

the range of physical, if not of commercial, practicability. Indeed, there are many fields where wireless telephony already rivals telephony over the metallic circuit, especially now that methods of linking up the two have been perfected, and we look forward with interest to the results of

the experiments now being made with the view of establishing a commercial wireless telephone service between London and Birmingham, and the competition which appears likely between cable and wireless telephony from England to Holland.

### Obituary.

BY the death at Cambridge, on April 9, of DR. RICHARD HENRY VERNON, at thirty-six years of age, the younger generation of chemists in this country has suffered a serious loss. The elder son of the late Hon. William Vernon, Dr. Vernon was educated abroad and took the degree of Ph.D. at the Zurich Polytechnic. At the close of his course at Zurich the war broke out, and although his health had always been delicate he hastened to offer his services and enlisted as a private, receiving later a commission in the Dorset Regiment. After having been invalided home, he worked for the Chemical Warfare Committee, first at the Imperial College of Science, and afterwards in the University Chemical Laboratory, Cambridge. He was then sent to the Shell Filling Factory at Chittening, where his health became seriously affected. After the armistice he returned to Cambridge, and was appointed to the official position of assistant to the professor of chemistry. Dr. Vernon possessed in a remarkable degree the special sense of the organic chemist, and his manipulative ability was quite exceptional. His work on tellurium, which led to the discovery of the isomeric dimethyltellurium iodides, had an important bearing on the stereochemistry of elements of higher atomic weight and impressed all who had seen it with his powers. He had a personality of singular charm and attractiveness that rapidly won the friendship of all with whom he was brought into contact.

WE notice with much regret the announcement of the death, on April 13, of MR. HOWARD PAYN in his eighty-first year. In his early life Mr. Payn qualified as a barrister, but never practised. In middle life, after some years' service on a Sugar Commission, he became greatly interested in astronomy, and in 1899 entered Sir Norman Lockyer's laboratory at South Kensington as a volunteer worker. Mr. Payn took part in the eclipse expedition to Santa Pola, Spain, in 1900, and obtained a fine series of photographs of the corona and prominences with a lens of 16-ft. focal length. In 1905 he was with Sir

Norman Lockyer's eclipse party at Palma, Majorca, but the spectroscopic photographs which he had planned to take were only partially successful, on account of clouds. In collaboration with Prof. Fowler, he was among the first to investigate the vacuum arc spectra of metallic elements, and to show that enhanced lines are strongly developed under these conditions. Mr. Payn also rendered considerable assistance to Sir Norman Lockyer in his work on "Stone Circles." He died in a nursing home at Hounslow after a long illness, and will be greatly missed by his many friends.

THE sudden and unexpected death, from heart failure, of DR. HERBERT HAVILAND FIELD, at the age of fifty-two, is a great loss to scientific workers. Some thirty years ago Field, then an American student at Paris, left the path of biological research for the less inviting road of bibliography. His aim was to provide a bibliographic service by cards of standard size. Each card carried numbers according to a modification of the Dewey decimal system, enabling it to be sorted mechanically into place according to the classification desired. Later he became associated with the bibliographic section of *Zoologischer Anzeiger*, and eventually founded at Zurich the well-known Concilium Bibliographicum, which has had the support of the Swiss Government and of various American funds. There he died at his work. It is to be hoped, especially in the present circumstances of the International Catalogue, that the institution he founded will continue and expand.

WE much regret to announce the death, on Monday, April 11, at the age of seventy-seven years, of PROF. ARNOLD WILLIAM REINOLD, F.R.S., lately professor of physics in the Royal Naval College, Greenwich.

WE regret to record the death, on April 9, of MR. BERTRAM BLOUNT, the well-known chemist, at fifty-four years of age; and, on April 13, of MR. R. A. ROLFE, of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, at sixty-five years of age.

### Notes.

WITH the intention of saving the lives of numberless birds of bright plumage slaughtered in foreign lands for no better purpose than unnatural decoration, a "Bill to prohibit the importation of the plumage of birds and the sale or possession of plumage illegally imported" has again been introduced in

House of Commons, and on April 13 passed the second reading by a majority of 143 votes against 25. The scope of the Bill is wide. As it stands, it prohibits the importation of all birds' plumes excepting those of African ostriches and eider-ducks, of birds imported alive, of birds ordinarily used in the United