

Barbados, but the siting 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 siting 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.

All Done with Ribbons

Most people who gain money by false pretences must be presumed to have primarily a sordid motive. We may hope, however, that there is a gradation and sometimes they perhaps allow themselves an innocent playfulness at the thought of having made their victims agreeably ridiculous. Thus we may suppose a fleeting smile on the lips of the hard-faced international scamps who are said to have made and scattered across Europe two miles of falsified hat ribbon. There is a pleasant picture by DU MAURIER in an old *Punch* of an English visitor to Paris ordering "un kilometre de Saucissons de Lyons"; but that is nothing compared with two miles of ribbon. It must have been good fun to think of those 40,000 ladies, wearing hats inscribed with the names of famous designers, despising their neighbours accordingly and now by this sudden revelation brought low. It is even possible to imagine a gleam of malicious amusement in the eyes of normally good-natured and uxorious citizens who have thought in the secret recesses of their hearts that a hat is but a hat for all that, that one hat is much like another and that they all cost a great deal too much.

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 straw hats, now vulgarly called "boaters." Only now and then some

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.

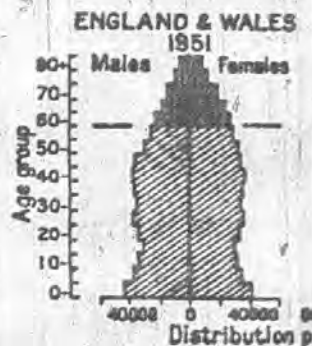
Consider the conditions for original work. Such work may be personal research in the laboratory, concentrating on an experiment to the exclusion of everything else. It may be the result of thought and reading in the study. It may arise from a discussion in which the leader tries to grasp what a member 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 questions 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

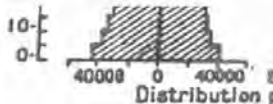
WORK

A cynic may regard of human lives as a misfortune that sci upon society, for it ha cult economic, medic lems. But he may d tion from the fact th spectacular medical years, resulting in th creasing number of d life span has not lengthened. During century the expectati aged 65 in this cot creased by less than to 11.73 years). Bu period his expectatio has increased by near

The present pop higher proportion of reached retiring age are likely to increa reduced mortality in difference between th England and Wales w and low mortality an Brazil with a high t mortality can be ill of population pyran



sent successive age zonal strips placed



would be impossible to make such fools of men, and indeed men do not wear ribbons as in the brave old days of straw hats, 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 school-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 is a historic fact moreover that the then new red and yellow ribbon of the M.C.C. was objected to because 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 Liars*. So it is 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-

mittee, 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. — is not 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 these 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 pre-occupations 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 misinterpreted 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 according to the Govern-

sent successive age zontal strips placed with the youngest at the top. The sexes can also be shown by numbers of males on the middle line and the females. Changes in the birth rate, the lowest strip of the pyramid, and changes in mortality rate, those strips in which the population is being added or subtracted. It will be seen that in countries with a high mortality rate, the population pyramid has a triangular shape with the base wide. In countries like England, where the pyramid has a narrow base, the sides rise steeply until they tapering off at the top.

MORE ON

During the past few years there has been a pronounced increase in mortality, especially in the younger age groups, where the conquest of disease has been most effective. The results of the General Register Office's investigation of these changes from 1920 to 1930, in this aspect, has shown that the mortality when some of the national insurance contributions were the proportions occupied at older ages was 95 per cent. for those aged 65 and over. It has also shown that the numbers of those aged 65 and over will increase by about 40 per cent. in the next 40 years. At first sight these figures suggest an alarming increase in national dependency, but they are offset by the fall in the number of those needing national support, caused by the decrease in the number of employed females. It is clear that national dependency will not be very different from the present time.

Apart from the cost of the Government with its economic policy, one of the more serious problems facing population is the loneliness and the disintegration of the family. The present picture is one of married couples with few children, and family aged about