

in addition to recommending close co-operation with U.N.R.R.A., it recommends the establishment of an International Emergency Food Council and a survey of existing organisations dealing with long-term problems with the view of providing any further international machinery required.

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SCIENCE AND HUMAN WELFARE

A REPORT of the proceedings of the conference, sponsored by the Association of Scientific Workers, supported by the British Association of Chemists, the Institution of Professional Civil Servants, the Association of University Teachers, the Physical Society, the Nutrition Society and the Institution of Electronics, held in London during February 15-17, has now been published under the title "Science and Human Welfare"*. The four sessions of the conference dealt successively with science and world needs, the implications of recent scientific development, the responsibilities of men of science in modern society and international organisation of science; the addresses given have been somewhat compressed. It is unfortunate that there is no index or contents page.

In opening the first session, Sir Robert Robinson asserted that while the active help of the Governments is needed, the initiative must come from the men of science. He suggested a start might well be made in the battle against malnutrition and disease, and endorsed the Government's decision not to set up a comprehensive Ministry of Science. Mr. Herbert Morrison said that upon a scientific approach to human problems depends the future of man, and that there has been far too little general appreciation of the value of the scientific method. We need over the whole field of science a combination of freedom, initiative and social responsibility. The position of science in China was described by Dr. T'U Chang Wang, while the needs in South Africa were discussed by Miss P. M. Cooke. Prof. J. M. Burgers dealt with the Dutch scene, M. Mathieu with developments in France, Dr. G. Lathe with Canada and Dr. J. A. Simpson with American views.

At the second session, Dr. S. Taylor discussed trends in medical research, Dr. H. L. Richardson dealt with agriculture, Mr. F. Le Gros Clark with food and famine, Prof. M. L. Oliphant with atomic energy, stressing that the first problem here is the control of the nuclear bomb, and Sir Alfred Egerton with chemical engineering, using penicillin manufacture as an outstanding example. Colonel Ungerson commented on the necessity for collaboration between the natural scientists and social scientists, and Dr. Bunting on Britain's need for a vast increase in national productivity and the demand for both the highest levels of existing skill and for new kinds of skill.

Opening the third session, Prof. A. V. Hill dealt with the need for men of science to evolve a common standard of ethical behaviour. Prof. B. Farrington, suggesting that science is the main agency in building the human conscience, which is a product of the development of human society, pleaded for the establishment of chairs of history of science. Prof. J. D. Bernal discussed planning and democracy, and said that the most important social responsibility of the

man of science is to be aware of what he is doing and to take part in determining what it is. He emphasized the importance of free and rapid communication between all branches of science, and of a really efficient organisation for that purpose.

At the final session, Dr. Julian Huxley discussed the organisation and functions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, and his plea for world co-operation for science was echoed by Dr. Dorothy Needham in dealing with the situation in China, Dr. D. P. Riley as regards France, and Mr. N. S. Bannerjee as regards India. Dr. Ossowski stressed the growing importance of collaboration in the social sciences, especially co-ordination of research, and Miss L. Ridehatch urged the endowment in Great Britain of more schools of sociology and social science, and greater use of the present theories and findings of social science. Prof. P. M. S. Blackett reviewed the effect of the atomic bomb on the United Nations Organisation and the prospects of control. French views were expressed by Dr. Bonet-Maury and Prof. F. Joliot, while Dr. J. A. Simpson put forward the American views on the possibility of an inspection system.

Sir Robert Watson-Watt, summing up, suggested that the basic prescription is for a fuller and better-balanced education. While the scientific man must learn more of the humanities and of the similarity of method in the natural and the social sciences, we need to bring the scientific method within the understanding of the ordinary educated person: there is danger that the intentions of Ministers alive to the possibilities of science may be frustrated by misconceptions in the Civil Service. Finally, referring to atomic energy, he emphasized the need for something more than good aspirations in working out the formulæ required to convert the Atomic Energy Commission into an effective force, and in elaborating any system of control and inspection.

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EARLY GREEK SCIENCE

PROF. BENJAMIN FARRINGTON'S Friday evening discourse at the Royal Institution, entitled "The Character of Early Greek Science", was delivered on February 23, 1945, and has recently been published. It deserves to be widely known; for it corrects some popular misconception, and relates the scientific achievements of early Greeks to their social background. The misconception arose from Aristotle's presentation of the 'physical' philosophers of Ionia as primarily metaphysicians concerned with the general nature of things, and as pioneers in his own line of philosophic thought. Probably even in his time, those early Ionians were represented mainly by summaries of conclusions, without the observations and experiments on which they were founded. But the Ionian objective was more limited, to give "an operational rather than a rational account of the nature of things". Their question was "How it works", and the answer was supplied, not by myths or abstractions, but by practical knowledge within their own control. Thus "technology drove mythology off the field", not indeed from all aspects of Nature, but from those which could be illustrated by the technical equipment of the age. Hence the nomenclature and imagery of science, derived from arts and crafts, which Prof. Farrington illustrates from Lucretius,

* Science and Human Welfare. Pp. 72. (Temple Fortune Press, Herbal Hill, London, E.C.1.) 2s. 6d.