



SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, 1930.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Royal Veterinary College . . . . .	265
Popular Science under Discussion. By Dr. B. A. Keen . . . . .	266
Life and Physics. By Dr. A. D. Ritchie . . . . .	268
Savage Life and Thought. By Dr. A. C. Haddon, F.R.S . . . . .	270
Aviation and Meteorology . . . . .	271
Our Bookshelf . . . . .	272
Letters to the Editor :	
Spontaneous and Induced Magnetisation in Ferromagnetic Bodies.—Prof. J. Frenkel and J. Dorfman . . . . .	274
Space and Matter.—Prof. Henry E. Armstrong, F.R.S. . . . .	275
Stability in Soap Films.—W. J. Green . . . . .	276
Daily Variations of Temperature.—Sir Flinders Petrie, F.R.S.; Dr. C. E. P. Brooks . . . . .	277
Bird Flotation.—Francis H. Alexander; The Writer of the Note . . . . .	277
Crystal Structure of Normal Paraffins.—S. H. Piper and T. Malkin . . . . .	278
Raman Spectrum of Diamond.—Sir R. Robertson, K.B.E., F.R.S., and Dr. J. J. Fox . . . . .	279
Sperms as Living Liquid Crystals.—Prof. F. Rinne . . . . .	279
Mushrooms—Mineral Content.—Hugh Ramage . . . . .	279
Photography on Copper.—Dr. T. J. Baker . . . . .	279
Distribution of some Oceanic Birds in the Waters East of New Zealand. By Dr. P. Jespersen . . . . .	280
Competition between Plants. By Prof. E. J. Salisbury . . . . .	282
Some Scientific Instrument Makers of the 18th Century. By Robert S. Whipple . . . . .	283
Obituary :	
Mr. A. E. Seaton . . . . .	286
News and Views . . . . .	287
Research Items . . . . .	293
The Topographical Changes Accompanying Earthquakes and Volcanic Eruptions. By Dr. C. Davison . . . . .	296
Estimating Stream Flow from Evaporation. By H. L. . . . .	296
The Origin of the Irish Fauna and Flora. By Prof. J. R. Matthews . . . . .	297
University and Educational Intelligence . . . . .	298
Historic Natural Events . . . . .	298
Societies and Academies . . . . .	299
Official Publications Received . . . . .	300

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The Royal Veterinary College.

IT would indeed be a national calamity if the Royal Veterinary College, London, the premier veterinary college of the British Empire, had to close its doors. The precarious condition of the College was emphasised by the Earl of Harewood recently in the House of Lords when he asked what steps the Government is prepared to take to maintain it. Reference to Lord Harewood's speech and to the discussion which followed was made in our issue of Aug. 9, p. 212.

Less than a year ago there was issued as a White Paper the report of the Departmental Committee on the Royal Veterinary College appointed by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries in 1928. The report stated that "the condition of the Royal Veterinary College is a national disgrace, it needs rebuilding and re-equipping". After a very thorough investigation the Committee stated clearly that "the deplorable condition to which the College has been reduced both as regards buildings and finance has not been due to any lack of enthusiasm on the part of those few members of the Governing Body who for many years past have been sufficiently public-spirited to devote attention to the affairs of the College, or to the small staff who, despite their meagre salaries and wholly inadequate facilities, continued loyally at their work. It is nothing less than extraordinary that the College has been able, in spite of the most depressing circumstances, to turn out year by year a regular flow of qualified students." The necessities of an Institution have never, we venture to state, been more strongly emphasised by a Government departmental committee, and it should have been unnecessary for the question to have been raised again in either House of Parliament.

The response of the Government to the appeals which have been made is frankly disappointing, and one wonders if the responsible ministers have really taken the trouble to read the report or to weigh up its import. The committee recommended a grant of £280,000 for building and equipment, and a guaranteed annual income of not less than £21,000. The Government offer, as stated by the Earl de la Warr, of pound for pound up to £100,000, is totally inadequate in view of the circumstances. The governors have collected £30,000 as the result of four or five years' urgent endeavour and urgent appeal, and it is believed to be absolutely impossible substantially to increase that amount, so that the offer is practically abortive. Lord Ernle pointed out in the debate in the House of Lords



that in Berlin the *annual* sum paid for veterinary science is £280,000, and yet in London a single capital grant of that same amount is refused.

