

Sir Alexander Russell, Dr. P. Stocks and Dr. J. G. Thwaites. The secretary of the Royal Commission and of the three committees is Mr. N. F. McNicoll, of the Ministry of Health.

The terms of reference of the Royal Commission are to examine the facts relating to the present population trends in Great Britain; to investigate the causes of these trends and to consider their probable consequences; to consider what measures, if any, should be taken in the national interest to influence the future trend of population; and to make recommendations.

#### Lavoisier Statue in Paris

ACCORDING to the July 1943 issue of the French monthly philatelic review, *L'Echangiste Universel*, a copy of which has just reached Great Britain, a 4-franc postage stamp is being issued in commemoration of Lavoisier, the centenary of whose birth occurred on August 26, 1943 (see *NATURE*, Aug. 21, 1943, p. 207). Incidental reference is made to the removal "depuis un an" of the bronze statue of Lavoisier which stood at the north end of the Madeleine, not far from his town house (now rebuilt), 17 Boulevard de la Madeleine. *L'Echangiste Universel* appears to have no doubt about the fate of this superb monument—the work of Barrias—for its removal is attributed, with tactful obliquity, to the "service de la récupération des métaux", and the comment is added: "Pauvre Lavoisier connu à deux reprises, les vicissitudes de l'exécution capitale".

It will be remembered that Barrias adorned the pedestal of this beautiful work of art with two bronze reliefs, one of which depicted Lavoisier at work in his laboratory with Madame Lavoisier, his capable and devoted assistant, who is said to have learnt English so that she might translate for her husband the scientific papers of his great contemporaries, Cavendish and Priestley. In the other panel could be seen Lavoisier lecturing before the Paris Academy of Sciences, with Lagrange, Monge, Lavoisier, Condorcet and Laplace among his audience. Though the pedestal was standing when *L'Echangiste Universel* recorded the destruction of the statue, the activities of the "service de la récupération des métaux" in occupied countries would seem to indicate that Barrias' bronze panels, with the statue, may never be seen again.

#### New Mathematical Tables

THE many users and admirers of the New York Work Projects Administration Mathematical Tables always studied the impressive list at the end of each volume of further tables to be published, and looked forward to the time when much-needed values would be available. It was a great shock to them when President Roosevelt announced, towards the end of 1942, that all W.P.A. activities were to cease; it was hard to realize that such a great international asset as the wonderful New York team of computers—the greatest the world has ever known—was to be destroyed at a time when its proved usefulness might have been diverted to the war effort. Actually, although the greater part has been disbanded, a nucleus has remained in being to help the Service departments, under the sponsorship of the U.S. Bureau of Standards. Naturally there were, early in 1943, a great number of tables ready for press, but

not printed. It is with feelings of relief that we learn that the publication of these has now been provided for, and that four volumes have been announced already. The first gives reciprocals of the integers from 100,000 to 200,000, and thus extends the tables of Oakes (now unobtainable) and Cotsworth, which stop at 100,000. The second is a 10-place table of the Bessel functions  $J_0(z)$  and  $J_1(z)$  for complex arguments, giving real and imaginary parts for  $\phi=0(5^\circ)90^\circ$  and a range  $0(0.01)10$  of the modulus. The third table gives circular and hyperbolic tangents and cotangents to eight significant figures for  $x=0(0.0001)2$ ; it is thus a companion to the similar values of sines and cosines that appeared in 1939. The American practice of computing by calculating machines led to a revival some fifteen years ago of the Lagrangian interpolation formula. The new tables now provided give the coefficients for interpolating with any number of points (that is, tabular values) from 3 to 11. Incidentally, they include all the coefficients of Everett's central difference formula. The tables are to be issued by the Columbia Press, Ithaca, N.Y. (in Great Britain by Scientific Computing Service, Ltd., 23 Bedford Square, London, W.C.1).

#### British Medical Bulletin

IN 1940 the Medical Research Council, the Ministry of Information and the editorial department of the British Medical Association decided to send abroad abstracts of important articles in British medical journals, and Dr. Howard Jones was appointed to do this work under the direction of the editor of the *British Medical Journal*. By the end of 1941 a British Medical Information Service had been formed, and the British Council, which had supported the work from its inception, took it over as a permanent part of its work. The *British Medical Bulletin* is published in English, Turkish, Portuguese and Spanish, and Dr. Howard Jones, who is now a whole-time officer of the British Council, has made it a valuable addition to medical literature.

#### One Hundred Years at the Cincinnati Observatory

EVERETT L. YOWELL has an interesting article with the above title in *Sky and Telescope* (3, No. 2; December 1943). He gives an account of the development of the Observatory from the days when Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel resigned his professorship of mathematics, engineering and mechanics at Cincinnati College, and later, in the spring of 1842, started giving lectures on astronomy. These lectures were so well received that Mitchel announced his intention of building and equipping an observatory; and immediately he solicited membership for a society, each member to subscribe for a share at 25 dollars. It is remarkable that in spite of many initial difficulties—lack of funds in particular—Mitchel began the erection of the building with one carpenter and one mason as foremen, and on November 9, 1842, ex-President John Quincy Adams, then in his seventy-seventh year, laid the corner stone. In January 1845 the 11-inch refractor which Mitchel had purchased in Munich arrived; it was mounted in the spring of the same year.

