

and experiments in the ionosphere were being carried out in co-operation with Canada and Australia and all Commonwealth countries had been invited to give suggestions on all aspects of the programme and were being kept fully informed of progress. Britain was also going ahead with design studies of the modifications which would be needed to allow Blue Streak and Black Knight to be used for launching satellites and meanwhile Britain would make any use she could of test firings to obtain further information about conditions in the upper atmosphere.

#### U.S. Planning Committee on Planetary Sciences

THE Executive Committee of the American Geophysical Union of the National Academy of Sciences has formed a Planning Committee on Planetary Sciences. The purpose of the new committee will be to accommodate the increasing number of American Geophysical Union members engaged in planetary and space research by expanding the Union's activities in this field. The following committee officials are announced: Homer E. Newell, jun. (deputy director, Office of Space Flight Programmes, National Aeronautics and Space Administration) as chairman; Robert Jastrow (Theoretical Division, Goddard Space Flight Center) as secretary. Other members of the committee are Philip H. Abelson, Leroy R. Aldredge, J. W. Chamberlain, Thomas Gold, J. G. F. MacDonald, Hugh Odishaw, Allen Shapley, E. H. Vestine, Harry Wexler and Charles A. Whitten.

#### School Children in Africa

MORE than half the world's children are now in school. Unesco figures, collected over a three-year period, estimate that there are approximately 550,000,000 children aged 5-14 years in the world to-day, but only 300,000,000 of them are in school. During the early 1950's, the world passed the half-way mark in getting school-age children into classrooms. The enrolment figure was 48 per cent in 1950 and 55 per cent in 1954. Many countries to-day still show low enrolment figures, especially in Asia and Africa; but it is in these countries that enrolments are increasing the most. In the Belgian Congo, for example, the number of primary school pupils rose from 145,000 in 1930 to 1,060,000 a quarter of a century later (*South Afr. J. Sci.*, 55, No. 7; July 1959). Enrolment in Ghana rose from 55,000 in 1932 to 508,000 in 1954. Girls' education is no problem in Basutoland where the difficulty lies in getting more boys into school. Owing to the economic pattern of Basuto life, where boys are traditionally herdsmen, girls outnumber boys in class by two to one.

#### Contemporary Physics

Two numbers of the new journal, *Contemporary Physics*, have so far appeared, and there are excellent articles in both (Taylor and Francis, Ltd., 18 Red Lion Court, London, E.C.4. 27s. (4 dollars) per vol. of six parts; 5s. (75 cents) per part). The journal aims at interpretation and review—to maintain the highest level of scientific content, but at the same time to present the content in such a way that the young graduate, and the teacher needing a refresher course to bring him up to date with modern developments, may understand without undue difficulty. The editor has succeeded in obtaining first-rate authors to write articles on interesting and topical subjects, but generally the standard is rather high and the text too burdened with fearsome mathematics and frightening graphs. There are exceptions,

of course, like the articles on skidding friction by Barbara Sabey, of the Road Research Laboratory, and on diamond by Prof. S. Tolansky; but the reader turning with expectation to Sir Harrie Massey's article on space research may well be put off by the fact that it contains no illustrations at all. It is conceivable that it will be the university teacher and the more advanced physicist who will spend many enjoyable hours reading *Contemporary Physics*. The article, "Molecular Beams", by Prof. O. R. Frisch, for example, is an excellent introductory survey to the subject which will neither dismay a postgraduate research physicist working in some other field of physics, nor give him the impression that the author is talking down to his reader.

Specific articles in both numbers are devoted to historical or educational aspects of physics. In No. 1 (October 1959), Dr. C. Kellner discusses Alexander von Humboldt and the organization of international collaboration in geophysical research; Mr. H. V. Beck, the selection and design of experiments for alternating current teaching; and in No. 2 (December 1959), F. Lester describes a course in the physical sciences for teachers in training; Sir John Cockcroft, the newly founded Churchill College; and L. R. B. Elton the vexed question of a clearing-house to help students to find admittance to honours courses in physics. *Contemporary Physics* deserves to do well; perhaps, without departing too much from its initial standard, its content could be made more appealing in form and less suggestive of another learned society journal, so that it may reach the wider public for which it is intended and which it richly deserves.

#### Botanica Marina

SCIENTIFIC periodicals are already so numerous that the appearance of a new one inevitably arouses misgivings. There does, however, seem to be a very good reason for the birth of *Botanica Marina*, the first number of which has recently appeared (Cram. de Gruyter and Co., Hamburg, 1959). As Prof. Drescher-Kaden points out in the introduction, classical botany has for hundreds of years been essentially *Botanica Terrestri*, but recently both planktonic and benthic marine algae have been attracting more attention than formerly. Their intrinsic interest is great and their practical importance large and increasing, so it is obviously desirable to have a journal for the publication of work on them. The editorial committee, which is truly international, must inspire faith in the future of this journal, while the contents of the first part give an indication of the range of studies to be included—cell physiology, chemistry, statistical ecology and what might be called 'straight phycology'.

It would be interesting if in some future number we could be given an account of the debt botanists owe to the work of zoologists and chemists in the investigation of marine phytoplankton. It must be considerable. *Botanica Marina* looks like becoming an essential periodical for every library with marine interests and a useful one for such others as can afford it.

#### Technological Education and the Nuffield Foundation

THE Nuffield Foundation has made an imaginative and constructive approach to senior colleges of technology which should do much to raise the standards of technological education in Great Britain. In a letter to the principals of those colleges which provide