

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE BENGAL FAMINE

IN regard to the recent famine in Bengal, India, Dr. A. V. Hill writes to *The Times*, London, as follows:

There has been much fruitless recrimination about the recent famine in Bengal: instead of arguing about the symptoms, let us face the facts of the disease itself.

(1) The mortality in India at all ages is four to eight times ours; the expectation of life at birth is 26 years instead of our 62; only half the people born reach 22 years, instead of 69 with us.

(2) Ill-health is correspondingly prevalent; between 100 and 200 million people, out of 400 millions, suffer from malaria every year; tuberculosis, cholera, small-pox, plague, guinea-worm and filarial infection, yaws, kala-azar and many other diseases take their continual toll of life and health.

(3) A large part of the population is underfed, according to any reasonable standards more than half; of these, many millions are living near the verge of starvation.

(4) Chronic malnutrition acts with disease in a vicious circle, producing poverty and inefficiency.

(5) In spite of all this, the population of India is increasing now by about 6,000,000 a year, about 15 per thousand per annum.

There is nothing new about disease and under-nourishment in India: indeed the present population trend is a sign that they have rather less effect than formerly. . . . Already about 50 per cent. more food is needed in India. Can agriculture by present methods catch up and cope with the expanding population?

It is idle to talk of family limitation, except as a long-term policy; and the present need is acute. The factor of safety indeed in India is very low. Disorganization or disorder could lead to frightful tragedy. Cooperation by all men of good will in the whole-hearted development of India's resources by modern scientific methods is the only hope of averting it.

THE FORESTRY MISSION TO CHILE

THE technical forestry mission sent to Chile by the Forest Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture at the request of the Department of State has now completed its work in Chile and has returned to the United States to prepare a formal report. This mission consisted of five technicians: I. T. Haig, assistant chief of the Division of Forest Management and Research, in charge; Lawrence V. Teesdale, Forest Products Laboratory, wood utilization specialist; Philip A. Briegleb, Pacific Northwest Forest Experiment Station, in charge of timber surveys; Burnett H. Payne, North Pacific Region, evaluation surveys, and Martin A. Haertel, specialist in hardwood chemical distillation.

This project, initiated at the request of the Corpora-

ción de Fomento de la Producción, an agency of the Chilean Government, had as its objective an appraisal of the forest resources of Chile and its evaluation as a basis for the expansion of forest industries. This is part of a broad scale program to industrialize the country in so far as natural resources permit and to help to stabilize Chilean economy.

The mission spent six months in a rapid appraisal of the forest situation, including a study of forest volume, distribution and economic availability, forest depletion, forest growth and national timber requirements both present and future. Highlights of the forest situation are: (1) Chile has a substantial forest area; on a *per capita* basis her commercial forest acreage is fairly comparable with that of the United States. (2) There is no forest practice worthy of the name in the natural forest area, even organized fire protection being entirely lacking. In contrast, the small but substantial plantation area is very intensively managed, stand improvement operations beginning in some types at as early as four years of age with harvest cuttings frequently at twelve to fifteen years of age. (3) Under crude forestry, primarily fire protection, the forest resources could sustain on a permanent basis two to three times the industry now based upon it.

THE NEW YORK CITY MEETING OF THE AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY

THE one hundred and eighth meeting of the American Chemical Society will be held in New York City from September 11 to 15, under the auspices of the North Jersey Section, which has two thousand three hundred and thirty-two members, with headquarters in Newark. The meeting will be devoted to wartime research, problems of the chemical industry and post-war activities of the profession. It is expected that there will be meetings of all divisions except the Division of the History of Chemistry. More than a hundred local sections of the society will be represented.

Rubber, petroleum, food, plastics, fertilizer, cellulose, gas and fuel, medicinal chemistry and education are among the general fields of discussion. Catalysis will be the chief subject discussed by the Petroleum Division, which will also hold a round table on bench-scale techniques in addition to general sessions. The chairman of this section is Dr. Cecil L. Brown, of the Standard Oil Company of Louisiana. Cellulose and cellulose plastics will be discussed at joint sessions of the Cellulose, Colloid, Physical and Inorganic Divisions.

The American Chemical Society is the largest professional organization of its kind in the world with a membership approaching forty thousand. It has a