

increasingly appreciated by parents, who recognize the value of its teaching. One of the difficulties is that English is learnt as a foreign language; so that subject can scarcely be taken, as at the University of London, with Middle English and Anglo-Saxon as necessary adjuncts. It would be like studying Latin in early and medieval sources as well as Virgil and Cicero. The Commissioners urge that the standard of the London degree should be attempted and some modification of the English course allowed, tending to special knowledge of English masterpieces.

The present diploma of the College is not recognized outside Malaya, and not much progress can be achieved without some external assistance in the examinations, which could be managed by the use of air-mail. The professors take leave once in three years, which puts rather a heavy burden on their substitutes, but gives them a chance to meet external examiners. The present arrangements for a president are inadequate, and the "high wastage rate" of failures needs to be reduced. Several drastic improvements are suggested. We regret to notice that science teaching in the schools is generally in a very backward state, and biology has been scarcely begun. The King Edward VII College of Medicine at Singapore is well equipped and does good work within its limits; but it needs a larger scope, particularly regarding public health.

#### *International Journal of Agrarian Affairs*

THE first International Conference of Agricultural Economists was held ten years ago. As the period elapsing between meetings is now three years, some means of maintaining an interchange of ideas, beyond the issue of the proceedings, seemed desirable. The *International Journal of Agrarian Affairs*, the first number of which has just been published, is a bold attempt to meet this need. Two numbers will be brought out each year, the intention being to develop a series of studies on economic and social problems, one such problem being dealt with at a time. The *Journal* will therefore serve as a complement rather than an addition to the statistical year-books of agricultural information which are already available. The kind of topics which will form the subject-matter are those common to all countries, and the aim will be to emphasize the universal concern with the solution of such problems, and to discuss them from all possible angles.

The first number deals with the problem of surplus agricultural population. Contributions are made from such widely different localities as Harvard University, Edinburgh, Washington, Quebec, Sofia and Riga. The theoretical basis of the problem is first discussed and an account given of the historical influence of landowning. Other writers stress the effect of policies of restriction on trade and on movements of population between countries, and describe the special problems of Bulgaria and Latvia, while as regards remedies the development of subsistence holdings is advocated. Though not actually the official organ of the International Conference of Agricultural Econom-

ists, the *Journal* will be issued free to all members. For non-members the price is 3s. 6d., or £1 per volume of six numbers (including postage). All subscriptions and communications should be addressed to the Editor, 3 Magpie Lane, Oxford.

#### Meteorology in Iraq

THE third annual report of the Director of the Meteorological Service of the Government of Iraq, which covers the year ending March 31, 1939, shows that, owing to the difficulty of obtaining the necessary staff, the basic organization of the Service had not been completed by that date. For example, although new offices were available at Nasiriya and Diwaniya, no staff was available to man them. At the headquarters station at Baghdad, continuous records of wind, temperature, humidity and rainfall were maintained and were analysed and published in the Monthly Weather Report. Upper winds were measured three times a day, and the results appeared in the I.C.A.N. summaries published by the Meteorological Office, London, up to December 1938. After that month they were published in Iraq together with similar summaries obtained from stations maintained by the Air Ministry, Meteorological Service, Habbaniya.

Meteorological information continued to be supplied to civil aviation from Baghdad and Basra, the number of messages rising to 1,200 per month during the winter. As the volume of air traffic over Iraq continued to increase, difficulty was experienced in maintaining this part of the service, and the need for an extension of the existing wireless service was felt. As was only to be expected, the report contains little of purely scientific interest. Owing to the fact that air-conditioning engineers were constantly asking for data concerning the dust content of the air, the Director placed an order for an Owens settlement dust counter and for the necessary microscope for measuring the records.

#### Lantern Slides

THE cost of making lantern slides from illustrations may be materially reduced by using paper negatives, and Mr. G. H. Bell, of the Physiological Institute, Glasgow, gives an account in the December issue of the *Journal of Scientific Instruments* of a method he has found very satisfactory. He uses "Kodak Paper Slow" exposed for three minutes at *f*/11, the illustration being illuminated by four 100-watt lamps placed just behind the camera lens. He develops with Kodak developer and gets a pure black and white negative. He prints on gas-light lantern plates using a mask and giving an exposure of 8 seconds for a surface intensity of 65 foot-candles, uses an energetic developer and gets a slide with black lines on a perfectly clear background both for line diagrams and half-tone illustrations.

#### Drift of the *Sedov*

THE Northern Sea Route Administration of the U.S.S.R. is preparing for press a collection of articles and other material relating to the remarkable drift of

the icebreaker *Sedov* in the Arctic, the crew of which was reported to have been taken off the icebound vessel by the icebreaker *Joseph Stalin* on January 13. The *Sedov* commenced her drift on October 23, 1937. The book being prepared for press tells the story of the *Sedov's* unprecedented drift. It contains articles by I. D. Papanin, head of the Northern Sea Route Administration and leader of the North Polar Expedition on the drifting icefloe of 1937-38, and by Prof. N. N. Zubov, and diaries of members of the *Sedov's* crew.

