

tion of Anthropology visited the Indians at their camp on the St. Lawrence, in the absence of Mr. Marsh, and concluded that the white characters were a form of albinism, and that ostracism had encouraged its propagation, as summarized by the chairman, Dr. F. C. Shrubbsall, in a short presentation at the close of the meeting. Following this paper, Mr. Marsh made the following statement:

(1) The difference in size and shape between the skulls of the blonde Indians and those of the standard San Blas has been attributed to artificial deformation of those of the dark infants, while those of the white infants are natural. This is wholly untrue. The San Blas Indians do not massage nor in any way alter the heads of their children. The rounder, broader and higher crania of the whites can not be explained in that way.

(2) The timid demeanor of the children and the behavior of their eyes when under inspection by strangers is misleading. They are not mentally deficient nor abnormal in any way. On the contrary, they are unusually alert and keen, with excellent memory. They are rapidly learning English.

(3) That the blonde Indians do not spring from the normal San Blas Indians but from the larger and more robust type, which occupy the hills back from the coast.

It is evident that the great number of these blonde Indians and their birth from both white and dark parents present an interesting and important problem, either ethnologic or medical. Thus far we have the following tentative explanations:

(1) A peculiar form of transmissible and stabilized albinism. This names but does not explain. The blonde complexion, the procreation and the large number rule out ordinary albinism.

(2) Some disease or pathologic condition preventing pigmentation. It appears that the physiologic defect is transmissible as an acquired character.

(3) That the blondes are biologic "sports." This argues for a new variety or race of the human species.

(4) That the phenomenon is atavism, the effect of a long-ago infusion of white or Nordic blood. The anthropologists are inclined to discredit the many legends of ancient or Pre-Columbian immigration from Europe. But it may be wise to critically review the historic narratives.

One important matter is not yet determined, that is, if the white parents ever have dark children.

Summarizing, it would seem that we may be limited to two views. The first three of the above explanations suggest the initiation of a new white race, and fortifies the belief of many anthropologists that our own white race sprang from dark ancestry. Either this explanation or the ancient introduction of Nordic blood.

All agree that Mr. Marsh deserves great credit for his persistence in the face of great difficulties in mak-

ing a very important discovery. Dr. Aleš Hrdlička has said:

. . . The phenomenon deserves a thorough scientific investigation, and Mr. Marsh deserves the thanks of American and British anthropologists for having brought to their attention a subject of considerable scientific interest and importance.

It is the purpose of Mr. Marsh to make another expedition to Darien, equipped for thorough ethnologic and medical study. The Indians are very reticent about their family and tribal affairs, and it will require tactful and sympathetic handling to obtain the full truth concerning this matter.

Mr. Marsh is also intent on finding some way of establishing ownership by the Indians of the lands which they have held so long, of protecting them from the dangers that surround them, of assisting them in sanitation and agriculture and of helping them to live their own life in their own way. They are an admirable people and should not be encouraged to adopt the many vices which we call civilization.

The moving pictures taken by Mr. Charlton will soon give on the screen a vivid story of the Marsh Expedition.

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SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE WORLD POWER CONFERENCE¹

THE World Power Conference held in London, June 30 to July 12 was, from many points of view, the most notable gathering of its kind ever convened. It attracted large representations of engineers from many nationalities to London, and the various sections of the program reviewed the power problems of the world with a completeness that has never before been attempted.

The conference was organized by the British Electrical and Allied Manufacturers' Association in cooperation with numerous technical, scientific and commercial organizations. The purpose was to consider the sources of world power by evaluating the resources of each country, by comparing experiences in the development of scientific agriculture, irrigation and transportation, by engineering conferences, by consultations of power consumers and power-machinery manufacturers, by financial and economic discussions, and by conferences looking to the establishment of a permanent world bureau for the collection of data and the exchange of industrial and scientific information.

