



FOREWORD

A request has come to me to write a Foreword for the Inaugural Number of the Journal of the Palaeontological Society of India. With this request has come a formidable volume in the proof stage. I have looked into some of the articles contained in this first number and found that they come not only from eminent scientists in India but also from famous scientists in many other countries.

I do not quite know what I can say about this very learned collection of articles except to express my pleasure that the study of palaeontology has made such progress in India and is now showing its worth by this publication.

As Prime Minister, I should like to congratulate those who are responsible for this massive Memoir. But, perhaps, I have a better claim to welcome it. Long ago, when I was a student at Cambridge in England, I took up Geology as one of my subjects. I studied palaeontology and played about with fossils and found them fascinating. Some part of this fascination has continued and, looking through these pages, the long years have passed by, and I have almost felt as if I was a student again in that dim past before world wars came to plague mankind.

Everyone talks of science and technology today, even though many may have little understanding of them and of the mighty part they have played and are playing in the shaping of the world and in the lives of human beings. But, whether we understand them or not, we have inevitably to worship at their shrine. And so, in India, we have seen during the past nine years a great urge for scientific development and technological progress. Great institutions have grown up and more and more of our bright young men and young women train themselves in these activities typical of our age. Our planning depends upon them. Even hard-headed politicians and men of business, thinking of oil or the other riches under the earth's surface, search for geologists who might help them to discover these riches. In some countries, geologists are produced annually in their thousands. India will have to go the same way and pay far greater attention to the innumerable branches of scientific activity and endeavour to turn them to peaceful uses.

Palaeontology might not appear to be more practical, in the narrow sense of the word, than many other studies. But, science has grown not only by its service directed to immediate practical needs, but also in its search for knowledge of all kinds. I am sure that the study of palaeontology is important. It gives us glimpses of the ancient history of the earth and tells us much that is of practical importance.

I welcome, therefore, the Inaugural Number of this Journal and congratulate the Palaeontological Society of India on it. For a hundred years or so, palaeontology has been studied in India and has revealed to us the fascinating story of various epochs of geological history. It has told us how the Himalayas have grown and how the other parts of this great country have gradually taken shape. The time has now come to enlarge our work and to increase its pace. I hope this venture will help in this.

New Delhi,
September 8, 1956.

Jawaharlal Nehru