#### Clough Memorial Research Fund

THE Clough Memorial Research Fund of the Edinburgh Geological Society was instituted in 1935 for the purpose of encouraging geological research in Scotland and the north of England; the north of England is defined as comprising the counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, Durham, Westmorland and Yorkshire. Under the terms of administration of the Fund, a sum of approximately £30 is available annually. Applications for grants are invited for the period April 1, 1939, to March 31, 1940. These applications should state the nature of the research to be undertaken and the amount of grant desired. Applications must be in the hands of the Secretary, Clough Research Fund Committee, Edinburgh Geological Society, Synod Hall, Castle Terrace, Edinburgh, not later than March 1.

#### Royal College of Physicians: Lectures

THE following lectures have been arranged by the Royal College of Physicians to be delivered at the College, Pall Mall East, London, at 2.30 p.m.: Mitchell Lecture (postponed from 1939), Dr. F. G. Chandler, "Some Observations on the Diagnosis and Treatment of Pulmonary Tuberculosis" (February 7); Milroy Lectures, Dr. R. E. Smith, "Acute Infectious Diseases at School" (February 13 and 15); Goulstonian Lectures, Dr. W. D. W. Brooks, "The Pathology and Treatment of Pulmonary Tuberculosis" (February 22, 27 and 29); Bradshaw Lecture (postponed from 1939), Dr. J. C. Spence, "On the Nature of Disease in Infancy" (March 7); Oliver-Sharpey Lectures, Prof. E. P. Cathcart, "The Mystery of Alimentation" (March 12 and 14); Croonian Lectures, Dr. George Graham, "Recent Advances in Diabetes Mellitus: Aetiology and Treatment" (May 16 and 21).

#### Royal Aeronautical Society: Lectures

ARRANGEMENTS are being made by the Royal Aeronautical Society to resume part of the lecture programme which was postponed on the outbreak of war. It is hoped to arrange definitely for four or five lectures. The first one, on aircraft production, will be given by Mr. H. J. Pollard, on March 12 at 6.0 p.m., in the Institution of Electrical Engineers. Sir Alan Cobham and Mr. Marcus Langley have provisionally agreed to give a joint lecture on flight refuelling in the air; Mr. A. A. Hall on recent theoretical and experimental work on turbulence; Wing Commander T. R. Cave-Brown-Cave on noise

and nuisance in aircraft, at dates to be fixed. The Wilbur Wright Lecture will be delivered at the end of May.

#### The Night Sky in February

DURING this month, the night shortens in the latitude of London by  $1\frac{3}{4}$  hours. The moon is new on February 8 and full on February 23. Lunar conjunctions with the planets occur as follows: with Venus on February 11d. 21h., with Jupiter on 12d. 14h., with Saturn on 14d. 3h., with Mars on 14d. 4h. It will be seen from these conjunctions that the bright planets are a striking feature in the evening skies, enhanced by the presence of the crescent moon. On February 13 at 8h., Mars, which had overtaken Jupiter on January 7, is in conjunction with Saturn, while on February 20 at 22h., Venus and Jupiter are in conjunction. On February 28, Mercury is at greatest elongation ( $18^\circ$  east) and should be visible low in the west after sunset, leading the train of five bright planets, in addition to Uranus (stellar magnitude 6) in the constellation Aries. The planet Neptune, which transits about 2h. in mid-February, approaches the 8th magnitude star, B.D. +  $3^\circ 2549$  (Lalande 22237) on February 14. The light variation of Algol (total variation mag. 2.2-mag. 3.5) is best seen about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours before and after the following epochs: February 8d. 4.5h., 11d. 1.3h., 13d. 22.1h. and 16d. 19.0h.

#### Announcements

PROF. MAX BORST, professor of morbid anatomy at Munich, has been awarded the Goethe Medal for art and science on the occasion of his seventieth birthday for his work on cancer.

SIR HUMPHRY ROLLESTON, chairman of the executive committee of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund since 1924, and Sir Thomas Dunhill, sergeant-surgeon to the King, were admitted to the honorary fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of England at a meeting of the Council on January 11. Sir Hugh Devine, president of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, has accepted the honorary fellowship subject to the condition of personal attendance at the College at some future date.

THE number of births in France, which was 1,022,000 in 1876, fell to 750,000 in 1930 and 616,000 in 1939. For the last three years the number of deaths has exceeded the number of births by 14,000 annually.

DR. FRANS VERDOORN, formerly of Leyden, Holland, has now gone to the United States. Dr. Verdoorn controls the following publications: *Chronica Botanica*, New Series of Plant Science Books, "World List of Plant Science Institutions", "International Address Book of Plant Taxonomists", *Annales Bryologici* and other bryological publications. All communications concerning these should now be addressed to Dr. Frans Verdoorn, *Chronica Botanica* Co., c/o the Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, Mass., U.S.A.