The conference was formally opened on Monday

¹ From *Mechanical Engineering*.

afternoon, June 30, by the Prince of Wales in the large conference room of the British Empire Exhibition. Lord Derby, president of the conference, presided at this ceremony. In his address the Prince of Wales extended a cordial welcome to the delegates to the conference and expressed the hope that the personal contacts gained during the discussions would form the inspiring motive of progress in every great activity connected with modern industry. Sir Joseph Cook responded on behalf of the British Dominions, Dr. G. Semenza of Italy, spoke for the European countries, and O. C. Merrill, of the United States, replied for the Americas. Mr. Merrill received considerable applause when he stated that mutual understanding was badly needed in the world at the present time and that contacts between people more than contacts between governments would bring about that understanding.

More than four hundred papers were presented from over forty countries, which were classified for discussion under the following headings: Power Resources, Power Production, Power Transmission and Distribution, Power Utilization and General. Under this last heading financial, economic and legal considerations were discussed, as were also research, standardization, education, health and publicity. In the Survey of Engineering Progress in this issue will be found very brief abstracts of some of the foreign papers which deal with topics of outstanding importance. Forty papers presented by American authors summarized the results of American progress in power generation, transmission and utilization, and included a summary of American resources. The complete proceedings of the conference will be included in four volumes approximating 5,500 pages, which are to be published by Perry Lund, Humphries & Company, Ltd., 3, Amen Corner, London E. C. 4, England. The publishers will send a prospectus of contents upon application.

The technical sessions were held mornings and afternoons, sometimes three at a time, on the first ten week days of July. The meeting places were the conference halls at the British Empire Exhibition. The papers, which had been printed in advance, were presented by title and thrown open to discussion by the delegates present. Over one hundred and seventy-five Americans were at the conference and many of them participated actively in the technical sessions. Among the presiding officers were George Otis Smith, director of the U. S. Geological Survey; David S. Jacobus, John W. Lieb, John R. Freeman, Fred R. Low, Joseph W. Roe and R. A. Millikan. Arthur Survever, president of the Engineering Institute of Canada, presided at one of the sessions on Water Power Resources. Among those who discussed the various papers were W. L. R. Emmet, David Rush-

more, W. S. Murray, Sanford Riley, O. F. Junggren, Geo. A. Orrok and Lieutenant R. B. Alexander.

At the concluding sessions, which were held on Friday, July 11, there was a review of the activities of the previous day's sessions and plans for future development were considered. At this session Mr. Merrill pointed out that the papers and discussions would be a source of reference to engineers and other for many years to come. Each country had brought its own contribution and the questions had been discussed in a spirit of confidence and cooperation. There had been general recognition of the fact that scientific knowledge was common property and should be used for the common purposes of mankind. Resolutions were passed asking that each country which participated in the conference create and maintain a permanent national power committee from which delegates would be appointed on an international executive committee which would for the time being carry out the necessary work arising from the conference. Another resolution recommended that the organization which had convened the London conference should remain as an organization during the transitional period. The following general resolution was unanimously carried: "That this conference is of the opinion that the world's most crying need to-day is greater production and manufacturing activity among its peoples under conditions which will promote individual prosperity and happiness, and that this can be largely achieved by the fuller development of national power resources and by the establishment of the most economical means for the general distribution and utilization of energy."

THE HEALTH COMMITTEE OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

DR. O. R. EICHEL, director of the Division of Vital Statistics, on leave of absence and serving with the League of Nations, reports the following interview with Surgeon-General H. S. Cumming, chief of the United States Public Health Service, and U. S. Representative on the League Health Committee:

I am one of the ten members appointed by the International Health Office to the League Committee under the new arrangement just concluded between the two bodies. The close coordination of international public health work that has been made possible by the partial amalgamation of the two bodies is to be welcomed as a great step forward. I have been keenly interested in effecting this reform since 1919, for the previous situation bordered on the absurd. Practically the same representatives of practically the same governments (except the United States, which was a member of the office and not of the committee, and Japan, which was a member of the committee but not of the office) met and worked separately. Most of these anomalies have now been