

juveniles, a foetus or new-born infant, a child of about five years, and one of an age of fifteen to twenty years. Of the four adults, two, probably women, may have been slightly more than twenty years of age; the third is indeterminate, but probably not advanced in years, and the fourth was an old man of at least sixty years. Thus in the late palaeolithic population also old age was seldom reached.

In both groups, *Sinanthropus* and late palaeolithic man, the brevity of duration is to be attributed to the conditions of primitive life. In both groups, also, the cause of death is clear. It was due to violence—wounds inflicted by club and axe or spear as the case may be—whereas the members of the *Pithecanthropus* group died by accident as the consequence of a volcanic eruption.

Neither bones nor teeth show evidence of disease, while the repair of fractures and the ready formation of secondary dentine points to greater powers of

recuperation than in modern man. Further, the absence of decay in the teeth suggests a resistance to bacterial infection which may account for the absence of disease, with the doubtful exception of an arthritic affection in the vertebrae of the old man of the Upper Cave. In undomesticated animals a natural power of resistance to disease and influences of a detrimental character destroying the efficiency of the organs apparently compensates for the dangers of attack and extermination by their enemies, and the same may hold good of primitive man.

<sup>1</sup> Teilhard de Chardin, P., "The Post-Villafranchian Interval in North China", *Bull. Geol. Survey, China*, 17, 1 (1937).

<sup>2</sup> Weidenreich, Franz, "Tatsachen und Probleme der Menschheitsentwicklung", *Bio-Morphosis*, 1, 1 (1938).

<sup>3</sup> Weidenreich, Franz, "The Forerunner of *Sinanthropus Pekinensis*", *Bull. Geol. Soc. China*, 17, 2 (1937).

<sup>4</sup> Weidenreich, Franz, "The Duration of Life of Fossil Man in China and the Pathological Lesions found in his Skeleton", *Chinese Medical J.*, 55 (1939).

## EIGHTH AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC CONGRESS

THE Eighth American Scientific Congress will be held in Washington, D.C., during May 10-18, 1940, under the auspices of the Government of the United States of America. Invitations on behalf of the President have been extended to the Governments of the American republics members of the Pan American Union to participate in the meeting, and scientific institutions and organizations are being invited to send representatives.

On April 14, 1940, the Pan American Union will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. Although the Eighth American Scientific Congress will meet a few weeks after the anniversary date, the Congress will be one of the important phases of that celebration. It is hoped that the presence in Washington of many distinguished scientific workers of all of the American republics as participants in this Congress will serve as one of the many tributes to the Pan American Union for its work in the fostering of goodwill and better understanding among the republics of the western hemisphere.

This series of inter-American meetings, serving as a medium for the exchange of scientific information of particular interest and importance to the Governments and peoples of the Americas, dates from the first Latin American Scientific Congress held at Buenos Aires in April 1898 in commemoration of the silver jubilee of the Argentine Scientific Congress. The Second Latin American Scientific Congress was held at Montevideo in 1901 and the Third at Rio de Janeiro in 1905.

In 1908 the Government of Chile, which had offered to act as host to the Fourth Latin American Scientific Congress, enlarged the scope of the meeting and invited the Government of the United States of America to participate. At the same time, the name of the meeting was changed to the First Pan American Scientific Congress.

The Second Pan American Scientific Congress was in session in Washington, D.C., during December 27, 1915-January 8, 1916, and inspired a wide interest on the part of the Governments and scientific workers of the other American republics. A total of 2,566 participated in the sessions, including ninety official delegates of twenty Governments and a hundred and

thirty representatives of scientific organizations and institutions in the other American republics.

The Third Pan American Scientific Congress was held at Lima, Peru, in December 1924 and January 1925. The fourth meeting in this second series of scientific congresses was held in Mexico City in September 1935, and in recognition of the continuity of the preceding conferences was designated as the Seventh American Scientific Congress. A resolution adopted at the Seventh Congress reposed in the governing board of the Pan American Union the responsibility for the selection of the date and place of the next meeting. In due course it was decided that the necessary steps would be taken to arrange for the convening of the Eighth Congress in Washington in connexion with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Union.

An organizing committee has been set up including the Hon. Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State (*chairman*), Dr. Warren Kelchner, acting chief, Division of International Conferences, Department of State (*vice-chairman*), and Dr. Alexander Wetmore, assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institution (*secretary*), to collaborate with the Department of State in formulating definite plans for the Congress. Dr. Wetmore has been appointed also as Secretary General of the Congress.

It has been decided that the Congress will be divided into the following sections, each to be in charge of a chairman, assisted by a vice-chairman, secretary and section committee: I, Anthropological Sciences; II, Biological Sciences; III, Geological Sciences; IV, Agriculture and Conservation; V, Public Health and Medicine; VI, Physical and Chemical Sciences; VII, Statistics; VIII, History and Geography; IX, International Law, Public Law and Jurisprudence; X, Economics and Sociology; XI, Education.

In accordance with established precedent at inter-American conferences, the official languages of the Congress will be English, Spanish, Portuguese and French. Papers may be submitted in any one of the official languages and appropriate arrangements will be made for the presentation of these papers, or *résumés* thereof, in the other official languages of the Congress.