SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

SECOND CONFERENCE ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTS[1]

THE second international conference on the standardization of biological products was held at Geneva from August 31 to September 3, under the presidency of Dr. H. H. Dale, F.R.S., of London, and was attended by seventeen representatives from various countries. The members of the conference were welcomed by Dr. Rajchman on behalf of the Health Section of the League of Nations. The main business of the conference was to discuss the standardization of such products as pituitary extract, insulin, digitalis, salvarsan, thyroid gland, ergot and others, and each of these was the subject of a good discussion, and resolutions were formulated which received the unanimous support of the conference.

The first product which received detailed consideration by the conference was pituitary extract, upon which a report was presented by Professor Voegtlin. After a somewhat lengthy discussion resolutions were arrived at, declaring that the dry (acetone) extracted substance of the fresh posterior lobe of the pituitary gland, which was recommended by Professor Voegtlin to the Edinburgh conference as suitable for adoption as a standard of activity for pituitary extracts, and which has since been adopted as a standard for this purpose in the United States *Pharmacopoeia* (tenth edition), should be now definitely accepted as the international standard, that the authority responsible in any country for biological standardization should prepare such quantities of the standard as were needed for distribution, and that the health organization of the league should be asked to furnish a small sample of the standard as originally prepared for examination by the Edinburgh conference to any authority which might require it for the confirmation of its own national standard.

Professor Macleod introduced the subject of insulin, and recommended the adoption as the international standard of the dried preparation of insulin hydrochloride which, at the request of the Edinburgh conference of 1923, has been made at the National Institute for Medical Research, London, 1 mg of this preparation to be regarded as containing 8 units of insulin. Professor Meyer mentioned a new method devised by Professor Loewi, of the University of Graz, depending upon, what Professor Loewi held to be proved, an alteration by insulin of the distribution of dextrose between the plasma and corpuscles of shed blood. It was agreed that this method deserved further careful investigation, but that no recommendation could yet be made as to its adoption. The recommendation made by Professor Macleod was agreed to, and it was arranged that the standard preparation should be kept by the Medical Research Council, which would undertake to test the permanence of its potency from time to time, and that samples of the preparation should be sent to some responsible organization in each country which would undertake its further distribution to testing laboratories.

The conference accepted the principle of the standardization of salvarsan and its derivatives in relation to permanent standard preparations, and Professor Kolle, of Frankfort, was asked to accept the responsibility of preparing, maintaining and distributing the standards for the various products of this class.

Thyroid gland preparations were also discussed, and it was agreed, on the suggestion of Professor Reid Hunt, to adopt the standard of iodine content. The question of ergot was introduced by Professor Trendelenburg, who said that, of a number of testing methods he had examined, a test based on the paralyzing effect of these alkaloids on the inhibitory action of adrenaline on the movements of the isolated intestine of rabbits and guinea-pigs appeared to be most promising. The conference decided that the question of the biological standardization of ergot was not yet ripe for final decision.

After various other substances had been considered, Professor Poulsson presented a memorandum dealing with methods proposed for standardizing for vitamin content the substances used in medicine for supplying vitamins to patients. He recommended the method already adopted in the United States *Pharmacopoeia* (tenth edition) for standardizing cod-liver oil for the growth-promoting factor (vitamin A). He stated that tests were already available, though less certainly quantitative in their interactions, for the antirachitic vitamin, the water-soluble growth-promoting vitamin and the antiscorbutic vitamin. A discussion ensued, in the course of which it was suggested by Dr. Dale that the present conference was hardly suitable for the discussion of the whole question of the biological standard of vitamins. It appeared to him that such a discussion could more suitably be undertaken by a special conference analogous to the serological conference, attended by recognized experts in this special branch of inquiry.

[1] From the *British Medical Journal*.

THE COLUMBIA-PRESBYTERIAN MEDICAL CENTER

A REPORT on the progress of the fund to provide the Presbyterian Hospital's share of the cost of construction of the new Medical Center being erected at Broadway and 168th Street has been made public by Dean Sage, president of the hospital. Mr. Sage