

the United Kingdom are Sir Ben Lockspeiser, secretary of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Sir William Slater, secretary of the Agricultural Research Council, Dr. F. H. K. Green, representing the Medical Research Council, and Dr. Alexander King, head of the Intelligence Division of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. All the self-governing countries of the Commonwealth will send delegations, and Colonial research will be represented by Dr. G. A. C. Herklots, of the Colonial Office. The United States Government is also sending observers. The main object of the Conference is to improve collaboration in research throughout the British Commonwealth, in particular the spreading of information and personal contacts between scientific workers. In addition, consideration will be paid to the furthering of relations with international research organizations, both those within the United Nations Organization and others. The detailed programme for the Conference is as follows. Under the heading of industrial subjects will be discussed industrial microbiology, the utilization of seaweed, research on metal casting, sulphur production, the utilization and beneficiation of low-grade ores and wastes, research on wool fibre, soil mechanics, and the utilization of solar energy by physical or biological means. Agricultural topics include animal climatology, the assessment of new insecticides and fungicides, grassland research in tropical and sub-tropical climates, and the sterility and infertility of animals. Among the medical subjects are climatic physiology, with special reference to living conditions in the tropics, the effect of radioactive tracers on living cells in plant and animal research, medical biochemistry, with particular reference to such problems as the standardization of methods of examining blood constituents, the geographical incidence of dental caries, and the geographical distribution of differences in the physical standards between different countries and between different types in a single country.

New Chair of Geology at the Rice Institute, Houston, Texas

A NEW chair, to be known as the Harry Carothers Wiess chair of geology, has recently been established in the Rice Institute, Houston, Texas, by a gift of 1,570,000 dollars from Mrs. Olga Keith Wiess in memory of her husband, the late H. C. Wiess, formerly vice-chairman of the board of trustees of the Institute. Mr. Wiess was also a member of the corporation of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a charter trustee and permanent member of the board of Princeton University. It is expected that the chair will consist of a full professor of geology and two associates, and will be concerned particularly with the field of marine geology.

European Association of Exploration Geophysicists

THE inaugural meeting of the European Association of Exploration Geophysicists was held on December 14, 1951, at The Hague in the Royal Netherlands Institute of Engineers. On the following day the president, Mr. A. van Weelden, gave an address to members on geophysical activities in Western Europe during 1946-51, and six papers were read. The Association, which was formed during the previous June at The Hague when the Third World Petroleum Congress was held there, at present consists of more than three hundred geophysicists working in twelve countries in Europe and also in East Africa; the

European countries are Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Great Britain. The headquarters of the Association are at 30 Carel van Bylandtlaan, The Hague. The membership subscription is 12 guilders (24s.) a year. Its council members are as follows: *President*, Mr. A. van Weelden, director of research, De Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij (Royal Dutch/Shell Group); *Secretary-Treasurer*, Dr. B. Baars (Netherlands); *Vice-President*, Dr. D. T. Germain Jones (Great Britain); *Members*, Dr. A. A. Fitch (Great Britain), Mr. L. Migaux (France), Dr. E. G. Hedström (Sweden) and Dr. A. Schleusener (Germany).

Radiography and the History of Art

A LECTURE was given on January 31 at the Institut Français du Royaume-Uni, South Kensington, London, by Mme. Magdeleine Hours on "La Radiographie des Peintures et l'Histoire de l'Art"; Mr. F. I. G. Rawlins, scientific adviser, National Gallery, was in the chair. Mme. Hours has been head of the Laboratory Departments at the Musée du Louvre, Paris, since 1949. In the course of her lecture, Mme. Hours pointed out that the Laboratory of Scientific Studies at the Musée du Louvre is at the disposal of all the departments of the Museum, but that she proposed to discuss only work carried out by the Art Department. When a picture is sent to the Laboratory, it may be for the purpose of preservation or for the purpose of an examination from the point of view of the history of art. So far as preservation and restoration are concerned, Mme. Hours thought the British public is already familiar with the scientific technique for the control of restoration. If opinions on this matter differ strongly, it is because of their subjectivity—the methods of control are the same in France and in England—only the interpretation of records is different and this depends a lot on the pictures concerned. Mme. Hours wished in particular to direct the attention of historians of art to the help which can be given by scientific methods, and more particularly by radiography and infra-red radiation, in providing an intimate knowledge of masterpieces, through the study of the rough sketches, the substructures of the painting, repaintings and so on. The records in the Laboratory of the Musée du Louvre, which number about ten thousand, would enable many false attributions to be rectified and solve numerous technical problems. International acceptance of these records, and exchanges between the chief museums, would enable the art critic to improve his methods of investigation and to re-create the various stages in the gradual construction of masterpieces. Mme. Hours has in preparation an international bibliography of the radiography of works of art and also a book on the scientific methods used in the Laboratory of the Louvre.

W. H. Hudson's Works

IT is good to see that a new uniform edition of the works of W. H. Hudson—"Nature in Downland", "A Hind in Richmond Park" and "The Purple Land"—has recently been published (J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd.; 7s. 6d. each volume). Hudson is remarkable not only for his close observations on birds, beasts and the human race but also for the beauty of his prose. He wrote in such a way that each successive generation finds enlightenment and pleasure in his works. He had a passion for freedom