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THE SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF GENETICS

THE Seventh International Congress of Genetics was unique in more than one way. As described by Prof. Crew in *NATURE* of September 16, p. 496, it was held during a period of high political stress, and it accomplished something that perhaps no other international congress will be required to attempt again. The enthusiasm of the six hundred men of science present, combined with a well-thought-out organization, retained the attention and support of all geneticists who were present in Edinburgh during an eventful week of turmoil. The following pages provide a survey of the proceedings.

The Congress not only achieved success in the work of the sections, but will also be remembered in at least one other direction. The exhibits, which included charts, diagrams, photographs, together with dead and living material of plants and animals, occupied the laboratories of the new Zoological and Engineering Departments of the University of Edinburgh. Under at least a hundred and fifty microscopes (probably many more) were slides illustrating most of the branches of cytology. These exhibits enabled one to see for oneself how great was the advance in cytological technique, to see perhaps for the first time heterochromatin or chromosome splits, and to judge the grounds on which controversial matters were based. The plant exhibit in the laboratory ranged from magnificent demonstrations of the origins of maize, the genetics of wheat hybrids, and the cyto-genetics of *Datura*, to the illustration of scientific method in the analysis of the peculiarities of fruit crops and plant pigments. In addition, there were living exhibits of genetic characters in a number of plant species. One laboratory was filled with charts and diagrams recording the genetics of *Drosophila* and

physiological actions of the genes, while another laboratory contained exhibits on the inheritance of colour in the cocoon of the silkworm, and the diseases to which man is subject. A large exhibit of animal genetics covered the inheritance of characters in rodents, rabbits, and other animals. A notable feature was the organization by Dr. Koller of an exhibit of living plants of *Pisum*, *Lycopersicum*, *Primula*, *Antirrhinum*, *Nicotiana* and other genera. These were arranged to illustrate the characters which are controlled by known genes. One of the crops was so well grown that members of the Congress who were specialists on this crop were able to use the plants for observational purposes.

It is obvious that the success of the Congress was due to the excellent organization of Prof. F. A. E. Crew, his committee and staff. Both previous to the Congress and during the Congress in normal times the position of the general secretary is an onerous one. When each day of the Congress brought more news and rumours of war, it was doubtful whether the Congress could continue. By a complete reorganization, only possible by excellent team work, the sections were able to complete their work, the exhibits were received, erected and dispatched in safe custody, and each individual member of the Congress who was directly or indirectly affected by the political upheaval was made to feel that he was being personally looked after by the general secretary and his able staff.

Science will not falter so long as the spirit initially engendered by the staff of the Institute of Animal Genetics at Edinburgh and propagated by the members of the Congress continues among the research workers of the world.