

weeks?" It is by these means "that we could advance civilization, emancipate every slave and improve generally the welfare of mankind." Now most of the things Shelley thought of have been done, and mankind has benefited.

MAN has become a more efficient unit, he performs more work in a given time, he lives longer, he has greater comforts, but with all these advantages, it is a misfortune that the necessity still arises for some to spend their energies and the wealth of their country in fruitless endeavours to kill, or to be ready to kill, their enemy in less time and at less cost than is possible for their adversaries. According to the best authority, it was shown in 1936, by statistics of the cost of various domestic commodities throughout Europe, ranging from electricity to coal and including butter, bread, milk, meat, potatoes and sugar, that the fall in the price of electricity since 1914 was greater than that of any of the others. In addition, the price of electricity in Great Britain had fallen more than in any other country. It is practically certain that it will fall still further. In conclusion, Mr. Donkin quoted with approval Lord Weir, who said that millions of pounds should be spent in research in the political sphere for the founding of a thinking department for the investigation and analysis of human qualities. It should explore the possibility of healing and softening racial bitterness and ultimately demonstrate to the world the utter inability of war to solve political problems.

Co-operation between the Engineering Professions

At the beginning of his presidential address to the Institution of Electrical Engineers delivered on October 21, Sir George Lee re-echoed Sir Alexander Gibb's suggestion, given in his address to the Institution of Civil Engineers last year, for closer co-operation and co-ordination between the various engineering institutions. The engineering industry is now so large that amalgamation between the various institutions, even if desirable, would be practically impossible. But he made two suggestions of directions in which co-operation should be easy and an advantage to industry. The first was that facilities might be given to members of one institution to attend meetings of other institutions, to hold joint meetings on subjects of common interest and to give special library facilities to all. The second was that the full implications of social science can best be handled from the engineering side by the combined efforts of all the engineering professions. To an increasing extent the lives of our people are bound up with engineering development, and the economics of our welfare are dependent to a large extent upon the rate of this development. The closer association and meeting of people who are interested in different phases of what is actually the same subject would facilitate the recognition of common interests and ideas.

SIR GEORGE then passed on to give an interesting account of developments in some of the activities of the Post Office. He pointed out the success of the

new telephone tariffs. The shilling night rate has been a very successful psychological touch which succeeded beyond the wildest expectations. He laid stress on the difficulties of development forecasting. If a successful forecast is made, then the capital expenditure can be reduced to a minimum. When the sixpenny telegram was introduced in 1935, there was an immediate increase of 34 per cent over the corresponding period for the preceding year. The standardization of teleprinter working has paved the way for the development of a switched telegraph system utilizing the familiar methods of automatic telephony. Probably it will soon be possible for any teleprinter office in the inland service to obtain instant communication with any other teleprinter office simply by dialling.

Nuffield College, Oxford

MORE information relating to the proposed college for research in social studies, to be called Nuffield College (see NATURE of October 23, p. 697), is now available. The erection and equipment of the College and the laying out of its grounds will be in the hands of the governing body of the University, the Hebdomadal Council. It shall from time to time appoint the warden, the fellows and other officers, and generally take charge. It is proposed to have maxima of twelve official fellows, eight faculty fellows, twenty visiting fellows, and forty students. Women will be eligible for fellowships and studentships. The official fellows will be whole-time research workers, the faculty fellows teaching members of other colleges who do work on social studies, and the visiting fellows the possibly non-academic persons from outside. The students will be at least in their third term of residence at the University and working for research degrees. All classes of fellows (but not women fellows) will be entitled to rooms and dinner in college and students may also have rooms there. The visiting fellows and the students will receive honoraria or emoluments of the order of fifty pounds per annum. Lord Nuffield will be the first honorary fellow.

Comets and Problems of Cosmogony

THE presidential address at the British Astronomical Association was delivered on October 27 by the Rev. Dr. M. Davidson. He discussed comets, especially in connexion with the light that they throw on problems of cosmogony. Considering that comets move in orbits of such a diverse nature, direct and retrograde orbits being nearly equal in number, taking comets on the whole, he showed that there are difficulties in reconciling this fact with the tidal theory of the origin of the solar system. He referred to the families of comets which are associated with the major planets, stating that it is quite impossible to explain these on the capture theory. There is, he considers, some basis for the view that they were expelled by the planets, though there are certain objections here also. Various theories for the origin of both the short-period and long-period comets were dealt with in turn; but, Dr. Davidson