

# NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SCIENCES OF INDIA

## Seventeenth Annual General Meeting

The Seventeenth Annual General Meeting of the Institute was held at 2-30 p.m. on Friday, 5th October, 1951, in the hall of the Institute, Mathura Road, New Delhi.

Present: Dr. S. L. Hora, *President (in the Chair)*.  
Dr. H. S. Pruthi, *Secretary*.

Prof. S. P. Agharkar.  
Prof. S. L. Ajrekar.  
Prof. S. K. Banerji.  
Dr. J. L. Bhaduri.  
Dr. P. N. Bhaduri.  
Prof. S. Bhagavantam.  
Prof. Y. Bharadwaja.  
Prof. S. R. Bose.  
Dr. K. A. Chowdhury.  
Prof. B. B. Dey.  
Dr. H. Gupta.  
Mr. S. Gupta.

Dr. Robert Heilig.  
Dr. P. V. Krishna Iyer.  
Prof. R. C. Majumdar.  
Dr. K. Mitra.  
Dr. B. Mukerji.  
Dr. B. B. Mundkur.  
Dr. L. A. Ramdas.  
Dr. J. C. Ray.  
Prof. J. M. Sen.  
Prof. T. R. Seshadri.  
Dr. M. B. Soparkar.  
Dr. P. L. Srivastava.

Dr. A. C. Ukil.

Besides these Fellows of the Institute, there were several visitors present.

1. The minutes of the Fifty-eighth Ordinary General Meeting, held on the 3rd and 4th August, 1951, were confirmed.

2. Dr. P. V. Krishna Iyer was admitted as an Ordinary Fellow under provisions of Rule 13.

3. The Secretary presented the Report of the Council for the year 1950-51 (*vide* page 33).

The Report was accepted.

4. The President then delivered the Annual Address reviewing the work of the Institute (*vide* page 27).

5. The following papers were taken as read as the authors were not present:—

- (1) *Studies on Foliar Sclereids in Dicotyledons IV. Structure and Development of Sclereids in the leaf of Ternstroemia Japonica.* By T. Ananda Rao and communicated by Prof. P. Maheshwari.
- (2) *A contribution to the life-histories of Stellaria Media Linn. and Polycarpon Loeffingiae.* By Niranjana Pal and communicated by Dr. I. Banerji.
- (3) *Studies on South Indian Fusaria I. Fusarium vasinfectum Atk. with a note on its varieties and forms.* By C. V. Subramanian and communicated by Dr. M. O. P. Iyengar.
- (4) *Further observations on directional changes in locusts and other short-horned grasshoppers (Insecta: Orthoptera: Acrididae) and the importance of the third instar.* By M. L. Roonwal.
- (5) *Variation and post-embryonic growth in the number of antennal segments in the phadka grasshopper (Hieroglyphus nigrorepletus Bolivar), with remarks on the Desert Locust and other Acrididae (Insecta: Orthoptera).* By M. L. Roonwal.
- (6) *Studies on cyto-chemistry of hormone action Part X. The hormonal modification of alkaline phosphatase activity in the testis and in some genital accessories of the guinea-pig.* By A. B. Kar and Asok Ghosh and communicated by Dr. B. Mukerji.
- (7) *On the Minimax Approach to the Problem of Estimation.* By D. Basu and communicated by Prof. S. N. Bose.
- (8) *An Algal Flora from the Laki (Lower Eocene) Beds of the Nammal Gorge (Punjab Salt Range)—1. Archaeolithothamnium.* By C. P. Varma and communicated by Dr. S. R. N. Rao.

(All these papers have been recommended for publication in the *Proceedings of the Institute*.)

6. A Symposium on 'Antibiotics' organized by Dr. B. Mukerji was held. Several papers were read and discussed.<sup>1</sup> The Symposium continued also on Saturday, the 6th October, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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In the afternoon of the 6th October, 1951 (at 4-30 p.m.) the Hon'ble Shri Sri Prakasa, Minister, Ministry of Natural Resources and Scientific Research, formally opened the new building of the National Institute of Sciences of India, the foundation stone of which had been laid by the Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, on the 19th April, 1948, on the land granted by the Government of India.

In inviting the Hon'ble Shri Sri Prakasa to declare the building open, the President said:—

**THE HON'BLE SHRI SRI PRAKASA, FELLOWS OF THE INSTITUTE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.**

Today we have met to celebrate an important event in the history of the National Institute of Sciences of India. The Institute is about to make its formal entry into its own new building. On such an occasion one's mind runs back both to the events which led up to the birth of the Institute and to the years that witnessed its growth. Hence I feel that it may be of interest to summon up brief memories of the past.

