

littoral area into three natural algal belts correlated with the run of the tide. This tidal flow theory also fits closely to the observed distribution of various animal species inhabiting the sandy and muddy areas of the tidal zone. Mr. A. C. Stephen, following up his previous reports on molluscan ecology, has found that in 1933 the density of population of *Tellina tenuis* was far in excess of any previously met with, on an average 8214 per square metre. This was largely composed of a very abundant spat. The closely related *T. fabula* was also very successful in its spatting, but the conditions were evidently not so favourable for the common cockle, *Cardium edule*, very little spat of this species occurring. Dr. Orr, Dr. Marshall and Dr. Nicholls, in continuing their co-operative work on the plankton with special reference to *Calanus*, have shown that the success or failure of a brood depends on the presence or absence of diatoms during the early stages of development. A study of the chemical composition of *Calanus* showed that the fat content followed the changes in weight, and that the protein content also followed in general the changes in weight. Spent females were rarely found, which indicates that they die soon after spawning. An unusual occurrence was noted in the behaviour of Stage V *Calanus* on one occasion, when they swarmed actually on the surface of the water for two or three days, remaining in the upper few metres nearly all the time and only showing a tendency to seek deeper water during the darkest part of the night, which is a complete reversal of the normal migration. This subject is undergoing further investigation.

Public Health in England and Wales, 1934-35

THE sixteenth annual report of the Ministry of Health, 1934-35, has recently been issued, and deals under six sections with the whole subject of the public health and its administration in England and Wales (Cmd. 4978. H.M. Stationery Office, 1935. 5s. 6d. net.). Sir Kingsley Wood, the Minister of Health, in his introduction, contrasts mortality rates for the years 1910 and 1933. Thus, the death rates per 1,000 living for these two years were, respectively, 13.2 and 9.3; the infant mortality rates were 105 and 64, the death rates per million from pulmonary tuberculosis were 988 and 639, and for typhoid fever, 53 and 5. Maternal mortality, however, in spite of the development of maternity services in recent years, has not yet begun to fall. Statistics of vaccination show a slight but steady decline, from 42.6 per cent of total births in 1928 to 37.0 in 1933. Samples of food and drugs analysed during 1934 numbered 140,583, a small increase over the previous year, of which 7,451 or 5.3 per cent were reported against. It is mentioned that in some districts there are signs of revival and expansion of canal traffic, and there is evidence that motor traction of canal boats is continuing to develop, for many motor-propelled boats are on order, such boats being notable for improvements in design as regards ventilation and sanitation compared with the old type of boat.

Destructive Earthquakes in 1935

IN a recent number of the *Matériaux pour l'Étude des Calamités* (No. 35, 82-86; 1935), M. Charles Bois continues his record of destructive earthquakes. During the first six months of this year, there were 16 such earthquakes, four of them resulting in considerable loss of life, namely, the Persian earthquake of April 11 (480 deaths), the Formosa earthquake of April 20 (3,065), the Caucasian earthquake of May 1 (600) and the Quetta earthquake of May 30 (40,000). The latter number is probably too high, the latest estimate being about 30,000. On the other hand, the number of deaths (2,000) given by M. Bois for the Bihar earthquake of January 15, 1934 (*NATURE*, 136, 472, September 21, 1935), is too low, the number given in the official report on the earthquake being more than 10,000.

Third World Power Conference

THE third World Power Conference will be held in Washington, U.S.A. on September 7-12, 1936. This will be the third plenary meeting of the World Power Conference, the first plenary meeting having taken place at Wembley in 1924, and the second at Berlin in 1930. There have, in addition, been a number of sectional meetings. The Chemical Engineering Congress of the World Power Conference, to be held in London next June, ranks as one of these series of sectional meetings. The general subject to be discussed at the Third World Power Conference is "National Power Economy". Among the aspects to be treated are the following: physical and statistical bases; technical, economic and social trends; organisation of fuel industries and of gas and electric utilities; public regulations; national and regional planning; conservation of fuel and water resources; rationalisation of distribution; national power and fuel policies. The second Congress of the International Commission on Large Dams of the World Power Conference will be held in Washington at the same time. Further particulars regarding the plenary meeting of the World Power Conference and the second International Congress on Large Dams will be issued in due course. British participation will be organised by the British National Committee of the World Power Conference, 36 Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

Work of the Medical Research Council

IN a pamphlet by Miss Norah Dacre Fox, issued by the London and Provincial Anti-Vivisection Society, an attempt is made to criticise the work carried out under the Medical Research Council. Reference is made to the dominating influence of the late Sir Walter Fletcher, to vested interests, to a suppressed report, etc. It is stated: "The public is the Master, the Medical Research Council its servant. Is it not entitled to assert itself and to require from those it remunerates so lavishly, an account of this stewardship?" Needless to say, an account of this stewardship is available to all who desire it in the annual report and in the numerous research reports issued by the Council.