

In constituting this committee the Government took advantage of the offers of co-operation and assistance made during 1916 by the scientific and technical societies of the Union, which had placed before the Government certain suggestions with regard to an economic survey of the natural resources of the Union and the necessity for industrial research. The Scientific and Technical Committee was constituted as follows:—

Dr. W. A. Caldicott, D.Sc., M.I.M.M. (Chairman), (Metallurgy); J. Burt Davey, F.L.S. (Biology); L. Colquhoun, M.S.C.I. (Chemistry); Professor Malherbo, M.A., Ph.D. (Chemistry); Professor St. J. v/d Riet, M.A. (Chemistry); Professor John Orr, B.Sc. (Mechanical Engineer); Bernard Price, M.I.E.E. (Electrical Engineer); Professor Young, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S. (Geology); Professor J. S. Beattie, D.Sc., F.R.S.; and Dr. Peringuey, F.R.S., President Royal Society of South Africa (*ex officio*).

In the memorandum dealing with the appointment of the Scientific Committee forwarded to the Government by the Industries Advisory Board, the functions of the Scientific Committee were outlined as follows:—

- (a.) In addition to providing for industrial research, the co-ordination as far as possible of all industrial investigation and research in South Africa and the collection and dissemination of data emanating therefrom.
- (b.) Co-operation with other Government Departments and with similar departments in the United Kingdom and Dominions to obtain information already available, to avoid overlapping, and to take advantage of facilities for research not available in this country; the acquisition and utilization in arts and manufactures of knowledge already existent in countries which are more highly developed industrially than in South Africa.
- (c.) The carrying-out of an economic survey of the natural resources of South Africa, and the furnishing of advice in regard to the best methods of utilizing such resources.
- (d.) The furnishing of advice with regard to the best methods for attacking industrial problems, for inducing industrial improvements, and for facilitating and encouraging manufacture in suitable localities.
- (e.) The co-ordination of various industries to obtain the best combined results and the exchange between user and manufacturer of manufacturing improvements and operating experience.
- (f.) The standardization of scientific and industrial quantities affecting the efficiency of production and the accuracy of statistics.
- (g.) Educational work such as lecturing, the publication of technical information, and the establishment of technological museums in suitable localities.

The Scientific and Technical Committee held its first meeting during last month, and its more important recommendations to the Government include—

- (1.) As a preliminary measure to an economic survey of the national resources of the sub-continent, the preparation of special reports by the best authorities on subjects of an economic nature. These reports will embody the existing knowledge of the natural resources of the country, and it is proposed to publish them through the medium of an industrial journal and thereafter in the form of bulletins.
- (2.) Immediate steps be taken for special survey-work under the following headings—(1) Minerals; (2) Botanical; (3) Water-power; (4) Fisheries—with a view to obtaining and publishing, for information of manufacturers, investors, and others, reliable data in regard thereto.
- (3.) As a further preliminary to the commencement of a proper system of scientific research, a census be made of facilities for investigation and research within the Union, viz.: (a) In respect of available laboratories and institutions; (b) staff available for research work.

Among the resolutions of the committee the following was passed:—

“That the Secretary for Mines and Industries be requested to take steps to notify the Imperial and Dominion authorities and corresponding organizations to our own of the steps which are being taken in regard to the development of the resources of South Africa, and in doing so to forward copies of the list of preliminary reports and give a general survey of the programme recommended; further, to request that this committee be furnished with copies of any reports and memoranda which such authorities may consider of value to this committee. The committee recognizes the extreme value of close co-operation, and the assistance which may be rendered by frequent communication with other similar authorities throughout the Empire.”

In accordance with the above resolution a list of subjects upon which preliminary reports are being called for is attached.

Ministers would be glad if His Excellency would communicate the foregoing in reply to the communications of His Majesty's Government, and they suggest that intercommunication between the Scientific and Technical Committee and other similar bodies throughout the Empire may advantageously be established through the Minister of Mines and Industries, in whose Department control of the two bodies above mentioned is vested.

LOUIS BOTHA.