

News and Notes

Report on Caribbean Soils Conference

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On April 3 sixty experts in soils science and related fields gathered at the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras to discuss soil types, distribution, and problems in the Caribbean countries. Sponsored by the Caribbean Research Council of the Caribbean Commission, the conference was invitational, but the invitation list was designed to bring the maximum number of experts together for deliberation on common problems; hence it transcended the rigid statutory limits of representation imposed on most meetings sponsored by the Caribbean Commission. In addition to the secretariat and officials of the commission, there were 12 official delegates from the American, British, Dutch, and French Caribbean possessions, 44 observers—chiefly from Puerto Rico and the United States—and 16 official visitors, including representatives from Colombia, Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Venezuela.

At the opening plenary session on April 3, Eric Williams, deputy chairman of the Research Council of the Caribbean Commission, presided. Following an address of welcome by Jaime Benitez, chancellor of the University of Puerto Rico, and a brief address by Bernardo G. Capo, acting director of the University's Agricultural Experiment Station, the conference was organized for the conduct of official business. Juan A. Bonnet, chief of the Soils Division of the Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Puerto Rico, was unanimously elected chairman of the conference. Roy W. Simonson, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, was named chairman of the Committee on Soil Surveys, with F. Hardy, of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture at Trinidad, rapporteur; Hugh F. Allison, director of the Soil Conservation Surveys in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, was named chairman of the Committee on Soil Conservation, with J. B. D. Robinson, of the Department of Agriculture in Barbados, rapporteur; R. D. Hockensmith, chief of the Soil Conservation Surveys Division of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, was named chairman of the Committee on Land Classification, with A. B. Lewis, of the Food and Agriculture Organization, rapporteur.

Fifty-two papers were prepared long enough in advance of the conference to be mimeographed, and copies were placed in the hands of all those in attendance upon their arrival. Practically every aspect of Caribbean soils was covered in this collection of manuscripts, which included one paper on the geologic background of the Antilles, several on soil types and soil distribution in the Caribbean islands and peripheral countries, a

number dealing with the formation and compositional characteristics of tropical and subtropical soils, a small suite of papers discussing soil conservation problems, and a few dealing with land use and land classification in such tropical environments as the Caribbean. The scope of the papers was eloquent testimony of the need for such a conference, which was initially inspired by a meeting in St. Thomas of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission in August, 1943. Although it took seven years for the conference to materialize, it was obvious that a great deal of thought was contributed in planning the meeting by the Preparatory Committee under the chairmanship of J. A. Bonnet.

With preprints in the hands of every official delegate, observer, and visitor, no time was wasted in paper-reading sessions. Instead, the three committees on soil surveys, soil conservation, and land classification went into separate sessions to consider specific problems in their respective fields. Committee work was supplemented by plenary sessions, directed by a "drafting steering committee" headed by Dr. Bonnet. To assure discussion of general problems and to facilitate the exchange of views and experience, a series of evening seminars was organized, starting Sunday evening, April 2, and running each evening through Friday, April 7.

As a prelude to the sessions at Río Piedras there was a two-day field trip (March 31 and April 1) across the mountainous backbone of Puerto Rico via the old Spanish military highway from San Juan to Ponce, with a side trip to Cidra. From Ponce the route followed the coastal highway via Yauco, the Guanica sugar *central*, San Germán, Mayagüez, Aguadilla, Arecibo, Manatí, and thence to Río Piedras. On the afternoon of April 2 a brief trip to the Caribbean National Forest and Luquillo Mountains was scheduled. Following adjournment several participants in the conference engaged in individual studies and surveys under the direction of personnel of the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Puerto Rico.

The conclusions reached and recommendations offered by the three committees, and approved by the Drafting Steering Committee, fill 16 pages. Notwithstanding the presentation of 52 papers at the conference, the dominant theme of the recommendations is for more definitive work in practically every phase of soil science. Special points stressed include the unevenness of geological coverage and the urgent need for more geological studies, particularly in those islands where little, if any, systematic work has been done; the urgent need for aerial and ground surveys leading to the preparation of standardized base maps for detailed areal work; the need for more climatological data, for standardization of field and laboratory procedures in soil surveys, and for assistance in soil classification; the dire need for technical personnel

to ensure proper land use through erosion control and other conservation methods; the lack of sufficient financial support for the preparation of adequate base maps for the inauguration of scientific land use programs; lack of funds and personnel for research in land management. The conference concluded its recommendations by urging "that each Caribbean territory that has not already done so initiate within its boundaries a comprehensive land improvement programme; and that a high degree of coordination of effort be maintained as between the various territories in the planning and carrying out of these programmes." The programs recom-

mended comprise soil surveys, classification, and research; land capability surveys and classification; farm management surveys and research; economic land-use classification; specific land utilization programs, including soil and water conservation. Frank recognition is given to the most vital requirements—financial support on the part of the several governments and trained technical personnel. In a region where the land and its productivity comprise the chief resource of growing populations, proper and efficient land use, which depends upon full and complete knowledge of the soils, becomes the *sine qua non* of progress, and even of survival.

