

successful efforts in this direction that have resulted from that realisation. It fell to Capt. Brooke-Smith to explain to a committee of the Chamber of Shipping of the United Kingdom in 1921 some of the advantages which might accrue to navigation from the more general use of reliable thermometers as well as reliable barometers, and the report of that committee to the Chamber of Shipping included recommendations in respect to both these items. Apart from their value in forecasting, reliable measurements of atmospheric pressure at sea should eventually become important for pilots of aircraft when far from land, who will rely on them for obtaining correct indications of height from their altimeters, and for that purpose will have to obtain them by wireless from ships.

An equal improvement in thermometers, Capt. Brooke-Smith states, has not yet taken place. He points out, however, that the information about temperature required at sea can generally be obtained from the broadcasts made on 2100 metres wave-length by British *A* class selected ships, which broadcasts have a range of 1,500 miles; such ships are to be found on all main trade routes, and all are equipped with thermometers certified by the National Physical Laboratory and exposed in Meteorological Office screens. The thermometers on such ships, when the ship is in port, afford a means whereby, through the courtesy of the captain, other ships may test their own thermometers and ascertain their accuracy. In answer to the frequently made suggestion that more British merchant ships should be equipped with instruments provided through the Meteorological Office, Capt. Brooke-Smith points out that the existing meteorological personnel at the ports is not adequate for dealing with such an increase, which would also throw excessive extra work on the divisions of the Meteorological Office concerned with maintaining the marine meteorological equipment, that is, the marine and instrument divisions.

Sixteenth Century Central Europeans in England

In the *Matice Moravská* (Brno, Czechoslovakia), Prof. O. Odložilík has just published the results of extensive researches among documents and manuscripts from British libraries and those in Holland and central Europe, under the title "Visits from Bohemia and Moravia to England, 1563-1620". He shows how scholars in Britain and the remoter parts of the Continent managed to keep in touch with each other's discoveries, views and writings. This contact was as strong between men of science (astronomers, mathematicians and others) as it was between theologians or historians. The period under review preceded the influx of refugees from the Thirty Years' War, but the question whether Komenský (Comenius) visited England in 1613 (that is, when he was only twenty-one years of age) is again raised. Whilst it is extremely unlikely that the great educationist did come to England prior to 1641, it is clear that many Bohemian and Moravian students and savants (including Peter Vok and Thaddeus Hajek) visited

Oxford and Cambridge, and made contact with such sixteenth century Englishmen as Dr. John Dee, Francis Bacon, Sir Philip Sidney, Lord Burghley and the Earl of Essex. Some, like Charles of Zerotin, acted as diplomats between Bohemian monarchs and the British Crown at this period when culture and science began to flourish again after the Dark Ages.

Flashes of Lightning

ACCORDING to a message from Science Service, flashes of lightning photographed by a cine-camera by J. W. Beams, L. B. Snoddy and E. J. Workman, of the Universities of New Mexico and Virginia, were shown at the recent meeting of the American Physical Society. The progress of the flash was shown to be similar to that of a nail gradually piercing a wooden board step by step under the successive blows of a hammer. Their cameras showed that the first flash extended halfway from the cloud to the earth. A second one followed the path of the first but went six tenths of the way, while a third travelled seven tenths of the distance. The fourth flash reached all the way and struck the earth. Four other flashes from the cloud to the earth followed at short intervals of approximately one hundredth of a second.

Institution of Gas Engineers

At the seventy-third annual general meeting of the Institution of Gas Engineers which opened in London on May 26 the following medals were presented: Institution Gold Medal, to George Dixon, for a paper on "Problems and Answers in the Reconstruction of Manufacturing and Distribution Plant, Nottingham"; H. E. Jones London Medal, to W. L. Boon, for a paper on "The Preparation, Marketing and Utilization of Coke"; Institution Silver Medal, to T. P. Ridley, for a paper on "Gas Tariffs"; Institution Bronze Medal, to William Hodgkinson, for a paper on "Benzole Recovery and the Production of Motor Benzole". Mr. Stephen Lacey, controller of gas sales, Gas Light and Coke Company, London, was elected president of the Institution for the year 1936-37, and Mr. H. C. Smith, chief engineer, Tottenham and District Gas Company, and Mr. Robert Robertson, engineer and works manager, Bristol Gas Company, were elected vice-presidents.

