Current Science

Vol. XIX] MAY 1950 [No. 5

NATIONAL FUEL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, DHANBAD

THE National Fuel Research Institute which was opened by President Rajendra Prasad during the fourth week of April, constitutes the third in the chain of the eleven laboratories sponsored by our farsighted National Government. The creation of the Fuel Research Institute is the fulfilment of the persistent demands made from time to time during the last twenty years, by the three Coal Commissions which considered the position of coal industry in India. It was, however, left to Sir S. S. Bhatnagar to galvanise these recommendations into action and establish the Institute.

The Institute will interest itself with major problems pertaining to fuels in its broadest sense ; the solid, liquid and gaseous fuels will come under its perview and in addition, the Institute will organise a physical and chemical survey of Indian coals, whose deposits in India are none too abundant. This circumstance calls for an intelligent conservation of our resources with a full and proper appreciation of the growing demands of our present industries and of our future commitments. Our resources of high grade metallurgical coal are limited and so far as our present estimates go, they are expected to last for not more than 50 years. This is a serious situation which calls forth immediate and careful investigation. Our total annual output of all kinds of coal amounts to about 30 million tons, of which a third is consumed by our railways, a fourth is accounted for by metallurgical industries while a tenth of the output is utilised for domestic purposes. It is estimated that about 13 million tons of high grade coal is being used for purposes for which lower grades would suffice.

Processing coal for the recovery of valuable byproducts which provide the raw material for the fine chemical industry, constitutes an important item in the research programme of

the Institute. Sir J. C. Ghosh, who addressed the distinguished gathering on this occasion, disclosed that India imports 2·8 million tons of petroleum products valued at 40 crores of rupees. "Modern research", Sir J. C. Ghosh said, "has shown that it is possible to produce oil from coals of a poorer type, of which we have unlimited resources. Prudence demands that at least 50 per cent. of our petroleum requirements should be secured by the conversion of indigenous coal into oil." Continuing, Sir J. C. Ghosh added that demands for various types of fuel were not static. Even at snail's pace, increased production could be expected to be about one per cent. compound interest annually. And if, as the result of the labour of the Planning Commission, the Government gave the highest priority to the development of resources, the annual rate of increase might easily be five per cent. compound interest. Hence, research and its utilisation should be planned on the basis of this increased demand. He declared that it would be a mistake to ignore the fact that the environmental climate for applied research in India was not the same as in other countries. He warned the Indian industrialists that mere import of machinery and plant and technical talent from abroad was not all that was necessary for industrialisation of India. In these days of rapid progress, the imported plant and machinery might become obsolete in ten years. More light and better guidance would come as a result of the talented men and women working in these homes of research.

TWO HUNDRED RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIPS INSTITUTED

IN pursuance of the recommendations of the Scientific Manpower Committee, the Ministry of Education, Government of India, have instituted 50 senior and 150 junior research training scholarships in Universities and other educational and research institutions.

Further information about the scheme of research scholarships is given in a statement laid on the table of the House by the Education Minister. The objective of the scheme is to enable deserving and talented students to engage in scientific and industrial research and to acquire, as a result of such training, knowledge and experience for holding research positions.

The scheme provides for two grades of scholarships tenable for a period of three years—senior scholarships of Rs. 200 per month and junior scholarships of Rs. 100 per month.

The Senior scholarships are available for advanced research in basic science and for post-graduate research in engineering and technological subjects. The scholarships are awarded to research workers who have taken at least a Master's Degree in Science or a good Degree for advanced diploma for engineering or technology.

The Junior scholarships are available for research of comparatively lower standards at post-graduate level, and are awarded generally to those who have taken at least a good Honours Degree in Science or a Degree in Technology.

In the terms and conditions governing the award of the scholarships, it is laid down that the heads of the institutions concerned shall make the award strictly on the basis of merit, subject to the approval of the Government of India. The grants on account of the scholarships will be given to the institutions concerned in quarterly instalments in advance, and the heads of the institutions will disburse the amount to the scholars at the end of every month. It is also laid down that the heads of the institutions will submit quarterly reports on the satisfactory progress of the work of the scholars to the Government of India. The continuance of the scholarships will depend upon the scholars making satisfactory progress with their work.
