

neath the sea; in other words, that the breaking up was effected by the foundering or sinking of the intervening portions of the continent. More recently several geologists who have been impressed by Wegener's theory of Continental Drift seek to explain the breaking up of the Lemurian continent in accordance with this theory, and postulate that the existing continents were grouped together during the Carboniferous period as one continuous land mass in apposition to South Africa and that subsequently, this continuous land mass was fractured, with drifting apart of the fragments to form the present continents. There has been considerable discussion regarding the relative merits of these two hypotheses, and it has now been recognised that the final solution of this problem must await further researches. Speaking on this subject in his presidential address to the Indian Science Congress at Patna in January 1933, Dr. Fermor referred to the forthcoming Murray Expedition led by Col. Seymour-Sewell and said that, if during this expedition rock specimens in any quantity can be secured from the bottom of the ocean, we would get some "evidence helpful to the determination of whether India has been separated from Africa by the foundering of the intervening land or by drifting apart."

In the light of this, it is very gratifying to read the announcement made in the press only a few days back that this expedition has been able to collect extensive samples of rock material from depths of 2-5 miles below the surface in both the Indian Ocean and the

Arabian Sea. It is expected that an intensive study of this material, which will shortly be undertaken at Cambridge, will make it possible to draw the map of a large part of the world as it existed millions of years ago in the days of the Lemurian continent. One of the important achievements of the Expedition is the discovery of "a submarine mountain range rising 10,000 feet from the ocean floor, whose summit is yet 1,000 feet below the surface between Socotra and Seychelles." So far as the breaking up of the Lemurian continent is concerned, the observations recorded during this Expedition seem definitely to support the older idea of the foundering of the land masses as against the theory of continental drift. Geologists all over India, will be eagerly looking forward to a fuller and more comprehensive account of the results of the Expedition, which will no doubt be published in the near future.

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*Ring-Dykes in India:*—Subsequent to the publication of the note in *Current Science* (2, No. 7, p. 246) on the occurrence of a ring-dyke near Hulikere, Mandya Taluk, by Mr. M. R. Krishnamurthi Rao and others wherein the authors had claimed that this ring-dyke was the second example of its kind in India, Mr. A. L. Coulson of the Geological Survey of India has written to us drawing attention to the occurrence of another ring-dyke which he has described from Mundwara in Sirohi State, Rajaputana.

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## NEWS

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### SPACE STATION: 'A WASTE OF MONEY?'

... "In comments released by Stanford U., three scientists roundly opposed the station. There are James van Allen, professor of physics at the State U., of Iowa and the man who discovered the radiation belts surrounding the Earth, Thomas Gold, professor of astronomy, Cornell U., and von R. Eshleman, director, Stanford's Ctr. for Radio Astronomy. 'The various applications of manned vehicles are grossly overstressed' said van Allen. He called the work 'enormously inefficient'. Gold said NASA wanted to keep manned space flights going because they attrac-

ted public attention. 'But that's not true any more. No one knows who is up in the space shuttle'. A space station also gave NASA a reason to increase its shuttle flights. 'It's just a lot of busywork' he said. Eshleman said that, instead of keeping pace with the Russians, the US would be better advised to develop automated spacecraft." (*Reproduced with permission from Press Digest, Current Contents*®<sup>®</sup>, No. 15, April 9, 1984. Copyright by the Institute for Scientific Information®<sup>®</sup>, Philadelphia, PA, U.S.A.)