

Chancellor, to whom addresses of congratulation were presented. The Chancellor then conferred the honorary degree of D.C.L. upon nine distinguished men: Dr. C. A. Allington, Dean of Durham; Prof. P. Bedson, emeritus professor of chemistry; Lord Cadman, an old graduate of the University; the Hon. J. A. Hanan, chancellor of the University of New Zealand; Sir John Jarvis, the promoter of many schemes to help the distressed area of Jarrow; the Rev. S. R. P. Mouldsdales, until recently principal of St. Chad's College; Mr. Tracy Philipps, explorer and war correspondent; Sir Cuthbert Wallace, president of the Royal College of Surgeons; and Mr. G. H. A. Wilson, master of Clare College and vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge. Convocation was followed by a garden party in the adjoining Fellows' Garden. Later, the delegates were entertained to a banquet in the Great Hall, after which they were received by the Council of the Durham Colleges.

It is interesting to record that so early as 1650 a petition to Parliament that a college be established at Durham was approved by Cromwell. When university powers were applied for, however, the proposal was thought to be prejudicial to the older universities and the Great Seal was withheld. No more was heard of a northern university until a draft scheme was drawn up in 1831. The necessary Act was passed in 1832, and the first students came into residence during the following year. Among the first members of staff was J. F. W. Johnstone, lecturer in chemistry and mineralogy. About the same time (1834) the Newcastle-upon-Tyne College of Medicine originated, though it did not become connected with the University of Durham until 1852. Durham College of Physical Science was founded in Newcastle in 1871. It had then four professors—mathematics, physics, chemistry and geology—but by the time its name was changed to Armstrong College, in 1904, a very wide range of university subjects had long been incorporated. Now, both the College of Medicine and Armstrong College are about to be united, under the revised constitution of the University, as a new corporate body to be known henceforth as King's College. At Durham itself, science seems to have lapsed after the death of Johnstone in 1855. Since 1924, however, when the first block of the present Science Laboratories was opened, several very flourishing schools have developed. Under the new regime, the University of Durham (consisting of the Durham Colleges, together with King's College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) enters the most promising period of its history, with every prospect of expanding achievement and prosperity.

The World's Air Altitude Record

THE world's air altitude record was regained for Great Britain by the Royal Air Force on June 30, by a flight to an altitude of 53,937 feet (more than ten miles). The previous record of 51,362 feet was held by Lieut.-Colonel Mario Pezzi for Italy, who beat the then British record of 49,944 feet last autumn. The flight was made from the aerodrome

of the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, by Flight-Lieut. M. J. Adam, using the Bristol 138 experimental high altitude aircraft. This was the same machine as used by Flight-Lieut. Swain, R.A.F., for the previous record, but was fitted with a special Bristol Pegasus engine. It had various detail improvements as suggested by experience. The pilot wore the actual high-pressure suit that was prepared as a reserve for the previous record flight, with small improvements. These included precautions against 'frosting up' of the Celestroid windows of the headpiece, and an emergency breathing pipe to lead air direct from the outside when necessary, instead of having to slash open the front of the headpiece as did Flight-Lieut. Swain, upon landing, after his flight. The transparent material forming the cabin roof was observed to crack upon reaching an altitude of about 48,000 feet, but this was not serious enough to interfere with the continuation of the flight.

THE ascent was made in 1 hr. 35 min., and the total time of the flight was 2 hr. 15 min. The minimum pressure and temperature were 77.8 mm. of mercury and -48.9°C . respectively, both occurring at the maximum height. The pilot experienced a good deal of navigational trouble due to cloud-layers at intervals, at one time being forced to fly east, facing the sun, which at 6 a.m. was low enough to blind him. A steady north-westerly wind, estimated by the pilot to be of about 100 miles an hour velocity, was encountered in the upper regions. It is understood that the aircraft will continue to be employed upon researches into conditions of flight in the upper atmosphere.

Atlantic Air Mail Service

THE first test flight of the Atlantic air mail service began on July 5 when the Imperial Airways flying-boat *Caledonia* left Foynes, Ireland, for Botwood, Newfoundland, and two and a half hours later the Pan-American Airways *Clipper III* took off from Botwood on the easterly crossing. The two boats alighted at their destinations within a quarter of an hour of each other on July 6. The *Caledonia*, under Captain A. S. Wilcockson, flew mostly at a height of 1,500 ft. to avoid the worst of the head-wind; she followed a rhumb line course at an average speed of about 132 miles an hour and was in the air for 15 hr. 28 min. The *Clipper III*, under Captain H. Gray, flew most of the way at 10,000 ft. to make the most of the following westerly wind; she kept roughly to a great circle course and her average speed was 156 miles per hour and flying time 12 hr. 37 min. Both commanders described the crossing as comparatively uneventful, and paid high tribute to the work of the wireless stations on both sides of the Atlantic in assisting their navigation.

Centenary of the General Register Office

AN exhibition which opened on July 1 at the General Register Office, Somerset House, Strand, London, W.C.2, for a duration to be announced later,