At a meeting of the Indian Science Congress Association held at Bombay in 1934, it was realized that there was a need for the founding of a Scientific body of eminent scientists of the country to act as a central and all-India co-ordinating body, embracing all scientific research in the country. The Science Congress supported the idea and set up an Academy Committee to draw up a plan for the founding of such a body. On the recommendations of this Committee, the Institute came into being and it was inaugurated at Calcutta on the 7th January, 1935, with its headquarters in the rooms of the Asiatic Society. Thanks to the efforts of our earlier Presidents and successive Councils, the Institute was able to weather many storms and the War years saw us firmly established and fairly well off from our own resources with only a small grant from Government Funds. However, our efforts and earnestness were rewarded when Prof. A. V. Hill, during his visit to India in 1943-44, advised the Government to recognize the Institute as the premier scientific organization in the country and to establish with the Institute liaison similar to that which exists between the Royal Society of London and His Majesty's Government in the U.K. Negotiations between the Government and the Institute followed and it was not until 1945 that the Institute was accorded by the Government the recognition of being the premier scientific organization in the country.

Among the important terms negotiated with the Government one was that Delhi should be the Headquarters of the Institute. The Government wanted the name to be changed to 'Academy of Sciences of India', but as the majority of the Fellows were against this change, the Government did not press for it.

The year 1945, proved auspicious for the Institute in one other respect also, for in that year the Imperial Chemical Industries (India) Limited placed a sum of Rs.3,36,000 for the establishment of Research Fellowships for Physics, Chemistry and Biology according to a scheme covering a period of 7 years.

The University of Delhi, having agreed to provide the Institute some temporary accommodation in its building, the Institute shifted from Calcutta in 1946, but retaining the Publication Office there. The Government very kindly made a

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<sup>1</sup> The proceedings of the Symposium will be published separately in the *Bulletin* of the Institute.

non-recurring grant of Rs.2,20,000 for the building of the Institute, but when the plans were prepared according to the requirements of the Institute the cost worked out at about Rs.5,00,000. Our intention was to provide a Lecture Hall, a Council Room, a Library Hall and the usual office accommodation. It was also intended to have a few rooms set apart as a Faculty-Club where scientists of eminence visiting India from abroad could stay for a limited period. On the model of the Burlington House in London, it was also our intention to provide in our building accommodation to other learned Scientific Societies of India. We had also a plan to run a Science Museum. Owing to financial stringency, the Government asked us to construct the whole building with the allotted sum of Rs.2,20,000 with the result that a part of the building, meeting our minimum immediate requirements, is put up and even for this construction we have overspent a sum of about Rs.50,000 for which an additional grant had to be sought.

The Institute wanted 5 acres of land but only 3 acres were allotted in 1948. The foundation stone of the building was laid by our Prime Minister on 19th April, 1948, but the delay in the construction of the building has been due to some regrettable circumstances beyond the control of the Institute. We recall with grateful thanks the kindness of Mr. S. Khurshid Ahmed Khan, the then Chief Commissioner of Delhi, Mr. M. S. Randhawa, one of our Fellows and the then Deputy Commissioner of Delhi and Mr. A. W. H. Dean, the then Chairman of Delhi Improvement Trust for being helpful to us in the allotment of this plot. Dr. S. S. Bhatnagar, one of our past Presidents, has been helpful to us in so many ways that we cannot, of course, forget his services to the Institute. Mr. G. B. Mhatre of Bombay was selected the Architect for the building by Prof. H. J. Bhabha and Major-General S. S. Sokhey, and the contract for the building was given to Sardars Partap Singh and Ajit Singh, a well-known firm of contractors of Delhi. Our contractors have been very accommodating and helpful in spite of many difficulties and made special efforts to have the building ready for occupation in time for holding our Statutory Meeting in the first week of October.

In inviting you, Sir, to declare the new building open, the Institute takes special pride, for within a few months of your assuming the office of Minister for the new ministry of Natural Resources and Scientific Research you have already shown your great sympathies with scientific development in the country. It is our earnest hope that under your patronage and wise guidance, scientific research in India will progress from day to day and that the Institute will be able to play a leading rôle in such development. The Institute is grateful to you for having spared the time to attend this function and to consent to our request for opening the building. I request you, Sir, to declare the building open.

In reply the Honble Minister addressed the gathering as given below.

