

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. Mouldsdale, 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,

marks the centenary of the establishment of the general registration of births, deaths, and marriages in England and Wales, by illustrating the work of the Office, as well as the character of the records which are in its charge. Although the system of civil registration was established only one hundred years ago, its origins in England go back no less than four hundred years. Such statistical material relating to the population, outside the parochial records, as was recorded before 1837 was transferred to the custody of the Registrar General under the Marriage and Registration Acts of 1836. The earliest form of record, the parochial register of baptisms, marriages and burials, was established by Thomas Cromwell in 1538; but so long ago as the sixteenth century the value of demographic data and the inadequacy of the parochial system for this purpose were appreciated.

IN 1590, Lord Burleigh put forward a proposal for the establishment of an office for a general register to summarize "how many christenings, weddings and burials were every year in England and Wales". The proposal was not adopted; and subsequent attempts to secure some measure of systematic collection of facts were both unsatisfactory in working and incomplete, owing to increase in the number of nonconformists, who did not avail themselves of the services of the parish church. It was owing to this latter factor that the earliest records now preserved at Somerset House are those which did not come within the established order, belonging to the refugee churches of Walloons and French, the Chapels Royal, the Independents, and the Society of Friends of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is interesting to note that the last-named body, with characteristic precision, was the first to register births and deaths, rather than baptisms and burials. The official guide to the exhibition ("The Story of the General Register Office and its Origins from 1538 to 1937". Pp. 30+6 plates. London: H.M.S.O. 6d.) deals with these and other matters of much sociological interest, especially in the light thrown by the registers on the early history of nonconformity and the scandalous 'Fleet' marriages.

Ethnological Museums: Methods and Limitations

DR. H. S. HARRISON, in his presidential address to the Royal Anthropological Institute delivered on June 29, played the part of a wandering sceptic, to use his own term, to excellent effect in setting out some of the more striking shortcomings of the ethnological museum as a place of exhibition of material objects bearing on man's cultural development. As he pointed out, there is a considerable body of exhibits, such as, for example, musical instruments, personal ornaments, money and currency, which find their place in a museum as 'material objects', but of which the real significance is non-material and is lost on either the distributional or comparative method of arrangement, as their interest lies not in form or material, but in their sociological functions and meanings. Practical considerations limit the use of labels, quite apart from the danger of the museum

becoming what Dr. Harrison said has been described as a collection of labels illustrated by exhibits. Dr. Harrison also showed himself a keen but kindly critic of the evolutionary method of display, pointing out its weaknesses in the scanty evidence and uncertainties relating to origins, the necessary, but at times excessive dependence upon inference, and the ambiguities of direction, including the possibility of degeneracy. Among the instances quoted in support of the argument he cited an interesting example in the uncertain development of the canoe and the relation of the plank and dug-out forms.

WITH a sympathy born of experience, Dr. Harrison recognizes the limitations imposed by space on experiment to meet defects inherent in present museum methods, but hopes for their alleviation in a National Anthropological Museum, which would be sufficiently spacious and catholic to deal with such problems. Notwithstanding his criticisms, as a museum man himself he believes firmly in the importance of the museum as a technological laboratory, forming an essential part in a school of ethnology. While anthropologists will warmly endorse his plea for a national anthropological museum, they will trust that his anticipation of its foundation before the close of the present century is a playful euphemism for "at no distant date".

Proposed Rhodes-Livingstone Memorial

To mark the jubilee of the foundation of the two Rhodesias by Cecil Rhodes in 1890 and the centenary of the setting out of David Livingstone for Africa in 1840, it is proposed to found a Rhodes-Livingstone Institute for Central African Studies in Northern Rhodesia. The main purpose of the Institute will be the study of the effect on native African society of the impact of European civilization and the urgent problem of establishing permanent and satisfactory relations between native and non-native. The proposal has the support of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Right Hon. W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore, Lord Lugard, Lord Hailey, Dr. Henry Balfour, Sir William Bragg and others. It is proposed to purchase at a cost of £15,000 the premises now housing the Museum at Livingstone, the old capital of Northern Rhodesia, with the adjoining old Government House. The Museum contains objects of historical interest relating to David Livingstone and the nucleus of an important ethnographical collection. It was formed by the Government of Northern Rhodesia with assistance from the Beit Railway Trust, the Royal Geographical Society, the Scottish National Memorial at Blantyre and a number of individual benefactors. The premises will be vested in a trust, which will be responsible for administration and financial control. As a preliminary to the foundation of the Institute and the incorporation in it of the existing Museum, the Government of Northern Rhodesia has appointed an expert in applied anthropology, to whom an assistant will be added later if funds permit. Although the Rhodesian Government will bear its full share of the cost, an