

Glaciological Society. Meetings are held at about three-monthly intervals in London, Cambridge and other places, and the papers with their discussions are printed and circulated in the Society's journal, which among other features contains a useful glaciological bibliography. Membership of the Society is open to all who have scientific, practical or general interest in any aspect of snow and ice study, and is by nomination. Further particulars may be obtained from the Assistant Secretary, British Glaciological Society, *temporary address*, c/o Royal Geographical Society, Kensington Gore, London, S.W.7.

Scientific Background in China

RECENT reports of the British Council, in describing the work of its Cultural Scientific Office in Chungking, have given some account of the position of science in China, and still more factual accounts have been given by Dr. J. Needham in *Nature* (157, 175; 1946, and 156, 496; 1945). In "Chinese Science" (London: Pilot Press, Ltd., pp. 80), Dr. Needham presents the background and setting in which scientific work is carried out in China, and the vivid contrast of old and new. There is little here to indicate research actually in progress in China or the results so far achieved by Chinese workers; there is much to indicate how important will be the future contribution from workers imbued with such resourcefulness and determination to overcome the handicaps under which they have been compelled to work. Few who read this admirably illustrated little volume can doubt that under the organisation already established, and which Dr. Needham outlines in his preface, Chinese research workers will speedily be making unique contributions in fields of their own, and that urgent as may be China's needs for equipment and supplies, even now the traffic will not be only one way. Four profusely illustrated chapters describe the position of scientific and educational institutions in Szechuan, in the north-west, the south-east and the south-west, and if the emphasis is on the workers and conditions rather than on the work being done, that may well enhance the appeal to the general reader to whom, rather than to the man of science, it is obviously addressed.

Mechanism of Orogenesis and Volcanic Activity

IN a pamphlet dealing with "The West Indies and the Mountain Uplift Problem" (privately printed by B. T. Ord, Ltd., West Hartlepool, 1945, pp. 25+6 figs.), Dr. C. T. Trechmann presents a short account of the geological structure and history of the West Indies, largely based on his own observations; and having found there a puzzling assemblage of phenomena, such as causes difficulty to geologists from time to time, he expresses his disbelief in the various hypotheses now on trial and offers alternative suggestions. Dr. Trechmann's attempt to account for orogenesis and vulcanism, with special reference to the West Indies, involves the following fallacious or demonstrably untenable ideas: (a) that ocean water at considerable depth penetrating unconsolidated or fragmented conglomerates may induce metasomatism and generate heat by exothermic reactions; (b) that the floor of the Bartlett Trough may be lowered and that gaseous or magmatic and plastic material may be forced inwards and upwards beneath Jamaica and Cuba by the pressure due to four miles of sea water; (c) that the upward tidal pull on emergent land may be cumulative, so inducing a landward

flow of [sub-crustal] magmatizing gases or liquids and thereby still further raising the land and deepening the adjacent sea floor. If Dr. Trechmann were able to visualize the kind of earth that would have resulted from the operation of the above alleged processes, he would find it strikingly at variance with the real earth with which geologists are concerned.

Analysis of High-Purity Zinc and Zinc Alloys

PHYSICAL methods of analysis, such as by the use of the polarograph or the spectrograph, are particularly suited to the determination of minute quantities of impurities in zinc and its alloys. A panel was appointed in 1941 by the Non-ferrous Industry Committee of the British Standards Institution to consider recommended methods for the polarographic and spectrographic analysis of high purity zinc and zinc alloys for die casting. The panel found in its review of earlier work that, though the spectrograph was used in certain laboratories, neither the details nor the precision of the technique was sufficiently defined to justify the immediate recommendation of a spectrographic method; the use of the polarograph was observed to be even less developed. The panel therefore planned, and had carried out by a number of interested organisations, a considerable amount of experimental work. An account of these investigations has been published under the title "Polarographic and Spectrographic Analysis of High Purity Zinc and Zinc Alloys for Die Casting" (H.M. Stationery Office, 1945). Based on this work, recommended methods have been prepared in order to enable comparative information to be collected. The recommendations of the panel, "Recommended Methods for Polarographic and Spectrographic Analysis of High Purity Zinc and Zinc Alloys for Die Casting" (British Standard 1225; 1945. Pp. 36. 2s. net), are intended to be a guide and not a rigorously binding specification. The methods are effective, but, as the fields of analytical chemistry in which they lie are rapidly expanding, the Committee does not wish to impede development by strict rules. It is intended, therefore, to review the position at an early date in the light of further experience obtained by the use of these methods.

The National Museum of Wales

THE progressive activity of all departments of the National Museum of Wales is a striking feature of the report for the year 1944-45. Most of the material removed from the public exhibition galleries has now been restored and the reorganisation of certain parts of the collections is near completion. In accordance with the strong educational policy of the Museum, departmental lectures, gallery talks, demonstrations and special exhibitions have been provided throughout the year. The value of these is amply proved by the large attendance of students, teachers, classes of school-children and groups of Service men and women. Of the several public lectures given outside the Museum, mention may be made of a series of three given by the Keeper of the Department of Folk Culture and Industries to teachers at a Ministry of Education course held at Caerleon.

