EXCHANGE OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE—AUSTRALIA AND INDIA

THE Australian Goodwill Scientific Mission which visited has recommended that a party of Indian scientists be invited to visit Australia.

At a later date, when conditions are more normal, it is expected that students from there may be afforded facilities to carry out post-graduate work in Australia, and that an exchange of workers between the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in Australia and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research of India may be arranged.

In the course of a report which the Australian mission has issued, it is stated that all Indian universities evince "considerable interest in Australian universities and student life. Members of the delegation are stated to have received a large number of enquiries from Indian students about the possibility of undertaking work, particularly post-graduate study, in Australian universities. The report adds that many Indians are thinking of Australia as a place for post-graduate training in addition to Europe and America.

"The various difficulties Australian universities would experience at present in accommodating Indian students, due to over-crowded post-war conditions, were explained to the enquirers. Nevertheless, it is apparent that a demand is likely to arise from Indians to study in Australia, and the delegation feels that when conditions become more normal this should be encouraged.

"It is also possible that there are certain scientist in India, for example, Sir C. V. Raman at the Indian Institute of Science, and Professor P. C. Mahalanobis, the Director of the Institute of Statistics at Calcutta, under whom Australians might wish to study.

"The exchange of students at an impressionable age would be very useful in building up goodwill between the two countries", the report continued. "Members of Indian University staffs also enquired about the possibility of visiting Australia for short periods for lecturing or research purposes and about the possibility of arranging exchanges. The detailed method of carrying out such suggestions would involve many difficulties, but it is felt that everything should be done to encourage exchange wherever possible. There is no doubt that in the academic world India looking to Australia as a friend."

SCIENTISTS ARE BORN AND NOT MADE

CAPACITY for creative thinking is a relatively rare inborn talent. Under proper environmental stimulation, it develops that quality of mind essential in original research. Advances in science will depend upon discovering this talent and putting it to work. The need for doing this is well recognised to be in the national interest and is giving rise to the appropriation of vast federal funds for research and legislation toward the establishment of a National Science Foundation. These measures, valuable as they can be in encouraging the development of scientific ability, cannot create scientists. From the overcrowded graduate schools come hundreds each year with the doctorate in chemistry and other sciences. Yet the great majority of these young Ph. D.'s have no real ability in original thinking! Learned, proficient, and skilled they may be in experimental techniques, but these are not substitutes for intelligence and the capacity to have ideas.

It is evident that the first and most important step toward increasing the yield of men qualified for research is to seek out and recognise the essential talent when it appears. Graduate school need to become more discriminating in their acceptance of candidates for the doctoral degree and more courageous in rejecting those lacking the qualification. Too often the persistent attain what only the giftted deserve. By the assignment of problems requiring the exercise of research talent early in the first year of graduate work, it should be possible to discern latent ability if it exists. Those who display definite evidence of research capacity should then be admitted to what might be called the "higher" graduate school and go on for the doctorate. The present emphasis in graduate training on course work and doctoral thesis often fails to allow sufficient opportunity for training in and practice of research methods. As a consequence, men enter research careers lacking familiarity with the research approach to problems.

It is not more graduate school capacity that is needed today but better selection of those who are to be trained. Men possessing capacity for creative thinking deserve the full attention of graduate faculties and school facilities. Society will be the beneficiary when this comes about.

(By courtesy of The Journal of the Electrochemical Society, 93, 53N, 1948.)

PROCUREMENT OF RADIOACTIVE ISOTOPES

IT has been decided that all matters connected with the procurement of radioactive isotopes are to be handled in India by the Board of Research on Atomic Energy in consultation with the Department of Scientific Research. Requests for the procurement from abroad of radioactive isotopes or any information relating to Atomic Energy should therefore be addressed to the Department of Scientific Research who will forward them after scrutiny through the appropriate channels. Requests addressed directly to foreign governments or their representatives in India are not likely to be acted upon.