

News and Views.

At all points where popular and professional opinion has ground for complaint against the present lunacy administration, the recently issued report of the Royal Commission on Lunacy affords clear and wise guidance to Parliament. The recommendations cover a wide field—public, private, and medical—and are fairly free from pettifoggery and meaningless phrases. A certain vagueness appears over at least one of the more radical suggestions, namely, that concerning the end to which reorganisation of the Board of Control should be directed. But generally the advice offered is detailed and practical, or limited to the mere intimation that in particular directions improvement is desirable. The importance of provision for early treatment and for treatment without certification is generously recognised, the Commission advocating a recasting of the lunacy code “so that treatment of mental disorder should approximate as nearly to the treatment of physical ailments as is consistent with the special safeguards which are indispensable when the liberty of the subject is infringed.” To this end detailed proposals are framed. The need for improving the status of asylum medical officers is expressed in terms equally explicit; so is the necessity for protecting medical practitioners, who at present undertake the duty of certification with increasing reluctance. The cost and responsibility of maintenance should, in the opinion of the Commission, be transferred from the Poor Law to the County authorities. No support is given to propagandist allegations of abuses in the administration of the Lunacy Act. On the question of the abolition or reorganisation of licensed houses, the Commission is divided. An Exchequer grant is proposed to meet the additional expenditure involved in a lunacy service such as the report envisages, and the hint is thrown out that an increase in recoveries following early care and the discovery, by research, of new possibilities of cure, will render such expenditure not wholly unremunerative. Further the Commission does not go, and it remains for its successor to present the problem of national fitness in its broader aspects as one of the major political problems of the modern State.

It is a significant fact that one of the principal founders of the British Association over which the Prince of Wales is now presiding should have belonged to his own college in Oxford, and should have preceded him at that college by almost exactly one hundred years. Dr. Charles Daubeny was up at Magdalen as a Demy from 1810 until 1814, exactly a hundred years before his successor in the presidential chair this year. This is not the time to discard upon the many-sidedness of Dr. Daubeny's work within the University. In the words of his biographer: “In his whole career Dr. Daubeny was full of that practical public spirit which delights in co-operation, and feeds upon the hope of benefiting humanity by associations of men. When the British Association came into being at York in 1831, Daubeny alone stood for the universities of England, and so standing,

boldly invited that body to visit Oxford in 1832. In 1856 he became president of the Association at Cheltenham, in his native county, amidst numerous friends, who caused a medal to be struck in his honour, the only occurrence of this kind in the annals of the Association.” During the recent meeting a memorial wreath was placed upon the grave of the illustrious predecessor of the present president of the Association immediately within the entrance to Magdalen College, where a simple stone inscribed “C.G.B.D.” marks the place in accordance with his own wish “that he might not be separated in death from a Society with which he had been connected for the greater part of his life.”

HERR RASMUSSEN, the Danish Minister of Defence, who is shortly paying an official visit to Denmark's colony, the Faroe Islands and her sister State, the republican kingdom of Iceland, intends thereafter to proceed to the lonely, uninhabited island of Jan Mayen, lying between Greenland, Iceland and Norway. The announced object of the Minister's visit is to arrange for the erection there of a Danish seismographic station. The Danish Government owns the buildings on the island, which were given to them, it is said, by the Austrians, who once occupied Jan Mayen. It was made the station of the Austrian polar expedition of 1882-83, but has apparently remained unclaimed ever since, though Great Britain and Norway together established a ‘close season’ for the seal fisheries. The whale and seal fisheries off the east and north coasts are very important during the summer. Jan Mayen land, which was discovered in 1611, by the Dutch navigator of that name, is of volcanic origin, is some 35 miles long, and practically covered with immense glaciers and, in winter, frozen waterfalls. Its highest point, an extinct volcano, is 8350 feet high. Lord Dufferin refers to the island in his book, “Letters from High Altitudes,” published in 1857.

