

Dr. Horváth is able to announce that the tenth Congress will meet at Budapest on September 4-9, 1927, and he cordially invites all zoologists and friends of zoology to attend. The detailed programme of the Congress will shortly be issued and sent to all who are interested.

A SERIES of Sunday afternoon addresses under the general title of "The Contribution of Science to Human Life" is to be given during the autumn at the Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, London, W. The lectures are free, and no tickets are required. The lecturers and their subjects are as follows: Oct. 3, Sir Richard Gregory, the worth of science; Oct. 10, Dr. Bernard Hollander, sound and unsound mind; Oct. 17, Sir Sefton Brancker, the scientific problems of commercial aviation; Oct. 24, Dr. W. A. Bone, the economic aspects of coal; Oct. 31, Prof. H. H. Turner, the fight against fear; Nov. 7, Dr. W. H. Eccles, the influence of wireless on modern life; Nov. 14, Dr. E. E. Fournier d'Albe, eyes and ears of the future; Nov. 21, Dr. G. C. Simpson, meteorology in the service of man; Nov. 28, The Right Hon.

Viscount Haldane, the wider meaning of relativity; and Dec. 5, Sir George Newman, the contribution of medical science to human life.

APPLICATIONS are invited for the following appointments, on or before the dates mentioned:—An assistant in the anatomy department of the University of Aberdeen—The Secretary (September 27). A head master for the Eye Grammar School, graduate, science preferred (with agricultural bias)—W. E. Watkins, Hon. Clerk to the Governors, County Hall, Ipswich (September 29). A joint keeper of archæology in the National Museum of Wales and lecturer in archæology in the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire—The Director, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff (October 16). A senior lecturer in zoology and physiology at Huguenot University College, Wellington, Cape Province, South Africa—The High Commissioner for South Africa, Trafalgar Square, W.C.2. A laboratory attendant for histology in the anatomy department, University College, London—Prof. J. P. Hill, Anatomy Department, University College, Gower Street, W.C.1.

### Our Astronomical Column.

THE METEORIC PHENOMENA OF SEPTEMBER 6.—Mr. W. F. Denning writes that a large number of observations have been received of apparently two large fireballs which illuminated the sky in many parts of England on the evening of September 6 at about 20<sup>h</sup> 30<sup>m</sup> and exactly at 20<sup>h</sup> 45<sup>m</sup> G.M.T. respectively. The data collected have not yet been thoroughly discussed and will necessarily take some time. The first meteor appears to have travelled from a southern radiant northwards and was observed at places so distant as Wanstead, near London, Durham, the south-west of England, and Sunderland. It gave a considerable light and some persons mistook it for lightning, but its motion to north dispelled the idea.

The second meteor made its apparition about 10 or 15 minutes later, and was no doubt the most brilliant object of the pair. Its path was also to the northwards, and it terminated its career by a series of loud detonations when it was some miles south of York. This meteor appears to have given several flashes of dazzling brilliancy; for some observers compared its light with that of the sun. For a moment or two it illuminated the landscape as it is at noonday. Some fragments of this object may possibly have fallen to the ground unobserved in the north-east region of Yorkshire, but no evidence of actual stonefalls has been received. In the district of Selby, and Goole, Yorkshire, the height of the fireball was about 26 miles, and it was decreasing.

The first object seen on September 6 appears to have been of very unusual size and aspect. Did it represent anything of similar nature to the auroral beam which passed over England on November 17, 1882?

THE UNIFORMITY OF THE EARTH'S ROTATION.—M. Bigourdan, of the Paris Observatory, contributes an article to *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Sciences* for August 30, in which he points out that the comparison of the clocks of a large number of observatories by the aid of wireless time-signals distributed from Bordeaux-Lafayette, Saigon, Honolulu, and Washington, should afford a very delicate test of the uniformity

of the rotational movement. It is not even necessary for this purpose to await the determination of the errors of the different clocks, provided that their daily rates are uniform to 0.01 sec. or thereabouts. Comparison of 100 such clocks will permit the testing of the uniformity of rotation to the order of 0.001 sec. The present time is particularly appropriate, as the International Astronomical Union has arranged for a general series of wireless longitude determinations to be made between October 1 and November 30 next.

A very large number of signals will be recorded at each observatory, but a small number will suffice for M. Bigourdan's purpose, and he asks that observers will communicate to him the Bordeaux-Lafayette signals Nos. 113-122 and 235-244, that is, those just preceding 20<sup>h</sup> 3<sup>m</sup> 0<sup>s</sup> and 20<sup>h</sup> 5<sup>m</sup> 0<sup>s</sup> of Universal Time. The uncorrected clock times of reception of the signals will suffice, and they need only be sent for the period of 30 days, commencing on October 15. It will be remembered that many astronomers, including Prof. E. Brown, now attribute the unexplained irregularities in the moon's motion to changes in the earth's rate of rotation. The inequalities that M. Bigourdan wishes to examine are of much shorter period than these, but analogy leads one to expect that if inequalities are present at all they may have many different periods.

MR. WILK'S COMET ANNOUNCEMENT.—It has now been confirmed that a motion among the stars of a degree in 4 minutes of time was the correct interpretation of the telegram from Cracow Observatory referred to last week, p. 388. Since no further observations have been received, it is evident that the material is insufficient to pronounce definitely in favour of the cometary nature of the object. It may have been a patch of aurora or the trail of a meteor in the upper atmosphere.

Prof. Perrine and his assistants observed a somewhat similar object at Cordoba in May 1916. In that case also its nature remained doubtful, but Miss Glancy showed that, if a comet, it must have approached very near to the earth (even closer than the moon).