

liberty to select any paper on the subject of the natural history of China published either in China or abroad for the purpose of this award.

3. The prize may be withheld should the prize committee deem that no work published during the year is worthy of award.

### THE BEIT MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIPS

A MEETING of the trustees of the Beit Memorial Fellowships for Medical Research was held recently for the election of fellows and other business. The annual report of the honorable secretary, Sir James K. Fowler, was presented. It stated:

The death of Lord Haldane, F.R.S., has deprived the trust of one by whose wise advice and unflinching interest it has profited since its foundation in 1909. In spite of indications which he himself recognized, he presided at a meeting of the trustees very shortly before his death "as he did not wish to be absent." The appointment of Lord Rayleigh, F.R.S., to fill the vacancy thus caused will be recognized as specially suitable.

The reports of the directors of laboratories on the work of the fellows are uniformly favorable, and all without exception dwell upon the energy with which the various problems presented by their researches are being attacked.

The year has been marked by an unusual number of resignations. As in all cases this has been due to the appointment of the fellow to a scientific post of a permanent character, it is incidentally a tribute to the value which is attached to the tenure of a fellowship. Often, moreover, the research is continued, but it has ceased to have the first call upon the time of the worker. The researches are in possibly increasing proportion concerned with problems "in the scientific subjects related to medicine" and do not lend themselves to a review of a general character. Those, however, who have seen the very remarkable film by Dr. Canti illustrating the actual method by which normal and cancer tissues are built up will be interested to know that Miss Honor B. Fell, who was last year appointed to a senior fellowship, has been associated in this work at the Strangeways Research Hospital, Cambridge.

Dr. Hindle, whose discovery of a vaccine protective against yellow fever was mentioned in last year's report, has experienced one of those setbacks which almost invariably attend work of such a character by the diminution in virulence of the strain of the virus with which he has been working. Such variations in virulence are well known in other virus diseases—*e.g.*, dogs' distemper—and therefore it is not surprising that similar changes should have occurred in the yellow-fever virus. The practical consequences are increased difficulties in testing the protective value of the vaccine, as it is necessary to use large numbers of monkeys. Efforts are now being made to reestablish the virulence of this strain and also to obtain other strains. Further evidence has been obtained which establishes the fact that those engaged upon this research, if unprotected, are subject to serious risk of infection.

The advisory board are of opinion that the records of the candidates at this election indicate a standard both as regards academic distinctions and subsequent performance at least as high as in any previous year.

Possibly in the next annual report advantage may be taken of the fact that twenty-one years will then have elapsed since the foundation of the trust to review the service which the work of the fellows has rendered to the advancement of medical science, although the intervention of the war period, during which all the fellows resigned to undertake work of more immediate service to the state, will prevent it from being a review of a similar number of years.

### WESTERN FOREST FIRES

THE critical forest fire situation in the Western National Forests is somewhat improved but still far from satisfactory, according to reports received in Washington by the Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture. In northern Idaho, where raging forest fires were rapidly approaching disastrous proportions a short time ago, cool weather with some rain has given some temporary relief. In spite of this change, 4,900 fire fighters are rushing work to make the many large fires safe from further outbreak in anticipation of the possible recurrence of dry weather. In Washington and Oregon, where several large uncontrolled fires are being fought by hundreds of men, the weather remains hot and dry with no relief predicted. In California the weather has become more favorable to the work of fire control and no large fires are now burning.

More than \$1,000,000 has been spent by the Forest Service in the last three weeks in fighting forest fires, and in the fire season more than 500,000 acres have been burned over in the Western National Forests. In the six Western National Forest Districts, comprising the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast region, there have been in that period 5,025 separate fires, 3,016 of which have been caused by lightning and 2,009 by human agency.

"Lightning fires have been unusually troublesome this year," says E. A. Sherman, acting chief of the Forest Service in the absence of Major R. Y. Stuart, who is in the west studying national forest needs with the agricultural subcommittee of the appropriations committee of the House of Representatives. "Fires caused by human carelessness are unnecessary and will be eliminated by education and law enforcement. Bunched lightning fires, sometimes running to 300 or 400 separate fires set by one dry electrical storm, will always present the risk of disaster unless adequate means are provided to cope with them. This means especially a complete system of roads and trails throughout the National Forests, including especially the now almost inaccessible country where lightning strikes most frequently. It means, secondly, an avail-