

the news columns of every national and provincial newspaper and many of the journals make some aspect of the conference the subject of editorial comment. One of these Editorials referring to the 1956 meeting was of such outstanding quality that we think it worth while passing on to members. It appeared in the News Chronicle under the heading

"SECRET SCIENCE"

"The British Association meets for one week, from Wednesday to Wednesday, because when it was started 125 years ago its founders, mainly theologians from Oxford and Cambridge, refused to contemplate more than one Sunday away from the pulpit. This is the kind of anachronism that the Association has accepted to the present day.

"Unfortunately it has not been a solitary anachronism. In the nineteenth century the only platform for the spreading of scientific knowledge was the lecture hall, and the Association has tended to behave as if nothing had changed. Too little attempt has been made to guide public judgment, through film, radio and television, or to explain in simple terms what science has been up to.

"Yet the Association's founders realised that one of the greatest obstacles to the advancement of science was public ignorance of it.

"Equally mistaken has been the Association's tradition by which chemists listen to chemists, and physicists to physicists, at a time when the young expert is often better briefed than the lecturer. Active, creative scientists have understandably stayed away from such unrewarding hours.

"The result of all this isolationism carries genuine dangers for mankind. The atomic physicist knows how to produce chain reaction without knowing its biological consequences.

"Worse still, the scientists produce an H-bomb with which

the statesmen, lacking full awareness of the implications, take calculated risks affecting millions of human lives.

"It was thus high time that the British Association climbed out of its crinoline, and good news that it showed every sign, last night, of doing so.

"The task of the modern scientist is two-fold. He must rid himself of the watertight compartments that now bedevil his profession; and he must use modern methods to inform the public both of the progress he is making and precisely what it means."

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