

not been accorded adequate attention or weight. Nor, after studying the discussion of it in *NATURE*, can I see any material difference between the views of Sir Ray Lankester and those of Sir Archdall Reid.

H. BRYAN DONKIN.

London, February 1.

### The Scientific Glassware Industry.

I HAVE read with very great interest the article on the optical glass industry published in *NATURE* of January 20, and should like to direct attention to the condition of the scientific and illuminating branches of the glass industry, which are in the same position as the optical section and of equal importance to the nation. The manufacture of scientific glassware, practically non-existent in the country prior to 1914, was undertaken by several glass-makers at the urgent request of the Government, which, shortly after the outbreak of hostilities, discovered that the prosecution of the war was in danger of being impeded owing to the lack of supplies of these articles. The progress made in the manufacture of this apparatus has been very remarkable, especially when taking into consideration the comparatively short time it has been in existence in this country and the great difficulties with which the manufacturers had to contend. The latter have, however, succeeded in producing glass which is in many cases superior to German or Austrian pre-war glass, although it is freely admitted that in the early days the glass produced was in some cases of extremely bad quality. This has now been remedied, and one may fairly claim that, as regards both the quality of the glass and the technique and workmanship, British-made scientific apparatus now is among the best that can be produced anywhere.

The industry is, however, in grave danger of being again completely lost to this country. Owing to prevailing conditions Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia are trading under conditions which make it impossible for British manufacturers to compete, and the factories have no alternative but to cease work almost immediately unless the Government gives some very definite assurance that the promises it made when it asked the manufacturers to undertake this work will be very shortly redeemed. The industry has not been in existence sufficiently long to enable the manufacturers to create reserves to fight and meet this competition in the ordinary way. On the contrary, the present loss to those engaged in the industry is extremely large, and it is mainly for this reason that they cannot continue production without the assistance of the Government, the most suitable form of which would be legislation on the lines of the Dyes Bill. The large majority of users of industrial and scientific apparatus have considered this question, and have joined with the manufacturers in urging upon the Government the necessity for immediate action in order that they shall not again have to rely upon foreign countries—and possible future enemies—for supplies of glass which is so vital, not only to the scientific and industrial worlds, but also to the very defence of the nation.

T. LESTER SWAIN.

The British Chemical Ware Manufacturers' Association, Ltd., 51 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.2, January 31.

### Greenland in Europe.

WITH reference to the letter by "T. R. R. S." in *NATURE* of January 27, p. 694, I may be allowed to add some explanatory remarks which could not be included in the very condensed synopsis of my Cardiff

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paper. The map showing Spitsbergen as "Greenland" appears in "An Easy Introduction to the Arts and Sciences," by R. Turner, jun., LL.D., late of Magdalen Hall, Oxford, author of "An Easy Introduction to Geography," etc. The copy cited is the fifteenth edition of that work, and it was issued in 1812 by Longman and other London booksellers. The first edition may be assumed to have been printed about twenty years earlier, with or without that map.

It is difficult for us to determine how far the nomenclature of the 1812 edition was then regarded as old-fashioned. To this very day we call the ocean that stretches from the west coast of Spitsbergen southward to the Arctic Circle "the Greenland Sea." For what length of time that expanse of water has borne that name is an interesting question; at any rate, there is no room for doubting that our seventeenth-century whalers and mariners regarded the Spitsbergen region as specially "Greenland."

As for the passage from Goldsmith's *Geography*, quoted by "T. R. R. S." as indicating another point of view, he will find, I think, on fuller consideration, that it does not conflict with the map of 1812, because Goldsmith's statement that icebergs or ice-floes "are to be met with on the coasts of Spitzbergen, to the great danger of the shipping employed in the Greenland fishery," clearly implies that the scene of "the Greenland fishery" lay off the western seaboard of Spitsbergen. That the latter name was given in the first place to the mountain peaks is manifest; indeed, an Arctic voyager of 1653 illustrates the different application of the two terms. On his outward voyage towards Vaigatz his ship sighted the distant peaks of "Spitzbergen" to northward, but when a visit was afterwards paid to the great whaling station in that archipelago he speaks of the land as "Greenland." Probably the two names have been used interchangeably for many generations. DAVID MACRITCHIE.

Edinburgh, January 29.

### The Mild Weather.

IN continuation of the letter on the above subject in *NATURE* of January 20, it may be of interest to give a few facts for the calendar month of January, since high temperatures were so persistent throughout. From the beginning to the end of the month there was a neck-to-neck race for record temperature between the Januarys of 1916 and 1921. The temperature at Greenwich for the civil day as published by the Registrar-General's weekly returns shows the supremacy for warmth to be claimed by January of the present year, when the mean for all the maximum readings was 50.0° F., the minimum 40.8°, and the mean of the mean maximum and minimum 45.4°. For January, 1916, the corresponding means were 50.4°, 40.1°, and 45.3°. There is only a trifling difference between the results for the two Januarys, which are the warmest during the last eighty years. In January, 1916, the days were slightly warmer than in 1921, whilst in January, 1921, the nights were appreciably warmer than in 1916.

The two years 1916 and 1921 are the only instances with the January mean maximum temperature 50° or above, and they are also the only instances with the mean minimum temperature 40° or above. In January, 1916, there were nineteen days with the shade temperature 50° or above, and eighteen such warm days in January, 1921; whilst in 1916 there were three nights with the temperature 45° or above, and in 1921 nine correspondingly warm nights. In both years the mean temperature for January was 7° above the normal. CHAS. HARDING.

65 Holmewood Gardens, S.W.2, February 4.