It is of further interest that the director of the Museum, after consultation with the Welsh Department of the Ministry of Education, prepared on behalf of the Council and at the request of the permanent secretary, a memorandum setting out the Museum's suggestions for a schools service. This document comprised: (1) a record and assessment

of the Museum's past and present achievement in this field of its work (this part being intended for circulation to local education authorities and other interested bodies), and (2) a full description of (a) the requirements envisaged for a comprehensive service, and (b) the minimum requirements for an initial trial period of five years. A full list of the material acquired by the various departments during the year is to be found in Appendixes I-III, and Appendix IV lists publications by members of the staff. The usual list of the publications of the National Museum of Wales appears in Appendix VII.

Agricultural Museums ?

THE Agricultural History Society (Washington, D.C.) was founded in 1919 "to stimulate interest in, to promote the study of, and to facilitate research and publication on the history of agriculture". In Vol. 19 (July 1945) of the Society's quarterly journal *Agricultural History*, Herbert A. Kellar has contributed a paper on "Living Agricultural Museums", in which he shows how much the museum may do to promote the aims of the Society. Notable progress has been made in the museum idea since 1920, particularly as regards the importance attached to accuracy, the introduction of motion into the exhibits and the recognition of the necessity for an appropriate setting for the objects. As an illustration of the latter, he describes a recreated village typical of rather more than a century ago that has been set up near Springfield, Illinois, where no modern effects are allowed to detract from the reality of the scene. His conception of a national agricultural museum is particularly ambitious, as he envisages an institution where not only the historical and social aspects of agriculture should be portrayed by means of exhibits, but which should also act as headquarters of important national farm organisations, and serve as a centre for educational activities, with special library and theatre attached. Branch museums specializing in matters of local interest, such as the Farmers Museum sponsored by the New York Historical Association at Cooperstown, are suggested as extensions of the central unit. Here exhibits of both indoor and outdoor forms of agricultural operations might well be compared with those of earlier periods, illustrating, for example, the evolution of machinery, transportation, milling, tanning or other processes.

Electricity Supply Legislation in Britain

A PAPER read in London on February 7 by W. Fennell before the Institution of Electrical Engineers examines a number of the legal provisions regulating the relations and rights as between undertakers and consumers of electricity. Suggestions are made as to revision which is necessary to promote the further expansion of the industry and the maintenance of good relations with consumers. Among other matters, the author deals with the existing complicated provisions in the Electric Lighting (Clauses) Act of 1899, which intending consumers can follow in any application for a supply of electricity; with service connections; with charges for supply; with the authorization of inspection and inquiry; and with meters.

Fate of German Ornithologists

MRS. MARGARET NICE, the well-known American ornithologist, has heard from Dr. Stresemann that Dr. Konrad Lorenz, one of the pioneers in the study of behaviour, notably in birds, whose probable death was reported in *Nature* of November 10, 1945, p. 578,

is alive. He is a prisoner in Russian hands, unwounded, and employed as a camp physician. The same letter also contains news of other German ornithologists: Dr. Steinfatt is in Denmark, but will shortly be returning to Germany; Dr. Meise is alive, but still in Russian hands.

Advanced Lectures on Special Librarianship

THE Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux hopes to organise a course of advanced lectures on special librarianship during the period May to July 1946, to be given at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, Gower Street, W.C.1. It is proposed to hold the lectures in pairs on a Friday evening and the following Saturday morning with a fortnight's interval between each pair. No examination will be held. The subjects to be covered will include classification, bibliography, special library routine, recording and filing of research material, abstracting, the use of statistics, documentary reproduction, editorial work and the compilation of technical information bulletins. The fee for the whole course (twelve lectures) will be £5 5s., but applicants may, if they wish, attend six lectures only at a fee of £2 15s. Lecture programmes and application forms can be obtained from the General Secretary, ASLIB, 52 Bloomsbury Street, W.C.1.

Announcements

ON the joint recommendation of the presidents of the Royal Society and the Institution of Civil Engineers, the Council of the Institution of Civil Engineers has awarded the James Alfred Ewing Medal for 1945 to Prof. R. V. Southwell, rector of Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, for specially meritorious contributions to the science of engineering in the field of research.

THE REV. D. O'CONNELL, S.J., of Riverview College Observatory, New South Wales, states in the course of a letter that Dr. H. P. Berlage, jun., of the Royal Observatory, Batavia, who is well known for his work on the origin of the solar system, is now in Bandoeng after spending three and a half years in a Japanese internment camp in Java.

A SYMPOSIUM arranged by the Road and Building Materials Group of the Society of Chemical Industry will be held on May 8 at the Royal Institution to discuss "Shrinkage and Cracking of Cementive Materials". This symposium has been organised in conjunction with the Ministry of Works so that men of science working on topics connected with urgent problems in the building campaign will have the opportunity of making their contribution. There will be two sessions: 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 2.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

THE Scientific Film Association (34 Soho Square, London, W.1) has voluntarily undertaken the task of preparing a comprehensive and up-to-date catalogue of the films of scientific interest which are available for general distribution in Great Britain. This work is being published by the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux and will be ready this month. It contains details of 600 films, many of which have been appraised and the majority graded. The catalogue is to be sold at five shillings per copy to non-members of the Scientific Film Association. It is proposed to issue supplements from time to time to keep the catalogue up to date.