

# A MEETING OF SCIENTISTS

MANY of the outstanding scientists of the Dominion, some of whom are of world status, will assemble in Auckland on May 17 for the Eighth New Zealand Science Congress of the Royal Society of New Zealand. On this occasion the Congress has been organised by a committee representative of the Auckland Institute and Museum, the Auckland University College, and various national scientific bodies. Over 300 papers will be presented, under 12 main headings, including the physical, chemical, botanical, zoological, geological, geographical, medical and social sciences, anthropology, architecture and engineering, agriculture and forestry, and soil science.

The guest speaker, who will address a public meeting in the Auckland Town



DR. W. R. B. OLIVER  
President of the Congress

Hall on Tuesday, May 18, will be Professor M. L. E. Oliphant, Director of the Research School of Physical Sciences at the Australian National University, Canberra. Dr. Oliphant is one of the world's foremost physicists. His address, *Science and Mankind*, will be recorded and broadcast from 1YC at 10.0 p.m. that evening.

Most of the Congress meetings will be held at Auckland University College, and to facilitate radio coverage a temporary NZBS studio will be established in the College buildings. Listeners throughout New Zealand will first hear a talk on the organisation and objects of the Congress, given by Dr. L. H. Briggs, Chairman of the Executive Committee, and broadcast from main National Stations at 8.45 p.m. on Sunday, May 16. Then during the Congress itself there will be a programme of approximately twenty minutes broadcast in place of *Radio Newsreel* on the evenings of May 17, 18, 20 and 21, and possibly also on May 19, which is a day free of formal meetings.

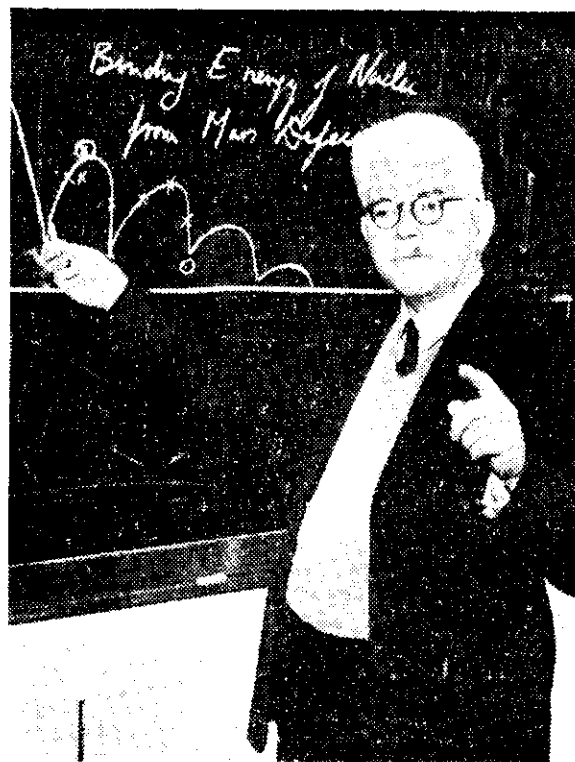
Called *Science Report*, this programme will be in the form of a newsreel, including commentaries on each day's events, and excerpts from some of the papers and lectures. Auckland listeners will in addition hear a preview by James Fox, of the Geography Department at Auckland University College, broadcast from 1YA at 7.0 p.m. on May 13. Mr. Fox will talk about some of the topics on the Congress programme.

The Congress is primarily a meeting of scientists, but it is open to anyone who wishes to enrol as a Congress Member, and the organisers have tried to keep the various papers as non-technical as possible so that scientifically-minded lay people can follow them. Wherever possible symposia have been arranged so that scientists specialising in different fields can hold joint meetings. Some highly technical subjects have been included, but, *The Listener* found, many of the matters to be dealt with

elsewhere cover problems of very great interest to a great many people.

One of the symposia, for example, bringing in the chemical, social and geographical sciences and agriculture, will be on the impact of substitute foods and fibres on New Zealand's primary industries. Some of the subjects to be discussed from varying points of view by New Zealand's greatest authorities on these matters will include the effects of the competition offered to wool by synthetic fibres and problems arising from the development of margarine as a substitute for butter. "Dairy farmers may wonder if there is a threat to their security behind the fact that in parts of the United States dairy land has been converted to soya bean cropping because chemists are finding it cheaper to get fats from plants by extraction than to allow the work to be done through the metabolism of the cow," one scientist at A.U.C. explained. "Butter is three times the price of margarine, you know; and unpalatable fats such as lard and tallow can now be readily and economically converted to edible margarine."