THE first attempt in Great Britain to utilise the aeroplane for spraying operations in connexion with agriculture is recorded in the *Times* of August 4. Mr. George Caudwell, of Weston, near Spalding, Lincolnshire, chartered a private aeroplane piloted by Major Savage, and 40 acres of Majestic potatoes were sprayed in 25 minutes, in contrast to the two days which would have been occupied for the same operation by ordinary methods. The machine flew so low that at times it almost touched the potato tops, and the spray, in the form of a fine powder, was blown on to the leaves of the plants through two pipes on either side of the fuselage. Although this method of spraying is new to Britain, it has been applied on a large scale in the United States for the control of insect pests, extensive areas of cotton being treated in this way with considerable success. Experiments are being carried on with the view of extending the scope of application of the method to deal with a larger range of plant pests. So far as Great Britain is concerned, the report of the success of

Mr. Caudwell's initial experiment will be awaited with great interest. It would seem, however, that practical difficulties may limit the application of aerial spraying in those parts of the country which are subdivided into relatively small fields with dividing hedges, but where large open areas are available much time and labour would be economised if success is attained.

At the recent graduation ceremonial of the University of Edinburgh an interesting address to the new graduates was delivered by Prof. J. H. Ashworth. In tracing the historical development of the Edinburgh School of Zoology, Prof. Ashworth emphasised the debt it owes to three of its professors of anatomy—Monro, Monro *secundus*, and Goodsir. The first two of these were responsible for discoveries of fundamental importance to morphological science. It was Monro who demonstrated the absence of free interchange of blood between the foetal and the maternal parts of the placenta: it was Monro *secundus* who anticipated by eighty years the discovery by Kühne of the motor nerve-endings in muscle. The same observer, whose name is permanently registered in anatomical text-books by the 'foramen of Monro,' was also the author of the great monograph "On the structure and physiology of fishes, explained and compared with those of man and other animals." Having traced the past history of his subject, Prof. Ashworth alluded to the generous contribution of 20,000*l.* by Dr. Laurence Pullar, which, with an allocation of 18,000*l.* by the Carnegie Trust, made it at last possible to contemplate the housing of the University Department of Zoology in a building fully adequate for the special needs of zoological teaching and research. The latter part of the address was devoted to emphasising the importance of the contribution which the subject of zoology is now making to the training and outlook of the medical man on one hand, and to the general progress of mankind on the other. Zoology has established itself as an integral part in the scientific foundation of preventive medicine: it is playing a part in the advancement of civilisation and in the amelioration of the conditions of life in various parts of the world to an extent that would have been inconceivable a generation ago.

A MONUMENT to the memory of John Ericsson, the famous Swedish-American engineer, was recently unveiled at Washington, D.C., by the Crown Princess Louise of Sweden. The ceremony was under the auspices of the American Society of Swedish Engineers. Erected not far from the memorial to Lincoln, the monument consists of a group symbolic of vision, adventure, and labour, standing on a massive granite pedestal, in the front of which is a statue of Ericsson, who is depicted sitting in contemplative mood. President Coolidge, responding to the speech of the Swedish Crown Prince, remarked: "Great men are the product of a great people. They are the result of many generations of effort, toil, and discipline. They are the incarnation of the spirit of the people."

An unusually precocious boy, Ericsson was born in 1803 at Filipstad, Sweden, and when quite young was employed on drawings and levelling in connexion with the Göta Canal. He resided in England from 1826 until 1839, while the rest of his life was spent in the United States. His locomotive *Novelty* competed with Stephenson's *Rocket* in 1829; he was one of the chief promoters of screw propulsion, and a pioneer in the use of hot-air engines. He is best known, however, for his design and construction of the *Monitor* turret vessel.

THE annual report of the Zoological Society of Scotland for the year ending in March last is a record of the most successful year in the history of the Society. The large increases in the number of visitors to the Zoological Park at Edinburgh, and in the number of new fellows admitted, witness to the growing popularity and interest in its work. During the year the new Tropical Bird House and the new Reptile House were completed, and a start has been made on the Carnegie Aquarium. The latter is being built with the aid of a grant from the Carnegie Trustees, and it is hoped to have it ready for opening at the end of the year. It will add enormously to the attractions of the gardens. In spite of the rigours of the northern winter, the stock in the gardens appears to flourish and breed in quite a satisfactory manner. The number of deaths is below the average, and a good proportion of the young animals born during the year was successfully reared. One of the most notable of the deaths was that of one of the original King penguins, which proved unable to survive the strain of incubating and rearing its last chick. The financial statement reveals a healthy condition of things, and a substantial surplus from last year's activities is to be devoted to capital purposes.

