Barbados, but the sitting of a federal capital near Bridgetown might do much in time to remove that prejudice.

This report is sure to meet with some objection, especially from Jamaica and Trinidad, but the arguments about the sitting of a capital have gone on long enough. A good case is made for Barbados; let the other islands accept it with grace, and let federation proceed.

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THURSDAY JANUARY 3 1957

NO TIME FOR SCIENCE

BURDEN OF OTHER DUTIES

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—The many letters and discussions on the shortage of scientists have generally been concerned with ways of training more scientists and technologists. But there is another way of increasing our scientific potential which might well be more rapid and effective; it is to allow the scientists and technologists we already have more time in which to do their proper work.

At present, far too much of their energy, especially that of the leading experts, is being frittered away on duties and responsibilities where their professional gifts play little part.

Consider the conditions for original work. Such work may be personal research in the laboratory, concentrating on an experiment to the exclusion of everything else. It may be the result of thought and reading in the study. It may arise from a discussion in which the leader tries to grasp what a member of his team is doing and to understand his difficulties. In each case, many consecutive hours of concentrated work, free from distractions, are essential. The engagement book, the in-tray, and the list of matters which require urgent attention are the deadly enemies of scientific work.

Committees are the worst time-wasters. My experience has been academic, but talks with industrial friends indicate that their experience is the same. Government and industry could greatly increase the working time of our leading scientific experts, which would be equivalent to having more of them, if they would refrain from calling a key man to a meeting except for discussions on important matters of policy where his expert knowledge would be of especial value. The contrast with the usual regular formal meetings of large consultative committees, with a mass of agenda and memoranda running to 100 pages or more, needs no elaboration. Experts should be called upon to answer specific and carefully framed questions, not to approve formally lengthy reports of what is being done. Another deterrent to original work in pure science is the growing
They are doubtless convinced that it would be impossible to make such fools of men, and indeed men do not wear ribbons as in the brave old days of hat and haters, now vulgarly called "boaters." Only now and then some hoary-headed swain may be seen at Lord's wearing an illustrious tricoloured ribbon on a straw. There was a time long past when small schoo-boys wore coloured ribbons round their bowlers, though their grandsons of to-day believe the poor old gentlemen are romancing when they say so. Yet one of them still remembers how he was met in London by a horrified parent and taken to a hatter's to have a sober black ribbon substituted for his garish one, before he was fit to be taken to lunch at a respectable Service club. It was a historic fact moreover that the then new red and yellow ribbon of the M.C.C. was objected to on a black hat it might be mistaken for the older red, black, and gold of I.Z. Men in fact would be just as easily led astray in this matter of ribbons as are the ladies, were it not for the laws of the Medes and Persians as to the wearing of colours. The ladies have been seen to wear without a blush or a scruple the ties of their husbands and boy friends. "Men are honourable and all that; they are kicked out if they aren't"—so says a lady, if memory serves, in that delightful play The Liar. So is it with ribbons. Men would like to wear them all, but a stern upbringing forbids. Otherwise the international scamps might be laughing at them too, for indeed they are very laughable creatures.

EXHIBITION OF RUSSIAN ART

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—In view of the suggestion made in your columns to-day by Sir Alfred Munnings that an exhibition of Russian art should be held at the Royal Academy next winter, the following facts may be of interest.

Last August the chairman of the Art Panel of the Arts Council and the Director of Art visited Russia, under the sponsorship of the Soviet Relations Com-

utive committees, with a mass of agenda and memoranda running to 100 pages or more, needs no elaboration. Experts should be called upon to answer specific and carefully framed questions, not to approve formally lengthy reports of what is being done. Another deterrent to original work in pure science is the growing complexity of university administration.

Finally, there is the type of organization which condemns men, appointed for their scientific talents, to spend most of the day at the desk. Academic scientists with their elastic hours can escape to a certain extent, but in large research organizations with a regular working day a quiet time for thought is almost impossible to attain. Scientific work cannot be done amidst telephones, typewriters, and a stream of callers. I remember vividly an occasion when I wished to consult a colleague about an administrative matter and got this revealing reply from his secretary: "I am sorry, Dr.—it isn't in the laboratory to-day, he is working.

Some administrative duties must be performed. Scientists deeply appreciate invitations to give their advice to Government and industry and wish to respond. But it seems wrong when one hears one leading man after another say that he is on so many committees and has so much administrative work that he has hardly any time to go round his laboratory or do his own research. It is hard for him to resist claims on his time because they are immediate and research work can always be postponed. The result of an investigation into the extent of these occupa-tions would, I think, be startling and would force us to try to find some way of putting matters right.

Yours faithfully,

W. L. BRAGG.
The Royal Institution, 21, Albemarle Street, W.1, Dec. 31.

CHIEF MINISTER IN CYPRUS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—In his letter published in your issue of December 24, Lord Radcliffe complains that the Greek Government's spokesman failed to understand the significance of his proposals and that, in particular, he mis-interpreted the provisions on the appointment and dismissal of the Chief Minister.

I am replying to Lord Radcliffe's letter several days afterwards lest I should be accused, too, of drawing hasty and unwarranted conclusions. As regards the statement about the Greek Government's spokesman's erroneous inference that, essentially, the Chief Minister is not required to obtain the Assembly's confidence, it seems that, even from the quotation in Lord Radcliffe's letter, the Governor has the last word in this matter. For, in the first place, the Chief Minister is appointed by the Governor of the island, and in the second place, the Governor is the person responsible to Parliament, and it is the Governor who can remove the Chief Minister, not the Chief Minister who can remove the Governor.

Apart from the comment with its economic aspect, one of the more serious and pressing population is the problem of the growing population is the problem of the growing population. The present picture is that of married couples within the same family, such as the following:

The present picture is that of married couples within the same family, such as the following:

sent successive ages of horizontal strips placed on top of each other. The younger at the bottom, and the oldest at the top. Thus males and females can also be shown. Each strip represents the number of males and females born in addition to the middle line and the following line. Changes in the birth and death rates are indicated by those strips in which the numbers are increased or decreased. It will be seen that the population pyramid has a narrow base, widens at the sides and then tapers off at the top.

MORE ON MORTALITY

During the past century there has been a progressive increase in mortality, especially in the female sex. The conquest of smallpox, which has been most effective, is shown in the General Register Office reports. The percentage of deaths from this cause dropped from about 25% to 12.6% between 1870 and 1970. Although some of the decrease is due to the national insurance and other schemes, the proportions of the population occupied at older ages has increased from 1.5% to 95% per cent. for those 75 and over to 12.6 per cent. for those 75 and over. It has also been noted that the numbers of those aged 75 and over increased by about 40% between 1911 and 1931 by about 40% between 1911 and 1931, and that the number of those aged 75 and over increased by about 40% between 1911 and 1931.

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