

way to induce a specific back-mutation, therapy along somatic-genetic lines is unthinkable. The chemotherapeutic approach based on physiological differences between the normal and the cancer cells suffers from the overwhelming intrinsic disadvantage that all anti-cancer drugs are also carcinogens.

There is little ground for optimism about

cancer. Somatic cells, being what they are, the impact of the environment must inexorably lead to the accumulation of mutant cells and the development of cancer. Unless all sources of mutagenic stimuli are controlled, no hope of decreasing the incidence of cancer can be visualised in the near future.

M. SIRSI.

## OBITUARY

### PROF. BASANT KUMAR DAS

**T**HE news of the death of Prof. B. K. Das on 6th April 1957, was received with deep regret by all who knew him. In the death of Prof. Das, India has lost a distinguished Zoologist of international repute. It is well known that Prof. Das was largely responsible for organising the Zoology Departments of the Calcutta and Hyderabad Universities.

Prof. Das was born on November 21, 1895, at Gangoor in Burdwan District. He was educated at the Government High School at Allahabad, and then at the Muir Central College, Allahabad, where he passed his M.Sc. in Zoology in 1918 standing first in the examination. In recognition of his merit and distinction in research he was awarded scholarships of the U.P. Government. In 1920 he was appointed Lecturer in Zoology at the Allahabad University, and, in 1923, he was awarded the U.P. State Scholarship for study abroad, and joined the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, under the late Prof. E. W. MacBride, F.R.S. While at London University, he carried out researches on air-breathing fishes of India and obtained the D.Sc. Degree of the London University. On his return to India he was appointed Professor of Zoology of the

Calcutta University. After working there for five years he joined the Osmania University in 1932, where he continued as Professor of Zoology till he retired from service. After retirement he was closely associated with the organisation of the Fisheries Department in Hyderabad. Professor Das's researches on air-breathing fishes has received worldwide recognition. It was for this work that he was awarded the Huxley Memorial Prize in 1931. In 1935, he represented India at the International Zoological Congress held in Lisbon and was elected as one of their Vice-Presidents. In 1940, he was President of the Zoological Section of the Indian Science Congress held at Madras.

Prof. Das took immense interest in his students, both in regard to their scientific training as well as their personal welfare and was a source of great inspiration to them. His death is a great personal loss to all his students. Even after retirement from the University service, Prof. Das rendered immense help to research workers by giving guidance and technical help. He leaves behind his wife, two daughters, two brothers and a number of friends to bemoan his loss.

B. S. BHIMACHAR.

### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RADIO-ISOTOPES IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

**F**URTHER to our previous announcement (Curr. Sci., 1957, p. 131), we now officially learn that the above Conference, organised by UNESCO, will be held in the premises of the New Faculty of Medicine, 45, Rue des Saints-Peres, Paris, from 9th to 20th September 1957.

English and French will be the working languages of the Conference and the UNESCO Secretariat will provide simultaneous interpretations in both the languages. Speeches made by Russian and Spanish participants of the Conference will also be interpreted in English and French. Papers presented and summaries

of speeches made in languages other than English or French will be recorded in these two working languages only.

During this part of the year, when the weather will be usually fine in Paris, it would be difficult to find hostel accommodation unless reservations are made. Therefore, the participants are requested to correspond with UNESCO Radio-Isotopes Conference, 19 Avenue Kleber, Paris (16<sup>e</sup>), France, giving full particulars in block letters of their names, addresses, etc., so as to reach them on or before the 10th August 1957.