

GENERAL SCIENCE

Defense of Democracy Urged At Meeting of Scientists

Rallies in Twenty-Six Cities and Universities Discuss Necessity for Action to Preserve Science

KEYNOTING for a host of scientist speakers at Lincoln's birthday rallies in 26 cities and university centers throughout the country, Secretary of Agriculture Wallace summoned his fellow-scientists and fellow-citizens to a crusade in defense of democracy and against persecution of racial minorities.

Beliefs that one race is superior to another have no basis in scientific fact, Secretary Wallace, known among men of science as an expert plant breeder, declared at a mass meeting attended by more than 1,000 scientists in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City.

"Let us dedicate ourselves anew to our democratic body of faith," he urged, "to the promotion of a stable but ascending general welfare . . . Let us dedicate ourselves anew to the belief that there are extraordinary possibilities in both man and nature which have not yet been realized, and which can be made manifest only if the individualistic yet cooperative genius of democratic institutions is preserved."

Outstanding men have arisen in all racial groups and will continue to arise, in even greater numbers, if their environments provide them with the opportunity, the secretary continued. "The seed bed of the great leaders of the future, as of those of the past, is in the rank and file of the people."

Organization Planned

American scientists will create an organization to strengthen democracy and to defend science's precious right to freedom of research, Prof. Franz Boas, Columbia University's noted anthropologist, pledged at the rally, which was called by the Lincoln's Birthday Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom of which Prof. Boas is chairman.

Attacking the pseudo-scientific basis for exaggerated racial claims of apologists for Nazism, Mr. Wallace declared "the color of a cow's hair, for instance, has nothing to do with her ability to produce milk and there is no reason to think that the color of a man's hair has anything to do with his ability to produce ideas.

"And so it is quite possible that the

master breeder, being concerned primarily with physical appearance, would find he had produced a group of blonde morons—useful to him mainly as a superior type of cannon fodder," he asserted.

Democratic peoples must be continually on guard to defend their freedom, Prof. Boas warned, in pledging that scientists will do their part. Though he identified the totalitarian states as the main threat, he recalled that a "bigoted majority may be as dangerous to free thought as the heavy hand of a dictator."

Twenty-eight leading men of science, including Nobel prizeman Harold C. Urey of Columbia, who was chairman of the New York rally, compose the newly-organized Lincoln's Birthday Committee.

Science News Letter, February 18, 1939

GENERAL SCIENCE

Scientists Ask Themselves Four Questions for Freedom

TO SPUR their defense of intellectual freedom and stop the spread of racial or religious discrimination, scientists throughout the country asked themselves four questions at mass meetings held in leading centers of research on Lincoln's birthday.

Acting under the leadership of a committee of 28 noted colleagues headed by Prof. Franz Boas, distinguished anthropologist and foe of oppression, they propose to find out:

"1. How can the scientist insure freedom of research and socially useful application of the fruits of his research?"

Combat Discrimination

"2. How can scientists and educators best help to combat racial, religious and other forms of discrimination which violate the letter or spirit of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights?"

"3. How can the schools best meet the obligations which rest upon them as fortresses of democracy?"

"4. How can the government most effectively assist the expansion of science and culture?"



ORNATE BREASTPLATE

Remember the breastplate set with twelve stones worn by high priests in the Old Testament? Here is evidence that an Assyrian king, who reigned shortly after King Solomon's era, wore a strikingly similar device with nine rosettes when he appeared on priestly duties. The Boston Museum of Fine Arts, acquiring this small amber and gold image, calls it excessively rare. Only one other royal Assyrian statue "in the round" is known. Curiously, both are portraits of King Ashurnasir-apal, low-brow fighting king who expanded Assyria and set the stage for the Middle Assyrian Empire, with revolting cruelties. It happened in the ninth century B. C.

From answers to these questions, the Lincoln's Birthday Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom believes, will come a program for a sustained campaign by men of science against forces inimical to scientific progress.

Discussion meetings were held in New York, Boston, Albany, N. Y., Chicago, Philadelphia, and Washington; at Stanford, Miami, Purdue, and Duke Universities, and at the Universities of Oklahoma, Illinois, California, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Virginia, Nebraska and others.

Science News Letter, February 18, 1939

The first detailed survey of fur farming in the United States is being made.

Dairy farmers in this country keep records of milk production on only two cows out of a hundred.