

British Association: Installation of President

THE installation on January 8 of Sir George Thomson as president of the British Association for 1960 (see *Nature*, 184, 151; 1959) marked the close of a year of increasing activity and encouraging and significant developments. The lecture service, in its infancy in January 1959, is now well under way. Some 500 scientists have agreed to give lectures, and their audiences run into five figures—around 22,000 adults from trade unions, rotary clubs, women's institutes and chambers of commerce, and 32,000 children from all types of schools. The three pioneer area committees of 1958 have been joined by twelve more; the last of these, in York, is a direct follow-up of the recent annual meeting there. The decision to make a number of fundamental changes in the quarterly journal of the Association was also taken during the past year. From May 1960 *The Advancement of Science*, in a completely revised format, will be published six times a year, instead of four. Though still containing papers delivered at the annual meeting, the journal will include much new material, and will be of an essentially non-specialist character, aimed to appeal to scientists working in other fields, students and sixth forms in the schools, and laymen who are anxious to understand something of the significance of scientific research and development. The wide potential circulation of such a journal should make it a powerful weapon in the Association's campaign.

Nuclear Energy Conferences and Symposia in 1960

THE International Atomic Energy Agency, Vienna, has issued a provisional schedule of meetings to be organized in 1960. One large conference will deal with Radioisotopes in Physical Sciences and Industry and will probably be held at the end of August. The last major isotope conference, apart from the sessions devoted to this subject at the Geneva Atoms for Peace Conference in September 1958, was organized in Paris in September 1957 by Unesco, which will co-operate in the 1960 isotope conference. Another scientific conference will deal with problems of medium and small-size reactors and is planned for the beginning of September in Vienna with the expected participation of the United Nations. The tentative list of symposia to which invitations will be extended to all the Agency's Member States is as follows: (1) Fuel Element Fabrication with Special Emphasis on Cladding Materials (May 3-6, in Vienna); (2) Radiation Dosimetry in Physical Sciences (June 7-13, in Vienna); (3) Effects of Ionizing Radiation on Seeds and its Significance on Crop Improvement (probably in Karlsruhe, August 8-12, in co-operation with the Food and Agriculture Organization); (4) Inelastic Scattering of Neutrons in Solids and Liquids (October 11-14, in Vienna); (5) Neutron Pile Research (October 17-21, in Vienna); (6) Chemical Effects of Nuclear Transformation (October 24-27); (7) Nuclear Ship Propulsion with Special Reference to Safety (mid-November; the arrangements will be worked out in consultation with the International Maritime Consultative Organization); (8) Experimental and Test Reactors (November 28-December 2, in Vienna); (9) Pest Control by Radiation (probably in India in December, in co-operation with the Food and Agriculture Organization); (10) Use of Radioisotopes in the Study of Endemic and Tropical Diseases (in the Far East at the end of November or beginning of December, in

co-operation with the World Health Organization); (11) Education and Nuclear Energy (probably in Argentina at the end of the year or beginning of 1961, in co-operation with Unesco).

Scientific Man-power in Britain

IN an article, "The Statistics of Scientific Man-power", in the January 7 issue of *Education*, Sir Solly Zuckerman points out that the figures since published by the Scientific Man-power Committee, which were not available to Prof. J. Jewkes when he presented his analysis of the marked shortage of scientists before Section F (Economics) of the British Association at York last September, indicate that the conclusion drawn by Prof. Jewkes is wide of the mark. Graduates in pure science from British universities during 1956-59 numbered only 15,500, and not 18,000 as he stated, and even taking into account about 800 scientists, not considered by Prof. Jewkes, who were admitted to membership of the Royal Institute of Chemistry or the Institute of Physics on the strength of qualifications other than a university degree, when allowance is made for those who returned to their homes overseas or took up employment abroad (about 500) and for the 5,000 needed to replace losses, we are left with about 10,800 to satisfy any net increase in demand expected between 1956 and 1959 (11,700 in the 1956 estimate).

The Scientific Man-power Committee's recent report also shows that there were still about 4,000 vacancies at the beginning of 1959. The new estimates made by employers themselves of the number of scientists they will require by 1962 suggest that the general market shortage of scientists is still likely to be about 2,000 in 1962. Commenting further on Prof. Jewkes's 'working rule' that employers know best about their future requirements, Prof. Zuckerman also points out that the demand between 1956 and 1959 rose much more sharply than employers anticipated, and that in practically no branch of industry did action follow intention. We have still far to go before we need be unduly concerned about the exhortatory character of Prof. Jewkes's concept of 'unmet need'; but the Scientific Man-power Committee would certainly agree wholeheartedly with him that the criteria now available for estimating how many scientists and technologists will be needed in the long-term are very crude and urgently need to be refined.

Computation and Automatic Control

AT the annual general meeting of the British Group for Computation and Automatic Control of the British Conference on Automation and Computation, held on December 17, 1959, the Executive Committee was reconstituted for 1960 as follows: *chairman*, Mr. J. F. Coales; *vice-chairmen*, Mr. R. Hindle and Mr. H. W. G. Gearing; *honorary treasurer*, Mr. S. M. Rix; *honorary secretary*, Mr. W. Bamford; *members*, Dr. A. D. Booth, Mr. N. Clarke, Mr. E. C. Clear Hill, Mr. W. C. F. Hessenberg, Mr. N. C. Pollock, and Prof. E. J. Richards. Groups A and B have undertaken the sponsoring of the British contribution to the First Congress of the International Federation of Automatic Control which is being held in Moscow during June 27-July 6. Further details can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, Group B. Arrangements are being made also for a British Convention on this subject to be held in London in September, and further information can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary,