

and unanimously elected Dr. Simonsen president of the fifteenth annual meeting of the Indian Science Congress to be held in Calcutta during the week Jan. 2-7, 1928.

A NEW and cheaper impression of Prof. A. N. Whitehead's "Science and the Modern World" is to be published almost at once by the Cambridge University Press, and at a later date a new impression of the same author's "Religion in the Making." The same house also promises a new book by Dr. C. Davison entitled "Founders of Seismology," being in effect a history of the study of earthquakes ranged round the founders of the science from John Bevis and Elie Bertrand down to Prof. John Milne and Prof. Fusakichi Omori.

APPLICATIONS are invited for the following appointments, on or before the dates mentioned:—A full-time assistant lecturer in pharmaceuticals at the Cardiff Technical College—The Principal, The Technical College, Cardiff (Feb. 19). A keeper of the laboratories of the Royal Horticultural Society at Wisley—The Secretary, Royal Horticultural Society, Vincent Square, S.W.1 (Feb. 22). An assistant entomologist

at the Rothamsted Experimental Station—The Secretary, Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden (Feb. 26). A lecturer in the department of botany (special subject—plant physiology), King's College, London—The Secretary, King's College, Strand, W.C.2 (March 2). A professor of physiology in the University of Birmingham—The Secretary, The University, Birmingham (April 23). A head of the agricultural department and farm director of the Harper Adams Agricultural College, Newport, Salop—The Principal, Harper Adams Agricultural College, Newport, Salop. An assistant bacteriologist at the Wellcome Tropical Research Laboratories, Khartoum—The Director of the Laboratories. A head of the department of bakery and confectionery of the Borough Polytechnic Institute—The Principal, Borough Polytechnic Institute, Borough Road, S.E.1. A technical officer, grade II., at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, South Farnborough, for duties in the technical supervision of the application of all equipment used in aeroplanes built under contract for the Air Ministry—The Chief Superintendent, Royal Aircraft Establishment, South Farnborough, Hants (quoting A 127).

Our Astronomical Column.

COMETS.—An orbit of comet 1927 *b* (Reid) has been telegraphed from South Africa, from which it appears to have passed perihelion in 1926, so it will presumably be numbered as 1926 VII. The orbit indicates that the motion in R.A. in the former telegram was erroneous; it was sent as +44 sec., but it should be about +11 min. The comet has begun to travel northward, and should be visible in Europe about the middle of March.

$$\begin{aligned} T &= 1926 \text{ Dec. } 30.54 \text{ U.T.} \\ \omega &= 224^\circ 45' \\ \Omega &= 108 \quad 42 \\ i &= 83 \quad 40 \\ \log q &= 9.87703 \end{aligned}$$

Annals of Moscow Observatory, Vol. 8, No. 1, contain definitive elements of comet 1904 I. (Brooks) by M. S. Kasakov.

$$\begin{aligned} T &= 1904 \text{ Mar. } 7.138756 \text{ G.M.T.} \\ \omega &= 53^\circ 32' 34''.0 \\ \Omega &= 275 \quad 47 \quad 25.4 \\ i &= 125 \quad 7 \quad 42.5 \\ e &= 1.0013646 \\ \log q &= 0.432643 \end{aligned} \quad \left. \vphantom{\begin{aligned} T \\ \omega \\ \Omega \\ i \\ e \\ \log q \end{aligned}} \right\} 1904.0$$

As the comet was observed from April 16, 1904, until June 5, 1905 (besides a photograph on May 14, 1903, not used in the above orbit), the hyperbolic character is well established.

MERCURY AS AN EVENING STAR.—Mercury will be well placed as an evening star in the second half of February, reaching elongation on Feb. 25, when it is 18° from the sun and $8\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ north of it. The latter point is of importance for increasing its height above the horizon at sunset. Herr Carl Schoch, who is well known for his researches in ancient astronomy, contributes an article to the *Steglitzer Anzeiger* of Jan. 20 in which he points out the assiduity with

which Mercury was observed in Babylon, and the importance of the *arcus visionis*, or length of time of visibility of the planet. On Feb. 22 it will set $1^h 40^m$ after the sun, and should be visible to the naked eye for nearly half an hour. This is the best evening elongation of the present year. The presence of Venus some 5° further east will add to the interest.

Herr Schoch asks naked-eye observers to send him notes of the duration of visibility of Mercury, that he may compare them with the Babylonian records.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF MARS IN 1926.—An extensive series of photographs of Mars during September and October of last year was made by Mr. F. E. Ross at the Mount Wilson and Lick observatories. A preliminary account of the results obtained are given by him in the *Astrophysical Journal*, vol. 64, p. 243. A special enlarging camera was used, attached to the 60-inch telescope at Mount Wilson, and photographs were taken in light of five different colours (ultra-violet, blue, yellow, red, and infra-red) with the aid of suitable filters. At the Lick Observatory the camera was attached to the 36-inch refractor, the photographs being taken only in yellow and infra-red light. The photographs discussed in this preliminary paper are extremely interesting in showing that surface markings appear only in light of long wave-lengths (yellow to infra-red), whereas clouds and atmospheric effects require short-wave light to render them visible in the photographs. This is the reverse of what might be expected, especially as the prominent rim light in the ultra-violet photographs seems to point to the existence of a strongly scattering atmosphere. The decrease of diameter in the infra-red photographs, discovered by Wright in 1924, is confirmed. The method appears to be a very valuable one for studying atmospheric conditions in Mars, and a further discussion of the photographs will be awaited with interest.