As the Observatory was without endowment, Mitchel agreed to act as director for ten years without remuneration. Unfortunately, he had to devote a lot of time to lecturing at the College, which provided his only means of livelihood, and in consequence he

had very little time for astronomical work. The Observatory passed through many changes, including its removal to a better site and the appointment of Prof. Ormond Stone as director in 1875. He revived the study of double stars which had been undertaken by Mitchel, but was carried out in a desultory manner owing to other responsibilities. Stone was succeeded by H. C. Wilson (1882-84), Dr. Jermain G. Porter (1884-1930), E. L. Yowell, the author of the article (1930-40), and Dr. Elliott S. Smith, who succeeded him and is now in charge. A catalogue of stars observed by Dr. Smith is nearly ready for publication, and Dr. Paul Herget has done valuable work in computing orbits for the last two satellites of Jupiter.

### Penicillin

A SPECIAL issue of the *British Medical Bulletin* (2, No. 1; 1944) devoted to work on penicillin contains special articles by Prof. L. P. Garrod, Prof. A. Fleming, Prof. H. W. Florey, Dr. E. Chain and Dr. M. E. Florey, and reviews of papers published between 1929 and 1943 on the discovery of penicillin and on its chemotherapeutic action, purification and chemical properties and on clinical trials of it. An appendix deals with the Oxford Unit, the slide-cell technique and communications not reviewed in this issue of the *Bulletin* or published in other countries. Everyone interested in penicillin will find this excellent review of the subject valuable.

### West Indian Conference

THE first of a regular system of West Indian conferences is to be opened in Barbados on March 21 (see p. 320 of this issue). The conference, which will be presided over by Sir Frank Stockdale, British co-chairman of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission, will consider means of raising the nutritional level in the Caribbean area, the re-absorption into civil life of persons engaged in war employment, the planning of public works for the improvement of agriculture, education, housing and public health, health protection and quarantine, industrial development, and the Caribbean Research Council and possibilities for its expansion.

### Royal Society of Edinburgh: New Fellows

THE following have been elected ordinary fellows of the Royal Society of Edinburgh: Mr. John Anthony, lecturer in botany, University of Edinburgh; Dr. Daulatrai Bhatia, senior lecturer in zoology, Government College, Ludhiana, India; Prof. David Burns, Department of Physiology, University of Durham; Mr. John G. Carr, cancer research worker, Institute of Animal Genetics, University of Edinburgh; Dr. R. W. Craig, Scottish Secretary, British Medical Association; Dr. L. J. Davies, lecturer, Department of Medicine, University of Edinburgh; Prof. E. M. Dunlop, Department of Bacteriology, University of Durham; Mr. J. M. Geoghegan, president of the Society of Accountants in Edinburgh; The Hon. Lord Gibson, chairman of the Scottish Land Court; Mr. J. Methuen Graham, surgeon, Edinburgh Royal Infirmary; Prof. Arthur Holmes, Department of Geology and Mineralogy, University of Edinburgh; Dr. D. J. A. Kerr, lecturer on forensic medicine, School of Medicine of the Royal Colleges, Edinburgh; Prof. J. R. Learmonth, Department of Surgery, University of Edinburgh; Dr.

W. Ledermann, assistant lecturer and Carnegie Fellow, University of St. Andrews; Dr. A. D. McEwen, chief bacteriologist, Moredun Institute Animal Diseases Research Association, Midlothian; Dr. Robert McWhirter, lecturer in radiology, University of Edinburgh; Major Noel Ewart Odell, Clare College, Cambridge; Dr. R. F. Ogilvie, lecturer in pathology, University of Edinburgh; Prof. G. D. Preston, Department of Physics, University College, Dundee; Mr. W. S. Procter, regional engineer, Post Office Engineering Branch, Scottish Region; Dr. T. Robertson, district geologist, H.M. Geological Survey, Edinburgh; Dr. R. W. Scarff, reader in morbid anatomy, University of London; Mr. E. Openshaw Taylor, lecturer in electrical power and machinery, Heriot-Watt College, Edinburgh; Dr. O. A. Trowell, lecturer in human physiology, University of Edinburgh; Prof. J. Stirling Young, Department of Pathology, University of Aberdeen.

### Announcements

THE triennial award of the Coopers Hill War Memorial Prize and Medal, which fell in 1943 to the Institution of Electrical Engineers, has been made by the Council to Mr. Harold Page, for his paper on "The Measured Performance of Horizontal Dipole Transmitting Arrays".

THE award for 1943 of the Page Prize for the best thesis submitted in lieu of the Associate Membership Examination of the Institution of Electrical Engineers has been made by the Council to Mr. J. V. Beaumont for his thesis entitled "Types of Power Transformers, with special reference to On-Load Voltage Regulators".

THE Institution of Electrical Engineers will this year make awards of the Duddell and Manville Scholarships. These Scholarships are each worth £150 a year for three years. They are open to British subjects who are less than nineteen years of age on July 1, 1944, who have passed the matriculation examination of a British university, or an equivalent examination, and who wish to take a whole-time day course in electrical engineering. Applications for particulars and nomination forms should be addressed to the Secretary of The Institution, Savoy Place, London, W.C.2. Nomination forms must be returned not later than April 15.

THE ninth Pedler Lecture of the Chemical Society will be delivered by Dr. C. R. Harington on March 16 at 2.30 p.m. Dr. Harington will speak on "Newer Knowledge of the Biochemistry of the Thyroid Gland".

A WEEK-END course for medical practitioners on factory medical services and industrial diseases will be held at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine on March 25-26. It will be opened by Sir Wilson Jameson, chief medical officer of the Ministry of Health, and lectures will be given on "Tuberculosis and the Industrial Worker", "Industrial Diseases of Coal Miners", "Medical Inspection of Canteens", "Young Persons in Industry", and "The Medical Selection of Factory Personnel". The fee of one guinea for the course should be sent to the Secretary, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, Gower Street, London, W.C.1, not later than Monday, March 20.