

Social and International Relations of Science.

IN a series of brilliant editorials in *Nature*, followed by a comprehensive Symposium¹ on Social and International Relations of Science, Sir Richard Gregory has been advocating that steps be taken to formulate the immediate purpose of science into a logical and constructive programme of work for the betterment of human relations and conditions of existence. The result of Sir Richard Gregory's action has been a wide awakening of consciousness among scientific workers that their interest in the promotion of social well-being and international cordiality is both profound and positive. Accordingly proposals for investigations of the social and public problems on an international basis have been favourably received by scientists in America and in most of the European countries. The outcome of this general movement has found expression in the establishment of a new Division by the British Association for the Social and International Relations of Science. We reproduce below the memorandum prepared for the consideration of the General Committee.

I. PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW DIVISION.

At the present time a strong feeling exists that the social relations of science demand close and objective study. The question has been dealt with recently in the press and elsewhere. At an informal meeting of persons specially interested, it was stated that there is nothing in the constitution of the British Association to prevent the establishment of machinery within that organisation for the purpose desired. A resolution was thereupon addressed from this meeting to the Council of the Association, inviting the Association to establish a special department which would consider the social and international relations of science, by means of enquiry, publication, and the holding of meetings not necessarily confined to the annual meetings of the Association.

International relations were specified in this resolution primarily because of the deep interest of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in the subject. Discussion is expected to take place between officers of the two Associations, during the present summer, on the best means for international co-operation.

The Council supported the proposal to establish an organisation for these purposes within the Association. They appointed a Committee to formulate a scheme for the working of such an organisation, to be presented to the General

Committee at the Cambridge Meeting. It is thought that the organisation should work on lines in some respects different from those of a Section, and should not bear that title. The term Division is therefore recommended.

The purpose of the Division would be to further the objective study of the social relations of science. The problems with which it would deal would be concerned with the effects of advances in science on the well-being of the community, and, reciprocally, the effects of social conditions upon advances in science.

The Division would be worked by a Committee, nominated annually by the Council and appointed by the General Committee. The Council should have power to appoint additional members of the Committee during the year.

The Committee should embody the existing British Science Guild Committee of the Association, inasmuch as the Norman Lockyer, Alexander Pedler, and Radford Mather Lectures, now administered by that Committee, would appropriately come within the purview of the Division.

The President of the Association and the General Officers should be *ex-officio* members of the Committee. A Chairman of the Committee should be appointed for a fixed period of office. A fixed proportion of the ordinary members of the Committee should retire annually (as in the case of the Council) and should not be eligible for immediate re-election.

The functions of the Committee would be :

(a) To arrange meetings of the Division both at the time and place of the Annual Meetings of the Association, and elsewhere at other times, as invited or otherwise arranged ; to appoint speakers, and to accept or reject communications offered to the Division.

(b) To furnish material for the information of the public.

(c) To co-ordinate work dealing with the social relations of science, both at home and abroad.

(d) To be prepared to act in a consultative capacity and to supply information, and to that end to establish relations with organisations and persons engaged in practical administration.

(For the furtherance of the above objects, the Committee, immediately upon the establishment of the Division, should issue an announcement thereof, together with a reasoned statement of its aims, to institutions and other organisations and individuals known or likely to be interested in its work.)

(e) To set up sub-committees for executive purposes, or for research, enquiry, or co-ordination. If any such sub-committee should require a grant of money for its work, the Committee should be empowered to apply for such grant to the General Committee or the Council in accordance with the usual procedure relating to research committees.

(f) To maintain close relations with the Sections of the Association and their Organising Committees. In particular, there may be imagined subjects which two or more Sections might be

¹ *Nature*, Saturday, April 23, 1938, 141, No. 3573,

disposed to recommend to the Division for discussion, in lieu of arranging joint meetings of the Sections. The Committee of the Division, on its part, should be enabled to invite the advice of the sectional organisations on all appropriate questions. The Organising Sectional Committees should be kept regularly informed of the activities of the Division.

The Committee should meet regularly throughout the year, at intervals determined by itself, and in particular it should hold a meeting at or near the time of the joint meetings of Organising Sectional Committees in January, in order to assure the relations with the Sections referred to above.

The Committee should report to the Council as and when necessary, and annually through the Council to the General Committee.

II. PROPOSAL FOR A QUARTERLY REPORT.

In November 1937 the Council directed the General Officers to consider and report upon the format and printing of the Report of the Association. Subsequently, the Committee which was appointed to formulate a scheme for the new Division referred to above was instructed also to consider and report upon the whole question of publication by the Association.

The Committee, after considering various schemes in detail, recommend that as from the year 1939-40 the Annual Volume should be superseded by a Quarterly Report. The Annual volume following the Cambridge Meeting would thus be the last of its series.

The principal considerations which have led the Committee to make this recommendation are as follows :

Quarterly publication should go far to overcome the widespread belief that the British Association is inactive except during its annual meeting. The fact that it now administers the Norman Lockyer, Alexander Pedler, and Radford Mather Lectures (which are given at times and places other than those of the annual meetings) points to the desirability of publication at less than annual intervals; and the establishment of the new Division on the lines recommended would strongly reinforce this argument.

Quarterly publication would provide the means of keeping members and the public informed as to the activities of the Association, as an annual volume cannot. Quarterly publication should achieve a wider circulation than the annual volume does for individual communications which call for a wider publicity than they receive by inclusion in an annual volume.

It is recommended that the Quarterly should appear in October, January, April and July. The size proposed is royal octavo (approximately $10 \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ in.). It is suggested that the title *The Advancement of Science* should be transferred to the Quarterly from the present publication which

bears that name and contains the presidential address given at the annual meeting. In substitution for the publication of all these addresses together, it is proposed to issue individual addresses separately, at the time of the meeting.

The bulk of the material made available from the annual meeting would appear in the October and January numbers. There should, however, be the fullest possible measure of elasticity. This consideration might be expected to apply especially to the reports of research committees, for which delayed publication is sometimes found desirable; or on the other hand publication in advance of the meeting at which a particular research is to be discussed might be allowed at the discretion of the appropriate Organising Sectional Committee.

It is considered that the Journal of Sectional Transactions, as at present issued at the annual meeting and subsequently incorporated in the Annual Report, is of little value as a permanent record. It is proposed that the present Programme and Timetable should include the programme of each Section separately (as the Journal does now), with abstracts of the briefest possible nature, or none where titles of communications would suffice alone. The transactions of the Sections should be reported in the Quarterly in narrative form, and so far as finance would allow there should be additional opportunity for publication *in extenso* or full abstract, and for the reporting of discussions.

No changes in the terms of membership subscription are recommended; life members and annual members now entitled to receive the Annual Report would receive the Quarterly. The price of 3s. 6d. per part is recommended for non-subscribers.

The Quarterly should be marketed by arrangement with a publishing firm.

The division into quarterly parts would in itself cost little more than the annual volume, even allowing for improvement of the format. Additional matter for publication, however, would be expected from the new Division and from more effective reporting of the work of the Sections. The establishment of the new Division would increase clerical work in the office. On these considerations it has been estimated that the proposals here made might involve the Association in an additional annual expenditure of £400-500 in a few years' time; and in this event a temporary draft upon capital would be necessary.

It is hoped, however, that such additional expenditure would be offset by increased sales of the Quarterly and reports of the Presidential Addresses, as against those of the Annual Volume and the present *Advancement of Science*, and also by receipts from advertisements in the Quarterly. Moreover, the establishment of the new Division and the publication of a Quarterly are both measures which should help to increase the membership of the Association.