

ASIA AND OCEANIA CONGRESS OF ENDOCRINOLOGY

THE second Asia and Oceania Congress of Endocrinology was held in Sydney during May 28–June 3 under the auspices of the Endocrine Society of Australia. The president of the Congress was Prof. C. W. Emmens, and Prof. T. Miyake (Japan), Dr. H. D. Purves (New Zealand) and Prof. V. M. Trikojus (Australia) as vice-presidents.

One hundred and eighty delegates participated in the Congress, including fifteen from Japan, six from New Zealand, five from the Philippines, four from both Great Britain and the United States, two from India, one from Hong Kong and one from Italy. Eighty papers were read from 120 offered.

Prof. A. S. Parkes (Physiological Laboratory, Cambridge) opened a symposium on "Regulation of Fertility", and discussed climatic, social and nutritional factors. Rapid-acting and neural effects were differentiated from the slower-acting responses mediated via the anterior pituitary. The importance of smell as an exteroceptive factor working through slowly acting neurohumoral mechanisms was discussed. Related papers, including a number from workers in Japan and from a group in Sydney on various aspects of oestrogenic and anti-oestrogenic effects, followed the opening paper.

Dr. H. D. Purves (Endocrinology Research Department, Medical Research Council of New Zealand) opened a symposium on "Control of Thyroid Secretion" and discussed aspects of the feed-back mechanism in relation to control of thyroid function. He was followed by Prof. T. Miyake (Kyoto, Japan), who reported on clinical studies of thyroid hormone metabolism, and a series of papers from groups working in New Zealand, in Melbourne and in Adelaide were presented.

A symposium on "Hormonal Response to Environment" was led by Prof. E. C. Amoroso (Royal Veterinary College, London), who spoke on "The Endocrine Environment of the Fetus" and discussed aspects of the complicated hormonal environment in which the developing mammalian organism grows pre-natally. This was followed by papers from a group in Melbourne on electrolyte balance in ruminants, and by a paper on the suckling stimulus in marsupials from workers in Canberra, and by two papers from Indian workers.

Dr. M. S. Raben (Boston, United States) opened a symposium on "Protein Hormones in Growth", and reported investigations of metabolic and clinical effects of human growth hormone. Problems concerned with the production of a satisfactory preparation were summarized

and details given of metabolic work on selected patients receiving these preparations. The characterization of pituitary growth hormones from various species was described by a group working in Sydney.

In addition to these symposia a number of papers on adrenal physiology, comparative endocrinology, steroid hormones and hormone assay were presented in concurrent sessions.

The interest and prominence of a session on hormone assay, particularly of steroid hormones, indicated the concern of many endocrinologists with details of basic methods which will enable reliable results to be obtained by workers in different laboratories and thus lead to comparisons which have some significance.

On the final day a group of papers on clinical endocrinology was presented, and during the afternoon a plenary session was held with The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, which was celebrating its Jubilee in the week following the Congress. The session was opened by Dr. R. F. Escamilla (San Francisco), who spoke on "Stimulation of Growth in Short Children: Experiments with Human Growth Hormone", and papers were presented from the United States, Japan, India and Australia on various clinical aspects of human growth hormone, anabolic steroids, idiopathic hirsutism, corticosteroid treatment and diabetes in pregnancy.

It is apparent from the general interest of the participants and the quality of the papers presented that the study of endocrinology is being actively pursued in a number of centres in the Asia and Oceania region, and that a high standard is being maintained.

A factor in the success of the Congress was associated with the opportunities afforded delegates to make new, and renew old, acquaintances. The site of the Congress, a section of the Chemistry School, University of Sydney, and the limited number attending were both conducive to a free circulation of members during lunch and tea periods. The spirit of informality pervaded the lecture rooms and led to that most important aspect in the success of a Congress, lively and friendly discussion.

Acknowledgement should be made to the Executive Committee for their organization and to Dr. P. J. Claringbold (C.S.I.R.O. Division of Animal Genetics), the secretary to the Congress, for his excellent administration, which contributed largely to its success.

The third congress will be held in Manila in January 1967. I. G. JARRETT

VOLTA BASIN RESEARCH PROJECT

By PROF. G. W. LAWSON

Department of Botany, University of Ghana, Legon

WHEN the Volta Dam in Ghana is completed next year a lake will begin to form which will eventually cover an area of 3,275 square miles. This will be the largest man-made stretch of water in the world. The water-level will begin to rise in about September after the rainy season of 1964 and will reach the 200-ft. contour in the first year, but the final level will not be reached until some years later. The Volta Scheme will primarily provide hydro-electric power for an aluminium smelter at the new port of Tema which will ultimately produce 120,000 long tons of aluminium per annum, mostly for export. Ghana is and has always been an agricultural country relying mainly on the export of cocoa for the foreign exchange needed to buy manufactured goods. The availability

for the first time of cheap electricity means that conditions will be created for a rapid industrial revolution with an inevitable rise in standards of living throughout the country.

Additional benefits from the scheme will include a large freshwater fishery and a cheap inland water transport system. It is also planned to grow crops, especially rice and sugar cane under irrigation. Undoubtedly the impact on Ghana's economic life will be tremendous.

The creation of the lake will also, however, have many important biological implications, the most important and immediate of these being the removal and rehabilitation of more than 70,000 people from the area to be flooded. This work is being undertaken by the Volta