A SECOND report has been issued by the Medical Research Council on the gold treatment of tuberculosis. The drug employed was sanocrysin and the report deals almost entirely with clinical experience, based on about 140 cases treated. As a result of previous experience the dangers attending the use of the drug have been greatly lessened. There is necessarily a conflict of opinion, some clinicians believing that little benefit results from the treatment. Others, however, are very emphatic in the opinion that sanocrysin did cause unusually rapid amelioration of symptoms, particularly in the lessening of sputum and disappearance of tubercle bacilli in pulmonary tuberculosis.

THE success of the Department of the Interior of Canada in its efforts to save the buffalo from extinction is shown in the fact that the great park at Wainwright, Alberta, is unable to support a further increase in the herd at present there. This park is approximately 15 miles long and 13 miles wide, and was thought by many, even a few years ago, to be ample for all time. Provision will now have to be made for the disposal of the annual increase in the herd, and the action taken by the Department will be watched with interest.

IN connexion with the recent meeting of the British Association at Oxford, the honorary degree of D.Sc.(Oxon.) was conferred upon the following distinguished visitors: Prof. Niels Bohr, professor of physics in the University of Copenhagen; The Abbé Breuil, professor of the Institute of Human Palaeontology, Paris; Sir Frank W. Dyson, Astronomer Royal; Prof. A. S. Eddington, Plumian professor of astronomy in the University of Cambridge; Sir Daniel Hall, Chief Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Agriculture; Prof. Henry Fairfield Osborn, research professor of zoology in Columbia University; Sir Edward A. Sharpey-Schafer, professor of physiology in the University of Edinburgh; Mr. F. E. Smith, Director of Scientific Research, Admiralty; Sir Josiah Stamp; Prof. Vito Volterra, professor of mathematics in the University of Rome and president of the Royal National Academy of the Lincei; Prof. Wilhelm Wien, professor of experimental physics in the University of Munich.

THE Earl of Middleton will open the new buildings of the Haslemere Educational Museum, Haslemere, Surrey, on August 27 next. A memorial tablet to Sir Jonathan Hutchinson is to be unveiled by Dr. F. A. Bather on the same occasion.

PROF. JOCELYN F. THORPE, professor of organic chemistry in the Imperial College of Science and Technology, South Kensington, has been appointed chairman of the Explosives in Mines Research Committee, in succession to Sir Frederic L. Nathan, who has resigned. Mr. F. E. Smith, Director of Scientific Research under the Admiralty, has been made an additional member of the Committee.

AN autumn meeting of the Institute of Metals is to be held at Liège on September 1-4. A number of papers on the constitution and properties of non-ferrous metals and alloys will be read and discussed, and visits to works and to places of interest in the neighbourhood have been arranged. Particulars can be obtained from the secretary of the Institute at 36 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

THE trustees of the British Museum have revived the office of secretary, which since 1851 has been combined with that of principal librarian. In future the secretary will act as assistant to the director and principal librarian, with the status of a keeper. Mr. Arundell Esdaile, hitherto assistant keeper in the Department of Printed Books, has been appointed secretary.

THE Duke of York will visit the Harper Adams Agricultural College, Newport, Shropshire, on Wednesday, November 3, for the formal opening of the National Institute of Poultry Husbandry, established at the College under the joint auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Poultry Council. This signal recognition of the importance of the recent advances in the provision of adequate facilities for advanced education and experimental work in poultry husbandry will be warmly appreciated by all engaged in the industry.

