

The Indian Science Congress, 1976—An Agenda for Action

The following account is taken from a report written by Cyril Ponnampereuma of the University of Maryland, who represented AAAS at the recent Indian Science Congress. AAAS News thought it might be of particular interest, especially since members are frequently sought to represent the Association at scientific meetings in other countries.

More than 2000 Indian scientists assembled for the 63rd session of the Indian Science Congress, 3–7 January 1976. In addition, some 50 foreign visitors from 21 countries attended the meeting, which was held in the seaside university town of Waltair, in the province of Andhra Pradesh.

Several hundred scientific papers were

presented in 13 different sections, ranging from mathematics and statistics to anthropology and archeology. Symposia, panel discussions, and special lectures dealt with a variety of timely topics, such as energy, environmental pollution, and consumer education. For the first time, the Congress program was planned around a focal theme: "Science and Integrated Rural Development." The inspiration for the adoption of a single interdisciplinary theme came from the impact the 1975 AAAS Annual Meeting on "Science and the Quality of Life" had made on the Indian scientists.

M. S. Swaminathan, F.R.S., director of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, was elected president of the 63rd session by the Indian Science Congress Association. His presidential address called for a national policy of scientific development, in which rural assets and liabilities would be reviewed and guidelines developed for using the tools of science to enhance rural life.

The highlight of the meeting was the

opening session, in which Prime Minister Indira Gandhi spoke. In commenting on the meeting theme, she pointed out that the drain of talent from village to town was an old and universal form of brain drain. There was no question in her mind that India had to make a deliberate effort to turn this tide. However, she was careful neither to minimize the importance of scientific investigation in aid of industry and technology nor to denigrate fundamental research.

A distinctive feature of the Congress was the exhibition organized to focus attention on the central theme. Of great interest was the exhibit arranged by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). Visitors were able to watch television programs which are currently being broadcast to 2400 villages throughout India. This 1-year experiment, which commenced 1 August 1975, uses the Applications Technology Satellite (ATS-6) by special arrangement with NASA. The experiment is considered to be an unqualified success.

Second Half of Current NOVA Season Announced

Please consult local television listings for air times of the following programs:

4 April: Joey (BBC): A re-creation of the life of Joey Deacon, 54, and a spastic since birth. A repeat of the program first broadcast on 11 January.

11 April: The Transplant Experience (BBC/WGBH): The story of Norman Shumway of Stanford University, who has done more heart transplants than any other heart surgeon, is presented. The complete routine of a heart transplant is followed in detail. Legal, ethical, and economic aspects of the operation are considered.

18 April: The Underground Movement (BBC/WGBH): This film examines creatures that make their lives underground, from tiny soil organisms to foxes and badgers.

25 April: The Secrets of Sleep (BBC/WGBH repeat): Most of us spend one-third of our lives in a state about which we understand remarkably little. The film challenges traditional notions about how much sleep we need.

2 May: Hunters of the Seal (WGBH remake of an Educational Development Center film): Anthropologist Asen Balici examines the Netsilik Eskimos of Pelly Bay and the changes that have occurred in their traditional life-style since they were settled in a permanent encampment by the Canadian government. The film deals with what happens when a Western life-style is imposed upon an ancient culture.

9 May: Benjamin (BBC): This revealing film about early

child development traces the first year in the life of Benjamin, a healthy, normal baby.

16 May: The Other Way (BBC repeat): E. F. Schumacher, author of *Small is Beautiful*, is convinced that there must be "another way" for technology to serve mankind without gobbling up resources. He calls it Intermediate Technology—development and use of machines that effectively and efficiently extend the capacities of persons without replacing them.

23 May: The Woman Rebel (WGBH): This film is a dramatic reconstruction of the life of Margaret Sanger, pioneer of birth control, and of the struggle for acceptance in America of the birth control movement.

30 May: How Much Do You Smell? (BBC repeat): Many insects and some mammals use smell as a primary means of communication. But what of a human's sense of smell? The film indicates that humans tell each other far more than they think by odoriferous messages.

6 June: Smallpox (working title) (WGBH): This film concerns the WHO-coordinated smallpox eradication program. Experts now believe the disease to be on the verge of extinction.

13 June: Inside the Shark (WGBH/BBC): A recent popular movie has given a bad name to sharks. This program is about the life-style of this remarkable animal and its unique jaws, brain, and senses of smell and touch.

20 and 27 June: Unscheduled; titles to be announced.