

this value implied that it is the closest star to the solar system, and gave the star its present name. The nearest competitor is  $\alpha$  Centauri, which has a parallax of  $0.76''$ . Subsequent measurements, however, have failed to confirm Innes' value of the parallax of Proxima, and in Schlesinger's Catalogue a weighted mean value of  $0.802'' \pm 0.050''$  is given. This still makes Proxima nearer to us than  $\alpha$  Centauri; but the parallax has recently been determined both at the Yale Observatory at Johannesburg and at the Royal Observatory at the Cape of Good Hope, the results being  $0.783''$  and  $0.758''$  respectively. The name given to Proxima is accordingly seen to be in grave danger of losing its justification, and it appears possible that  $\alpha$  Centauri is after all the closest neighbour of the solar system in space.

#### Fireball of October 11, 1934

At 10 h. 29 m. p.m. of October 11 a very brilliant meteor appeared over eastern Yorkshire. Mr. A. King, 53 Victoria Road, Ashby, Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire, received nineteen observations, ranging in place from Durham in the north to Chipping Campden in the south-west and Brentwood in the south-east. The total light of the fireball, in Yorkshire and north Lincolnshire, was probably greater than that of the full moon. From the best observations, the following real path is found: Began, 94 miles over 3 miles E.S.E. of East Malton, Yorks.; mean deviation 2.0 miles. Ended, 50.8 miles over 5 miles N.E. of Brigg, Lincs; mean deviation, 0.8 mile. Earth-point, near Boston. Length of visible track, 58 miles; speed, 21 m.p.sec. Radiant,  $\alpha$ ,  $252.3^\circ$ ;  $\delta$ ,  $+75.8^\circ$ , in Ursa Minor. The speed, allowing for air resistance, was of the parabolic order; hence, corrections for zenith attraction and diurnal aberration were applied to the observed radiant, and an orbit computed, on the assumption of parabolic velocity. The corrected radiant was  $249.6^\circ + 74.9^\circ$ , and the orbit:  $\iota$ ,  $56.3^\circ$ ;  $\pi$ ,  $15.6^\circ$ ;  $\Omega$ ,  $197.9^\circ$ ;  $q$ , 0.998. The meteor left a streak along its track, extending from 77 miles high to 56 miles over 2 miles S.S.E. of Barton-on-Humber. The upper portion quickly vanished, and the part from 69 miles over  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles N.E. of South Cave, Yorks, to end as given above (mean deviations, from three observations, respectively 1.8 m. and 1.9 m.), drifted in an east-north-east direction, taking up, in 3 minutes, a position extending in a curved line from 73 miles (dev. 2.0 m.) over  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles, roughly east of Beverley, to 58 miles (dev. 3.0 m.) over West Hull, the forward point of the bend (one third way from the lower end) being above 1 mile N.W. of Sutton, Hull; height, 64 miles (dev. 3.4 m.). The corresponding rates of drift were thus 168, 156 and 186 miles per hour.

#### Grants for Metallurgical Research

THE Council of the Iron and Steel Institute awards annually a limited number of grants, each not exceeding £100, from the Andrew Carnegie Research Fund for metallurgical research work. The object of the scheme is to enable students of academic or industrial experience to conduct researches on

problems of practical and scientific importance relating to the metallurgy of iron and steel and allied subjects. Candidates, who must be less than thirty-five years of age, must apply before the end of next January on a special form to be obtained from the Secretary of the Institute.

#### Aviation and Public Health

THE Third International Congress of Sanitary Aviation will be held at Brussels on June 11-17 at the time of the Universal International Exhibition. The subjects for discussion at the Congress, which has been organised by the Aero-Club of Belgium, of which Dr. Charles Sillevaerts is president, are as follows: utilisation of private and commercial aeroplanes for sanitary objects; collaboration of public services and private organisations for the utilisation of sanitary aviation in peace time; organisation and working of first aid in public aerial transport; and help afforded by aviation in times of calamity. Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Odessa, Kharkov, Minsk, Baku, Sverdlovsk, Irkutsk and Khabarovsk have recently been provided with aeroplanes intended to convey first aid to patients in out of the way districts which have no doctors or have been rendered inaccessible by floods, storms and the like. The aeroplanes can be summoned by wireless, telegraph or telephone.

#### Leipzig International Industries Fair

THE Leipzig Spring Fair 1935 will be open on March 3-10. The Samples Fair closes at noon on March 9, but the Engineering and Building Fair will be open until March 10. The Textile Fair closes on the evening of March 6. The "Bugra" (Book Trades) Machine Fair closes at noon on March 9. The section representing the optical, photographic and cinema industries, which has hitherto been housed in the Gymnasium at the Frankfurter Tor, is being included in the Engineering and Building Fair, and its exhibits will be arranged in Hall 12 (Dome Hall). This will make the Leipzig Fair more self-contained, a fact which should be appreciated. It is announced that the Machine Tool Hall (Hall 9) has been booked up completely, and further exhibits have overflowed into Hall 11. In the Electrotechnical Hall, too, all space available has been booked. General mechanical engineering will be well represented, there being large increases in the department of Diesel engines and foundry machinery. Manufacturers of gas appliances are arranging a special exhibition on a large scale in the Building Trades Hall.

#### National Academy of Medicine in Spain

THE second centenary of the foundation of the National Academy of Medicine was celebrated at Madrid on December 10 by an exhibition of books and documents dating from the fifteenth century, including treatises on plague and bloodletting and commentaries on Hippocrates, and by an address on the history of the Academy by the librarian, Dr. Goyanes.