

public meetings arranged by the French Association of Scientific Workers under the auspices of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, which have been going on since early spring. The meetings have been divided into lectures on laboratory technique, public lectures on current scientific topics and visits to laboratories. The programme, which contains more than a hundred entries, reveals an enthusiasm that augurs well for the resurgence of science in Paris.

Physical Society: Presentation of Duddell Medal

At a meeting of the Physical Society to be held at the Royal Institution at 4 p.m. on May 23 the Duddell Medal for 1944 will be presented to Dr. F. W. Aston in recognition of his invention and subsequent development of his mass spectrograph. This instrument, first designed and constructed in 1919, made use of a new and ingenious method of electromagnetic focusing and enabled Aston to establish that many elements consist of mixtures of isotopes, as foreshadowed by J. J. Thomson's work on neon. With later modifications of the instrument, Aston investigated most of the known elements and showed that all the stable isotopes, of which he discovered hundreds, had nearly integral masses, taking O as 16. Aston's later work is concerned mainly with the small deviations from this whole-number rule, representing the binding energies of the isotopes in the nucleus. Using a much improved mass spectrograph, he measured masses with a precision of 1 in 20,000 and determined the binding energies in isotopes of the lighter elements with great accuracy. Finally, from the masses and the photometrically determined relative abundances of the isotopes, Aston calculated "chemical atomic weights" for comparison with, and as a check upon, the results of other methods. At the same meeting, Prof. E. N. da C. Andrade will deliver his presidential address, taking as his subject "The History and Future of the Physical Society".

Belgian Delegation in Britain

A SECOND group of Belgian professors, representing the Belgian Fondation Universitaire, is visiting Britain for a fortnight at the invitation of the British Council. For five of them it is their first visit to this country. The delegates are: Prof. Jean Brachet, Faculty of Science, Brussels; Prof. Marcel Homes, Faculty of Science, Brussels; Prof. Henri Koch, Faculty of Comparative Physiological Science, Louvain; M. Marius Lecompte, keeper of the Belgian Royal Museum of Natural History; Prof. Jean Louis, State Agricultural Institute, Gembloux; Prof. Victor Van Straelen, Faculty of Science, Ghent, and Brussels; Dr. Pierre Wigny (law and legal science); Prof. Jean Haesaert, Faculty of Law, Philosophy and Letters, Ghent; Prof. Paul Rousseau, Faculty of Law, Louvain; Prof. Paul de Visscher, Faculty of Law, Louvain. Among the places the delegation will visit are the British Museum, the Imperial College, Kew Gardens and the Bureau of Micrology, University College, London, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the Society for Visiting Scientists, Rothamsted Experimental Station, Oxford and Cambridge.

Advisory Committee on Building Research

The Minister of Works has appointed a scientific advisory committee to advise on and to suggest lines of scientific research; to suggest where this research could best be carried out and to keep it under review;

and to advise on the practical possibilities and further development of the results of current research. The committee consists of Prof. J. D. Bernal (physics), Birkbeck College, London (chairman); Dr. E. F. Armstrong, member of Building Research Board; Prof. J. F. Baker (mechanical sciences), University of Cambridge; Prof. P. M. S. Blackett (physics), University of Manchester; Prof. W. E. Curtis (physics), University of Durham; Dr. C. C. Douglas, University of Oxford, chairman, Joint Committee on Heating and Ventilation (Building Research Board and Industrial Health Research Board); Prof. C. D. Ellis (physics), King's College, London; Prof. I. M. Heilbron (organic chemistry), Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, scientific adviser, Ministry of Production; Prof. J. M. Mackintosh (public health), University of London; Mrs. J. V. Robinson, lecturer in economics, University of Cambridge; Sir Ernest Simon, chairman, Advisory Council, Ministry of Fuel and Power; Mr. F. E. Smith, chief superintendent, Armament Design Dept.; Prof. W. N. Thomas (engineering), University College, Cardiff; and Prof. S. Zuckerman (anatomy), Universities of Oxford and Birmingham. Mr. I. G. Evans, director of building research; Lord Amulree, medical officer, Ministry of Health; and Dr. R. S. F. Schilling, secretary, Industrial Health Research Board, are assessors. Sir Reginald Stradling is executive officer.

Release of Requisitioned Land and Premises

THE second report from the Select Committee on National Expenditure for the Session 1944-45 deals with the release of requisitioned land and buildings. It emphasizes the weaknesses in existing land legislation which were stressed during the debate in the House of Commons on the Requisitioned Land and War Works Bill, and shows the need for incorporating in the Bill provisions to amplify the assurances which Sir John Anderson gave to the House of Commons in that debate. An instance cited in the report of an airfield constructed on 600 acres of farm land and 260 acres of common land in the 'green belt', into which the Select Committee inquired, shows that existing legislation fails to protect common land or to provide for its reinstatement. The menace to the countryside which still persists is shown by two further examples: the Admiralty's claim to Bodmin Moor, rich in archaeological interest and potentialities for research, and also an important catchment area, for use as a bombing range—since dropped—and the War Office inability to say whether the tract between the Frome River and Studland and Swanage Bays, cleared for training purposes, is to be restored to public use.

