Editorial

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CO-OPERATION

The phenomenal expansion of the industries in developing countries like India during the post-war period has posed urgent problems concerning the import of technical know-how. It is, of course, advisable in the long term viewpoint to use as much indigenous technology as possible, but in the near feature it would be extremely difficult to cut off foreign technological know-how completely. Knowledge knows no barriers. Technological knowledge is developing at a much faster rate in every country, and any effort to ignore the advances made elsewhere will restrict the growth of industry. It has been suggested in this connection that a central agency be set up to import the know-how wherever possible. thereby relieving to some extent the strain on the country's meagre foreign exchange resources. The latter is estimated to be about Rs. 25 crores a year for India during the last 10 years.

It is needless to stress the importance of applied research which should be encouraged as much as possible in specific aress pertaining to the current and future needs of the industry. There should be effective liaison between fundamental and applied research, and also between the private and public sectors (Editorial: This Journal, Volume 17, No. 1, 1968). Engineering production as well as research and developmental activities are a new feature in post-war India. The knowledge gap between developed and developing countries has been widening rapidly with time. As compared to Japan, U.S.S.R., U.K. and U.S.A. which spend over 3 per cent of their national income on research and development, India's figure is about 0.26 per cent. There should be a growing realization in research laboratories that the programmes are planned so that they contribute to the development of newer processes of value to the industry. It is heartening to note that consultancy and engineering design units are being set up. There is also a growing realization of the utility of cooperative research laboratories.

It has been recently pointed out that international cooperation in research and a technology is at once a fact, a source of concern and a necessity. International cooperation enables the participants either to carry out research at lower cost, or in better conditions, or to obtain more effective economic results. For some countries it may be the only way to gain entry into certain fields. Such cooperation can be expected to provide knowledge that can be put to subsequent use, or to widen the market.

These are problems worth serious consideration by countries like India. By collaboration with other countries where feasible, the benefits of research can be conveniently reaped, culminating in industrial progress and development at a satisfactory level (Indian Chemical Engineer, Volume 10, No. 4, 1968 and Volum 11, No. 1, 1969; Physics Bulletin, Volume 20, August 1969).

—T.L.R.