National Physical Laboratory Abstracts

AFTER the publication of the volume of "Collected Researches" of the National Physical Laboratory at present in the press, that quarto publication will cease and will be replaced by an annual octavo pamphlet entitled "Abstracts of Papers", the first issue of which, for the year 1936, has already appeared. It extends to 65 pages, 61 of which are devoted to 140 abstracts and the rest to author and subject indexes. The title of each abstract is in Clarendon type and that of the publication in which the complete paper is to be found in italics with specification of year, volume and page. The abstracts themselves generally give the object and method of the investigation concerned in outline and the net results in detail, so that a large amount of valuable information is condensed into a small space. They are grouped under subjects. The present issue is published at 1*s*. by H.M. Stationery Office.

Esperanto for Scientific Papers and Abstracts

THE "Universala Esperanto-Kongreso" is to take place this year at University College, London, on July 30–August 6. A recent article by Dr. D. R. Duncan, published in the *Scientific Worker*, directs attention to the great potential value of Esperanto as a means of intercommunication between men of science. Being "intelligible to any educated European" without previous study, it is eminently suitable for scientific abstracts in cases where the original paper was published in a language little known outside its own country. Reports consisting largely of tables such as the "International Critical Tables" might well, it is suggested, use Esperanto instead of numerous parallel columns in different languages. Esperanto is, it appears, much used in Japan for scientific papers. A few journals outside Japan give Esperanto summaries at the end of papers published in the journal's own language, for example, the *Bull. Soc. Française des Electriciens*, the *Phare Médical* and the *Revista da Sociedade de Geografia do Rio de Janeiro*.

Society for Extending the Rothamsted Experiments

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE has consented to accept the chairmanship of the Incorporated Society for Extending the Rothamsted Experiments which had been held by his late father since the inception of the Society in 1904. The vice-chairmen are the Earl of Radnor and Lord Clinton. The purpose of the Society is to foster the development of the work carried out by the Rothamsted Experimental Station: the last important effort was to raise the funds for the purchase of the agricultural part of the Rothamsted Estate, which was successfully achieved in 1934, and its next effort will be in connexion with the centenary of the foundation of the Rothamsted Experimental Station which falls due in 1943.

Growth of a Sunspot

BETWEEN May 22 and 24, a large group of sunspots suddenly appeared near the central meridian and became visible to the naked eye. Measures of area taken from the Greenwich photographs show the following rapid increase in size of the spot group, which began as two or three tiny spots. The areas are corrected for foreshortening and are expressed in millionths of the sun's hemisphere.

May	22·4	U.T.	10	millionths
,,	23·3	,,	210	,,
,,	24·3	,,	1060	,,
,,	25·4	,,	1200	,,
,,	26·3	,,	1390	,,
,,	27·3	,,	1570	,,

Since the average group of this size takes about 8–10 days to develop fully, the very great increase in area during the first 48 hours suggested that the group would be unusually large, exceeding perhaps 2500 millionths. The maximum size appears, however, to have been reached about May 27 or 28, the group passing out of view at the western limb on May 30. These sunspots, in about latitude 8° north and longitude 12°, offered several points for study with an ordinary telescope. There was, for example, a marked drift equatorwards of the leader spot amounting to 3° or about 37,000 km. between May 24 and 27. The changes in structure between May 23 and 24 were also considerable. During the initial development of the group, the accompanying hydrogen flocculi seen spectroscopically in $H\alpha$ (and at times in $H\beta$) were persistently of enhanced intensity, although no outstanding short-lived eruptions were observed at Greenwich. The time of central meridian passage of the group was May 23·8, and it will return to the central meridian on June 20, unless by then the spots have dispersed.

Announcements

WE regret to announce the death of Dr. J. W. Mellor, C.B.E., F.R.S., author of "A Comprehensive Treatise on Inorganic and Theoretical Chemistry", on May 24, aged sixty-eight years; and of Prof. W. Stroud, Cavendish professor of physics in the University of Leeds in 1885–1909, director of Barr and Stroud, Ltd., Glasgow, on May 27, aged seventy-eight years.

SIR FRANK SMITH, secretary of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, has been elected an honorary fellow of the Institute of Physics. This, the highest distinction the Institute can confer, is reserved for those whom it especially desires to honour for exceptionally important services in connexion with physics or a science allied thereto; there are only seven other honorary fellows. Sir Frank Smith was a founder fellow of the Institute, and did much to help establish it on the sound basis which has assisted so much in its rapid development.

MR. A. H. R. FEDDEN has been elected president of the Royal Aeronautical Society for the year 1938–39.

THE annual inspection of the field plots and laboratories of the Rothamsted Experimental Station