

national Federation for Documentation contain perhaps the most comprehensive collection of original authoritative papers within its field, and should be studied by everyone who has at heart the mobilization of recorded information. The first issue has already been sold out. But, by the time these notes are in print, a new issue will be available at the moderate price of £1 net for the three volumes. These will be obtainable directly from the International Federation for Documentation, Willem Witzgenplein 6, The Hague, or from its British National Section, British Society for International Bibliography, at the Science Library, Science Museum, South Kensington, S.W.7.

Those who are seriously interested in the task of making recorded information more fully available should put themselves in touch with Miss M. Gosset, the honorary secretary of the British Section at the above address.

Sir William Bragg's presidential address, as well as Dr. Alingh Prins' lecture as president of the Federation, together with the discussions of the papers, will be printed in the *Communications* published quarterly by the Federation.

Space will not permit to describe the Government banquet in the beautiful Hall of Christchurch, presided over by Lord Stanhope, the reception by the Vice-Chancellor in the Ashmolean Museum, the hospitality of the Mayor in the Town Hall, the garden party given by Dr. and Mrs. Priestley at their beautiful manor house at March Baldon, the interesting visit to Messrs. Morris Motors Ltd., the tea provided by Messrs. Kodak Ltd., and the various other visits and excursions, which did so much to create the prevailing atmosphere of friendship and provided those opportunities of social contact that constituted such a valuable part of the proceedings of the Conference.

S. C. BRADFORD.

Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux Annual Conference

THE fifteenth annual conference of the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux, held at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, on September 23-26, was somewhat overshadowed by the anxiety of the political situation, and also by the Conference of the International Federation for Documentation, which held its fourteenth annual conference simultaneously. If the joint sessions with the latter Federation unfortunately suffered from the depressing effect of an excessive number of papers which characterized the sessions of the International Federation, the remaining meetings at the ASLIB Conference had their characteristic spontaneity, and the discussion on the work of the Association at the annual meeting in particular indicated a lively interest on the part of members in its continued progress.

The president-elect, Sir William Beveridge, was unfortunately prevented by illness from giving his address on "The Use of Books in Social Science". Mr. E. W. Wignall's paper on "Museums and Research: Some Facilities in London", gave an indication of the extent to which museum officers carry out research, not only for their own departments but also for Government departments, universities and scientific institutions of different kinds all over the world. Facilities for workers not on the staff of a museum are often limited by the space available or the demands made on the time of the museum staff, and Mr. Wignall urged that in any new museum it is of the utmost importance that adequate study rooms should be provided. He also stressed the question of acknowledgment, very considerable help being sometimes given to a student which receives no acknowledgment in his subsequent papers. A brief subject list of museums in London was included in the paper.

At the annual general meeting of the Association, the honorary treasurer, Mr. A. F. Ridley, submitted accounts showing a slight balance of income over expenditure as compared with the deficit of the previous year. Although the membership of

the Association has also increased from 308 to 325, the report of the Council once more emphasizes the necessity for a much larger membership if the Association is to fulfil the functions which belong to it. The report also refers to the increased circulation of the ASLIB Book-List and to the issue in May of a second edition of the "Select List of Standard British Scientific and Technical Books". Increasing use is being made of the inquiry bureau, and the panel of expert translators has been reorganized, a new register having been established under new regulations. Eighty-six members have now been enrolled under the modified scheme.

In the absence of Sir William Beveridge, Mr. B. M. Headicar presided over the evening session on September 24, when Mr. Frederick Brown, lecturer in statistics at the London School of Economics, read a paper on "The Compilation of Statistics by Trade Associations", in which his felicity and liveliness of exposition drew the warm appreciation of a large audience. Mr. Brown referred to the difficulty of generalizing about the statistics compiled or issued by trade associations owing to the wide variations in practice both in compilation and in objective or use. Terminology is also important, as frequently trade statistics cannot be interpreted without knowledge of special terms used, or of the way in which they are compiled. Among the services which trade associations can render to their members in this way is the reproduction of market prices of special interest to them in the calculation of special index numbers.

While most trade associations base their statistical work on data collected and compiled outside, some few associations are breaking fresh ground, and Mr. Brown emphasized the opportunities which await trade associations in the field of statistical research, in such matters as the compilation of figures of consumption and production by members, stocks and plant capacity and operating or production costs. In this connexion, Mr. Brown pointed out that if such work is to have any value, membership of the

association must be representative of the trade or industry as a whole, or comprise such a majority of the trade that firms who are not members are too insignificant to affect the returns.

