session, which dealt with the problems of water-supply, sewerage and sewage disposal during the last fifty years. Whilst maintaining continuity with previous publications, it is intended that the *Journal* shall enable the earlier publication of papers and the wide dissemination of the reports of the Research Committee and its sub-committees, one of the important activities of the Institution. Eight numbers of the *Journal* will appear each year, six in the session and two in recess. In the form in which the first number appears, the *Journal* is assured of a favourable reception from all who are interested in the work of the Institution.

THE present issue of the *Journal* contains details of the work of the Research Committee, four papers published by the Institution and a special lecture on "Surveying from Air Photographs" by Brevet-Major Martin Hotine, R.E. Among these, the most important contributions are Mr. E. H. Bateman's paper on "The Open Frame Girder" and J. P. R. N. Stroyer's on "Earth-Pressure on Flexible Walls". The former is an extended analysis, by the strain energy method, of uniform and non-uniform girders, and tables and diagrams are given to show the effect of variation in the stiffness-ratio, from which the effect of variation in the number of panels can be inferred. Mr. Stroyer's paper records the nature and results of an investigation by means of special apparatus on the pressures produced by several materials on wall panels flexing between supports, and sets out the several conclusions at which the author has arrived. Written communications on these papers have been invited by the Council.

Recent Acquisitions at the Natural History Museum

AMONG recent additions to the zoological collections at the British Museum (Natural History) are six skins of Malagasy mammals, including a rare insectivore (*Limnogale mergulus*) presented by Sir Frank Colyer. Acquisitions by the Department of Geology include a series of invertebrate fossils from the Permian of Durham, presented by Dr. C. T. Trechmann. These are arranged to show how the increasing salinity of the sea in which the animals lived led to progressive dwarfing and finally to the extinction of the forms. The Mineral Department has acquired by purchase a faceted cassiterite (tin-stone), weighing 13½ carats (2·713 gm.), together with a crystal of similar material, from Uganda. Cassiterite, known since classical times as the important ore of tin, has seldom provided transparent pieces of sufficient size for cutting for ornamental purposes, so that this specimen is an interesting addition to the collection of faceted stones. The purchases include a carefully collected and labelled set of Swiss rocks, together with the corresponding thin sections, which form a valuable addition to the collection of rocks. Thanks to the courtesy of the Director of the Royal Museum of Natural History at Brussels, the Museum has received part of five rock specimens which, though collected by the *Challenger* Expedition, were described by A. F. Renard and retained at Brussels.

Everyday Science in Civil Service Examinations

WE directed attention in our last issue (p. 825) to the withdrawal of "Everyday Science" from the list of obligatory subjects in the examination for admission to the Administrative Group of Civil Services—a step which appears to us regrettable. The policy of the Civil Service Commissioners in determining the type of the questions set in the examinations in science subjects is also called in question in an article by Dr. Herbert Dingle in *Time and Tide* of November 16. In discussing the part played by examinations in causing the ineffectiveness of scientific training in public life, Dr. Dingle relates his experience in the preparation of questions in astronomy. This confirms us in our opinion that the place of science in these examinations is not all that it should be.

British Institute of Radiology: Annual Congress

THE ninth Annual Congress of the British Institute of Radiology (incorporated with the Röntgen Society) will be held on December 4–6, in the Central Hall, Westminster, S.W.1. The Congress will be opened on December 4 at 3 p.m. by the Right Hon. Lord Nuffield. An exhibition of apparatus, organised by the British X-ray industry, will be held at the same time. On December 5, Dr. G. W. C. Kaye will deliver the eighteenth Silvanus Thompson Memorial Lecture entitled: "Forty Years of Radiology (1895–1935): a Review and Some Reminiscences". On the same day, several physical, technical and therapeutical papers will be read. On December 6, Dr. G. Harrison Orton will deliver the sixteenth Mackenzie Davidson Memorial Lecture entitled "Calcium Changes and their Importance in Diagnostic Radiology", and some papers on diagnostics will be read. Further information concerning the Congress can be obtained from the General Secretary, British Institute of Radiology, 82 Welbeck Street, W.1.

The Leonids

ATTENTION was first directed to this shower of meteors by Humboldt, who observed a great display at Cumana, Venezuela, on November 11, 1799. It was not, however, until the meteor 'storm' of 1833 that the shower was observed scientifically. The next return of the main swarm was observed in England in 1866 and in America in 1867. The period of about 33¼ years was now, by researches into records of past great 'storms', fully established. The next return, 1899, was eagerly awaited, but in the general excitement the work of Drs. Stoney and Downing was overlooked. They showed that planetary perturbations would probably deflect the richest portion of the stream so that it would escape encounter with the earth, and thus the recurrence of a great 'storm' was doubtful. The failure of the Leonids of 1899 has become historic, although good showers were seen in America in 1901 and in England in 1903. Observations have shown a steady increase of Leonid activity year by year in the few years up to 1931, giving hope of another 'storm' about 1933. The promise, however, was not fulfilled. Mr. A. King informs us that this year on November 15, about a day before