Curt Stern, professor of zoology, University of California at Berkeley, has been appointed to the Atomic Energy Commission's advisory committee on biology and medicine, for a three-year term. Dr. Stern replaces **G. W. Beadle**, of the California Institute of Technology, retiring member of the committee.

Delegates appointed by Detlev W. Bronk, president of the National Research Council, to attend the meeting of the International Commission of Optics of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics, to be held in London, July 17–20, are: **Irvine C. Gardner**, National Bureau of Standards, **Rudolf Kingslake**, Eastman Kodak Company, **Stanley S. Ballard** (chairman of the U. S. national committee of the commission), Tufts College, and **David S. Gray**, of the Polaroid Corporation, who will serve as alternate.

Harry Beevers, of Oxford University, England, has been appointed visiting professor of plant physiology in the Department of Biological Sciences of Purdue University for 1950–51. He will present a series of lectures and direct research in mineral nutrition of plants.

Mario G. Levi, professor of industrial chemistry and director of the College of Engineering, Milan, Italy, has been elected president of the Associazione Italiana di Chimica.

Silvano Rossi, senior research worker of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Spain, has been appointed professor of radiobiology at the University of Tucumán, Argentina. Dr. Rossi is working at present in the Institute of

Physiology at Tucumán, and will be in charge of the organization of the Institute of Roentgenology and Physical Therapy with a center for studies in the fields of radiobiology and experimental oncology.

Visitors to U. S.

Stig G. Anvill, research engineer, Surahammars Bruk, Surahammar, Sweden; **Per V. Bruel**, director of Bruel and Kjaer, Naerum, Denmark; **M. V. Deshpande**, lecturer in electrical engineering, College of Engineering, Poona, India; **Stig Giertz-Hedstrom**, president, Vibro-Plus Corporation, Stockholm, Sweden; **Roberto S. Nasser**, chief chemist, S. A. Fabricas Orion, São Paulo, Brazil; **Enrique Futierres Rios**, professor of inorganic chemistry, University of Granada, Spain; and **Juan L. M. Vivaldi**, member of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, attached to the Instituto de Edapologia (Soil Study) at the university, visited the National Bureau of Standards recently.

A. Buzzati-Traverso, of Pavia, Italy, lectured June 20 at the Conference on Genetics of Heterosis being held at Iowa State University (*Science*, April 21, 451). **E. S. Wellhausen**, of the Rockefeller Foundation, Mexico City, will give a lecture on "Heterosis in a New Population," on July 11.

Awards

The 1950 **Barnard Gold Medal of Columbia University** for meritorious service to science has been awarded to **Enrico Fermi**, nuclear physicist at the University of Chi-

cago. This award, normally given every five years, had not been made since 1940.

The National Tuberculosis Association has awarded its **Trudeau Medal** for 1950 to **John B. Barnwell**, chief of the Tuberculosis Division of the Veterans Administration Department of Medicine and Surgery.

The 1949 **Lamme Medal of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers** was presented to **C. M. Laffoon**, manager of the A-C Engineering Department, Westinghouse Electrical Corporation, at the annual meeting of the institute, June 12, in Pasadena, California.

Tilly Edinger, research paleontologist at the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, has been awarded the **National Crusade Fellowship of the American Association of University Women** for foreign travel in connection with the preparation of a new edition of her book on fossil brains.

Meetings and Elections

Approximately 1,300 botanists from 30 nations have given notice of their participation in the **Seventh International Botanical Congress**, to be held in Stockholm, Sweden, July 12–20. Further notifications are expected. In addition to the main proceedings in the capital, the agenda includes a number of excursions and study trips by the fifteen congressional sections to all representative areas of Sweden. The largest number of excursions is allotted to the **Vegetative Geography Section**, headed by **Einar Du Rietz**. The first trip starts on June 27 to

eastern Scania, Blekinge, Oeland, and Gotland. Another expedition will be made through the Vestergotland and Smaland bogs; a third will be devoted to the Halland-Bohuslän littoral in West Sweden. By way of contrast to Smaland's coniferous forests, a trip has been planned through the deciduous forest areas in Scania and Blekinge to Mt. Omberg in Oestergotland. There will be a one-day excursion for all delegates among the outermost skerries of the Stockholm archipelago. Upon conclusion of official business, a trip will be made to study algae in the Öregrund archipelago north of Stockholm, the lakes of Upland and Dalecarlia, and Abisko in North Lapland.

