universities and institutes, evening instruction, vocational education, industrial economics, apprenticeship, management education and production training. In his conclusion, he suggested that, in vocational education, Great Britain has much to learn from America, "especially under proposed changes in our secondary school system"; in technical education, however, he thinks that America has equally as much to learn from Great Britain in work of the national certificate type and in high-grade craft technology.

CONGRESS OF THE SOUTH-EASTERN UNION OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES, 1939

THE first Congress of the South-Eastern Union of Scientific Societies held at St. Albans in 1911 showed that the effect of Queen Victoria's raising the town to the dignity of a city and appointing a bishop had not only resulted in the late Viscount Grimston restoring the Abbey of the Benedictine monastery, erected over the Saxon shrine of the first Christian martyr, to the form it took under its abbots; but also directed attention to the excavation of the sites of the three older cities of Verulamium under the superintendence of Dr. and the late Mrs. Mortimer Wheeler. The second Congress, held this year, during June 6-10, marked a second stage and showed the interest and pride which the present-day citizens, with their enlarged boundaries and modern buildings, take in their long history. The Corporation has built a fine museum specially to house the Verulamium finds which were arranged by Mr. Philip Corder, the curator, and both he and Dr. Mortimer Wheeler were on the spot to explain and interpret the finds. A visit to the excavated amphitheatre, adapted by the Romans as a Greek theatre, is unique in Great Britain, and serves to emphasize the fact that it was the only town given the status of "Municipium", thus making its inhabitants citizens of Rome and Verulamium the capital of England, with London merely its port twenty miles away.

The restoration of the Abbey for conversion into a cathedral meant the removal of the grammar school, housed in one of the aisles of its very long nave, to a site inside the old Abbey Gate, and the modern buildings with a fine school hall and lecture theatre, together with the Abbey Institute rooms, served well for the Congress sessions and lectures. As in 1911, the old Town Hall was made available for the reception of members, and here the Mayor (Councillor T. F. Elm) and local patrons welcomed the Congress and heard the presidential address given by Mr. James G. Mann, keeper of the Wallace Collection and now Master of the Armouries at the Tower of London. His subject was "The Changing Conditions in the Study of Art and Antiquity", and dealt mostly with the growth of museums during the last century, pointing out that it was almost entirely due to the enthusiasm of amateur collectors; now there is a risk in paid officials labelling and arranging their specimens and pictures for the education of students—even classes of school children unable to appreciate artistic treasures—and the true amateur is driven

to collect unwanted 'by-gones' hitherto neglected by professional curators. Mr. Mann made a plea for retaining works of art in their original setting, and for dispersing to local museums representative specimens, either permanently or by rotation in loan collections, to improve provincial taste, and specializing the general museums even in the metropolis, making some allowance for accretion.

The Archaeological Section heard an address on the changing fashions in place and personal names by Mr. L. F. Salzman. The origin of many forms of place names were explained and an examination of old nominal lists, such as the poll tax required, showed that in medieval times "Mary Anne's" were rare, partly because Mary seems to have been reserved for important personages and because it was not the custom to give more than one Christian name to a girl. Although St. George has always been considered the patron saint of England, the name "George" is almost absent before the time of the Hanoverian monarch.

The address to the Botanical Section, by Mr. P. M. Hall, was devoted to a discussion of the dozen hybrid wild orchids of Great Britain. The crosses are far more common in temperate than in tropical vegetation but it often requires microscopic examination to determine the origin of a hybrid. Dr. H. G. Thornton spoke on the investigations, undertaken at Rothamsted Experimental Station, on bacteria in the soil, which are fundamental to the science of agriculture.

Mr. D. Seth-Smith, of the Zoological Gardens, addressed the Zoological Section on "Animal Behaviour". He pointed out that animals brought up in captivity, though they lose the fear of man and depend upon him for food, nevertheless retain in reared generations certain wild habits; he said that zebras are liable to panic, lions crouch on sighting a dog, deer attack familiar attendants and birds fight in nuptial display. Dr. C. B. Williams spoke of the results obtained from 800,000 insects collected in light traps of his design at Rothamsted Experimental Station in four years. The unexpected results show that the majority are Diptera and that Coleoptera rarely come to light, that at 35 feet above ground females are twice as numerous as males but not so at ground-level, that twice as many insects come to light on dark cloudy nights as in clear moonlight, and the separation of catches by hours shows the periods in which various species are active and the

effect of change of temperature and barometer upon numbers captured.

Mr. C. P. Chatwin devoted his address to the Geological Section to the "Lost Atlantis", taking the view that Africa was the central land mass from which the continents divided as in Wegener's theory. In both the zoological and geological sections papers were read on modern ideas of the theory of evolution, by Mr. Ward Cutler and Dr. Dighton Thomas respectively.

