

loose as possible, and there has been no subscription. In spite of this, useful work has been done, discussions have been organized in connection with the Zoological Society, the Linnean Society and the British Association, and "The New Systematics," a book of essays on recent progress in taxonomy in relation to other branches of biology, edited by Dr. Julian Huxley, will be published soon by the Oxford University Press.

It has now, however, been decided that, in order that the association may function still more effectively, a regular income is necessary, and a subscription of 5s. a year has been fixed for the first three years. An agreement has been made with the Linnean Society, whereby the association may use the society's rooms for meetings, joint discussions are to be held, and the annual report will appear in the *Proceedings* of the Linnean Society.

The general aim of the association is to remedy the isolation which modern specialization has inevitably created in the various branches of biology. Its objects include the study of the bases and practical aims of taxonomy; the examination of the criteria employed in defining species and other systematic categories; the consideration of modifications of the existing categories in the light of various branches of specialized research; the promotion of research; the investigation of methods of teaching systematics; and the promotion of cooperation between workers in different branches of biology and taxonomic problems. The association plans eventually to produce a uniform series of handbooks on the British fauna and flora.

The chairman of the association is Dr. Julian Huxley; J. S. L. Gilmour is botanical secretary; H. W. Parker, zoological secretary, and Dr. J. Smart, treasurer. The address of the treasurer is care of the British Museum (Natural History), London, S.W. 7.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF GENETICS

BEFORE the opening of the International Congress of Genetics at Edinburgh a special cable to *The New York Times*, signed by Ritchie Calder, reported that Professor N. I. Vavilov, president of the congress, together with fifty of his colleagues had withdrawn from the congress and that Soviet science would not be represented either by a delegation or by individuals. The official explanation, contained in a letter to Professor F. A. E. Crew, secretary-general of the congress, is that the Russians could not participate because the congress should have been held in Moscow instead of Edinburgh.

Mr. Calder wrote that this announcement, which was received on the eve of the congress, came as a complete surprise. Two years ago plans to hold the congress in Moscow were abandoned because of differences and restrictions that foreign geneticists could not

accept. By a decision of the international committee that organizes the congress, the meeting was transferred to Edinburgh, but it was also decided that the president should be Professor Vavilov as arranged and that the Russians should have a dominant part in the proceedings.

Three weeks before the opening, Professor Vavilov, who for eighteen months had been actively participating in the arrangements, discovered that the project for meeting in Moscow had not been "abandoned" but only "postponed" and that the Edinburgh proceedings were therefore out of order.

Russian papers, including the presidential address, had been received and printed. They had to be suppressed and all the program had to be readjusted and reissued to close the fifty gaps caused by this wholesale retreat.

No one, according to the *Times*, seriously accepted the official explanation. It is known that there have been growing differences of opinion among Russian geneticists, and one section is demanding "Marxist genetics." Thus Soviet biology has become involved with ideology.

It is also thought that the turn of international events has had some bearing on the fact that the Russians had not received their passports.

About a quarter of the German geneticists had also withdrawn. Six out of twelve members in the field of human genetics were "unable to attend," but thirty-two were expected to be present at the opening of the Congress. One of the principal papers planned for that day was a study of heredity and environment through identical twins by Professor Fritz Lenz, of Berlin. About twenty Italians were expected to take part. The American contingent numbered 120, and there were large delegations from France, the Netherlands and Scandinavia.

#### OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR MICROBIOLOGY

THE third International Congress for Microbiology opened at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York City, on September 2. According to the *New York Herald Tribune* many scientific men from abroad who expected to be present were unable to attend and others must return as soon as transportation can be arranged.

Nearly all the forty-two official delegates designated by the German government actually sailed on the Hamburg-American liner *Hansa*, but the boat was recalled to Hamburg. Several official delegates designated by the Italian Government were to have sailed on the Italian liner *Conte di Savoia*, but the sailing was cancelled, and the ship is still in Naples.

Some of those who were unable to attend were already in the service of their governments. Among these is Dr. G. Ramon, director of the Pasteur Insti-