members. The same is true in each of the aliphatic series studied.

We wish to thank Dr. W. T. Astbury, of Leeds, for encouragement and for advice with regard to the form of this communication.

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Oct. 8.

Poultry as Food Converters

MR. E. E. JONES, in his letter in *NATURE* of October 18, states that the goose is the only grass-eating bird available for egg production. While the main object of his communication, which is to encourage the breeding of a superior kind of goose, is no doubt of value, he would seem to infer that the hen does not eat grass. It is true that on a confined run with plenty of other food and no supply of fresh young grass the hen does not because there is none, not because she would not if it were available.

On a limited run, the hen willingly eats cabbage leaves for the sake of fresh green food, and is often made to jump for it for exercise, but with a large area of good grass on which to roam, a hen will not touch cabbage. I used to let out the hens for an hour to forage in the garden, and they used to dive at once into the edges of the borders in the lawn where, among the leaves collected there, they found plenty of 'creepy-crawleys'. But I noticed that they ate with avidity large quantities of the young grass on the edge where it is freshest and greenest, preferring this to the abundance which they had in their own territory. While no doubt the proportion of grass in their diet is not so great as it is with the goose, it is still an important item if they can get it, but not when it is denied to them.

Will geese any more than hens keep on laying if they are not provided with concentrated food, which it is the object of Mr. Jones to save?

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Oct. 24.

A British-American Scientific Reconstruction Expedition

ONE of the points generally agreed upon during the proceedings of the Conference on Science and World Order arranged by the Division for the Social and International Relations of Science of the British Association was that careful scientific planning is essential for post-war relief and reconstruction work; and Sir Richard Gregory, in his concluding speech, stated that the Council of the British Association will appoint, at an early date, committees to study the problems and make appropriate recommendations. One problem, however, did not receive the attention of the Conference, a problem which in my opinion is of the greatest importance in planning the reconstruction of the smaller European countries.

The small European countries actively involved in

the present War have lost a considerable proportion of their scientifically trained youth. A large number of the leading scientific personalities, professors and members of the staffs of the universities, social and administrative workers have been killed. It is the deliberate policy of the Nazis to destroy cultural and scientific centres, and thus to deprive conquered nations of the backbone of future reconstruction. Germany is doing everything to make the revival of the nations as difficult as possible. This is exemplified not only by the murder of the leading minds of each nation and of scientifically trained youth which could replace their masters and continue their work, but also by the destruction or removal of scientific equipment, by burning libraries, pulling down essential buildings, etc.

There can be no doubt that after an armistice has been signed, the smaller countries of Europe will need help from the outside world to re-establish scientific centres. There is no purpose in planning co-operation of scientific bodies on an international scale if such bodies in the various countries are unable to organize their work, or may not even exist, because of the lack of personnel to revive them and to carry out the work.

I know that Britain and the United States will be willing to do their utmost to help, but in order that assistance may be rendered in the most efficient way plans and foundations for it must be laid immediately. I suggest, therefore, that a detailed scheme be drawn up now for a British-American Scientific Reconstruction Expedition to the smaller countries of Europe.

A plan ought to be devised in collaboration with scientific workers from Nazi-dominated countries who have happily managed to escape and are at present continuing their work in hospitable British scientific centres, so that, immediately hostilities come to an end, arrangements might be made to send into each of the liberated countries a unit of scientific workers, which will be able to administer 'scientific first aid' and to establish in the shortest possible time conditions suitable for carrying out scientific work, and where necessary to initiate it. Not only will senior scientific workers be required to take over the lead and direct the work of reconstruction, but also a considerable number of younger workers, with up-to-date knowledge in the different branches of science, will be essential to pave the way for science during the first post-war years, before the huge loss in scientific man-power of these nations is made good again.

The Scientific Reconstruction Expedition will have to be able to provide scientific instruments, to re-equip laboratories, to rebuild essential buildings, to re-stock libraries, and perhaps also to provide the necessary funds. Like the Red Cross in the field of medicine and human welfare, the Scientific Reconstruction Expedition would be a mission of goodwill in the field of science. Its aim would be to help to restore the life of the smaller nations by assisting to re-establish their national centres for scientific work, and by doing so, to serve the cause of science throughout the world.

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