Earl de la Warr suggested that Lord Harewood and his friends should confer with the Ministry of Agriculture before coming to a decision as to the future of the College. While agreeing that the Ministry of Agriculture is the chief ministry concerned with veterinary science, we agree with the suggestion recently made by Major-General Sir John Moore that other ministries are also vitally concerned and that a conference of responsible heads of those ministries might be held to consider the necessities of the case, with the view of obtaining a proportionate grant from each of them. The Lovat Committee appointed by the Colonial Office emphasised the importance of a good supply of fully trained veterinary officers for the Colonies; the Ministry of Health requires veterinary officers for its administration, particularly in regard to milk supply and meat inspection as well as in respect of animal diseases communicable to man; the Ministry for War still requires a fully competent Army Veterinary Corps, and will continue to do so in spite of mechanisation; and the Ministry for Education must certainly be concerned with the technical education of a College affiliated with the University of London and training candidates for science degrees of the University. Thus no fewer than five ministries are more or less seriously concerned, and a conference as suggested of the Ministries of Agriculture, the Colonies, Health, War, and Education might yield some satisfactory results.

The progress of veterinary science has, moreover, introduced a new factor. The governing body of the profession—the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons—has extended the course of training from four years to five years, and the change is expected to take place next year. This extension alone will increase the need for more accommodation and a larger staff at the Royal Veterinary College. If it is difficult to carry on the work under present conditions, it will become impossible under the new curriculum.

An International Veterinary Congress has just been held in London and upwards of two thousand delegates attended from all over the world. Most of them visited the Royal Veterinary College and must have wondered at the depressing and humiliating spectacle which is presented by this dilapidated structure, the premier veterinary college of the British Empire. It is to be hoped that the Government will realise its responsibilities in this matter, and take early steps to place the College on a sound basis both as regards buildings and finance.

No. 3173, VOL. 126]

### Popular Science under Discussion.

- (1) *The Pastures of Wonder: the Realm of Mathematics and the Realm of Science.* By Prof. Cassius Jackson Keyser. Pp. xii + 208. (New York: Columbia University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1929.) 14s. net.
- (2) *Modern Science: a General Introduction.* By Prof. J. Arthur Thomson. Pp. xi + 210 + 6 plates. (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1929.) 3s. 6d.
- (3) *The Rhythms of Life, and other Essays in Science.* By Dr. D. F. Fraser-Harris. (Science for You Series.) Pp. vii + 185. (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1929.) 5s. net.
- (4) *Short Stories in Science.* By J. G. Crowther. (Science for You Series.) Pp. viii + 213. (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1929.) 5s. net.
- (5) *Science and the New Civilisation.* By Robert A. Millikan. Pp. vi + 194. (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930.) 7s. 6d. net.
- (6) *Popular Research Narratives.* Vol. 3: *Fifty Brief Stories of Research, Invention or Discovery, directly from the 'Men who did it'.* Pp. viii + 174 + 5 plates. (London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox, 1929.) 4s. 6d. net.
- (7) *Men Who Found Out: Stories of Great Scientific Discoverers.* By Amabel Williams-Ellis. Pp. 224 + 15 plates. (London: Gerald Howe, Ltd., 1929.) 5s. net.
- (8) *This Bondage: a Study of the 'Migration' of Birds, Insects and Aircraft, with some Reflections on 'Evolution' and Relativity.* By Cmdr. Bernard Acworth. Pp. xxiv + 229. (London: John Murray, 1929.) 7s. 6d. net.

**A.** WHAT have you there?  
**B.** The eight books on popular science that I asked you, as an educated man disclaiming any special knowledge of science, to read and to discuss with me. They were written especially for people like you.

**A.** Have you read them too?

**B.** Well, I have to review them for NATURE; and I am reasonably conscientious. A discussion with you might give me some useful ideas for the review.

**A.** I am honoured. But how shall we begin? The books do not fall into any special order.

**B.** Shall we take them as they come? Here is Keyser's "The Pastures of Wonder", which explains the philosophy of mathematics, and bases on that a philosophy of science. I suspect you found it heavy going.

**A.** I must confess I did. I struggled along to page 36, where I met my Waterloo: "If a pro-