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technique being used in attacking it, the other a survey of preliminary results.

Mining, engineering, and the technological sciences are all represented by papers which have immediate reference to current problems in daily life. "The Age and Distribution of Coals in North Auckland," "Electronics, its Place in Science, Engineering, and Industry," "The Problem for the Hospital Architect," "Recent and Potential Applications of Some of the Newer Plastic Materials," and "Sound and its Reproduction," are all titles whose importance to the community at large are at once evident.

Town planning also has received attention. A paper on "A Background to Town Planning" will be read on the afternoon of Friday, May 23. This paper will deal with the necessity for preconceived planning, the tragic results of uncontrolled urban expansion, and the opportunities of the post-war period. It will cover the history of planning and European influences reflected in early plans for New Zealand cities, and the specific problems of planning in this country. The social, economic and legislative backgrounds will be dealt with, as well as the plan pattern and its long and short-term objectives.

#### Farm Problems

As is natural in a community dependent mainly on primary production, a large percentage of the papers read will have a more or less direct bearing on agricultural and pastoral problems. The New Zealand Society of Animal Production, for example, will hold its seventh annual conference during the Congress period, and at its sessions the speakers will all be personalities already well known to country listeners through the farm talks given from the National

stations. Pastoralists will particularly be affected by the researches represented in the first group of papers, which cover pasture in relation to animal production, pasture growth and management, labour in relation to grassland dairying, hazards of grazing in New Zealand, sheep management in Poverty Bay, and hill country problems. Fertilisers, parasitism in pasture farming, extension services and the farmer are other topics listed.

In the pedology sub-section, the work of science for the farmer is also well illustrated in the subject-matter of the papers. "The Naming of New Zealand Soil Erosion Phenomena" is one, and there are others on the classification of New Zealand soils, soil mechanics, and phosphate in soils.

#### Iron Curtain

Though the fundamental purpose of the Congress is to enable scientists, as such, to get together and exchange the information which they have gathered, each in his own particular sphere, and though the fruits of such meetings may not be immediately obvious, the scientists themselves are apparently concerned with the kind of publicity which often arises from these gatherings. While some claim that they have experienced no difficulty in getting reliable news of their work into the newspapers, many others feel that too much of what is reported on scientific subjects deals with trivial matters. The "gadget" too often gets into the headlines at the expense of more important but perhaps less spectacular information. This feeling has become strong enough to lead to the inclusion in this year's programme of a paper on the "iron curtain" between science and the rest of the community.

This paper will be read at a public session of the Congress, and if it can

suggest ways and means by which sound scientific information can be given to the public, in a form which will be readable as well as reliable—a form which, in other words, will satisfy both the scientist and the layman—New Zealand journalists are scarcely likely to object. It would be unfortunate if science, having left its ivory tower, found itself confronted by an impassable curtain.

#### Science and Society

In other ways, too, this Congress will look outward from itself. The social sciences, which are well represented in the programme, of their very nature import into the realm of science factors traditionally non-scientific. The scientist might be regarded as the one member of the community whose sole concern is with the material, the tangible, and the factual. But to the social scientist an opinion—especially a generally held one, acquires the status of a fact meriting consideration. The social science papers will bring those who hear them directly into contact with the communal and social problems of the day, and the Congress will also be introduced to some new social topics. The cinema as a sociological influence, and the film as a social document, for example, will be two new subjects for discussion.

And, of course, the Congress will have its strictly social side. There will be plenty of opportunities for the members of the various groups to discuss their own particular problems informally over the teacups—and information exchanged in this way has often provided shortcuts in research work—and numerous excursions have been arranged. But though these will be off-the-record activities, a full record of all the formal proceedings will be taken, and a few hundred more pages added to the already formidable record of scientific achievement in New Zealand.

## SCIENCE IN THE PROGRAMMES

### Important BBC Series Coming

TOGETHER with the arts, science has always figured largely in winter course and other talks from the main National stations. Auckland opened its 1947 season with a group called *Four Aspects of the Film*, which could be classed under the heading of social science, and these are to be followed by talks on soil erosion as it affects botany, afforestation, the soil itself, and the engineering problems which arise from erosion. Station 2YA started its winter syllabus with discussions by members of the Wellington branch of the New Zealand Libraries' Association; but later there will be a series of talks on engineering, showing the place occupied by the engineer in society.

Dunedin started its series with *Recent Scientific Developments*, dealing with minerals, preventive medicine, fibres, rubbers and plastics, and the processing and storage of foodstuffs. In the second course philosophy will replace science, and in the third, those ever-useful topics of conversation, *Climate* and *The Weather*, will be discussed scientifically. In addition to all these, applied science will be found in the A.C.E. talks on diets and general health.

Later in this year the main National stations will present *Science Survey*, a BBC feature edited by E. N. da C. Andrade, Professor of Physics in the University of London, containing talks by leading men of science about their work, or about topics they feel will interest listeners. During the war scientists emerged from the "backroom," and they continue to play a prominent part in post-war plans and enterprises. This series of half-hour programmes has been planned to meet the public's desire to be brought into direct and personal touch with leading scientists.

#### Atomic Energy Series

The BBC some time ago committed itself to another bold enterprise—a series of talks on the highest possible level of knowledge and authority, devoted to the subject of atomic energy. The BBC decided not to give merely a dramatic story about atomic bombing, but to offer frank talks by leading authorities in Britain on the facts, theories and problems of atomic energy. They make up an all-star team, and if they cannot teach us something about atomic energy, then nobody can.

The general title of the series, which will be heard from NZBS stations later this year, is *Atomic Energy: the Present*

and the Future, and here are the subtitles and the names of the speakers: "Discovery and Development" (Professor J. D. Cockcroft and Professor M. L. E. Oliphant); "Military Performance" (Group Captain C. L. Cheshire, Dr. J. Bronowski and Sir George Thomson); "Strategic Significance" (Professor Cyril Falls); "Peaceful Uses" (Professor P. M. S. Blackett and Sir Henry Dale); "International Control" (Sir George Thomson); "The Outlook for Mankind" (Bertrand Russell); and "Our National Interest" (Sir John Anderson).

These are talks of which J. B. Priestley has said: "There is not a man or woman in this country (Britain) who is in a position to declare with truth: 'These talks on atomic energy are of no importance to me.' It does not matter a rap what your work or your interest or your hobbies or outlook may be, whether you are looking for sheep in the Grampians, rehearsing Dvorak's cello concerto in Kensington, getting your trousseau together in Truro, making notes for a sermon in East Anglia, running a golf club in West Kent, or a repertory theatre in Lancashire, you cannot by any amount of wriggling, squirming or running, put yourself outside the sphere of these talks."

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