Through Dr. Julian Huxley, a member of the Talks Advisory Committee, I was able to bring the facts before the B.B.C. with the result that it was arranged to explain that the story was completely untrue. The correction was made on March 7, but few people who heard it would have recognized it as related to the dramatic story originally broadcast. Because there must be many thousands who heard the story but missed its correction, it seems worth while to record the facts in these columns.

17 Victoria Street, Westminster, London, S.W.1. March 29.

A. S. E. ACKERMANN.

Albino Frogs

SOME years ago, Dr. Nellie B. Eales wrote concerning records of albino frogs[1]. It will be of interest to zoologists to know that on March 28, 1938, a schoolboy found a mass of white spawn in a brook at Coley, Reading, Berkshire. The brook contained many other masses of normal spawn.

The appearance of the spawn was that of clear jelly with milk-white ova. The boy reported the matter to his master, who retained some spawn, and the rest was handed to the Reading Museum by the finder. Except for a small quantity passed to the University of Reading, we have the residue here.

To-day (April 5), many of the eggs have developed into white tadpoles with distinctly pigmented eyes, and slight pigmentation is developing rapidly in the dorso-lateral region. We shall endeavour to rear these specimens, but I shall be happy to pass specimens to any zoologist for scientific work.

It is assumed that one parent was probably a true albino, as in the case of the Woodcote specimens in 1933.

W. A. SMALLCOMBE.

Museum and Art Gallery, Reading. April 5.

[1] NATURE, 132, 278 (1933).

Points from Foregoing Letters

OBSERVATIONS of solar activity made at Canberra, Australia, by A. J. Higgs and R. G. Giovanelli, with a spectrohelioscope and indirectly from a study of conditions in the ionosphere, have related recently observed auroras and magnetic storms to definite periods of activity. The interval, 38 hr., between the solar eruption and the auroral display of January 25–26 appears to be longer than usual (26 hr.).

H. C. Corben points out that, from Eddington's relation between the mass of the proton and that of the electron, the existence of a scalar particle of mass 135·9 can be deduced and this, combined with a positive or a negative electrical charge, will account for the recent observations which indicate that particles of about this mass exist in cosmic rays.

Dr. W. T. Astbury and Miss Florence Bell conclude from an X-ray examination of the sodium salt of thymonucleic acid that the molecule consists of a succession of some 2,000 nucleotides, standing out perpendicularly to the long axis, and spaced at a distance (3·3$_4$ A.) almost exactly equal to the spacing of the succession of amino-acid residues in a fully extended polypeptide. The probable significance of these findings for chromosome structure and behaviour is pointed out.

R. A. Stephen points out that in addition to the purely optical effect as described by Prof. W. L. Bragg and H. Lipson, there are two further effects which may give rise to angular scatter of spots in high-dispersion X-ray photographs. (1) A purely geometric effect due to the finite size or lack of parallelism of the incident X-ray beam. (2) An effect due to the finite width of the lines of the $K\alpha$ doublet. The first effect is insufficient to explain the scatter observed by Müller but the second effect gives results of the right order.

Prof. A. I. Virtanen and T. Laine find that if *l*-aspartic acid and pyruvic acid are added to crushed pea plants, the amino group is transferred from aspartic to pyruvic acid with formation of α-alanine. The authors consider that aspartic acid is the only primary amino-acid synthesized during the fixation of nitrogen and discuss the manner of its formation.

Prof. D. Kostoff submits photomicrographs of chromosomes in the root tip cells of *Triticum Timopheevi* showing differential staining—the distal ends being darker—presumably owing to a greater number of chromomeres. Since the heterochromatic regions have been found to be genetically inert (in the fruit-fly), the author considers that the genes are probably located between the chromomeres.

The spongy furrow on the inner surface of the anterior tibiæ of certain species of Reduviid bugs, which are predators of other insects, serve the purpose of enhancing the gripping power of the tibiæ when the prey is captured, according to N. C. E. Miller. They do not apparently help in climbing, as suggested by previous writers.

Results obtained with the sero-reaction of cancer described by Waldschmidt-Leitz and Brdička are given by F. Bergh, Dr. O. M. Henriques and J. Schousboe. They have obtained positive reactions with the sera of most cancerous patients and with those suffering from certain diseases of the liver, whilst non-cancerous individuals give predominantly negative results. The difference, they state, is unquestionable, but the statistical evidence is insufficient, as yet, to prove the value of the reaction in diagnosis.

A graph submitted by Dr. T. F. Wall shows that for nickel wires of diameter less than about 3/32 in. the value of the Young's modulus (determined by the electromagnetic method for measuring longitudinal vibrations) decreases with the diameter.

Drs. P. Jacquet and L. Capdecomme have studied the reflecting power of ultra-pure aluminium surfaces polished either by the classical mechanical process or by the new electrolytic method. The latter does not change the superficial crystalline structure and gives values very nearly the same at all points of several samples, whereas surfaces polished mechanically show reflecting power variable from point to point and always smaller than that observed after electrolytic polishing.