

3 mgm. *dl*- $\alpha$ -tocopherol per 5 minims. The booklet issued by this firm contains a brief survey of the chemistry, physiological function, and general clinical applications of vitamin E. It is pointed out that not only may vitamin E be effective in combating sterility in the female in cases of habitual or threatened abortion, but also that types of pregnancy toxæmia and premature separation of the placenta as well as dysmenorrhœa and vulvovaginitis may also respond favourably to administration. It may be effective in male impotence and may produce descent of ectopic testes. About three pages of the booklet are devoted to a description of work on the relationship of vitamin E and the anterior pituitary, carried out in the B.D.H. Laboratories by Barrie.

#### Earthquake near Seattle

THE United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, in co-operation with Science Service and the Jesuit Seismological Association, states that an earthquake was experienced in the State of Washington, U.S.A., on November 13, 1939, at approximately 7h. 45m. 49s. G.C.T. Reports of the earthquake were received from the seismographic stations at Georgetown, Chicago, Fordham, Pasadena, Pittsburgh, Tucson, St. Louis, Butte, Weston, Williamstown, Sitka, College, Philadelphia and Lincoln. From these reports, the epicentre has been calculated to have been near lat.  $47^{\circ} 35' N.$ , long.  $123^{\circ} 15' W.$ , which is to the west of Bremerton and south-east of Mount Olympus. No damage has been reported. It is well known that the western side of the American continent is more liable to earthquake shocks than the eastern side, though both as regards frequency and intensity the State of California appears to have suffered more in the past than the State of Washington or any other of the neighbouring States.

#### The Colonial Service: Appointments and Promotions

THE following appointments and promotions in the Colonial Service have recently been announced: G. G. Cowley, agricultural officer, Kenya; C. J. Dawkins, agricultural officer, Nyasaland; M. A. G. Hanschell, agricultural superintendent, British Guiana; J. Paine, agricultural superintendent, Gold Coast; T. A. Phillips, agricultural officer, Nigeria; H. W. T. Webb, agricultural officer, Nyasaland; R. S. T. Bowden, veterinary officer, Malaya; R. A. Hamilton, assistant meteorologist, Nigeria; J. A. Reid, research student, Institute of Medical Research, Federated Malay States; D. L. Blunt, director of agriculture, Nyasaland, to be director of agriculture, Kenya; C. J. McGregor, agricultural officer, to be senior agricultural officer, Tanganyika Territory.

#### The Parliamentary and Scientific Committee

THE Parliamentary Science Committee has now been re-formed on a new basis and will henceforward be known as the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee. Following a meeting on November 8, it was agreed to form an emergency committee forthwith and to invite all former officers and members of the executive committee to serve on it. A meeting of

this emergency committee was held at the House of Commons on Wednesday, December 6. Following the resignation of Mr. S. F. Markham as chairman in view of his forthcoming service abroad, Captain L. F. Plugge, M.P., was elected to the chairmanship. Prof. B. W. Holman and Mr. Alan E. L. Chorlton, M.P., will remain as vice-chairman and deputy-chairman respectively, while the new secretary is Mr. Christopher Powell. It was reported at the meeting that promises of support had been received from a large number of the organizations which previously supported the Parliamentary Science Committee.

#### Courses in Technical Optics

COURSES in technical optics, adapted for students with an initial training in physics or mathematics, are now being given as usual at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, South Kensington. The Technical Optics Section was founded in 1917 to meet the demands of the optical instrument industry and the Services for assistants with an optical training; and although a good many students have taken the course since that time, the present demand exceeds the supply. There are vacancies for a few more students who are prepared to begin work at once. The work is of a varied character, embracing many aspects of optical knowledge in its application to industry and to other sciences, and is of great national importance.

#### Cecil Peace Prize

A CECIL PEACE PRIZE of £100 is offered yearly for an essay on some subject connected with the maintenance of international peace, and having some bearing on the principles or work of the League of Nations. It is open to all undergraduates, without distinction of sex or nationality, of any university or university college in Great Britain or Northern Ireland, who have not attained the age of twenty-five years on the last day for submitting essays. The subject for the year 1940 is "What were the reasons for the 'failure' of the League of Nations in the years following 1930; and what steps should be taken after the present war to strengthen international authority?" The essay must be sent to the Secretary, Universities Bureau of the British Empire, 88A, Gower Street, London, W.C.1, so as to arrive on or before November 1, 1940. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary.

#### Institution of Electrical Engineers

THE meetings of the Institution of Electrical Engineers will be resumed in London during the second half of the current session if the present conditions continue. This applies to the ordinary meetings, informal meetings, meetings of the three technical sections and of the London Students' Section. As regards activities in the provinces, the various committees will decide in the light of local conditions whether they are able to carry out programmes of meetings, visits and functions. The first ordinary meeting of the programme for the