AN Order of Council has been issued altering the composition of the Committee of Privy Council for Medical Research, the ministerial body under which the Medical Research Council conducts its work. The Committee originally consisted of the Lord President of the Council, the Minister of Health (England and Wales), the Secretary for Scotland, and the Chief Secretary for Ireland, but the last-named office has become obsolete as a result of the changes in the government of Ireland. In view of this vacancy, and of the increasing relation of the Medical Research Council to research work in overseas parts of the Empire and in industrial medicine, the Secretaries of State for Home Affairs, for Dominion Affairs and for the Colonies have now been added to the Committee.

DR. A. W. Hill, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, sailed on Saturday last for the United States, where he is attending the International Congress of Plant Sciences (the fourth International Botanical Congress) at Ithaca, N.Y., on August 16-23, as one of the official delegates of Great Britain. Dr. E. J. Butler (Imperial Bureau of Mycology), Dr. A. B. Rendle and Mr. J. Ramsbottom (British Museum (Natural History)) and Mr. Sprague (Kew) are also attending the Congress in an official capacity. After the Congress, Dr. Hill is going on to the Missouri Botanical Garden and the University of California, Berkeley, where he is to deliver three lectures, and returning via Vancouver, Toronto, Washington, D.C., and finally New York, where another lecture will be given in the Botanical Garden.

THE centenary year of Lord Lister's birth will be celebrated in Edinburgh in July 1927 during the meeting of the British Medical Association. The Committee responsible for the celebration is anxious to interest students and young graduates in the significance of Lister's work, and is offering a prize of a gold medal and 25*l.* for the best essay upon the subject, "The Influence of Lister on the Evolution of Surgery." The prize is open to registered students and graduates of not more than one year's standing of any medical school of the British Empire. Essays must be submitted by May 1, 1927, to Prof. J. Fraser, Convener of the Lister Memorial Committee, 32 Moray Place, Edinburgh. The award of the prize will be made at the Lister Celebration meeting, July 1927.

THE report of the sixth International Congress of Photography has been published by the Société Française de Photographie, 51 rue de Clichy, Paris (9^e). It contains an account of the proceedings at each meeting, and the papers and reports that were presented to the Congress, but the final resolutions as to standard methods of sensitometry, and procedure in other matters in which uniformity is desirable, will be issued later. The subjects treated of at the Congress are classified under the following heads: Sensitometry, optics, photochemistry, history and documentary, and cinematography; in each case the

practical applications are dealt with as well as the fundamental theories. The membership of the Congress numbered about 240, and was well representative of all the centres of scientific photographic activity.

APPLICATIONS are invited for the following appointments, on or before the dates mentioned:—A chemist and metallurgist in the Government Assay Office in Cairo—A. G. Innes, c/o Chief Inspecting Engineer, Egyptian Government, 41 Tothill Street, S.W.1 (August 17). A lecturer in economics at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Trinidad—The Secretary of the College, 14 Trinity Square, E.C.3 (August 24). An assistant to the professor of surgery in the University of Bristol—The Registrar (August 28). An extra mural organiser at Armstrong College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne—The Registrar (August 31). Junior assistants at the National Physical Laboratory, preferably with some research or technical experience in either physics, engineering or electrical engineering—The

Director, National Physical Laboratory, Teddington (September 4). An assistant lecturer in textile engineering at the Manchester Municipal College of Technology—The Registrar (September 20). An assistant secretary of the Oxford University Appointments Committee—The Secretary, 40 Broad Street, Oxford (October 1). A full-time assistant, or two part-time assistants, in the Department of History and Method of Science of University College, London—The Secretary, University College, Gower Street, W.C.1. Evening teachers in electrical engineering and mechanical engineering at the Croydon Polytechnic—The Principal, Central Polytechnic, Scarborough Road, Croydon. Full-time teachers in the Physics and Chemistry Departments of the Northern Polytechnic—The Clerk to the Governors, Northern Polytechnic, Holloway, N.7.—A junior assistant under the directorate of Metallurgical Research, Research Department, Woolwich, for work mainly in connexion with technical records, reports and literature—The Chief Superintendent, Research Department, Woolwich, S.E.18.

Our Astronomical Column.

