

## SCIENCE NEWS A CENTURY AGO

## Steam Navigation to the West Indies

A FURTHER step in the promotion of trans-Atlantic steam navigation was taken on September 26, 1839, when the Government granted a charter to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company which was formed to connect Great Britain and the West Indies by steam. By a contract made in 1840 with the Admiralty, the Company agreed for the sum of £240,000 per annum "to provide, maintain, and keep seaworthy, and in complete repair and readiness, for the purpose of conveying all Her Majesty's mails, a sufficient number (not less than fourteen) of good, substantial and efficient steam-vessels, of such construction and strength as to be fit and able to carry guns of the largest calibre now used on board of Her Majesty's steam-vessels of war, each of such vessels to be always supplied with first-rate appropriate steam engines of not less than 400 collective horse-power; and also a sufficient number (not less than four) of good, substantial and efficient sailing-vessels, of at least 100 tons burden each".

## Climate of Russian Possessions in America

IN a long notice of Von Baer's report on the climate of the Russian possessions in America, the *Athenaeum* of September 28, 1839, said: "There is no philosopher of the present day to whom Physical Geography (a branch of knowledge fast rising into vigour) is more indebted than M. Baer. . . . In 1830 the Baron F. von Wrangel, well known for his scientific exploration of the northern coast of Siberia, was appointed governor of the Russian possessions in America. In the course of last year Baron von Wrangel placed at the disposal of the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg, all the papers relating to the north-west coast of America . . . and from these papers the learned academician M. Baer immediately selected the Meteorological Journal for the subject of his comments." The observations were made at New Archangel on the southern Sitka Island (named in some maps Baranov Island) and von Baer made a comparison of the mean temperatures of that place with others in the same latitudes. "As the comparison exhibits in the broadest light that apparently anomalous contrast of climate in which it is the business of the physical geographer to trace the operation of constant laws, we shall here state the problem in the form of an abridged table:

	Mean Temperatures			
	New Archangel	Middle of the Continent	Nain on coast of Labrador	Bergen in Norway
	Lat. 57° 3' N. Long. 135° 13' W.	57° 105°	57° 61-20°	60-24°
Winter	31-7°	-4°	-1-2°	36°
Spring	42-2°	27-2°	21-6°	44-6°
Summer	56-3°	66-2°	45-6°	58-5°
Winter	47-8°	30-7°	36°	47-7°

## Friedrich Mohs (1773-1839)

ON September 29, 1839, Friedrich Mohs, the German mineralogist, died at Agardo, near Belluno, Italy, at the age of sixty-six. Born at Gernrode in the Hartz Mountains on January 29, 1773, he was educated at Halle and at the Mining Academy at Freiberg, which had been founded in 1765 and of which the famous Abraham Gottlob Werner (1749-1817) was then the inspector and teacher of mining and mineralogy. From Freiberg, Mohs went to

Austria to study further and in 1815 became professor of mineralogy at Gratz. In 1817 on the death of Werner he returned to Freiberg as professor of mineralogy, holding the post for nine years, after which he was transferred to the Imperial Academy, Vienna. Mohs was one of the originators of the crystallographic systems. His "Treatise on Mineralogy, or the Natural History of the Mineral Kingdom" was translated into English by William Haidinger and published in Edinburgh in 1825.

## APPOINTMENTS VACANT

APPLICATIONS are invited for the following appointments, on or before the dates mentioned:

METEOROLOGICAL OFFICER CADETS (Male) in the Department of Industry and Commerce—The Secretary, Civil Service Commission, 45 Upper O'Connell Street, Dublin (September 25).

ASSISTANT AIRCRAFT INSPECTOR, Grade I, in the Civil Aviation Directorate of the Government of India—The High Commissioner for India, General Department, India House, Aldwych, W.C.2 (quoting Appointments 5/1B) (October 14).

HEADMASTER OF HARROW SCHOOL—The Chairman of the Governors of Harrow School, c/o G. F. Finch, Clerk to the Governors, 70 Pall Mall, S.W.1 (October 16).

DIRECTOR OF STUDIES for the Anglo-Yugoslav Institute, Belgrade—The British Council, 3 Hanover Street, W.1 (quoting 'Yugoslavia').

## REPORTS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

(not included in the monthly Books Supplement)

## Great Britain and Ireland

Battersea Polytechnic. Evening and Afternoon Courses and Classes. Calendar for the Session 1939-1940. Pp. 40. Department of Hygiene and Public Health, Calendar for the Session 1939-1940. Pp. 21. 3d. Domestic Science Department and Training College, Calendar for the Session 1939-1940. Pp. 36. 3d. Technical College for Day Students, Calendar for the Session 1939-1940. Pp. 50. 3d. (London: Battersea Polytechnic.) [318]

Tuberculosis in Cyprus (Final Report). By Dr. N. D. Bardswell, (Reprinted from *Tubercle*, December 1933, January 1939, Vol. 20.) Pp. 46. (London: John Bale Medical Publications, Ltd.) [19]

Iron and Steel Institute. Special Report No. 27: Ninth Report on the Heterogeneity of Steel Ingots. Pp. lx+84+16 plates. (London: Iron and Steel Institute.) [19]

## Other Countries

Annual Report of the Auckland Institute and Museum for 1933-39. Pp. 42. (Auckland: Auckland Institute and Museum.) [308]

Sudan Government: Agricultural Research Institute. Report of the Government Analyst for the Year 1933. (Chemical Section, Publication No. 83.) Pp. 18. (Khartoum: Agricultural Research Institute.) [303]

Tanganyika Territory: Department of Agriculture. Entomological Leaflet No. 17: Entomologist's Report, 1933. Pp. 6. (Dar es Salaam: Government Printer.) 6d. [303]

Tanganyika Territory: Department of Lands and Mines, Geological Division. Bulletin No. 13: Explanation of the Geology of Degree Sheet No. 18 (Shinyanga). By Dr. G. J. Williams and N. W. Eades. Pp. 23+2 plates. (Dar es Salaam: Government Printer.) 2s. 6d. [308]

Colony and Protectorate of Kenya. Forest Department Annual Report, 1933. Pp. ii+36. (Nairobi: Government Printer; London: Crown Agents for the Colonies.) 1s. [303]

U.S. Department of Agriculture. Technical Bulletin No. 678: A Chemical Study of some Soils derived from Limestone. By Lyle T. Alexander, Horace G. Byers and Glen Edginton. Pp. 28. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.) 5 cents. [318]

Smithsonian Institution: Bureau of American Ethnology. Bulletin 101: War Ceremony and Peace Ceremony of the Osage Indians. By Francis La Flesche. Pp. vii+280+13 plates. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.) 35 cents. [318]

Prospectus of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture. Pp. 35+2 plates. (Trinidad and London: Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture.) [19]

Canada: Department of Mines and Resources. Report of Mines and Geology Branch for the Fiscal Year ended March 31, 1933. Pp. ii+11-60. Mines and Geology Branch, Bureau of Geology and Topography. Geological Survey Memoir 213: Geology and Mineral Deposits of Bridge River Mining Camp, British Columbia. By C. E. Cairnes. (No. 2443.) Pp. ii+149+6 plates. 50 cents. National Museum of Canada. Bulletin 93 (Anthropological Series No. 24): Assomption Sash. By Marius Barbeau. Pp. ii+51 (18 plates). 25 cents. (Ottawa: King's Printer.) [19]