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A Scientific Smorgasbord

When thousands of local and visiting scientists and teachers convene in Washington for the 125th AAAS meeting, 26-31 December, approximately 300 sessions will provide a rich variety of short reports of current research, panels, symposia both specialized and interdisciplinary, and notable evening addresses. There also will be conferences, religious events, business sessions, tours, social functions, and the large-scale exhibits and Science Theatre. Since no one can occupy more than one point in space at any given moment, choices of what to attend each day must be made.

"Too many good programs at the same time" is a common remark, not without some validity. Concurrent attractions are an inevitable consequence of scheduling programs of the AAAS as a whole, of its 18 sections, and of some 50 societies, within five or six days, but virtually no one has the time or funds to stay for three weeks.

Fortunately, each program draws its own audience, many of whom will then attend other sessions and features that otherwise might not have brought them to the meeting. As in a restaurant, one must choose between fish, flesh, and fowl—or an exotic dish—on successive days. Or, on the same day, as at a smorgasbord, one may sample smaller portions of almost every dish.

The meeting is not unorganized. Within each discipline, concurrent sessions are at a minimum and general sessions are spread out. The Exposition and the Science Theatre have been scheduled so that they may be visited at any time between technical sessions. The Exposition is one of the largest and most varied in recent years, and the Science Theatre will present a selection—for the first time in this country—of recent prize-winning foreign films. Since the demonstrations of a new, improved closed-circuit color TV system, using a large screen, with teaching content, have been scheduled at 5 to 6 P.M., almost all will be able to attend.

The American Society of Zoologists has scheduled one four-session symposium, a second five-session symposium, eight sessions for contributed papers, a business meeting, and a dinner within three days, but it has been assumed that vertebrate zoologists, arthropod physiologists, ecologists, and taxonomists can be well accommodated by concurrent sessions. The two-session symposium, "Unsolved Problems in Biology III, 1958," sponsored by Sections F and G, will be held 30 December, after completion of the ASZ program, and therefore need not be missed.

The annual meeting of the American Astronautical Society, the three IGY sessions, the symposium of the American Physiological Society in space medicine, and a program of the Society for Industrial Microbiology have been fitted together so that space-minded scientists may attend all of them.

Among the religious events, the only time conflict is between Paul Tillich, guest speaker at the Washington Cathedral, and William J. McDonald, rector of the Catholic University of America. Phi Beta Kappa and the Society of the Sigma Xi have scheduled a joint address, to be given by James R. Killian, Jr. Among the unusually large number of speakers from abroad are Julian Huxley and Geoffrey Dawes. Graduate students and younger faculty members who may never have attended an AAAS meeting are particularly invited to come. Temperate indulgence in a smorgasbord need not be followed by indigestion, mental or other.—RAYMOND L. TAYLOR, AAAS

Science

A Scientific Smorgasbord

RAYMOND L. TAYLOR

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