

# REPORT ON UNESCO

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other United Nations groups in the establishment of 'scientific co-operation stations' all over the world; and by assisting with international publications in the scientific field. It is a big programme and a costly one. Unesco will, of course, not bear the cost by itself, but in such work a little financial assistance by an organisation like Unesco may often produce results out of all proportion to the money spent."

The Natural Sciences programme gives highest priority to an important proposal in a field in which new knowledge is urgently necessary. It is proposed that UNESCO should study the problem of satisfactory living in the Equatorial forest zone. As a concrete beginning, UNESCO will take over the co-ordination of the various researches by many nations into the resources and conditions of life in the great Amazonian forest with a view to establishing later an Equatorial Survey Institute. A similar proposal relates to the study, in collaboration with other United Nations organizations, of the urgent scientific problems arising in those regions of the world where the majority of the population is undernourished. As a first stage UNESCO will recruit teams of specialists expert in nutritional science and food technology to attack the problem in three sample regions—the Amazon forest, India, and China—and later, when conditions permit, in Africa.

DECISIONS OF THE SUB-COMMISSION ON NATURAL SCIENCES.

## "A REAL DANGER"

THEN we asked Dr. Beeby a question that must occur to anyone who studies Unesco's huge programme—how fast and how far was it likely to go? How much, for example, did he himself think Unesco would have accomplished by the end of this year, when the second conference is to be held in Mexico City?

"It would be very wrong to expect too much by the end of 1947," he replied. "Unesco has a terrific job this year merely to organise itself and collect its staff, and for the people who are running it to gain a clear idea not merely of the ends they wish to reach but of the means for getting there. They must work not in terms of the things they think it would be nice for Unesco to do, but of their ability to do them. Again, recruiting for the staff has to be done most carefully; the organizations co-operating in Unesco have got to recommend the right men and women for the various jobs, the really keen and useful people. So I shall be very satisfied if, by the end of 1947, Unesco has succeeded in nothing more than in getting its reconstruction and rehabilitation schemes properly under way, its staff assembled, and its methods of working clearly defined.

"But there is a real danger that too much may be expected of Unesco for a start. It was for that reason, and for that reason only, that the draft budget of the organization was cut by the conference. The New Zealand delegates supported that, but in no sense was it done from cheese-paring motives. We felt, and the delegates of all the other British Dominions felt too, that a bigger budget might be just an incentive to pipe-dreams; it was better for Unesco to start on a smaller scale, using a system of well-mapped priorities, than to run the risk of losing its way in a mass of nebulous projects. I want to make this quite clear: it was solely for these administrative reasons that the New Zealand delegation pressed for a reduced budget for 1947. It was not through lack of enthusiasm for Unesco."

"Did you, in fact, encounter much enthusiasm?" we asked.

"It was remarkable: both what I encountered at the conference itself and what I have run into on my way back to New Zealand through Britain and America. In the U.S. this month there's a meeting of 7,000 delegates to a special Unesco conference; the State Department is strongly in support—particularly perhaps William Benton, the assistant-Secretary of State; and some really important, able, and young-minded men and women are helping all they can. For example, Walter Laves, a noted American political scientist, has been

appointed Deputy-Director-General of Unesco in Paris (he's second in command to Dr. Julian Huxley); and Milton Eisenhower, president of Kansas State University and brother of "Ike," is chairman of the American National Commission.

"It is the same in England and France and other countries. When we arrived for the conference it cheered us greatly to see how those countries had sent over their really top-rank people. As you know, Leon Blum, President of France, was elected first president of Unesco. Huxley is the Secretary-General—the only permanent appointment actually made by the conference; it's Huxley's job now to build up a permanent staff. One of the men he's already got to help him in the mass-communication field is John Grierson.

## "LA GRANDE ABSENCE"

"Will such enthusiasm last, do you think?"

"I hope so, and I think so. At any rate, returning to Britain after the conference, I have never known English scientists, educationists, and public servants generally so stirred by any project as they were by what Unesco is planning to do. They are building up now in England a series of national commissions, with top-notch people on them, to help the various schemes."

"But Russia wasn't there?"

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