The **Electron Microscope Society of America** will hold its eighth annual meeting September 14-16 at the Hotel Statler in Detroit, Michigan. Further information may be obtained from the program chairman, F. A. Hamm, General Aniline and Film Corporation, Easton, Pennsylvania.

The **Eighth Annual Pittsburgh Conference on X-Ray and Electron Diffraction** will be held November 2-3 at the Mellon Institute for Industrial Research in Pittsburgh. Papers are invited on small-angle scattering, instrumentation and techniques, applications in the fields of metals and silicate chemistry, and related subjects. Titles should be sent to the chairman of the program committee, L. H. Hofer, Bureau of Mines, Bruceton, Pennsylvania, before August 15. Papers will be considered in the order in which they are received.

The **Illuminating Engineering Society** has elected the following officers for 1950-51: president, Walter Sturrock, General Electric Company; vice president, E. M. Strong, Cornell University; treasurer, R. F. Hartenstein, Ohio Edison Company; and general secretary, A. H. Manwaring, Philadelphia Electrical and Manufacturing Company.

The **National Board of Medical Examiners** held its annual meeting on May 3 in Philadelphia. Howard T. Karsner, medical research advisor to the Surgeon General of the Navy,

was elected president of the board for a term of three years. Other officers elected were Everett S. Elwood, executive secretary and treasurer, J. S. Rodman, medical secretary, and John P. Hubbard, associate secretary.

The **Minnesota Academy of Science** has elected the following officers for 1950-51: president, A. N. Wilcox, University of Minnesota; vice president, W. C. Croxton, State Teachers College, St. Cloud; secretary-treasurer, Shirley P. Miller, Augsburg College, Minneapolis.

Deaths

Trigant Burrow, 74, psychiatrist and initiator of phylobiology—a science dealing with the interrelational behavior of man—died May 24 at his home at Greens Farms, Connecticut, after several months' illness. Dr. Burrow, scientific director of the Lifwynn Foundation for Laboratory Research in Analytic and Social Psychiatry since its establishment in 1927, was also a founder and former president of the American Psychoanalytical Association.

Edward A. Birge, president emeritus of the University of Wisconsin since 1925, died June 9 in Madison, at the age of 98. Dr. Birge, who joined the faculty of the university in 1875 as an instructor in natural science, was an authority on limnology.

Oakes Ames, 75, professor emeritus of botany at Harvard University, and former director of the university's Botanical Museum, died April 28 at his home in Ormond, Florida. Dr. Ames had devoted his life to the study of orchids and in 1941 his collection of more than 64,000 specimens was presented to the Harvard Botanical Museum.

Herbert Spencer Barber, 68, entomologist of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, died of a heart attack, June 1, at his home in Washington, D. C. Dr. Barber, a well-known coleopterist, served with the Division of Insect Identification of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine from 1908 until his death.

Gustav Ernst Fredrik Lundell, retired chief of the Chemistry Division, National Bureau of Standards, died in Baltimore, June 8, at the age of 69. Dr. Lundell was in charge of developing methods of analyzing and purifying graphite and uranium to make possible their use in the first atomic pile, during World War II.

Miscellaneous

A **registry of hepatic pathology**, sponsored by the American Gastroenterological Society, has been established at the American Registry of Pathology, administered under the auspices of the National Research Council. Liver specimens obtained by biopsy or autopsy, accompanied by pertinent laboratory and clinical records, will be collected, and will be available for research. Material contributed will be reviewed by the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, and contributors will receive an opinion concerning it. Material should be submitted through a pathologist on forms obtained from the institute; one stained and five unstained sections of liver biopsy specimens are requested, and one stained section and paraffin blocks or wet tissues of autopsy material. Specimens should be sent to the Director, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Registry of Hepatic Pathology, Washington 25, D. C.

The **British Commonwealth Scientific Office for North America** recently moved to 1800 K street, N.W., Washington, D. C. The individual missions constituting the office are: United Kingdom Scientific Mission, Canadian (NRC) Scientific Liaison Office, Australian Scientific Research Liaison Office, New Zealand Scientific Liaison Office, and South African Scientific Liaison Office.

