

sent certain waves or particles into the earth's atmosphere. Previously there has been no way of identifying the magnetic disturbances associated with such eruptions. As the radio effects are easily identified, it is hoped to get a closer insight into the connexion between them and solar disturbances. In a later report by Prof. H. G. Gale of Mount Wilson Observatory, it is stated that on the morning of October 24 a group of dark granular flocculi was observed on the sun's disk. This group was observed frequently during the day, and at its maximum it was the largest object on the sun's surface as observed by the hydrogen spectroheliograph. The increased solar activity paralleled the strange radio fade-out. Technical details are given in the November 15 issue of the *Physical Review*.

#### Science and Vegetable Production

MR. F. A. SECRETT lectured before the Royal Society of Arts on November 27, the subject of the discourse being "Modern Methods of Vegetable Production and Marketing". Mr. Secrett, as the owner of Holly Lodge Farm, Walton-on-Thames, is well qualified to speak on this topic (see *NATURE*, May 25, p. 866). Mr. Secrett's outlook combines the enthusiasm of the amateur with business acumen and scientific discrimination. One of the problems of intensive culture is to obtain sufficient humus for the soil. Sewage waste and town refuse may possibly fill the need, but Mr. Secrett insisted that fresh or green manure has a denitrifying effect on the soil. The technique of irrigation by overhead sprays, and of heating the soil by hot water pipes laid in troughs of water below the soil, were described in detail, for Mr. Secrett is an authoritative exponent and pioneer in the application of these practices. Particular attention was given to methods of aerating the irrigation water, and of incorporating soluble fertilisers. The section on marketing dealt with the use of non-returnable packages, the re-organisation of commission sales, and the revision of railway rates. Much criticism of the work of marketing boards was given, and Mr. Secrett showed, by reasoned argument and without caustic remark, that the unvaried edict of bureaucratic control is often opposed to the best interests of a dynamic and changeable industry such as vegetable growing.

#### Mount Everest Expedition

In preparation for the new Mount Everest expedition of 1936, a reconnaissance party was at work last year. At the Royal Geographical Society on December 2, Mr. E. E. Shipton gave an account of this expedition. The main objects were to investigate snow conditions at high altitudes and decide on the best season for the attempt on the summit, to examine the possibility of alternative routes either by the north-west ridge from the head of the Central Rongbuk glacier or by the unknown Western Cwm, and to test equipment. An exploration of the western approaches to Mount Everest revealed no possible way of approach to the summit. Moreover, it was found that the ice slopes of the North Col were

in a very dangerous condition during the whole of the monsoon, and always liable to be swept by avalanches the occurrence of which it was impossible to foretell. The expedition scaled numerous hitherto unclimbed peaks in the district in the course of its work.

#### Housing and Overcrowding

THE Ministry of Health has recently issued several circulars dealing with the subjects of housing and overcrowding, all published by H.M. Stationery Office. "Housing" (*2d. net*) summarises the principal provisions of the Housing and Public Health Acts in relation to maintenance of dwellings in a reasonably fit condition. "Housing, England" (Statutory Rules and Orders 1935 No. 1115. *1d. net*) relates to the appointment of a committee, to be called the Central Housing Advisory Committee, for the purpose of advising the Minister on questions relating to overcrowding. "Circular 1507" deals with Section 1, Housing Act, 1935, and fixes dates for (1) the completion of inspection—April 1, 1936, (2) submission of report—June 1, 1936, and (3) submission of proposals—August 1, 1936. "Statutory Rules and Orders 1935 No. 1086" (*3d. net*) makes regulations applying to polls of local government electors in connexion with the promotion of bills by councils other than councils of metropolitan boroughs. The Central Housing Advisory Committee appointed by Sir Kingsley Wood includes among other prominent members the names of Lord Balfour of Burleigh, the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres and the Earl of Dudley, the Bishop of Winchester, Miss Megan Lloyd George, Sir Francis Fremantle, Dr. Greenwood Wilson and Mr. Silkin.

#### A Long Barrow in East Anglia

IT has been supposed that no long barrows exist in Norfolk and Suffolk, and various theories have been put forward to account for the absence of the long-barrow culture in these counties. Some have supposed that it never existed in these areas, while others have thought that the non-existence of the burial mounds is to be accounted for by their removal through ploughing or other agricultural operations. It now seems that the latter is the more likely explanation as, recently, Mr. J. E. Sainty, of The Hedges, West Runton, near Cromer, and his friend Mr. A. Q. Watson, of Holt, have discovered, in west Norfolk, what has every appearance of being a long barrow, surrounded by a ditch. This is a noteworthy find and the discoverers hope to be able to excavate the site in the near future.

#### Science in the Public Press

WE are glad to direct attention to a series of eight articles on scientific problems of particular human interest now being contributed to the *Evening Standard* by competent authorities on the subjects with which they deal. The first article, by Prof. H. Levy, in the issue of December 9, presents a philosophical picture of the universe. Succeeding articles in the series are "What is Death?", Prof. J. B. S.