SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1948-49

THE report of the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution for the year ended June 30, 1949*, again refers to the shortage of staff and of adequate housing space, which continues to hamper the activities of the Institution. During the year the Wright brothers' aeroplane of 1903 was presented to the United States National Museum (see *Nature*, 162, 646; 1948), and plans for the National Air Museum envisage a special area for this exhibit. Approximately 446,000 specimens were added to the collections of the Museum during the year, while field work was conducted in Arnhem Land (North Australia), India and Nepal, the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, New Zealand, the Canadian Arctic and in South and Central America, as well as in the United States. Some notes of this field work, which included anthropometric measurements of Mayan-speaking Indians in the highlands of Guatemala, ornithological survey in the eastern section of the Province of Panama, botanical work in the north-west of the Argentine, and in New Zealand, and a special study of the ecology of the lichens of the Arctic slopes of Brooks Mountains in northern Alaska, are given in the Director's report.

The daily attendance at the National Gallery of Art averaged 4,225, and nearly a thousand problems requiring reports were investigated. In a continuation of his archaeological work in Panama, the Director of the Bureau of American Ethnology found hitherto undescribed ceramic cultures at Utivé and Barriles and obtained much new information on the classic Chiriqué and Veraguas cultures. Dr. E. R. Willey completed his monograph "Archæology of the Florida Gulf Coast", and this is being published by the Institution. Of 2,107 archæological sites located and recorded by the River Basin Surveys, 456 have been recommended for excavation or testing.

The Smithsonian International Exchange Service handled 840,125 packages of publications, an increase of 80,006 on the previous year, and shipments are now made to all countries except Roumania, while fifty-eight full and thirty-eight partial sets of United States official publications are sent abroad in exchange for similar publications of other countries. At the close of the year the National Zoological Park contained 3,724 specimens, an increase of 927 on the previous year, while the number of visitors reached a record of 3,346,050.

Tests at the three most promising sites for a new high-altitude solar observatory indicate that the best skies prevail at the Clark Mountain site, California, with Pohakuola, Hawaii, ranking next; but lack of funds have necessitated postponement of building operations. The special radiation measurements started in 1945 at Camp Lee, Virginia, were continued, as well as those at Miami and Montezuma. The Division of Radiation and Organisms was occupied chiefly with reorganising and re-equipping the laboratories. In the Canal Zone Biological Area in Panama, twenty-nine men of science from different organisations worked at the laboratory on such subjects as the metabolic reactions to temperature in various animals and plants, long-term termite-resistance tests and the effects of tropical conditions on photo-

graphic equipment and materials, including colour film.

Among the outstanding publications of the year were Dr. H. Field's "Contributions to the Anthropology of the Soviet Union" in the Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collection, two more volumes in the series of life-histories of North American birds by A. C. Bent, and a paper by J. R. Swallen on new grasses of South and Central America, in Contributions from the United States National Herbarium. The Smithsonian Library received 57,671 publications during the year, as well as 17,713 periodicals, mostly in exchange from research institutions and other scientific and educational institutions. Inter-library loans totalled 2,619 to eighty-nine libraries, and 338 new exchanges were arranged. Of the library's holdings of 921,206 volumes, more than half are housed in the Library of Congress as the "Smithsonian Deposit". The usual departmental reports and the financial report of the executive committee of the Board of Regents are appended in this annual report.

FREEDOM AND CO-ORDINATION

OF independent means, Mary P. Follett was a native of New England who was educated partly in the United States and partly at Cambridge. For a number of years she was engaged in voluntary social work but then turned to the study of government. She soon found much more vitality in thought and feeling among business men than among politicians and economists, and gave more and more attention to business administration. The rest of her life was spent in lecturing and writing on that subject, and the philosophy she evolved has had a considerable influence on efficient management practice in her own and other countries. She died in 1939, and the present volume is mainly made up of a series of lectures given in that year at the London School of Economics (Freedom and Co-ordination: Lectures in Business Organisation. By Mary Parker Follett. Edited, with an Introduction, by L. Urwick. Pp. xvii+89. London: Management Publications Trust, Ltd., 1949. 5s. net).

Briefly stated, Mary Parker Follett's belief was that 'arbitrary' authority over others, in which orders are given by those at the top and executed by their subordinates, is wrong both in theory and practice. Authority should rest in an individual's function in an organisation, and orders issued by him should emerge from the "law of the situation" rather than by any desire to exercise power. Instead of the system whereby some are placed "in charge of" others, Miss Follett advocated that leaders should be regarded as those who can achieve a synthesis of all the different points of view in a given situation. Such a process of co-ordination will lead to a more effective control of the organisation, and if more attention is paid to realities than to the unsupported opinions of those holding high positions, the agreed authority will command universal respect.

Although it is doubtful that a situation in which there are deep cleavages of opinion on fundamentals can always provide the solution which Mary Follett believed will emerge by discussion, her stimulating approach to administration commands wide respect, and the editor, Colonel L. Urwick, has performed a useful service in making this latest record of her thought available to British readers.

T. H. HAWKINS

* Report of the Smithsonian Institution and Financial Report of the Executive Committee of the Board of Regents for the Year ended June 30, 1949. (Publication 3992.) Pp. ix+149. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1950.) 45 cents.