South African Association for the Advancement of Science

UNDER the presidency of His Excellency the Right Hon. the Earl of Clarendon, Governor General of the Union of South Africa, the South African Association for the Advancement of Science will hold its thirty-fourth annual session on October 5-10 in Johannesburg. It is noteworthy that the meeting coincides with the celebrations connected with the jubilee (fifty years) of Johannesburg, and with the holding there of the Empire Exhibition. Sectional presidents are: A, Dr. E. J. Hamlin, city engineer, Johannesburg ("The Researches of a City Engineer's Department"); B, Prof. E. D. Mountain, professor of geology and mineralogy at Rhodes University College,

Grahamstown, C.P. ("Minerals"); C, Prof. John Phillips, professor of botany in the University of the Witwatersrand ("Biology and Industry : with special reference to Plant Biology and the Mining Industry"); D, Dr. R. Bigalke ("The Naturalisation of Wild Animals with special reference to South Africa"); E, Prof. M. R. Drennan, professor of anatomy in the University of Cape Town ("Human Growth and Differentiation"); F, Dr. I. D. MacCrone, lecturer in psychology in the University of the Witwatersrand ("The Problem of Race Differences"). Prof. L. Fouché, professor of history in the University of the Witwatersrand, is to deliver a public evening lecture on the history of the Witwatersrand. Symposia have been arranged in the various sections, while demonstrations and excursions are included in the programme. A cordial invitation to attend the meetings is extended to visitors from overseas who are connected with, or interested in, scientific pursuits; visiting scientific workers will be made honorary members for the session.

Announcements

THE Government of the Spanish Republic has conferred the decoration of 'Comendador de la Orden de la República' upon Sir Henry Wellcome, the founder of the Wellcome Research Institution, London, in recognition of his outstanding services to Spanish interests.

AN exhibition of photographs organised by the American Institute for Persian Art and Archaeology, including photographs representative of the latest work of the Institute's architectural survey, will be held at the Royal Institute of British Architects on June 9-26. The exhibition will be opened at 3.30 p.m. on June 9 by His Excellency Hussein Ala, the Iranian Minister in London.

DR. ENID CHARLES, of the Department of Social Biology of the London School of Economics, will open a discussion on "Population Trends in Relation to the Housing Problem" at the Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, Victoria (Berwick Street entrance), on Tuesday, June 2, at 7.30 p.m. The discussion has been arranged by the Research Co-ordination Committee in conjunction with the Engineers' Study Group. Those wishing to attend should notify the honorary secretary, Research Co-ordination Committee, Hazlitt House, Southampton Buildings, W.C.2 (Tel. : Holborn 1068). The discussion is part of a concerted plan to approach the housing problem from various angles: sociological, architectural, health, engineering and financial.

THE German Statistical Society will hold its annual meeting at Brunswick on June 25.

THE Chancellor of the German Reich has awarded the shield of nobility to Prof. Gustav Tammann, professor of physical chemistry at Göttingen, and the Goethe Medal to Dr. Reinhold Schmaltz, professor of anatomy, embryology and histology at Berlin.

APPLICATIONS are invited for the following appointments, on or before the dates mentioned :

A head of the Building Department in the Gloucester Technical College—The Principal (June 3).

A head of the Engineering Department in the Shrewsbury Technical College—The Secretary for Education, County Buildings, Shrewsbury (June 3).

A University demonstrator in physics in the University of Cambridge—Dr. R. G. W. Norrish, University Chemical Department, Cambridge (June 4).

An assistant lecturer in chemistry in the Robert Gordon's Technical College, Aberdeen—The Registrar (June 5).

A demonstrator in anatomy in the University of Sheffield—The Registrar (June 6).

A lecturer in civil and mechanical engineering in the Woolwich Polytechnic, London, S.E.18—The Secretary (June 6).

A principal of the Norwich Technical College—The Director of Education, City Education Offices, Norwich (June 8).

An electrical engineer in the Armaments Inspection Department, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich—The Under-Secretary of State (C.5), The War Office, London (June 9).

A demonstrator in biology in the London (Royal Free Hospital) School of Medicine for Women—The Secretary, 8 Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, W.C.1 (June 12).

A lecturer in physiology in the Chelsea Polytechnic, London, S.W.3—The Principal (June 12).

A demonstrator in mathematics in the City and Guilds College, Imperial College of Science and Technology, Prince Consort Road, South Kensington, S.W.7—The Secretary (June 19).

An assistant lecturer in mechanical engineering in the Municipal College of Technology, Manchester—The Registrar (June 29).

An instructor in mechanical and electrical engineering in the Bulawayo Technical School—The Official Secretary, Office of the High Commissioner for Southern Rhodesia, 429 Strand, W.C.2 (Aug. 21).

A lecturer in geography and nature study in the Bedford Froebel Training College—The Principal, 14 The Crescent, Bedford.

A lecturer in physics in the Heriot-Watt College, Edinburgh—The Principal.

A lecturer in geography in St. Peter's College, Peterborough—The Principal.

A professor of physics in Canterbury University College, Christchurch, New Zealand—The Universities Bureau of the British Empire, 88a Gower Street, London, W.C.1.

A lecturer in geography in the University of Reading—The Registrar.

A professor of mathematics and a professor of education in University College, Cork—The Secretary.

A district engineer in the Public Works Department of the Sudan Government—The Controller, Sudan Government, London Office, Wellington House, Buckingham Gate, S.W.1.

A senior engineer in the Equipment Department of the B.B.C.—The Engineering Establishment Officer, Broadcasting House, London, W.1.