

Research Co-ordination Committee

AN account of the work carried out by the Research Co-ordination Committee during the past year was given at a meeting of the Group held in Cambridge on August 22. The work included (1) a list of essential statistics, on which the views of bodies utilizing statistical data (Political and Economic Planning, Engineers' Study Group, New Fabian Research Bureau), the Institute of Statistics and several leading statisticians have been obtained; (2) co-ordination of work on South Wales problems including a résumé of industrial proposals, bibliography on South Wales, report on land improvement, and on family budgets of employed and unemployed workers; (3) information on numerous societies and sources of information, which it is hoped will be published in the form of a directory of associations. The Research Co-ordination Committee has also been active in bringing together editors of scientific and other periodicals to consider co-ordinating publications and has gathered material which is to be put before the new Division of the Social Relations of Science of the British Association.

Safeguarding Unpublished Research

DURING the recent period of uncertainty in international relations, the Research Co-ordination Committee approached several organizations having valuable unpublished data with the view of securing co-operation for their safety in case of war. The microfilm technique of duplication was considered, since it is relatively inexpensive (about 0.1d. per page) when the necessary apparatus, which can be hired for a minimum period of one year, is available. This could be arranged if a sufficient number of bodies co-operate. The response has been satisfactory, and others interested should communicate with the Hon. Secretary, Research Co-ordination Committee, 35 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

Memorandum on Smallpox

DURING the last three years, Great Britain has enjoyed comparative freedom from smallpox, and the Ministry of Health has therefore considered it appropriate to issue a memorandum in order to direct the attention of local authorities to the possibility which now exists of limiting the spread of smallpox by prompt and vigorous action as soon as it is reported to have appeared (Memo. 215 (Med.). London: H.M. Stationery Office. 2d.). The memorandum contains an account of the incidence of, and mortality from, smallpox in England and Wales since 1901, and a summary of the procedure which should be adopted should the disease appear in a district.

Suggested Science Museum for Cambridge

A LARGE exhibition of historic scientific instruments and specimens was arranged under the auspices of the Cambridge Philosophical Society for the meeting of the British Association last August. It was most gratifying to see the long series of instruments associated with the great masters of the Cavendish Laboratory—with Wollaston, Clerk Maxwell, J. J.

Thomson, Rayleigh and Rutherford—but the older periods were also well illustrated by loans from the colleges. At the final meeting of the General Committee in Cambridge, it was resolved "that an expression of hope that the scheme for a permanent exhibition of historic scientific instruments in Cambridge would be brought to fruition, should be communicated to the University authorities", and this has been done.

Electrified Omnibuses

MR. A. E. WISEMAN, 21 Hanbury Road, Acton, London, W.3, writes stating that on boarding an omnibus recently, he felt a distinct electric shock on grasping the metal handrail, with one foot on the step and the other on the pavement. The effect was also observed by others, particularly on 'crisp' mornings. He suggests that the electricity may be caused by the friction of the tyres on the ground, which incidentally insulate the body of the bus. It is of interest to note that this effect was described in a letter in NATURE of June 29, 1929, p. 981, by Sir Charles Boys, who observed it on a hot dry day and ascribed it to the scuffing of the tyres on the polished asphalt.

A Naked-Eye Sunspot

A GIANT sunspot, easily visible to the naked eye, is crossing the sun's disk in latitude 17° north from October 5 until 18, the time of central meridian passage being October 11.9. The area of this spot on October 6, corrected for foreshortening, was nearly 2,500 millionths of the sun's hemisphere, and on October 8 its area measured 2,800 millionths, the measurements being made at Greenwich Observatory. The spot on the latter date extended in solar longitude for about 125,000 miles. Sunspots as large as this one are usually associated with terrestrial magnetic disturbances commencing about one day after the time of central meridian passage. On October 7, a small magnetic storm was recorded at the Greenwich magnetic observatory at Abinger, the disturbance reaching a maximum between 16^h and 20^h U.T. The ranges of the magnetic elements were: in declination $51'$; in horizontal force 200 γ ; and in vertical force 260 γ . It seems uncertain, however, whether this magnetic disturbance can be linked to the big sunspot; the most probable time of one related to the disturbed area of the sun containing this sunspot would be about October 12–13.

