

I. EDITORIAL

In 1969 Indonesian botany suffered a severe loss by the untimely death of Dr. B. Prijanto, at the end of April. He was the head of the Forest Exploration Division, Forest Research Institute, Bogor. He belonged to that still very small, but admirable circle of young able Indonesian botanists built up in the early sixties, largely through the efforts of Dr. Kostermans. Dr. Prijanto studied palynology for one year at Stockholm, after which he proceeded to Edinburgh where he received a thorough training under Dr. Burt, working largely on the systematics of Scrophulariaceae, in connection with problems in Gesneriaceae. He was a very nice and energetic man, full of plans for the future exploration of Indonesian forests. Our sympathy goes to his young wife, whom he had married only a few months before. He was a victim of an unfortunate car accident in SW. Celebes. The accident occurred when he was hunting for Eucalyptus with two Australian foresters, who both met an untimely death as well, one of them being Mr. E. Larsen, of Canberra.

Another thing that lamed botanical activity at Bogor was the serious trouble which Dr. Kostermans ran into with the police by whom he was detained. We hope that he will soon be cleared and that this will be a mere incident which will not affect his energy nor his enthusiasm for Indonesian botany. Unfortunately, through this mishap, he was unable to lead the Seminars on botany in August, neither could he accompany the British Museum Botanical Expedition to Central Celebes led by Dr. Jermy. These tasks were taken over by Dr. Rifai. Dr. Kostermans was also unable to attend the opening of the partly finished new Herbarium building in October, towards the planning of which he had contributed so much.

Several important papers have been published during the course of the year or are in the press, as is recorded in chapter IV. Progress in Malesian Botany.

Among them those on Apocynaceae (Dr. Markgraf), Dipterocarpaceae (Dr. Ashton), Icacinaceae (Dr. Sleumer), and Labiatae (Dr. Keng) are especially noteworthy.

Plant geography remains a fascinating subject and two important papers have been reviewed and provided with my comments, viz. the essay on the African flora by Aubréville and the large volume on the Solomon Islands Expedition by the Royal Society. I see with unconcealed pleasure that all botanists concerned are against random long-distance dispersal and need land for their explanations. Zoological contributors, however, are opposed to this.

Earlier, in the symposium on speciation in the tropics organized by the Linnean Society, I have already expressed the opinion that the difference between evolution in animals and that in plants is greater than is generally accepted. This difference may extend to dispersal, ecology, and other fields as well.

For example, New Caledonia is a unique reservoir of an ancient flora, but zoologists do not find anything equally exciting about its fauna.

The Solomons prove a most significant centre for the genus *Ficus*, and primitive forms are retained side by side with the advanced. Corner says: "The zoological comparison would be the co-existence today of species of the ancestral line of elephants along with the latest, but plant evolution and migration is different from animal".

For island floras zoologists claim random dispersal from source areas as a perfectly acceptable explanation, but "there is no random drift in the distribution of *Ficus*".

"Immigrant birds, if not other animals tend to differentiate into montane species on the whole plants do not do this".

Animals move, compete, and fight, populations change rapidly, are exterminated and replaced; these factors are for plants no issue of importance except in very early succession stages - and then by a restricted set of plants specialized in being marginal, the nomads.

In his criticism of the newly published mathematical 'Theory of Island Biogeography' Whitmore, in the Solomon book, remarked correctly, it seems to me, "that the same theory cannot be applied to plants and animals without modification because of the major differences in population structure and dynamics. Many plants (and certainly woody ones) persist many years without the necessity to reproduce, so they can outride temporary unfavourable fluctuations in the environment which may have drastic selective effects in short-lived organisms such as insects or birds. The old plants live alongside their progeny with the possibility of crossing, so genetic stability is enhanced. Some trees live several hundred years".

Obviously the traditional monistic view on the development of biological life is less satisfactory and less obvious than is given in textbooks. Few have dared to say this in the past; they would have been under penalty of being accused of scientific heresy.