A new departure at this Congress was the formation of a Section for Social Science, following the lead of the British Association, by adapting the Regional Survey Section to embrace scientific subjects not dealt with by existing sections which may be of special interest in different centres to be visited. Mr. Alexander Farquharson, honorary general secretary of the Union, explained the scheme and introduced various speakers: Miss S. Margery Fry on "Juvenile Delinquency"; Miss Hilda Jennings on "Industrial Transference"; Lord Forrester on his Welsh experiment of solving the problem of the "Older Unemployed Man", and in the public evening lecture he also took the chair for Prof. Winifred Cullis's lecture on "Biology and National Fitness".

Another evening lecture was given by Brevet-Col. W. le Hardy, who is engaged by the Corporation of St. Albans to report on the city charters, which are numerous and afford glimpses of the past history of the city and its importance for teaching the arts and crafts; but history from the charters will require supplementing by delving at the Public Records Office to trace out the activities of the abbots who ruled before the Reformation.

No less than twelve excursions were organized by a most efficient local committee convened by Miss Phyllis Gibbs as the Congress Secretary, a post her father had held in 1911. The general excursion was to Rothamsted Experimental Station and was addressed by Sir John Russell. A tour of the Lawes Trust grounds was made and in the Entomological Department an interesting experiment into the

habits of bees was in progress. Bees were marked for identification by spots of cellulose paint on emergence and their work in the hive watched by age groups. It is here that the records collected by the Insect Immigration Committee appointed by the Union are analysed, details of which appeared in NATURE of January 5, 1935 (p. 9).

It is the practice of other naturalists' unions in Great Britain to hold single day congresses at the invitation of a local society to transact business for mutual co-operation, a practice which is now contemplated as supplementary to the five-day annual Congress of the South-Eastern Union, with the view of keeping in touch with centres too small to house representatives and members from all the societies, whilst still keeping the representative assembly to the last day of the main Congress. This year, at the forty-fourth assembly, the only controversial matter brought up for discussion was connected with finance. As Sir Richard Gregory remarked to the Council, it is a tradition to be proud of that the Union has been able to maintain its activity for so long without the aid of a single paid official or any sort of endowment, and the economy of its administration is shown by a total expenditure of only £127 last year and that mainly upon printing, of which costs have more than doubled in the last twenty years. If only a yearly income of £100 was available from an endowment or some other outside source, the restriction on printing the transactions *in extenso* in the *South-Eastern Naturalist and Antiquary* would disappear. Increasing subscriptions is no solution, for it would only mean cutting off the poorer members it is most desired to help. With such local interest as was displayed at St. Albans there is no fear of an actual deficit; but that cannot be expected if the next Congress is held at Cambridge, where local support is sure to be meagre during the long vacation, however important the addresses may be and however much members may enjoy a visit to a university town so suitable in all other respects.

T. D.

THE LOCUST PROBLEM IN 1937

THE latest survey on the locust problem, by Dr. B. P. Uvarov in collaboration with Miss W. Milnthorpe, has recently been published on the recommendation of the Special Committee on Locust Control appointed by the Economic Advisory Council (H.M. Stationery Office, 3s. net). It is gratifying to note that the international co-operation for collecting information relative to locusts continues in an efficient manner. The present survey deals with the locust problem in 1937, and it demonstrates once again the importance of keeping continuous watch over developments in the situation.

The desert locust (*Schistocerca gregaria*) did not give rise to swarms during the period of review either in South Africa or in India. On the other hand, the situation in the Sudanese-Arabian area during the winter of 1937-38 gave rise to anxiety. In the early months of 1938, it was reported as breeding in the gregarious phase in several localities along the western coast of the Red Sea. No evidence of actual swarming has been recorded, and this is evidently due to the success of the control measures that were applied. This hopeful event should well justify the establish-

ment of proper organizations for the purpose of watching those areas known to be areas of swarm production. In this connexion it is mentioned that preliminary arrangements for such organizations on an international basis are progressing very favourably.

As regards the African migratory locust (*Locusta migratoria migratorioides*), all the eastern part of Africa remained free from this insect during the first half of the year under survey. Later in the year, however, the situation changed. Swarms appeared in West Africa and spread eastwards, with the result that the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan became reinfested by this species after an interval of two years. This invasion does not, however, appear to be an entirely new outbreak and its origin seems to have been in districts of Oubangui-Chari, and farther to the west, where swarm production has been noted for the last two or three years.

The red locust (*Nomadacris septemfasciata*) has shown a slow decline in its outbreaks. While there was no marked reduction in the area under infestation, in many instances the swarms were smaller and not so dense.