On the question of premises, the Select Committee's report indicates that the fundamental need is the same, and its principal recommendation is that a supervisory authority should be entrusted with the task of pressing for the release of requisitioned premises, bearing in mind urgent civilian needs; and a central and independent review of the use of premises and of storage requirements should be instituted and pressed forward with all practicable speed. But while a valuable system of co-ordinating the release of requisitioned land and premises has been devised, the little use that has so far been made of it is not to be attributed entirely to departmental reserve or inaction: it is due at least in part to the absence of decisions at the centre. The report recommends that the Government should not only come to an early decision whether it is more

to the national disadvantage to sterilize space by housing surplus stores or to scrap the stores, but also provide the departments, with the least possible delay, with the directions as to the strength and organization of the defence forces required after the War, which will enable them to determine which properties they will need to acquire and which of those now held they will eventually be able to release. Besides, the Select Committee recommends an independent review by the Government of the practice of departments in the retention of stores, and in this connexion the advice of Government scientific and research organizations should be sought in classifying stores according to their probable future use, having regard to scientific progress. The procedure for declaring stores obsolete also requires speeding up, and surplus stores and scrap arising overseas should, wherever possible, be disposed of without being brought back to Great Britain. Subject to political and strategic considerations, the fullest use should be made of storage facilities overseas for stores required for the war against Japan.

Museums as Contemporary Educational Centres

A MEMORANDUM received from Mrs. M. Harrison, acting curator of the Geffrye Museum, London, E.2, deals with the present-day problems of the creative use of leisure in an industrialized society—the education of children of a non-academic turn of mind, and the bridging of the gap that still tends to lie between school and the actualities of life. It is suggested that the solution lies in the establishment of centres specially equipped to show the individual, on a scale within his grasp, his place, meaning and purpose within the contemporary world. These centres could present in an appropriate manner a variety of visual material culled from industrial, commercial and public sources. They could also provide for courses of instruction in art and craft work and in contemporary social studies, educational film shows, facilities for study, and a scheme for loans to schools, with the view of encouraging further the individual's practical interest in, and investigation of, his or her surroundings in relation to the world at large.

Most of the plan is very feasible—indeed, several of the methods advocated have for some time been in successful operation in the 'village colleges' of Cambridgeshire; but it is difficult to accept the suggestion that it would be possible "to show the contemporary world . . . the direction in which the whole world is moving", either for reasons of exhibition space, or of opinion. There is much within it, however, which might well claim the attention of 'centres' already in existence, such as the larger provincial museums. For example, some of these in presenting the geology of their various areas are already 'illustrating' the fundamentals (not mentioned in the plan) inseparable from some industries. Upon such foundations the institutions concerned might profitably build along the lines suggested, and thereby help to refute the accusation (recently made at a meeting of the British Association) that the majority of museums in Great Britain are out of touch with modern life.

Burrell Art Collection for Glasgow

THE Corporation of the City of Glasgow reports this important acquisition in its Art Gallery and Museums Report for the year 1943-44. Sir William Burrell's collection, which consists of pictures, tapestries, stained glass, furniture, carpets, porcelain,

ivories, enamels and silver, has long been associated with his name. It is probably most widely known for its tapestries, which include many of international importance. While presenting this valuable material for the cultural benefit of Glasgow, the donor has at the same time made provision for the purchase of additional works of art (more especially for those of the Gothic period), and for a special building to house it. This building will eventually be erected in the country not less than sixteen miles from the city.

Cancer Control in Peru

THE August issue of the *Boletín de la Oficina Sanitaria Panamericana* contains an interesting article on this subject by Dr. Julio Bedoya Paredes, of the National Institute of Radiology of Peru, who states that since this Institute was founded two years ago a record has been kept of cases according to the site of the cancer, classification, treatment and results. The Institute includes a reception service, specialized clinics, such as gynæcology, surgery and internal medicine, X-ray, basal metabolism, laboratory and histopathology sections, statistical, health education and preventive sections. It is intended to create a biopsy service through which specimens may be sent by air to the Institute for diagnosis.

Announcements

DR. J. F. J. DIPPING, head of the Chemistry Department at the Mining and Technical College, Wigan, has been appointed head of the Science Department at the South-East Essex Technical College, Dagenham.

To encourage the reading of papers by student members of the Institute of Fuel, also those taking courses at universities and technical colleges, the Council has decided to make an annual award of a medal together with a prize consisting of books and instruments to the value of £5. Particulars can be obtained from the Secretary, Institute of Fuel, 30 Bramham Gardens, London, S.W.5.

At the anniversary meeting of the Royal Institution held on May 1, the following officers were elected: *President*, Lord Rayleigh; *Treasurer*, Sir Robert Robertson; *Secretary*, Dr. A. O. Rankine; *Managers*, Prof. E. N. da C. Andrade, Dr. F. H. Carr, Sir Charles Darwin, Prof. Herbert Dingle, Dr. P. Dunsheath, Viscount Falmouth, Prof. G. I. Finch, Prof. C. L. Fortescue, Captain H. L. Hitchins, Mr. James Kewley, Mr. Arthur Marshall, Prof. H. R. Robinson, Dr. G. Shearer, Mr. H. S. Souttar, Sir George Thomson; *Visitors*, Brigadier R. A. Bagnold, Mr. J. G. Bennett, Mr. M. G. Bennett, Major W. H. Cadman, Dr. W. H. J. Childs, Mr. F. P. Dunn, Mr. Kenneth Gray, Dr. Wilfred Hall, Mr. James Henshilwood, Dr. W. Jevons, Mr. L. B. W. Jolley, Mr. G. S. W. Marlow, Prof. L. C. Martin, Mr. E. Kelly Maxwell, Prof. H. J. Plenderleith.

A COURSE of six lectures on "The Problem of Freedom in a Planned Society" to be delivered on Wednesdays, beginning May 16, at 7.30 p.m., at Victory House Hall (N.S.P.C.C.), Leicester Square, London, W.C.2, has been arranged by the Progressive League. The speakers include Prof. H. Levy, Major Adrian Stephen, Prof. M. Polanyi, Prof. F. A. Hayek, Dr. C. A. Smith, and Prof. D. Mitrany. Tickets, 6s. for the course, 1s. 6d. for single lectures, can be obtained from the secretary of the Progressive League, 20 Buckingham Street, London, W.C.2, or at the door.