Another symposium of specially wide popular interest will be on insecticides, on May 21. It is expected to show that such "kill-alls" as DDT can be a very mixed blessing. Some insecticides are deadly to insects important to the welfare of crops, and there is the possibility of cumulative poisonous effects on



PROFESSOR M. L. E. OLIPHANT  
Among world's foremost physicists

animals and on man himself. Blanket use of DDT has often had unexpected results, it was explained, one typical example arising from the fact that this insecticide does not kill red spider, but does kill this pest's natural enemies. DDT treatment thus gives red spider an opportunity to make phenomenal progress.

Farmers should have a particular interest in a series of papers on trace elements and their importance to various crops and farm animals, which will be presented on May 18; and there should be wide interest, too, in a symposium on geothermal development, to be held on the same afternoon.

Among other subjects which appear to have an appeal for non-scientists as well as for the specialists for whom they are primarily intended are radio carbon dating, soil analysis, plant physiology, biological control of unwanted insects and weeds, race relations in New Zealand, wood and wood products (excluding timber), climate and agriculture. Of particular interest for city dwellers will be a symposium on Greater Auckland and its problems. "Urban Sprawl," "Town Planning Within the Urban Fence," and "The Cultural Centre" will be discussed.

Congress events will be open only to enrolled members, apart from three to which the public will be invited. These are Dr. Oliphant's address in the Town Hall, a meeting in the Seddon Memorial Technical College Hall at 8.0 p.m. on May 20, when there will be an address by Dr. R. N. Robertson, a plant physiologist with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, and an illustrated public lecture on "Geology and Geography in the Exploration of the Himalaya," to be held at the University at 8.0 p.m. on May 21, when the speaker will be Professor N. E. Odell, Professor of Geology at the University of Otago.

## Science and Christian Faith

THE relation between natural science and Christian life is not simply the relation between the man of science and the man of faith, declared Dr. John Baillie when he spoke to the British Association at Edinburgh about three years ago. It reached its most poignant form, he said, when the man of science and the man of faith were one and the same. Dr. Baillie's thesis was later taken up in a series of BBC talks by a group of young scientists, who were also Christians—they discussed the way in which they had been able to reconcile their personal religious faith with the science that claimed their attention day by day. But this didn't satisfy some listeners, who wrote complaining that while the speakers had described their faith and their science they had not properly related the two.

"When I showed these letters to the speakers," said the Rev. E. H. Robertson, BBC Assistant Head of Religious Broadcasting, "one of them pointed out that the wrong kind of relation was being asked for. In comparing science with faith, we were not balancing two things of the same quality; we were comparing things, or rather relating things, which had quite different quali-



ties. He suggested that a better picture of the relation between science and faith might be the plan and elevation of a building. The only relation between these two is a single line, but they are both required if we are to see the building as a whole."

As the discussion continued, it became obvious that there was need for clear thinking about the way in which science could be expected to be related to faith, and with that in mind the

young scientists enlarged their team and prepared a series of talks on the subject *Where Science and Faith Meet*.

These talks, transcribed for broadcasting in other countries, are now being heard from 2YC, which started the series last week with one by James Torrance, philosopher and theologian, on "The Nature of the Problem." On Monday, May 10, at 8.15 p.m., a physicist, Dr. Donald MacKay, will discuss "Looking for Connections." Dr. MacKay takes an analogy from the relation between the two different theories of light, saying that physicists today must hold together both the wave theory and the corpuscular theory of light. A psychologist, Malcolm Jeeves, next examines the thinking on the problem, giving his talk the provocative title "Wishful Unthinking." Another physicist, Dr. Robert Boyd, takes his material from the study of the hydrogen bomb, and calls his talk "The Universe Around Us"; and the series ends with a summing up by Doctor Oliver Barclay, a zoologist, who has taken part in the discussions on science and faith from the beginning.

In introducing the series Mr. Robertson said they made a very serious attempt, not to answer all the questions, but to show which are the right questions to ask in the relation between science and faith.