tion. The Rev. Peshall has also volunteered to make a collection of shells, sponges, &c. Thus even if we are clouded out and do not get our astronomical observations, we hope at least to bring back some new material which may advance science in other directions.

On Tuesday, March 28, Father Cortie delivered a lecture on "Eclipses in General," while the following evening Mr. McClean was persuaded to describe and give his experiences on aeroplanes. In fact, we have all been most busy, and the ship has been rolling and pitching nearly all the time, and a stiff head wind N.E. has been blowing.

On March 31 we were invited to a concert given by the ship's company, which proved very successful.

Early this morning (April 2) we passed on our star-board side the islands of Tofua and Kao; both are volcanoes, the former active, but there were no signs of activity. Tofua lies in the centre of the eclipse track, but has not been looked upon as a suitable place for an eclipse station. On our port side we are now nearly abreast of Late Island, a lonely peak in this landless ocean. In fact, except for a very few birds and a few flying-fish, the ocean and air have been lifeless. The barograph is daily marking out the diurnal double oscillation superimposed on long waves of rise and fall. The temperature has been steadily rising, and has now reached the eighties. The hydrograph persistently records more than 80 per cent. of saturation, but on the moving ship this humidity is not very much felt except when violent exercise is indulged in. We are now in very quiet trade winds, and the good ship *Encounter* is becoming more steady. To-night, or rather this afternoon, we expect to arrive at our destination, and then we shall feel the effects of the temperature and humidity.

At the present moment no decision has been arrived at as to whether we shall live on board or ashore. Most probably it will be the latter. Our present intention is to occupy the spot indicated on the large-scale map of Vavau portioned off as a naval coaling station, for the harbour is sufficiently deep for the ship to lie just off. This harbour has only a very narrow entrance, so that the ship will be well protected from strong winds and landing will be easy.

To-morrow morning (April 3) will be spent in looking for a suitable site, and then on the following day the Union Steamship Company's mail boat arrives from Auckland, bringing the Australian astronomers and the other members of my party, namely, Messrs. Brooks, Raymond, and Winkelmann.

I have arranged with Captain Colomb that, should we be successful on the day of the eclipse, the ship will not leave Vavau until about May 5. The object of this is to give us plenty of time quietly to develop and copy all negatives; as the climate is so hot and humid, particular care must be taken to produce the best results, and it is quite possible that development may only be successfully accomplished during the cool (!) of the night. In the case of our being clouded out, Vavau will be left on May 2. On her return journey to Sydney, H.M.S. *Encounter* will make for Suva, Fiji, to coal, and to land Mr. McClean and myself there.

It is now 11.30 a.m., and two small patches of land ahead give us the first imprint of Vavau, our future home for some time to come. At last we are there after this long journey.

W. J. S. LOCKYER.

THE PRIVATE SESSIONS OF THE IMPERIAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE.

IN our review of the public sessions of the conference (see NATURE, May 4), we hoped that the report of the private sessions would reveal a useful interchange of ideas between the delegates from various parts of the Empire, and that organised concerted action would result. The report (Cd. 5666, price 1s.) issued by the Board of Education is now before us, and we may state at once that it disposes of the fear—to which the character of the public meetings naturally gave rise—that the Colonial Governments had not been duly consulted with reference to the agenda of conference. Furthermore, we believe that the debates have been of a useful character, and that an

important step has been taken to fulfil our aspirations by the organisation of an Imperial Education Bureau. The agenda of the meetings may be summarised as follows:—

- (1) action arising from the previous conference in 1907;
- (2) memoranda prepared by the Office of Special Inquiries and Reports on schools in the self-governing dominions;
- (3) training and qualifications of teachers;
- (4) cost of instruction and cost of living in connection with advanced technical colleges and universities;
- (5) the Board's examinations in the overseas dominions;
- (6) the formation of an Imperial Education Bureau.

Two mornings were devoted to problems of an educational, rather than administrative, character. English spelling and spelling reform formed the subject of papers by Dr. E. H. Edwards (H.M.I., England) and Dr. A. H. Mackay (Nova Scotia); also Dr. W. J. Viljoen (Union of South Africa) contributed interesting information with reference to the simplification of Dutch orthography and grammar. H.E. the Governor of Sierra Leone submitted a paper, written by R. F. Honter, on the psychology of the negro child and on the adaptation of primitive customs, manners, laws, and traditions in a system of education. Sir F. D. Lugard, Governor of Hong Kong, presented a memorandum on the best methods of training character and inculcating a high moral standard in universities founded primarily for non-Christian races, without the compulsory teaching of the Christian religion, and this subject is to be considered further at the next conference. Among the appendices is a report of the Conference on Bilingualism, convened by the President of the Board of Education. The discussion of this question by representatives of South Africa, Canada, the India Office, Scotland, Wales, and Malta, brought clearly into view the desirability of bringing into the common stock the varied knowledge and experience of administrators under diverse conditions.

But the success of the conference rests upon its treatment of the urgent administrative problems indicated in our six items of summarised agenda, especially in regard to the last. Much credit is due to Dr. Frank Heath, as director, and his staff at the Special Inquiries Office. Their activity has been even more productive than appeared from Mr. Runciman's address (*vide* NATURE, *loc. cit.*), as the interchange of officials, as well as of official memoranda, has been facilitated, and the difficulties of mutual recognition of teachers' certificates are approaching solution. The main outcome of the conference is the extension of the work of Dr. Heath's department. If the unanimous and weighty recommendations of the conference are carried into effect, the Office of Special Inquiries and Reports will perform the functions of an Imperial Education Bureau. The machinery by which these functions are to be performed, the provision for the continuity of the conference, modes of cooperation of the several education departments of the Empire, have all been made the subject of definite proposals of a practical character. From these, which will be found on pp. 12 to 18 of the report, we quote the penultimate recommendation:—

"That the several Education Departments of the Empire should publish, each for their own part of the Empire, the following monographs in the order named:—(a) the curricula of schools for general education; (b) the training of teachers for schools giving general education; (c) the laws of compulsory attendance and their working; (d) the general education of children in sparsely populated areas; and (e) the medical inspection of schools for general education."

G. F. DANIELL.

THE ENDOWMENT OF HOME SCIENCE.

IT was announced on Friday last (the Queen's birthday) that a sum of 50,000l. had been subscribed for the endowment of "home science" in connection with the Women's Department of King's College, and that her Majesty had graciously allowed her name to be associated with a new hostel to be erected at a cost of 20,000l. Another 20,000l. is to be used for building and equipping laboratories, and it is hoped to supplement the remaining 10,000l. so that the endowment for salaries and current expenses may be 60,000l.