

Association Affairs

Section on Botanical Sciences (G)

The interest of botanists in the Chicago meetings is attested by the fact that, of the space in the *General Program* devoted to the programs of the sections and societies, over one-fifth was devoted to the botanical groups. Taking into consideration the division of the larger programs into sections, 18 distinct botanical programs had been arranged. When to these are added the 14 programs of the various societies which include both botanists and zoologists, supported in considerable part by botanists, over a third of the total program was of interest to students of the plant sciences. Under such circumstances, it was inevitable that numerous meetings had to be scheduled concurrently. This has always been the case in recent years, but it seems to have been more conspicuously the case at the Chicago Meeting than at any of the earlier ones.

In accordance with the current trend, many joint meetings and symposia had been arranged. Such sessions serve to offset, at least in some degree, the tendency to extreme specialization by informing specialists as to what is being done in related fields and especially by encouraging the development of borderline investigations. Among such symposia may be mentioned that on "Genetics of Microorganisms," sponsored by the American Society of Naturalists in cooperation with 8 other groups and presenting recent knowledge in this field relating to viruses, bacteriophage, bacteria, and fungi. That on "Mathematical Biology," arranged by the Biometric Section, American Statistical Association, in cooperation with the Biometric Society, occupied four sessions. The traditional program of Section G with affiliated plant societies was arranged as a symposium on growth and correlation. The numerous other symposia were in general more limited in their scope, but with few exceptions afforded opportunity to workers in two or more different fields to learn something of what is going on in others.

At the opposite extreme were some of the more specialized programs. The Botanical Society of America, now operating through 5 sections, had as many as 6 meetings going on at one time, and the meetings of the American Phytopathological Society were somewhat similarly split up into groups concerned with special topics. In the case of a few of the smaller societies, all the meetings were held jointly with other groups.

As usual, the Biologists' Smoker, held in the Chicago Natural History Museum on Monday evening, afforded an excellent opportunity for informal discussion and renewal of acquaintanceship. (G. W. MARTIN, *Secretary*.)

The Chicago Meeting, December 26-31, 1947

From all reports, the Chicago Meeting was one of the most successful in the history of the Association. Secretaries of the 67 cooperating sections and societies, thus far reporting to the Washington office, have been unanimous in their expressions of appreciation not only of the high quality of the different programs but also of the physical facilities placed at their disposal by their Chicago hosts and the general atmosphere of good fellowship.

In the headlong rush of events during the 6-day meeting period, few members pause to reflect upon the organization of the meeting unless something goes wrong, for it is traditional to expect those privileged to serve on local committees to accept their full responsibilities and to carry them out to perfection. It is equally traditional that committee volunteers expect no reward other than the opportunity to facilitate cooperation among scientists. In view of the excellence of the recent meeting, however, special tribute must be paid to the chairmen and members of the local committees organized in Chicago to provide funds and equipment and to assist in handling entertainment, registration, and publicity. Paul Jenkins, executive secretary of the Chicago Technical Societies Council, served as general chairman and coordinated the activities of the various committees. R. T. Van Niman, Motiograph Corporation, directed the procurement of equipment for over 275 sessions. A resident of Chicago, he made his headquarters in the Sherman Hotel, where he was available 24 hours a day throughout the meeting period. Distributing equipment—projectors, microscopes, chemical apparatus, etc.—and scheduling operators were among the most important of his many duties. Hans Hoeppner, director of the Information Bureau, The University of Chicago, directed registration from 8:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. daily at the Stevens Hotel. His duties included the organization of the registration facilities and scheduling of paid and volunteer assistants to distribute programs, badges, tickets to special functions, and literature relating to the Chicago area.

Another committee chairman who worked long hours during the meeting was Jeannette Lowrey, of the Department of Public Relations, The University of Chicago. It was her responsibility to provide equipment for the press room, which was used by over 100 newsmen, and to assist the Association's press director, Sidney S. Negus, in the preparation and distribution of copy.