#### SPEECH BY THE HON'BLE SHRI SRI PRAKASA.\*

Declaring open the building of the National Institute of Sciences of India, New Delhi, on Saturday, October 6, 1951, the Hon'ble Shri Sri Prakasa, Minister for Natural Resources and Scientific Research, said to the assembled gathering, that he felt very greatly honoured at having been invited formally to open the new building of the National Institute of Sciences of India; and though he could lay no claim to any knowledge of science beyond what was possessed by any schoolboy, he had been, curiously enough, called upon by the Prime Minister, to be in charge of the Ministry that deals with the higher branches of scientific knowledge; and is thus brought in daily contact with learned scientists and experts in varied branches

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\* The speech of the Hon'ble Minister, Shri Sri Prakasa, was delivered extempore and had not been taken down by any shorthand reporter at the time it was delivered. Therefore, only an abstract is given here.

of science. He was grateful for the honour that had been done him by the President and Fellows of the National Institute, by inviting him to inaugurate the function.

Referring to the speech of the President of the Institute, Shri Sri Prakasa said that he had learnt with much interest the history of the Institute from the lips of the learned President, and regretted with him that despite the ambitious plans that had been made, the implementation of the same had not been possible owing to financial stringency. He felt, however, that even if we could not have larger and more imposing buildings and busy laboratories, our men of science could help in the inculcation of the scientific spirit in the general mass of the people, for it was essential that men and women should have a scientific outlook. He also hoped that when better times returned, the authorities of the Institute would be able to fulfil their ambitions in the matter of science museum, lecture hall and other requirements.

Referring to the President's remarks regarding the attractions of administrative jobs which took away eminent scientists because of better pay and prospects, Shri Sri Prakasa felt sad that that should be so. It was indeed a pity, he said, that in the modern world, administrators enjoyed a higher position than men of learning though that was against the ancient traditions of the land. In the days of long ago, he said that the learned man, however poor, was given a place of honour higher than that of the ruler, however powerful; and that compensated the man of learning, for he got in honour what he lost in money. It was unfortunate that today the administrator should enjoy both pelf and position; and so it was natural that the scientist should seek to be an administrator though he knew that this meant a great sacrifice on his part, for his real work was thus woefully dislocated and interfered with. There were exceptions—and he had such exceptions in the eminent men in his own Ministry—who could be both good administrators and good scientists; who could keep all their files up-to-date as well as be abreast of advancing knowledge.

Such persons, however, could be very few, he added; and said that if Society did not make better arrangements, it would have to suffer from a large number of scientists and men of learning losing their individuality and giving up the work for which they were eminently fitted, by accepting administrative positions. He had however every sympathy with what the President had said, and hoped that the Government and the people alike would see to it that every consideration was made to the needs and requirements of the scientist so that he could carry on his work without any disappointment or dismay. He added that when he was saying this, he was not minimizing the importance of administration which was in itself a great thing; but what was needed, was a proper adjustment of values and the proper fitting of human beings in places for which they were most suited.

According to the traditions of old, Shri Sri Prakasa added, to which he could not help paying his allegiance, Government was not allowed to interfere or meddle with the growth of science and knowledge which was left to the men of learning and the men of science. In the present day, Government was taking on itself more and more work and was prone to interfere in departments of national activity where perhaps the effort of the private individual was more helpful. So far as he knew, many of the greatest discoveries and inventions of science which have revolutionized the lives of men and of nations, have been made not under the patronage of Government or in the laboratories established by them, but in small places by small men working with love and devotion at their tasks. He hoped that this great tradition will not die in India at least, and the great race of learned scientists doing their independent work unaided and undisturbed, will continue.

In the end, Shri Sri Prakasa pleaded with the scientists, to hand on their knowledge from generation to generation, and not make it some sort of a close secret with themselves. It was a pity, he said, that in India persons who have anything special to contribute, keep their knowledge to themselves, and do not teach what they know to others, with the result that important and essential items

of knowledge die with them, and the generations that follow, have to discover and invent the same things over and over again. All progress therefore comes to a stop.

We, in India, he concluded, must learn from the West this great art of generously distributing, so to say, the knowledge that each man possesses for the good of all. He expressed his great delight that Scientific Institutes were doing such good work, and he offered his very best wishes for the health and happiness of all those who were engaged in them. He hoped most sincerely that the general public will realize the value of this work; and when Government, because of its manifold difficulties, is unable to offer financial assistance to such institutions, persons will be found in adequate numbers, who would place sufficient funds at the disposal of scientists and scientific institutions, for the advancement and promotion of scientific knowledge, which will redound to the glory of those who have helped and, at the same time, prove beneficial in the enhancement of the lives and the promotion of the welfare of mankind.

