THE Radio Receptor Company, Inc., has placed a scholarship of $2,500 at the disposal of the department of physics of the Washington Square College of New York University. The recipient of this scholarship will be a student working for the doctorate and the research which the scholarship is designed to promote will be the subject of the thesis for the degree. Applications with credentials should be directed to the Chairman of the Physics Department, Washington Square College of Arts and Science, New York University, Washington Square, New York 3, N. Y.

A NEW du Pont postgraduate fellowship in chemistry has been made available for the academic year of 1945–46 to the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn. The list of applicants will not be closed for the next three months. The fellowship includes tuition paid by the du Pont Company in addition to a $1,000 stipend. It will be awarded for the fall term of 1945.

THE department of sociology of Oberlin College has introduced courses in general and cultural anthropology, origins of modern culture and racial and cultural minorities. The department of chemistry will include a new course in modern theories of organic chemistry, and the department of arts will give a course in museum training.

IT is reported in the *Journal* of the American Medical Association that on February 14 the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation filed in the U. S. District Court a reply denying all accusations of illegality and asserting that all actions were designed to safeguard the public interest and preserve legitimate royalty income. The filed reply is an answer to a Government suit charging monopoly, price fixing and other violations in connection with the marketing of patented vitamin D products. Litigation started about eighteen months ago, when the foundation sued the Douglas Laboratories, manufacturing chemists, for patent infringement. The Government intervened with a counterclaim against the foundation, and last October amended the counterclaim to include seventeen other defendants, naming one individual and ten food and drug companies.

INVESTIGATIONS into the use of new nitrogen containing compounds as agricultural fertilizers have been initiated for the American Cyanamid Company, in charge of W. P. Martin, assistant biochemist at the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Arizona. The company has made a grant-in-aid of $1,000 a year for three years. A search will be made for compounds that will supply the nitrogen, develop it slowly in the soil and that will contain nitrogenous material of such solubility that it will not leach rapidly to areas below the root zone of the plant.

THE Tropical Institute in Basel, Switzerland, is now established in a fully equipped building. Scientific studies affecting the tropics will be undertaken, and special training will be given to students who wish to go to the colonies.

IT is stated in *Nature* that the British Joint Council of Professional Scientists has been established for the period of the national emergency to voice the collective opinion of qualified men of science. It was originally a joint committee of representatives of the Royal Institute of Chemistry and of the Institute of Physics, which was set up for the purpose of fostering coordinated action in matters of common interest, and was developed by the cooption of a botanist, a geologist, a mathematician and a zoologist, there being no corresponding professional bodies to represent those branches of science. One of the representatives of the Royal Institute of Chemistry is a metallurgist of similar standing. The council has now been working for two years. Among matters which have received, or are receiving, its attention are the proposal to urge the Government to establish a central scientific and technical board; the Ministry of Labor's announcement regarding the minimum number of hours to be worked in laboratories and factories; the influence on professional standards of war-time university regulations governing the award of degrees; the conditions of service of professional men of science in the Colonial service and the national policy regarding research and development work.

DISCUSSION

THE CRUCIAL POSTWAR NEED FOR AN INTERNATIONAL, AUXILIARY LANGUAGE FOR THE SCIENCES

A PROBLEM which we should try to settle immediately concerns the common language that will be needed after the war if the results of research are to be made promptly and readily available to scientists of all nations. If this problem has been less critical in the past, it is because most scientists, regardless of nationality, have been trained in universities where either English, German or French is the primary language. But as scientific activities spread, more and more research workers will be trained at home—in Russia, Latin America, China, Japan—and we may find ourselves cut off from one another by language barriers. To effect economy of effort in learn-

ing secondary languages and, what is far more important, to help safeguard the international character of scientific activities, it seems essential that we immediately take steps to get an auxiliary, world language for the sciences into use.