Colonial Service Appointments

THE following appointments in the Colonial Service have recently been made: W. D. L. Corby, agricultural officer, Nigeria; T. N. Greeves, agricultural officer, Nigeria; D. G. Jones, agricultural officer, Malaya; H. T. Measurs, agricultural officer, Kenya; R. J. S. Waddington, inspector of mines, Nigeria; D. Luke, veterinary officer, Uganda; L. D. Branch, inspector of plants and produce, Gold Coast; C. L. Crosse, sleeping sickness control officer, Nigeria; J. H. C. Hicks, sleeping sickness control officer, Nigeria; R. Patterson, inspector of plants and

produce, Gold Coast; B. E. V. Parham (temporary assistant agricultural officer), agricultural officer, Fiji; J. D. Tallantire (agricultural officer, Nigeria), agricultural officer, Gambia (seconded); H. E. Hornby (director of veterinary services), director of tsetse research, Tanganyika Territory; D. A. Donald (temporary assistant agricultural officer), agricultural officer, Fiji; D. L. Foster (temporary assistant agricultural officer, Jamaica), junior agricultural instructor, British Honduras; L. W. Harwood (temporary assistant agricultural officer), agricultural officer, Fiji.

Biology in Education

UNDER the auspices of the Educational Advisory Board of the British Social Hygiene Council, a conference of principals and biology lecturers in training colleges will be held on October 22 at the British Medical Association House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1. Prof. J. B. S. Haldane will speak on "How to Make Biology Alive", and his remarks will be followed by discussion. Dr. Philippa Esdaile will speak on "The Place of Field and Practical Work in the Biology Course". A discussion on "The Concept of Human Biology" will be opened by Mrs. E. J. Hatfield and Dr. H. C. Squires. A selection of biological films will also be exhibited. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary, Educational Advisory Board, British Social Hygiene Council, Tavistock House South, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.

Announcements

PROF. B. W. HOLMAN, assistant professor of mining in the Imperial College of Science and Technology, has been awarded the Gold Medal of the National Bureau of Scientific and Industrial Research by the French Minister of Instruction and Fine Arts. The award of this medal to a British subject is very unusual.

DR. ALBERT E. QUINE, a medical officer of the Ministry of Health, has been appointed inspector of anatomy in England and Wales.

SIR HENRY BASHFORD, chief medical officer of the General Post Office, and Sir Kenneth Lee, chairman of Tootal Broadhurst Lee Co., Ltd., have been appointed to fill vacancies in the membership of the Industrial Health Research Board of the Medical Research Council.

THE Council of the Iron and Steel Institute confirms that, in accordance with previous announcements, the joint Autumn Meeting of the Iron and Steel Institute and the Institute of Metals in New York and the tours in Canada and the United States of America have been cancelled. The Autumn Meeting of the Iron and Steel Institute will be held at the Institution of Civil Engineers, Great George Street, Westminster, S.W.1, on October 26, at 10 a.m. and at 2.30 p.m. The Institute of

British Foundrymen has accepted an invitation for members to take part in the discussion on the third report of the Steel Castings Research Committee which will be presented during the afternoon session.

THE Council of the Iron and Steel Institute has accepted an offer from Captain C. A. Ablett to present a prize of £50 for the best paper on steelworks engineering submitted to the Institute, written by a junior engineer employed in a British iron or steel works, irrespective of whether or not he is a member of the Institute. Competing papers should be marked "Ablett Prize Paper" and sent to the Secretary of the Iron and Steel Institute, No. 4 Grosvenor Gardens, London, S.W.1, not later than January 31, 1939.

THE fifth biennial conference of the National Council of Mental Hygiene will be held at the Central Hall, Westminster, on January 12-14, 1939. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary of the Council, 76 Chandos Street, Palmer Street, London, S.W.1.

APPLICATIONS are invited for the Eunice Oakes research fellowship at the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, London, W.C.1. Candidates must be less than thirty-five years of age. The salary will not be less than £750 per annum. Further information can be had from the Secretary of the Hospital.

THE Middlemore Prize for 1939 in medical and surgical ophthalmology, consisting of a cheque for £50 and an illuminated certificate, founded in 1880 by the late Mr. Richard Middlemore of Birmingham, is offered by the British Medical Association for the best essay on the underlying causes of glaucoma with suggestions as to future research in clinics and laboratories. The essay should be sent to the Secretary, B.M.A. House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1, before December 31, 1938.

THE Council of the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom has established a Treacher Collins prize of £100 to be awarded triennially for the best essay submitted upon a subject selected by the Council. The subject for the first award is "Cerebro-spinal Disease in Relation to the Optic Nerve". Essays should be sent before December 31, 1938, to the Hon. Secretary, Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom, 5 Racquet Court, Fleet Street, E.C.4.

IT has been decided to form a medico-historical museum in Berlin after the model of the Wellcome Museum in London.

AN unusually large number of cases of infantile paralysis in Holland this summer has caused German authorities in some districts to forbid Dutch children crossing the frontier.