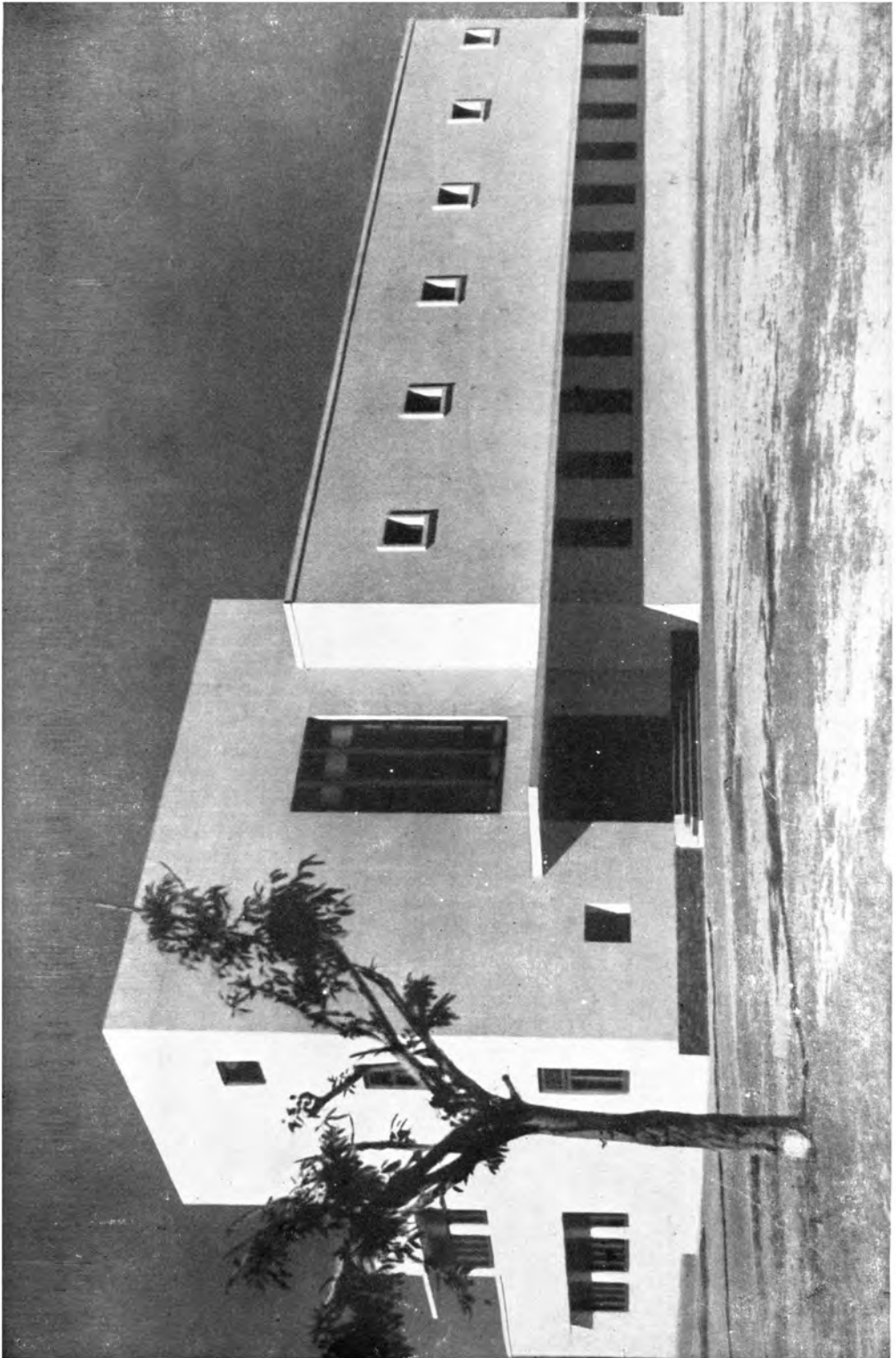
The Hon'ble Minister then declared the building open.

The President thanked the Hon'ble Minister for opening the building, and the Fellows and guests for their presence on the occasion.

The Hon'ble Minister then walked to the entrance door of the building and cut the tape that stretched across it.

On entering the building the Hon'ble Minister signed the Visitors' Book and went round the building with Fellows and guests.

All guests and Fellows were then entertained to light refreshments.



Building of The National Institute of Sciences of India (Opened 6th October, 1951)