FINLAY'S COMET.—This periodic comet was discovered by Mr. Finlay, Chief Assistant at the Cape Observatory, in 1886, and was observed again in 1893, 1906, 1919. S. Kanda and S. Hasunuma, of Tokyo Observatory, calculated from the 1919 observations the conditions of the present return, the perturbations by Jupiter in the interim having been considerable, producing an increase of about 6 weeks in the period. With the aid of their ephemeris, Dr. J. Stobbe succeeded in photographing the comet on August 3 at Bergedorf Observatory, near Hamburg. Its magnitude was 11.5, and its position at 0^h 40.6^m U.T. was R.A. 4^h 3^m 48^s, N. Decl. 17° 48'. The position indicates that perihelion occurred Aug. 7.9 U.T., which is 0.7 day later than the Tokyo prediction.

The following ephemeris is for 0^h U.T.

	{R.A.	N. Decl.
Aug. 15.	4 ^h 56.3 ^m	20° 33'
19.	5 12.8	21 14
23.	5 28.6	21 47
27.	5 43.9	22 13
31.	5 58.8	22 32

The comet is a morning object passing near ζ Tauri on August 23, and entering Gemini on August 31. It is well placed for observation, but is growing slowly fainter, since the distance from both sun and earth is increasing.

A plate was exposed by Mr. F. J. Hargreaves of Kingswood, Surrey, on July 21 at 1^h 53.5^m U.T. At first the comet was not detected upon it, but with the guidance of Dr. Stobbe's position, Mr. P. J. Melotte found a faint impression of the comet in R.A. 3^h 2^m 30.8^s, N. Decl. 13° 19' 36" (Equinox 1926.0).

THE NEW SOLAR RADIATION STATION IN SOUTH AFRICA.—A bulletin issued by the Smithsonian Institution describes Dr. C. G. Abbot's journey of 30,000 miles in search of the most suitable station in the eastern hemisphere. The desiderata were an elevated region, dry clear air, reasonable accessibility, and absence of wild tribes. This last consideration caused the rejection of Khojak Peak, 70 miles north-west of Quetta, though the sky conditions were superb. Stations in the Sahara, Egypt, and Mt. Sinai were

visited and rejected. His choice fell on Mt. Brukkaros in South-West Africa, 200 miles south of Windhoek, and 20 miles from the railway. It is an isolated peak 5200 feet above the sea, and 2000 feet above the surrounding plain. The sky was found to be remarkably clear, the stars being brilliant right down to the horizon. The rainfall is very small, none having fallen for ten months. There is a crater at the top with a gap to the south-east, which was found to be suitable for the excavation of a tunnel for the bolometer. The sun will be observable an hour after sunrise. A neighbouring cave will be converted into a residence for the observers, Mr. W. H. Hoover and Mr. F. A. Greeley.

Mr. A. Dryden, Public Works Inspector, S.W. Africa, has undertaken the preparation of the building, and it is hoped to commence observations in September. There are prospects of daily observations for ten months in the year, and for three-quarters of the days in the remaining two months (the so-called rainy season). The Observatory is to supplement, not to replace, the stations already existing in Chile and California.

PROPER MOTIONS OF SOUTHERN STARS.—*Memoirs of the Royal Astronomical Society*, vol. 64 (part 2), contains a catalogue of proper motions in declination of 1738 southern stars by Dr. J. E. de Vos van Steenwijk. The recent observations of the stars were made by himself at La Plata. They are compared with older observations made at the Cape, Parramatta, Santiago, Madras, and other southern observatories. The systematic corrections given by Boss have been applied. The magnitudes range from 5.8^m to 8.8^m. The probable errors of annual motion are given; they are mainly in the neighbourhood of 0.006".

The following seven large motions are believed to be new: No. 166, mag. 6.1, type F8, P.M. +0.245"; No. 200, mag. 6.4, type G0, P.M. +0.457"; No. 470, mag. 6.9, type F8, P.M. +0.713"; No. 631, mag. 7.4, type F8, P.M. +0.593"; No. 1529, mag. 7.9, type B3, P.M. -0.370"; No. 1774, mag. 7.0, type K0, P.M. -0.814"; No. 2664, mag. 7.2, type B8, P.M. -0.490". It is unfortunate that the motions in R.A. are not given.