
CURRENT SCIENCE — 50 YEARS AGO

THE CALDER PLAN*

THIS is essentially an age of social reconstruction and it must naturally abound in social speculations. The unprecedented progress of physical sciences and the application of the scientific discoveries and inventions to the industrial processes induced a general confidence in the public mind that the line of human development was definitely set in the direction of reason. The faith of the old generation that the betterment of man depended upon his technical advance was frustrated because society as a whole was not organised to receive the benefits of their mechanical progress. Hopes are entertained that, if the social problems are handled in a scientific way, the disharmonies of the world may be assuaged, and a better order of social affairs may be established. For over a decade Sir Richard Gregory and others have been emphasising on the recognition of a change of scientific interest from the physical and biological to the sociological, and as a result of this campaign, the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1932 was led by Prof. Miles Walker to pass a resolution offering its services in the solution of the economic and social problems. This eminently friendly attitude of science towards social environment has now become an article of public faith among scientists, who realise the importance of the relationship between science and society, considered historically in all its continually changing aspects.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science, at its recent session held in Indianapolis, passed a resolution based on the principles of what is called "The Calder Plan". This Plan insists upon a "declaration of the independence of Science"—a *Magna Charta* of Science. The principal features of this Plan are set forth by Richie Calder himself in an illuminating article published in a recent issue of the *Science Forum*¹. The fundamental idea underlying this Plan is that Science should enjoy absolute freedom in the organisation of research and in the exchange of ideas,—“a free trade in brains,” being the badge of the scientific tribe. The implication of scientific discoveries and inventions is that they should be harnessed for the common good of

mankind, and for the purpose of prosecuting scientific researches, scientific workers should be left untrammelled to pursue their studies in an atmosphere of peace. It is a portentous fallacy that scientific knowledge could be treated as an exclusive national asset, its blessings are universal. These facts must form the general creed of scientists who ought to own allegiance to no other doctrine.

The British Association for the Advancement of Science which has been keenly alive to the consequences of the impact of Science on a greatly exasperated world, has been considering for a long time the necessity of shifting its alignment to meet the demands of the changing conditions in the social and economic systems. At the Blackpool session and at subsequent meetings the Association recognised the need of bringing into existence an organisation for enquiring in an objective spirit the social relations of science. In view of the common ideals animating the spirit and outlook of the two Associations, Calder proposes in the first instance the formation of “an English-speaking Consortium” which should ultimately develop into a democratic World Association, devoted to the consideration and solution of “international social problems, with the safeguarding of the interests and independence of scientists”. The membership of this somewhat fat Association is to be thrown open to all scientists subscribing to the *Magna Charta* of the scientific democracy, who, accepting the responsibility of their position, should act as a link between the specialist in their own particular branch of knowledge, and those who are responsible for government, so that the world of scientific discoveries might do the greatest good to mankind. It is doubtful, however, whether the scientists in the totalitarian states will recognise the democratic principles of science, and whether the proposed organisation will include the Nazi and Fascist scientific men.

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The British Association has proposed a less ambitious scheme, based on the series of articles in *Nature* on the “rapidly growing awokenness of the importance of those complex problems confronting our community, due primarily to the astonishing rate of advance of scientific knowledge during the last generation” and with the object of obtaining repre-

* Published in *Curr. Sci.*, Vol. 7, August 1938, p. 41.

¹ *The Science Forum*, June 1938, 3, 7-11.

representative opinions upon the subject of social repercussions of science, a symposium was recently organised. In the supplement to *Nature*² is published a series of letters contributed by about forty leading scientists and publicists whose comments emphasise the necessity of going deeper into the social relations of science and indicate in general outline the principal activities to be undertaken and the methods of achieving the underlying objects. It is obvious that as the sciences become specialised, they tend to develop a spirit of exclusiveness and pretentious airs are disastrous to sciences as they must be to society, whose problems are created by science.

² *Nature*, April 23, 1938, 141, 3573, 723-42.

With a view, therefore, to bring about a closer relationship between scientific and social workers, the British Association is proposing to establish a new organisation, a Society for the Study of the Social Relations of Science. At the forthcoming meeting of the British Association at Cambridge, the proposal for the formation of a society of this nature is expected to be discussed, and we envisage that a definite scheme will be put forward for organising the scientific workers into a comprehensive body who would devise a mechanism for the application of scientific knowledge in promoting social well-being and betterment. Time is not far off for India to establish international affinities with these movements which, we hope, will point the way for a better and a happier world state.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SYMPOSIUM ON COAL UTILIZATION: TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

The above symposium will be held at the Central Fuel Research Institute, Dhanbad, India during 28 to 30 November 1989. The symposium, besides focussing worldwide attention of scientists, technologists and other experts, will provide a forum to interact and exchange the state of the art on the existing and emerging technologies, trends and challenges of coal utilization. The aim of the symposium is to take stock of the present situation in coal utilization vis-a-vis future demands, and to further rationalise utilization pattern of the solid

fossil fuel resources by sharing experience with scientists from within the country as well as other parts of the world. The symposium will broadly cover different areas of coal utilization in four technical sessions.

For further particulars, please contact: Shri Samir Sen, Organizing Secretary, Symposium on 'Coal Utilization: Trends and Challenges', Central Fuel Research Institute, P.O. FRI, Dist. Dhanbad 828 108.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON 'OPTIMIZING CONCRETE MIXTURES FOR ENGINEERING, CONSTRUCTION, DURABILITY AND ECONOMICS'

The above conference will be held during December 12-13, 1988, at the Harvey Hotel adjacent to the Dallas/Ft Worth International Airport. Sessions will include reports of research on mix composition, particle distribution technology, and production management to meet engineering, construction, durability and economics needs. One segment will provide concurrent sessions to discuss

buildings and pumping, pavements, concrete products, and education and training. Each session will be chaired by a construction industry leader.

For further information: see MIX Jr, SeeMIX or the companion seeSTAT for statistical analysis; contact Shilstone Software Co., 8577 Manderville Ln., Dallas, TX 75231, USA.
