

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

time as Emperor of Abyssinia. Among the chief awards announced by the President, V. Rossi, are those of the Bocconi Prize for cancer research to Prof. F. Pentimalli and the Cannizzaro Prize in chemistry to Prof. L. Ruzicka, Zurich. The following were elected as members during the preceding year: A. Ghigi, D. de Blasi, P. G. Goidanich, L. Castiglioni, P. Ducati, A. Maiuri, P. de Francisci, F. Flora, as national members, and A. Carrelli, G. Polvani, F. Ercole, as corresponding members. The centenary of the death of the Italian poet, Giacomo Leopardi, was commemorated by an address given by G. Gentile.

Royal Academy of Belgium: Prize Awards

THE following prize awards have been announced by the Royal Academy of Belgium: the Théophile Cluge Prize to Dr. J. J. Bouckaert for his work on physiology; the Agathon De Potter Prize for astronomy to S. Arend, for mathematics to F. Bureau, for physics to J. Géhéniau, for chemistry to Prof. W. Mund, for mineralogy to E. Polinard, for biology to Z. M. Bacq and to L. Lison; the Schepkens Prize to J. Beirnaert for his work on genetics and the improvement of the oil palm; the Wetrems Prize to L. Coppens for his work on fire-damp.

Announcements

DR. L. J. SPENCER, formerly keeper of minerals in the British Museum (Natural History), has been elected a corresponding member of the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

AT the general meeting at Indianapolis of the American Society of Plant Physiologists, Prof. Henry H. Dixon, of Trinity College, Dublin, was elected an honorary corresponding member of the Society.

Sir Walter Langdon-Brown and Prof. W. J. Dilling have been nominated by the Privy Council members of the council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, in succession to Sir Humphry Rolleston and Prof. J. A. Gunn, who have retired. Sir Malcolm Delevingne will continue as the third member nominated by the Privy Council.

A COMMITTEE has been appointed under the chairmanship of Mr. John Forster with two representatives of the Medical Research Council, Sir David Munro and Mr. Bradford Hill, two representatives of the London Passenger Transport Board, and two representatives of the Transport and General Workers Union to investigate the conditions of work and their effect on health of the London omnibus workers.

AT the annual general meeting of the Ray Society on March 24 the following officers were re-elected: *President*, Sir Sidney F. Harmer; *Treasurer*, Prof. F. E. Weiss; *Secretary*, Dr. W. T. Calman. Prof. F. Balfour-Browne was elected a vice-president, and Dr. J. Ramsbottom and Mr. J. L. Chaworth-Musters

new members of the council. It was announced that a translation by the late Sir Arthur Hort of the "Critica Botanica" of Linnæus will shortly be published and that among other works in preparation is one on the distribution and ecology of British spiders by Dr. W. S. Bristowe.

DR. HEINRICH VON FISCHER, professor of meteorology at Vienna, has been made an honorary member of the German Meteorological Society and has been awarded the Silver Hillmann Medal by the Air Minister of the Reich.

THE twenty-fourth Annual Conference of the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis will be held at the British Medical Association House, Tavistock Square, W.C.1, on June 30–July 2.

THE Royal Sanitary Institute will hold a further course of instruction in disinfection of houses and furniture from the bed-bug, beginning on May 16. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary, 90 Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.1.

THE All-India Population and Family Hygiene Conference will be held at Bombay on April 16–19 instead of in January as originally announced. Further information can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, 8 Ormiston Road, Apollo Bunder, Bombay.

THE third International Congress for Microbiology will be held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York City, on September 2–9, 1939, under the auspices of the International Association of Microbiologists and the presidency of Dr. T. M. Rivers, Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, New York. Further information can be obtained from the General Secretary, Dr. M. H. Dawson, College of Physicians and Surgeons, 620 West 168th Street, New York, or from Dr. R. St. John-Brooks, Lister Institute, Chelsea Bridge Road, London, S.W.1.

THE International Federation for Documentation will hold its fourteenth International Conference on Documentation under the presidency of Sir William Bragg at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, on September 21–25. Members of the Conference will visit the Science Museum, London, on September 26. Advantage will be taken of the meeting being in England to hold joint sessions on the mornings of September 24–25 with the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary, Miss M. Gosset, The Science Library, South Kensington, London, S.W.7.

GUSTAV FOCK, Leipzig, has issued an important catalogue listing close on 4,000 items, of which, in addition to journals and works of general zoology, the most extensive series deal with the physiology and biology of animals, psychology, zoogeography, and animals of economic importance. From Antiquariaat Junk, Den Haag (Holland), comes a list of 2,014 items concerning the one group Vermes.