

bogs were being laid down, its existence as an indigenous tree during the last thousand years is extremely doubtful.

International Federation of Eugenic Organizations

WE have received a copy of the report of the ninth Conference of the International Federation of Eugenic Organizations, edited by the honorary administrative secretary, Mrs. C. B. S. Hodson, and published at 406 Fulham Road, London. The Conference met on Sept. 11-15, 1930, at Farnham, Dorset, and Larmer Tree Grounds, Tollard Royal, Wilts. Associated public meetings were held at the Tithe Barn, Hinton St. Mary, Dorset, at the invitation of Capt. Pitt-Rivers. The first conference, under the chairmanship of Sir Arthur Keith, considered the standardisation of human measurements, with opening papers by Miss M. L. Tildesley on the physical and Miss B. Schieffelin on the mental side. A conference on race crossing, with Dr. Alfred Ploetz in the chair, received contributions from Dr. Mjoen, Prof. C. G. Seligman, Dr. van Herwerden, Prof. Ruggles Gates, Dr. C. B. Davenport, and Prof. Eugen Fischer. At another session international programmes for research in racial psychiatry were presented by Prof. Rudin, and in racial psychology by Prof. Seligman. An afternoon was devoted to heredity in man, with Prof. Gates in the chair, and contributions by Dr. P. J. Waardenburg, Dr. C. J. Bond, Dr. G. P. Frets, and Dr. Heuyer. The report includes a summary of the discussion on each paper. The last part is devoted to general reports, including a brief statement from twelve countries regarding work on the eugenic or dysgenic effects of the War, and statements concerning recent eugenic work in Czechoslovakia, Finland, South Africa, Holland, Germany, and Austria. Dr. H. H. Laughlin contributes a survey of eugenic work in the United States, Dr. Mjoen one for Norway, and Dr. Schrieber for France. This pamphlet of a hundred pages is a useful summary of work having anthropological and medical as well as eugenic aspects.

Wood Decay in Motor-Cars in the Tropics

THE practical importance of this question is indicated in a brief note in the *Philippine Journal of Science* (vol. 46, No. 2) by C. J. Humphrey, mycologist to the Bureau of Science, Manila. He states that the depreciation of imported automobiles in the tropics from this cause reaches "a staggering figure in proportion to the investment". Most of the cars in the Philippines are American, a few come from Europe; in either case the woods used in their construction are almost exclusively temperate zone species, selected for other properties than their durability. The decay sets in as the result of moisture in the wood, but, under the conditions in the tropics in the rainy season, water almost inevitably penetrates and, in the humid atmosphere, does not easily dry out again. The author states that "six months under test conditions very highly favourable for decay will destroy for all practical use nearly all the temperate zone woods now used in American or European-made cars". Up to the present three species of the higher fungi have been observed fruiting on the

rotting wood taken from cars; many more species probably contribute, but most of them are Hymenomyces. The remedies for the trouble seem clear: either the use of the heartwood of durable species of timber, presumably tropical species, by the manufacturer, or else the non-durable timbers must be adequately treated with a preservative.

Light upon Eggs

ANALYSIS shows that an inverse relation exists between the amount of daylight and the price of hens' eggs in successive months of the year. That in turn is correlated with the amount of food a hen may eat per day, so that the more light, the more food, and, other things being equal, the more eggs. Artificial lighting has been used on a large scale in the United States to shorten the long nights and induce hens to lay more, but it cannot be said to be a common practice in Britain. The results obtained by J. W. Rhys and Raymond T. Parkhurst at the National Institute of Poultry Husbandry suggest, however, that its use might well be extended (*Bull.* No. 6). During the winter months the 120 pullets under lights laid 950 more eggs than an equal number without lights. For the 48 weeks of the test the lighted pen yielded 1086 eggs more than the unlighted pen. The lighted pullets laid an average of 173.5 eggs and the unlighted 161.0 eggs. Financially, the 'morning and evening lights' pen was most successful, the margin of profit over food and lighting costs being 11.58 pence a dozen eggs. Hens apparently give the best results under a 14-hour day.

The First 'Sky-scraper'

A POINT of considerable interest in the history of architecture has just been settled by a joint committee of the American Institute of Architects and the Illinois Society of Architects, which, having watched the demolition of the Home Insurance Building in Chicago, has declared it to be "the first tall structure of metal construction". The essential feature of a 'sky-scraper' is the metal skeleton, defined as "a type of construction in which a metal frame or cage, composed of girders, beams, and columns, supports all internal and external loads and carries all stresses to the foundations". Claims had been set up that the Tacoma Building of 1888 was the first tall metal skeleton building, but the committee states that in the Home Insurance Building there was "a complete skeleton framework, floor loads were carried by both interior and exterior columns, wall loads were transferred to columns, and columns were supported on independent footings". The Home Insurance Building was designed by William Le Baron Jenney and was erected in 1885. It has now been removed to make room for the gigantic Field Building in which 25,000 tons of steel will be used, but it will henceforth have its place in history as the first 'sky-scraper'.

Economic Uses of Beryllium

AMONG the rarer metals which are light in weight and therefore suggest themselves for employment in the aircraft and automobile industries, beryllium