Such statistical research could take two main forms: that of the descriptive study as seen in the survey of milk consumption in England and Wales undertaken by the Milk Board; or of the investigation type as in the survey of nutrition effects of milk also undertaken by the Milk Board; or the investigation into the causes of the marked fluctuations in retail trade about Easter and Whitsuntide undertaken by the retail distributors' associations. Mr. Brown pleaded for greater participation in such research by the universities and for greater readiness to place statistical information at the disposal of the community for the advancement of knowledge. He referred to examples of co-operation in this respect

between the Retail Distributors' Association, the Bank of England and the London School of Economics, which while securing a check on possibilities of error and safeguarding the disclosure of individual sources of information, has made the collective returns accessible for research or public purposes.

At the final session on Sunday evening, Mr. Max Nicholson, secretary of Political and Economic Planning (PEP), gave an interesting account of how material for the PEP Press Report was compiled, which is of some interest to scientific workers as an example of the possibilities of the group method of inquiry and research into subjects in which very little published information is available, and especially in making available neglected experience and buried sources of information. Mr. Nicholson also stressed the value of PEP anonymity.

Society of Chemical Industry

Autumn Meeting

THE autumn meeting of the Society of Chemical Industry held in Glasgow on September 16-20 was notable for a symposium of papers on the trend of progress. The opening paper, presented for the Food Group by Dr. L. H. Lampitt, referred to the part played by chemists in the effort of nations to secure self-sufficiency, and particularly to the issues involved in the storage and preservation of food. Dr. Lampitt asserted that although internationalism in the scientific world is less pronounced, we are heading towards international agreement in certain aspects of dietetics as well as towards increased Government control of the efforts of chemists in the field of food science.

On behalf of the Road and Buildings Materials Group two papers were presented. In the first of these, Mr. R. Fitzmaurice discussed the question how far standardization and how far freedom of design are to predominate in the building industry. Referring to the accumulation of the scientific knowledge necessary to replace tradition, Mr. Fitzmaurice indicated some of the possibilities which standardization offers, given close co-operation between the architect and engineer as in the "Mapin" system of instruction. He referred also to the question of building regulations and the obstacles they sometimes present to progress whether in the introduction of new materials or new methods. Mr. Fitzmaurice referred also to the large number of British standard specifications now in existence for building materials. Many of these should provide a valuable safeguard for the purchaser in respect of particular properties of materials which constitute a source of difficulty in practice, but many architects appear to be unaware of their existence. This position, however, may slowly change through the use of these specifications in official specifications for Government or local authorities works.

The second paper, by Mr. J. O. Willis, dealing with road design, urged a trunk road policy in the construction of which full advantage could be taken of modern practice of alignment, and all interruption of the main streams of traffic obviated by overbridges and properly laid-out junctions. He stressed the

importance of standards of riding quality and the improvement of surface quality, particularly of the need for the introduction of new methods of laying bituminous roads. Resistance to skidding is of vital importance, and Mr. Willis considers that asphalt surfacings, finished with pre-coated chippings, are only a palliative. The ideal he suggested is a fine textured bituminous carpet impervious to water and presenting a uniform texture throughout its life. In the light of work in Great Britain and in Holland, rubber might play an important part in solving the problem.

The paper presented by Dr. V. E. Yarsley on behalf of the Plastics Group referred to the fact that, in the plastics industry, only rarely has one material dominated another. This position is likely to continue, although with the balance of power inclining in favour of the thermoplastics group. The current trend is towards improved tensile properties and greater stability to heat, making possible the use of higher temperatures and the production of larger moulded units. In the field of cellulose plastics, the development of quick-growing celluloses which can be produced within Great Britain or the Empire is an obvious gain in a national emergency. Cellulose triacetate is now a commercial possibility, and ethyl-cellulose is promising for coating and impregnating compositions. The attention now being devoted to the production of shock-resisting phenolic plastics should ultimately provide an entirely new field for exploitation, while extended phenols should also do much to emphasize the possibilities of plastics as "the fourth material of construction". Amino-plastics are also promising for transparent plastics, and other possibilities lie in laminated plastics and for creaseless fabrics. The increased use of plastics for the production of high-duty wheels, gears and bearings, and also for airscrews, struts and construction parts in aircraft is only one of the developments to be expected.

In the final paper of the symposium, Prof. W. M. Cumming and Mr. F. Rumford reviewed tendencies in chemical engineering both in regard to materials