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Shall All International Congresses Be Held Abroad?

IMPORTANT international conferences are still being held outside the United States because of the possibility that participants would encounter visa difficulties. At the 9th International Congress of Genetics last summer the following resolution was passed without dissent: "The Congress asks the International Committee not to recommend that the next Congress be held in any country to which it may be expected that scientists would be refused permission to enter on grounds of birth or political associations, past or present." Montreal, Canada, has been chosen for the 10th International Congress of Genetics.

On May 18, 1952, the American Psychological Association announced that the International Congress of Psychology would hold its 1954 meeting in Montreal. The statement released by the APA went on to say that "The American Psychological Association had hoped to invite . . . the International Congress of Psychology to meet in New York City. . . . Because of the delays and embarrassments which foreign scientists experience in attempting to obtain even temporary admission to this country the Association decided it could not issue the invitation." The APA went so far as to have a statement read into the *Congressional Record* [98 (88), 5920 (1952)] to the effect that, in deciding to hold the 1954 International Congress in Canada, the psychologists agreed not to have a meeting in the United States until the existing legislation is "modified in such a way that visiting scientists will not be put through an inconvenient and embarrassing procedure in order to gain permission to visit this country."

As long ago as December, 1951, the following recommendations were included in a resolution adopted by the Council of the AAAS.

The Council strongly urges that the administrative procedures under the McCarran Act be reviewed and modi-

fied so as to minimize injustices and to increase both our internal strength and our prestige abroad.

The Council further urges revision and improvement of the relevant portions of the Act, to retain the objectives of necessary security, but with adequate provisions to maintain free interchange of knowledge that has no security implications.

On July 27, 1953, Rep. Charles S. Gubser (R, Calif.) introduced two joint resolutions, H.J. Res. 307 and 308, concerning scientists and the McCarran Act. This was the first definite action taken to alleviate the present situation. Decisions regarding the entry of scientists and scholars are now made only from the negative viewpoint of the harmful activities in which the applicants might engage. The present process of weighing evidence does not permit consideration of the advantages this country might gain by admitting a given scientist.

H.J. Res. 307 would provide for (a) a prompt decision by the consul and (b) review of unfavorable decisions by a board that would include scientists and scholars. H.J. Res. 308, the stronger of the two, makes the same provisions and in addition would allow the Secretary of State to grant nonimmigrant visas when the national interest so requires, despite some of the milder technical restrictions of the McCarran Act. Thus he would be able to resolve borderline cases in which an applicant's associations might be considered questionable, but in which there was little likelihood of the alien's engaging in subversive or illegal activity during his short visit. The potential contribution of the individual would thus be balanced against the possible harm.

The Gubser Resolutions are at present being studied by the House Judiciary Committee, which will decide whether or not they are to be presented to the House of Representatives. If these resolutions are to receive proper consideration through a hearing this spring, interested persons must write to the House Judiciary Committee indicating approval or disapproval. A congressional hearing would in itself influence the administration of visa regulations.—B. P.

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