The duties of the Finance and Entertainment Committees were completed, for the most part, before the meeting opened. The chairman of the Finance Committee, W. P. Cortelyou, Roosevelt College, and the treasurer, Gilbert A. Force, Illinois Institute of Technology, directed the acquisition and disbursement of \$3,000 to cover expenses incurred by the local committees in carrying out their duties. Margaret Seriven, Chicago Historical Society, and Mr. Jenkins, in addition to arranging the general reception, prepared leaflets welcoming conventioners to Chicago and highlighting the places of interest for the entertainment of visiting scientists.

This brief mention of the work of the committee-men scarcely conveys a full appreciation of the time and energy they and their colleagues spent in directing local activities, all at no expense to the Association or to its affiliated societies. Their generosity is striking indeed when it is considered that only one committee chairman, prior to his election, was a member of the Association or a member of any of the societies that met with the Association in Chicago. By the same token, the willingness of non-members to engage in work on behalf of the AAAS is evidence of the high esteem in which it is widely held.

Contributions by local members of the AAAS, however, were not lacking. Over 350 gave checks of \$3.00 or more to the treasurer of the local Finance Committee, and many volunteered and participated in the tasks of running the meeting. There is gratifying evidence of public-spirited interest among the 35,000 AAAS members who support a federation of 203 affiliated scientific societies with a combined membership exceeding 500,000.

Although it is not possible to name all of those who worked behind the scenes to make the meeting a success, special acknowledgment is due Clifford C. Gregg, director of the Chicago Natural History Museum, and his staff for making the Museum available to the biologists for their Smoker on Monday evening, December 29. This informal affair, held amid the magnificent exhibits of one of the Nation's leading cultural institutions, will long be remembered by those who attended. In addition to the Museum, 16 educational and cultural institutions in the Chicago area participated in the meeting by designating staff mem-

bers to serve on the local committees and by allowing their buildings and equipment to be used for sessions and social functions. These include the Chicago Historical Society, the University of Illinois, the John G. Shedd Aquarium, George Williams College, Wheaton College, the Chicago Academy of Sciences, Illinois Institute of Technology, the University of Chicago, Lake Forest College, National College of Education, Elmhurst College, Museum of Science and Industry, Saint Xavier College for Women, De Paul University, Northwestern University, and Roosevelt College.

The total registration for the Chicago Meeting was 4,940, the largest in the history of the Association. On only 6 other occasions has the registration exceeded 3,000: Washington, D. C., 1924 (4,206); Philadelphia, 1926 (3,181); New York, 1928 (3,935); Indianapolis, 1937 (3,094); and Philadelphia, 1940 (3,339).

The registration figure falls far short of indicating the total attendance at the meeting because, as in the case of previous meetings of the Association, registration was not mandatory. This year, to meet the rising costs of operation, the secretaries of the societies were asked to take administrative steps to increase registration. Most societies cooperated wholeheartedly and through executive action voted to require evidence of registration with the Association for admittance to their sessions. However, some societies preferred less vigorous measures. In order to have an equitable policy, especially in the case of joint sessions, the administrative officers of the Association therefore recommended that the chairman of each session merely ask nonregistrants in attendance to register before the next meeting and not attempt to proctor the meetings.

Ordinarily it is difficult to estimate the size of the required registration staff and the number of programs and badges to be purchased in order to meet maximum needs. Experience has shown that if registration estimates are exceeded, lack of supplies and personnel cause much ill will, whereas an excess of both may add materially to the deficit that is annually incurred in the operation of the meeting. The drive to induce greater registration increased the uncertainty of demand. That registration would be larger than usual was indicated by the fact that over 2,000 registered in advance of the meeting. It was anticipated, however, that the net effect of merely recommending registration would not greatly increase the number of registrants, and the final estimate placed the total number of registrants between 5,000 and 5,500. The deficit for the Chicago Meeting was slightly in excess of \$1,300. Had registration been required of all those attending the meetings of the

sections and societies, there is little question but that the income from this source would have been sufficient to cover meeting expenses and helped defray the cost to the societies of renting session rooms.