The history of attempts to develop an international language is long, but it should suffice here to recall to mind two recent studies. In 1921 a committee of the British Association gave unanimous approval to the desirability of having an international, auxiliary language and reached the conclusion that an invented language, such as Esperanto, is more practicable than either a dead language or a modern one. In the same year, 1921, a similar committee of the American Association for the Advancement of Science recommended: (1) a searching, fundamental study of the principles involved and experimental data available; (2) authoritative international agreement, both as to linguistic details and as to the practical measures to be taken.[1]

Perhaps these committees would now modify their recommendations in the light of events since 1921. The demand for a world language has become more emphatic; indeed, a recent British Association committee on postwar education has recommended that every university should require its students to be able to speak and write an international language.[2] Much has also been done to clear up the theories and facts as suggested by the American committee. As for the recommendation that there be international agreement on some language, such action surely would come too slowly to be of much value for the immediate postwar years.

If the trends of the past two decades are taken into account, the present answer to the question of what the international, auxiliary language should be, clearly is *English*. Even before the present war the tendency was toward English in international commerce. Today, on account of the war, devices and materials originating in English-speaking countries are in use almost everywhere, with the result that numerous English technical and vocational terms are being added to many different languages that have no suitable equivalents or substitutes for them.

Compared with French or German, English has certain characteristics that make it the best language of the three for the sciences. Possibly English is not the ideal science language for all time to come, but it is the one language that can be gotten into fairly general use almost immediately. If this is not done, it will be the fault of scientists who write in English.

The procedure is absurdly simple. The first step is merely that authors and editors of abstracts and research papers, nothing else, become thoroughly conscious of all readers in their own fields, but in other countries, whose reading knowledge of English will be only moderate and not comparable with that of a scientist trained in a British or American graduate school. Although this simple step can be taken immediately, and will accomplish a good deal, there soon will be a demand for a basic vocabulary upon which all authors and readers can rely. Such a vocabulary, which must be developed by expert linguists, is already available in the system known as Basic English.[3] Moreover, this system, with its simplified grammar, has now been extended to provide basic vocabularies for the sciences, including mathematics.[4] Certainly all abstracts of technical papers should from now on be written in Basic English, and here the editors of scientific journals must take the lead.

It should be emphasized that the concern here is not in a general world language, but in an *auxiliary*, world language for the sciences. If there are valid reasons for not trying to get Basic English into use for this purpose, the writer is unaware of them.

Scientists have made contributions to language that are more fundamental than is generally appreciated;[5] and the present question of an international, auxiliary language clearly lies within their domain and can be settled more readily and effectively by them than by any outside group. However, any proposal requiring modifications in language habits is slow to take effect unless there is vigorous group action. Various organizations of scientists surely will try to reach some practical decision on this question of an international, auxiliary language and, for that matter, on any course of action that will help materially in the postwar years to preserve an international fellowship among scientists and the freest possible interchange of scientific knowledge.

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[1] S. W. Stratton, SCIENCE, 55: 166, 1922. This report also describes the work of the British Association committee.

[2] R. Gregory, *Nature*, 150: 622, 1942.

THE THREAT TO PURE SCIENCE

IN his letter printed on December 8th, Mr. Eugene V. D. Robin discusses the subject of the value of science. He commends the kind of science that has "practical applicability," the kind that "will help greater numbers of men lead richer, fuller, more comfortable lives." He condemns, on the contrary, the kind of science practiced by the man who says, "Man-

[3] C. K. Ogden, "The System of Basic English" (Harcourt, Brace, 1934). For a brief description of the system, see, for instance, Hugh Walpole, "Semantics" (Norton, 1941), Chapter 9.

[4] C. K. Ogden, "Basic for Science" (Kegan Paul, 1942).

[5] These contributions, as revealed by an analysis of physical science source literature, are discussed by the writer in "Technical writing and editing," *Am. Jour. Physics*, 13 (April, 1945), in press. The present note is a modified version of one section of that article.