

human affairs before its students" and refers to an expression of the same belief by Lord Nuffield. Among other endowments were an anonymous gift of £20,000 and a legacy of £25,000 for founding a chair of psychology. The subject of employment of graduates is dealt with at greater length than is usual in these annual reports. In the technological departments, no difficulty was found in obtaining employment immediately after, and even before, graduation. To meet the situation created by the time-lag between graduation and employment in the teaching profession the Appointments Board exerted itself to find temporary summer employments. The usefulness of this Board is said to have greatly increased during the last few years, the number of vacant appointments notified to it having risen from 380 in 1932 to 3,500 in 1937. Appreciative reference is made to the report on employment of graduates published by the National Union of Students. Schemes for medical examination of students at their own option and for physical instruction were under consideration during the year and are now in process of realization.

#### Quantitative Economics

IN a paper on econometric researches, appearing in the series of publications dealing with economic problems edited by Dr. R. Gilrat (No. 412; Hermann and Cie., 6 Rue de la Sorbonne, 6, Paris, 1936), Prof. R. Ray deals with the demand for goods for direct consumption. Results obtained in this question of demand, whether by experimental methods or by the application of statistical methods to observations, afford a strong presumption in favour of the quantitative investigation of economic phenomena. Prof. Ray discusses the theories of Cournot, Dupint and Marshall, who considered demands as the function of a single variable, as well as the theories of Walras and the mathematical school. His own investigations on products for direct consumption suggest that for certain products or services, coefficients of elasticity can be used to characterize the demand. In considering the elasticity of demand, it is essential to analyse the part which the law of substitution plays, and accordingly it is desirable to limit the investigations to products which lend themselves less readily than others to substitution, or to investigate a group of products which are readily substituted one for another in meeting the same need. The method of multiple correlation offers interesting possibilities, and Prof. Ray concludes that the demand for goods or services investigated so far is nearly always inelastic.

#### Effects of Dry Rot in Ships

THE presidential address of Dr. John Ramsbottom to the Essex Field Club dealt with dry rot in ships. Its text appears in the *Essex Naturalist* (25, 231; 1937), and provides an interesting account of the struggle of naval builders with wood-rotting fungi. A historical survey from the sixteenth century onwards traces the use of various kinds and qualities of timber, and shows how prone they were to rotting within the vessel, and above the water-line. The

diarist Pepys made some contributions towards an understanding of the problem, but it was largely the work of James Sowerby, the author of "English Fungi", which first directed attention to the real cause. He figured twenty-three species of "Fungi found in the Dockyards and Ships of Great Britain from Deptford to Plymouth 1812". *Merulius lachrymans* was included in the list, and there can be little doubt that it was one of the chief agents of decay. Many substances were used to impregnate timber in an effort to control the rot; but it was not until the appearance of ironclad ships that dry rot ceased to trouble the Royal Navy.

#### The Rabbit Problem

IN certain localities, as is well known, the prevalence of rabbits has become of some importance in horticulture, agriculture and forestry. In order to deal with this nuisance effectively and humanely, the University of London Animal Welfare Society (ULAWS) has published a pamphlet, entitled "Instructions for Dealing with Rabbits", compiled by Capt. C. W. Hume, in which the chief methods of rabbit destruction are fully described. In addition, a list of some relatively rabbit-proof plants and details of rabbit-proof fencing are given. Sir Frederick Hobday, in a foreword, commends the pamphlet, a copy of which will be sent free on receipt of a stamped envelope measuring 6 in. by 9 in. by ULAWS, 42 Torrington Square, London, W.C.1.

#### Cambridge Dissertations for Degrees

A BOOK of "Abstracts of Dissertations approved for the Ph.D., M.Sc. and M.Litt. Degrees in the University of Cambridge" during the academic year 1936-37 has been issued (Published by Authority: The University Press, Cambridge, 1937.) Each summary has been approved by the examiners or by the student's supervisor, and gives a good idea of the matter of a dissertation. Copies of the dissertations are deposited in the University Library (Ph.D. degrees) or in the University Registry (M.Sc. and M.Litt. degrees).

#### Reference Standards Laboratory

AFTER a delay of many years, the establishment of a laboratory for the maintenance in Australia of standards of length, mass, electrical units, etc., has been approved by the Commonwealth Government. It will probably be placed at Canberra, the estimated cost of the building being £80,000. The administration will be in the hands of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, which will maintain intimate contact with the National Physical Laboratory at Teddington in general accordance with a plan drawn up some ten years ago.

#### National Academy of the Lincei

A SUPPLEMENTARY number of the *Atti della Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* (1937) contains an account of the formal annual meeting held in Rome on June 6, 1937, in the presence of H.M. the King of Italy, to whom tribute was also paid for the first