

his subject "Alcoholic Fermentation". Besides the president (Dr. R. E. Slade) and the chairman (Prof. G. R. Clemo), the past presidents, Prof. P. P. Bedson and Dr. J. T. Dunn, and Profs. H. J. Hutchens, Irvine Masson and H. L. Riley were present. Dr. Harden traced the history of the scientific investigation of fermentation from Lavoisier to Büchner and then outlined briefly but with great clarity the work of Neuberg, Meyerhof, and others as well as his own. He developed and reviewed the equations advanced for the process, discussed the rôle of the hexose mono- and diphosphates formed, and the co-enzymes required in yeast, muscle extracts, and bacteria. The fermentation processes leading to glycerol, the glycols, compounds of the butane series, lactic acid, and fumaric acid were all dealt with, as well as the energy relationships in muscle contraction with which these processes are linked. Finally, the differences between the actions of extracts and living cells were discussed.

Jubilee of the University of Oxford Junior Scientific Club

ON May 20, at the University Museum, Oxford, the Junior Scientific Club held a successful and largely-attended conversation to celebrate the jubilee of its foundation. The Club was inaugurated in 1882 with the object of bringing together undergraduate and bachelor of arts members of the University for the discussion of scientific matters. The holding of conversations has always been an important part of the Club's activities, and special interest was attached to last Saturday's gathering in view of the fact that the Club has just passed the fiftieth year of its useful existence. Numerous demonstrations and exhibitions of scientific objects had been arranged by the Club, supplemented by some assistance from others. Among the features that excited most interest were a demonstration by Prof. J. G. Gray of the properties of gyroscopes, experiments with liquid air, phenomena of polarized light, series of insects, chiefly butterflies, illustrating the theory of mimicry and the phenomenon of seasonal change, and an exhibit of the results of a zoological survey of Bagley Wood. The Main Court, including the Pitt Rivers Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, was open throughout the evening; and a water-colour drawing by Bernard Gotch of the entrance to the Old Ashmolean, together with objects from the historic scientific collections there preserved were also on view. The guests of the Club were received by the president, Mr. D. H. P. Peel, of Merton College.

James Watt Memorial Institute, Birmingham

ON May 15, Mr. A. E. L. Chorlton, M.P., president of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, opened the James Watt Memorial Institute in Great Charles Street, Birmingham, which has been provided out of the funds subscribed at the James Watt Centenary in 1919. The original scheme for which the funds were raised included both the endowment of a chair at the University of Birmingham and the erection of a building for the joint use of engineering societies. The sum subscribed, however, did not allow of the scheme being carried out in its entirety, and after

establishing a research scholarship and defraying other expenses, the balance was placed in the hands of trustees, by whom the present premises have been leased and fitted up with a hall, committee room and library. In declaring the premises open, Mr. Chorlton reminded those present that the Institution of Mechanical Engineers had its birth in Birmingham and remarked that the Memorial Institute could not fail to contribute to progress by bringing engineers together for intercourse and discussion.

Alaskan Earthquake of April 26

ON the night of April 26, much damage was caused in several towns in Alaska by an earthquake. The epicentre, as determined by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, lay in Lat. 61° N., Long. 153° W., a point north-west of the Kenai Peninsula, the time at the origin being 9.36 p.m., eastern standard time. An interesting and unusual observation was made by Mr. Earl L. Williams at Gaithersburg, Md., 4,000 miles from the epicentre. While working in his observatory at about 10 p.m., he noticed that the bubble in the spirit level attached to his telescope was sliding to and fro with a slow, even motion (Science Service, Washington, D.C., April 27 and 28). Similar observations have been made in a few other earthquakes. For example, on May 9, 1877, about 74 minutes after the great Iquique earthquake, the Russian astronomer Nyren noticed unusual oscillations in the bubble of a spirit-level fixed to the transit instrument in Pulkova Observatory, more than 8,000 miles from the epicentre. Again, on April 4, 1905, after the Kangra earthquake, movements were observed in levels at Tando Masti Khan (Sind) and Thedaw (Upper Burma), which are respectively about 660 and 1,300 miles from the epicentre.

Fifth Pacific Science Congress

REFERENCE has already been made in these columns to the Fifth Pacific Science Congress to be held in Victoria and Vancouver on June 1-14 (NATURE, April 22, p. 581). From a report dated May 2 issued by the National Research Council of Canada, it appears that of 393 scientific papers received for presentation at the Congress, 131 have come from Japan, 101 have been received from the United States, fifty-six from Canada, seventeen each from China and New Zealand, eleven each from Australia and Great Britain, eight from the Netherlands Indies, four each from Hawaii, Mexico, Siam, and the Netherlands, three each from India and Peru, two each from Norway, Straits Settlement and Federated Malay States and Sweden and one each from Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, Fiji, France, Guatemala, Philippine Islands and Spain. Arrangements are being completed whereby through the courtesy of the British Post Office, the Canadian Marconi Company, the Bell and British Columbia Telephone companies, a demonstration of a long distance wire and radio circuit will be made at the Congress and a speaker heard from Great Britain. Comdr. C. P. Edwards, Director of the Radio Branch, Department of Marine, Canada, is in charge of the demonstration.