

pituitary gland. Once the sexual season has started, oestrus is experienced at regular intervals (cycle-length 16.51 ± 0.18 days) provided that the daylight environment is favourable. Ewe lambs which show their first oestrus after the shortest day have consequently the shortest sexual season. It is suggested that, for the manifestation of oestrus in ewe lambs, certain thresholds of live weight, in the same way as the hormonal thresholds, are required. In the Suffolk (see diagram) the thresholds which play a part during the favourable daylight environment are classified as follows: (I) above 100 lb., high oestrous performance (maximum); (II) 75–100 lb., heat periods interspersed by silent heats; (III) less than 75 lb., low oestrous activity or no activity at all (minimum).

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¹ Hafez, E. S. E., *Nature*, **166**, 822 (1950).

² Hammond, jun., J., *J. Agric. Sci.*, **34**, 97 (1944).

³ Walker, D. E., "The Breeding Season, Oestrus and the Oestrous Cycle in the New Zealand Ewes", Univ. of N. Zealand thesis for M.Sc. degree (1943).

⁴ Hafez, E. S. E., *J. Agric. Sci.* (in preparation).

⁵ Watson, R. H. (personal communication, 1950).

A New Platyctenid Ctenophore from Jamaica

PLATYCTENID Ctenophores have now been discovered along the shores of Jamaica. This is the first record of these interesting forms from the West Indies, although related forms have been recorded from the coast of Florida¹.

In May 1950 five transparent, colourless Platyctenids were noticed adhering to the sides of a tank containing the black solitary tunicate, *Ascidia nigra* Savigny, which had been collected from mangroves on the previous day. Similar Ctenophores were afterwards found in the natural habitat actually creeping on these ascidians, presumably as commensals.

In the following July, more than a hundred specimens were found on the coenosarc of Dynamenid hydroids from the same locality. These forms were pale pink or pale green in colour, but appeared to have the same basic structure. All these specimens closely resembled the genus *Ceoloplana*, but also showed certain extremely interesting and well-marked features which are indicative of at least a new species and possibly of a new genus. Two of these features may be mentioned here, namely, (1) the presence of oral grooves with well-marked edges which curve round to end on the aboral surface in continuity with the openings of the tentacular sheaths, and (2) the presence of marked oral lappets which become produced laterally as the edges of the oral grooves.

A full description of the distinctive characteristics, habits and microscopical anatomy of these new

Platyctenids is in the course of preparation and will be published shortly.

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¹ Smith, F. G. Walton, *Science*, **101**, 17 (1945).

History of Science and Technology in India and South-East Asia

DR. JOSEPH NEEDHAM has very ably reviewed in *Nature* of July 14, p. 64, the series of papers that were read at the symposium on the "History of Sciences in South Asia", and has drawn some pertinent conclusions therefrom. He has, however, not been able to gauge the spirit in which the symposium was held, or expatiate on the new lights that were thrown on the subject. He has, on the other hand, omitted to mention certain salient facts about the organization of the symposium, and the review gives by omission the erroneous impression that it was solely the work of the Unesco Science Co-operation Office for South Asia. As chairman of the symposium, and now president of the National Institute of Sciences of India, I wish to put on record the part played by the National Institute in the symposium.

The idea of holding a symposium on the history of sciences in South Asia was first mooted by Dr. D. S. Kothari, one of the secretaries of the Institute, which received the support and co-operation of the Unesco Science Co-operation Office in Delhi. Accordingly, the symposium was held under the auspices of the National Institute of Sciences of India, in collaboration with the Unesco Science Co-operation Office, in Delhi, during November 5–7, 1950. Facilities for holding the meetings and accommodation for the visiting delegates were generously provided by the University of Delhi. A number of scientific men, historians and oriental scholars from India and abroad attended the symposium and took part in its deliberations. From the mimeographed copies of the papers that had been circulated in advance, it was clear at the very outset that considerable controversy was bound to arise about the dating of the most important texts, and to overcome this difficulty a Chronology Committee, consisting of historians and scientific men, was appointed at the business meeting prior to the symposium. This Committee felt that it was very difficult to ascertain with accuracy the dates of Indian literary works supposed to belong to the pre-Christian era. But after discussing the matter at length, it recommended that the chronological table given below might be taken as a working hypothesis in connexion with the discussion of papers of the symposium. The table is based on the standard work "History of Indian Literature" by Winternitz.

The authors of papers were then asked to revise their papers according to the dates given in the table for various texts. Owing to very divergent views, however, it was not intended to have all the papers published in full. In reviewing that motley of papers, which were not authorized for publication, and stating that mimeographed copies are available at the Unesco Science Co-operation Office in Delhi, Dr. Needham has unwittingly done an