German Aviation Medicine, World War II, a two-volume publication making available to American scientists original and unpublished research accomplished in Germany during the war, will be published by the U. S. Government Printing Office, June 30. The greater part of the data presented is directly concerned with aviation medicine, but there are

also descriptions of scientific equipment, and data on researches in physiology, biophysics, psychology, and pathology. The publication was sponsored by the U. S. Air Force and was made possible through the work of the Air Force Surgeon General and School of Aviation Medicine. Fifty-seven German scientists, specialists in their fields, aided in preparing the work—conducting further research, reviewing and evaluating German documents, and translating.

A new scientific program, **Science for the People**, is being broadcast over Station WEVD (1330 Kc), New York City, every Friday evening at 8:45. The program is written and produced by W. Wendell Rázim, chemist, meteorologist, and consultant technical writer. As one of his sources of information Mr. Rázim will use advance proofs of *The Scientific Monthly* in preparing some of his broadcasts; a similar arrangement is in effect with the University of Denver, which has been broadcasting items from *The Scientific Monthly* over Stations KVOR, KGHF, KFKA, KLZ, and KFXJ since November, 1949.

The Chicago Research Group, a new organization for the development and exploitation of chemical processes and products, has set up offices at 9 South Clinton Street, Chicago. Primary interest will be in products of a patentable nature, and in some instances research on inventions of independent inventors will be financed. Members of the new organization are Carl S. Miner, director of Miner Laboratories, Hoy A. Cranston, director of the Laboratory of Polarographic Analysis, A. Sidney Behrman, chemical consultant, and Franklin M. Warden, patent lawyer.

A campaign against malaria and other acute disease problems in the Hanoi and Saigon regions of Indo-China will be aided by a group of U. S. Public Health Service officers assigned to the Health Division of the ECA Special Technical and Economic Mission to Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The program, under the direction of John Grant, acting chief of the Health Division of the mis-

sion, will include spraying dwellings in designated areas with DDT, and some therapy for infectious diseases. Personnel will be recruited in local areas to assist in carrying out field operations. Specific objectives planned for the program, recruitment, and assignment of personnel have been handled by the Division of International Health of the Public Health Service. Supplies of DDT, penicillin, chloroquine, and other drugs will be provided by ECA. Members of the present team of specialists, part of a larger contingent expected to be assigned later, are: Frank Tetzlaff, sanitary engineer, Federal Security Agency regional office, New York City; F. Earle Lyman, assistant chief, Entomology Branch, Communicable Disease Center, Atlanta; Gustave C. Schram, venereal disease expert, Eastern Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina; Harry D. Pratt, chief, Medical Entomology Section, Laboratory Branch, Communicable Disease Center; and William J. Buchanan, sanitary engineer, FSA regional office, San Francisco.

A bimonthly magazine will be published by the **American Cancer Society** this fall. The new publication will bring doctors up to date on developments in cancer diagnosis, treatment, and care of patients. A number of the society's state divisions plan to subscribe to the magazine for all practicing physicians within their areas.

A new national commission on chronic illness has established headquarters at 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago. The commission is engaged in an education-research program and represents the first national unified approach to the common problems of long term illness. Agencies which have pledged financial support are the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Medical Association, National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, National Tuberculosis Association, National Society for Crippled Children and Adults, and the New York Foundation. A model community survey plan is being developed for use by communities interested in studying their local

needs, services, and facilities. The plan will be tested in several communities this summer before it is presented for use throughout the country. Plans have also been drawn up for a study of prevalence and medical needs in an urban and a rural area.

Meetings Abroad

Eighth International Congress of Agricultural Industries, July 1-15, Brussels, Belgium.

First International Congress of Cardiology, July 1-15, Paris.

First International Microchemical Congress, July 2-6, Graz, Austria.

International Conference on CO₂ Fixation, July 3-7, Sheffield, England.

International Union of Biological Sciences, July 7-11, Stockholm.

First International Conference of Gerontological Societies, July 9-12, Liège, Belgium.

Fourth Plenary World Power Conference, July 10-15, London.

Conference on Properties of Semiconducting Materials, July 10-15, University of Reading, Reading, England.

Seventh International Botanical Congress, July 12-20, Stockholm.

Fifth International Cancer Congress, July 17-22, Paris.

International Congress for Scientific Research, July 17-22, Sorbonne, Paris.

International Meeting for Optical Science, July 17-26, London.

16th International Congress of Ophthalmology, July 17-26, London.

London Conference on Optical Instruments, July 19-26, Imperial College of Science and Technology, South Kensington, England.

International Latin-American Congress of Psychology, July 20-30, Montevideo, Uruguay.

Sixth International Congress of Pediatrics, July 21-30, Zurich, Switzerland.

Sixth International Congress of Radiology, July 23-30, London.

Fourth International Congress of Soil Science, July 24-August 1, Oslo, Norway.

International Anatomical Congress, July 25-28, Oxford, England.