

GENERAL SCIENCE

UN "Common Knowledge Market"

A world "common knowledge market" has been given a significant start in Geneva even if the European common market has received a de Gaulle torpedo, Watson Davis reports.

► THE UNITED NATIONS Science Conference welcomed to Geneva discussion by all nations, of whatever blocs. There were no resolutions nor votes. Facts, ideas and opinions were heard from little nations as well as big with more than 2,000 persons from different nations participating.

Some of the working rules and ideas that resulted from the discussions included:

Because agriculture is basic to feeding growing populations, the developing nations will need to give major effort to increase crop production by better seed, more fertilizer, insect and plant disease control, and more efficient cultivation methods.

Scientists from the more advanced nations will be needed to start the spiraling push to better and more production in agriculture as well as industry.

The countries themselves will need to develop stable, democratic governments to allow the increase in their gross national product needed for progress.

Because basic talent and ability exist to about the same degree in people the world over, good education from the elementary grades through secondary grades should be available to all in order not to waste brains,

the most precious human resources." Nations to progress fastest must give preference in training in science and technology, with less emphasis on law and literature.

New nations can leap-frog from primitive cultures to developed technologies by borrowing methods and "know-how" from the more advanced areas.

Conditions in their native lands must be made attractive to scientists so that they do not escape to more advanced countries where living and culture conditions are more attractive.

• Science News Letter, 83:99 February 16, 1963

Attack Private Resources

► RUSSIAN scientists opened attacks upon private ownership of natural resources by implying that non-Communist nations exploited the fisheries, oil, minerals, migratory animals, and soil and water to dangerous exhaustion, and to their profit, in backward countries.

Soviet Academician E. K. Fedorov and U. P. Germasiov also repudiated the Malthusian doctrine, which they held allowed

Western experts to "pin almost all misfortunes and unsettled state of society" on the Malthus theory that unlimited population growth would result in starvation, giving excuse for birth control and wars.

Scientists can use solar energy, new cultivation methods and artificial fertilizers to maintain a population dozens of times greater than existing now, the Soviets claimed.

The thermal balance of the earth is being upset by the carbon dioxide produced by burning coal and oil and already the concentration has been increased 10%. When all known reserves of oil and coal are burned, carbon dioxide in the air will increase ten times.

They predicted that the natural resources of neighboring planets will belong to mankind in some ten years or even earlier, alleviating shortages due to limited resources of our earth.

The Russian attack on private ownership was made in a report prepared for the United Nations Conference on the Application of Science and Technology for the Benefit of the Less Developed Areas at Geneva.

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Speed Food Production

► SCIENCE can offer a "bootstrap" operation to speed more food production to near-starving parts of the world, the UN Science Conference learned in Geneva.

Good seed needed for more crop production in the less developed, hungry areas of the world can be found in many cases in the better fields of the farmers of the less developed hungry areas.

A U.S.A. expert, Prof. W. M. Myers, of the University of Minnesota advised a search for superior seed. The farmers themselves will know. Other farmers in a region will realize superior seed on one farm is better than that planted by other farmers. Collect and test these good seeds, increase the supply and distribute them, he advised. Then there will be an immediate increase in food or fiber production in the country.

This method of utilizing ready-made varieties has been used effectively in such countries as Mexico and Thailand.

Prof. Myers recommended introducing from other parts of the world superior varieties of crops that would be adapted climatically to their new homes. Hybrid varieties such as hybrid corn from the United States can also be a great help in some cases in improving the food production. The world seed collections that the United States maintains of wheat, oats, barley, corn, rice, soybeans, flax, alfalfa and several other crops are being made available to all parts of the world. The National Germplasm Bank at Fort Collins, Colo., is a storehouse of superior seed available not only to the United States but throughout the world.

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Martin Company

HELPING HAND—A technician watches through a three-foot thick window as he operates a remote control manipulator to handle radioactive material in a "hot cell" at the Quehanna, Pa., Laboratory of Martin Company where radioisotopes for use in atomic generators are processed.