

The occasional occurrence of a "tail" in man or of an azygos lobe of the right lung, microcephaly, large canine teeth, the fourth molar, the divided malar bone, the "third trochanter" of the femur, the entepicondylar foramen of the humerus, supernumerary mammae and many other characters have been, and still are, cited as examples of atavism. Yet in every case it can be conclusively shown that such characters are not upon any view to be regarded as reversions to an ancestral condition. Changes in development and in developmental rates resulting in persistence, suppression, reduction, hypertrophy, duplication or multiplication of structures and normal variability, are processes quite adequate to account for the so-called "atavisms" which are commonly cited.

In short, it is more than doubtful whether the concept of atavism has any counterpart in reality; and, I think it will be agreed, that unless the concept can be applied to some demonstrable type of phenomenon, it were better that the term were altogether dropped from the vocabulary of the biologist.

M. F. ASHLEY-MONTAGU

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

BIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS HAS GONE TO PRESS

Biological Abstracts has been saved! Funds for Volume 12 are pledged in sufficient amount to guarantee publication.

The first number of Volume 12 went to press on April 19, and will consist mostly of abstracts appearing in the last half of 1937, together with a few from 1938. The second number will follow close on the heels of the first, appearing before June 10, and will consist of 1938 material. It is planned that Number 3 will be a supplement, and will bridge the gap between Volumes 11 and 12. Thereafter publication will be prompt. The indices to Volumes 10 and 11 are likewise provided for. Over one half the index of Volume 10 is already through galley proof.

The budget adopted has been set at the lowest figure consistent with this worthy project. Under it some 15,000 abstracts are planned. A list of journals will be published in an early issue. It is planned to extend

the scope of *Biological Abstracts* as subscriptions are added. To insure satisfactory coverage, steps are being taken to secure the appointment of advisers from the various biological organizations having a stake in the enterprise.

The Board of Trustees, taking office as an emergency measure in mid-February with ten months of the fiscal year gone, are deeply grateful for the prompt and generous response given their appeals a month later in *SCIENCE* and the *Library Journal*. They regret the unfortunate features of the plan under which the present funds have been solicited, and pledge their energy to the liquidation of that plan at the earliest possible moment. The new editor-in-chief, Dr. John E. Flynn, is keenly aware of the problems facing *Biological Abstracts*, and is very eager to do his bit in keeping this journal up to the minute and in making it a more useful one.

Now that publication has been resumed, it is hoped that institutions and individuals will forward their orders at once. This is particularly necessary if they wish to avoid interruption of their files, since the edition must be kept reasonably close to the subscription list. That their institutions are saddled with various subsidies is lamentable, but the Board of Trustees promises relief in another year in the case of *Biological Abstracts*.

The present Board of Trustees has been maintained intact during the current emergency. While the membership has been criticized because of too great concentration in certain states, this has been a distinct advantage when personal consultations were needed. Committees have been appointed, however, to study the problem of a more satisfactory geographical distribution, together with other pertinent problems.

Biological Abstracts is yours. Its success depends upon an active interest taken by you and the societies of which you are a member during the coming years. If you do this, a creditable journal can be confidently forecast.

GEORGE W. HUNTER, III, *Chairman*
PAUL R. BURKHOLDER
M. L. RANEY

Executive Committee

QUOTATIONS

SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

THE correspondence shows a remarkable consensus of opinion. Practically all are agreed that some organized body is necessary which shall study the problems, many of them highly controversial, evoked by the impact of science on society, in an objective and

rational manner. Such a body must have the closest linkings with the physical and biological sciences, with economics, engineering, psychology, anthropology and sociology. It must provide a platform for free and frank debate; it should conduct its investigations as much by means of research committees and discussions