A breakdown of 4,288 registrants gave the following distribution by section: Mathematics, 68; Physics, 296; Chemistry, 678; Astronomy, 16; Geology and Geography, 108; Zoology, 822; Biology, 498; Botany, 903; Anthropology, 22; Psychology, 124; Social Sciences, 39; History and Philosophy of Science, 18; Engineering, 66; Subsection on Medicine, 236; Subsection on Dentistry, 69; Subsection on Pharmacy, 49; Agriculture, 176; Education, 100. Of this number, 2,645 were members of the Association, 370 were students, and 1,273 were nonmembers. It is obvious from these figures that the number of registrants was much less than the number attending the meetings. Attendance at the Biologists' Smoker held in the Museum was officially tabulated at 5,575 persons, exclusive of Museum personnel.

There were registrants from every state in the union and from the territories of Alaska and Hawaii. Transients from 26 other nations registered, including 14 who gave their home residence as China, 28 India, and 73 Canada. States contributing more than 90 registrants were: California, 105; Illinois, 1,416; Indiana, 239; Iowa, 148; Maryland, 93; Massachusetts, 102; Michigan, 181; Minnesota, 131; Missouri, 114; New York, 290; Ohio, 217; Pennsylvania, 138; and Wisconsin, 193. A total of 96 registered from the District of Columbia.

The annual meetings of the Association are among the most widely publicized scientific events of the year. In addition to their appearance in scientific journals, the reports of scientists presented on these occasions find far-flung outlets through public channels—newspapers, periodicals, and the radio. The organization of the National Science Writers' Association and its affiliation with the AAAS, and the establishment of the George Westinghouse-AAAS Science Writing Awards, reflect the interest of scientists and science writers alike in the support of high-caliber reporting that is timely, accurate, informative, and interesting.

The radio coverage of the Chicago Meeting was

larger than that of any previous meeting. Over 15 network programs originating in Chicago were broadcast during the convention period, and as many more were heard only over local and regional stations. Through informal interview, forum, and other types of radio programs, scientists themselves had an opportunity to interpret accurately to the public their own fields of specialization. Many took part for the first time in unrehearsed discussions recorded for delayed broadcasts. Those who had been skeptical of this method of reporting scientific progress were won over by appreciative letters from members of the radio audiences.

The *General Program* for the Chicago Meeting listed 2,019 papers; 1,809 were presented orally, 164 by title, and 46 by demonstration. These were distributed among 340 sessions—31 on Friday, 59 on Saturday, 50 on Sunday, 95 on Monday, 81 on Tuesday, and 24 on Wednesday. The maximum number of sessions held simultaneously (Monday afternoon) was 41. Each successive postwar meeting has shown a substantial increase in the number of sessions over the previous one, and if this trend continues, meetings of the Association will soon be limited to two or three of the larger metropolitan areas. The principal alternatives are to: (1) reduce the number of sessions; (2) schedule the meetings of the sections and their related societies at different dates in the same city; (3) have only the sections meet with the Association, the societies organizing and holding their meetings apart from the parent organization; (4) appoint a special AAAS meeting committee each year to determine the nature and scope of the program and to invite the speakers, without the participation of the sections and societies in other than an advisory capacity. A combination of these alternatives may be the best solution to problems of space, time of year, choice of location, etc., which vary with the society or the occupational restrictions affecting its members. The Association's Centenary, to be held in Washington, D. C., in September, is being organized by a special meeting committee, and the outcome of this procedure will provide information of use in establishing future meeting policy. (J. M. HUTZEL, *Assistant Administrative Secretary.*)

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AAAS
Centennial Celebration
Washington, D. C.
September 13–17, 1948
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