

was founded in the United States in March 1946. A grant from the American Philosophical Society has enabled this new society to launch a quarterly publication termed *Evolution: an International Journal of Organic Evolution*, and thus supply a noticeable want. The first number was issued in July 1947 and it is edited by Dr. Ernst Mayr, of the American Museum of Natural History, assisted by associate editors which include representatives of Great Britain, France, and the U.S.S.R. The journal is of convenient size, 25 cm. × 17 cm., well printed on paper that allows the use of half-tone blocks without undue loss in reproduction, and contains 112 pages. In general, contributions are limited to twenty pages, but shorter "Notes and Comments" are also published. They are accepted from any field of biology so long as they have a bearing upon evolution. The contributions in the first number include several papers on *Drosophila*, cytology, Hawaiian birds, adaptive evolution in sticklebacks, hybrids in oak-tree populations and evolutionary rates in hypsodonty in horses and beavers. The subscription-rate for the volume is 6.00 dollars, or membership of the Society, which includes the journal, is 5.00 dollars, and the business manager is Mr. K. P. Schmidt, Chicago Natural History Museum, Chicago 5, Ill., U.S.A.

Disposal of Effluents from Harwell

THOROUGH precautions are being taken by the Ministry of Supply to ensure that the Thames water used at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell is returned to the river free from risk of harmful radioactivity. These precautions are being adopted after close consultation between Harwell experts and experts of the Ministry of Health, the Metropolitan Water Board and the Thames Conservancy, and on the advice of the Medical Research Council's Research Committee on the Medical and Biological Applications of Nuclear Physics. A certain amount of radioactivity in drinking water can be tolerated by human beings, and the tolerances laid down by the Medical Research Council for the Thames water are such that the medical and biological effects due to the consumption of water during the life-span of human beings would be for all practical purposes negligible. Roughly one million gallons of water a day will be involved. The greater part will be used for the cooling of plant and ordinary domestic requirements at the Establishment. The remainder of the water will be used for research processes, some of them radioactive, and a carefully controlled separate water system will be installed to deal with it. The most highly active portion will be segregated and will not be returned to the river. The remainder will be delivered to storage tanks where it will be tested by medical officers for compliance with the agreed tolerances, treated for chemical impurities and then mixed with the domestic waste water before being discharged into the Thames at Sutton Courtenay.

The system of treatment and examination has been designed so that several operations have to be carried out before the water actually passes into the six-mile long discharge pipe. Moreover, a new weir is being constructed at the point of discharge into the Thames, and the Harwell water will thus be turbulently mixed with much greater quantities of river water immediately it joins the main stream. These safeguards have received the approval of the Ministry of Health. The Thames Conservancy has decided to raise no objection to the proposals, so far as their interests are concerned, in view of the safeguards

agreed to be adopted and having regard to the assurances they have received from the Ministries concerned. By arrangement with the Ministry of Supply, the Thames Conservancy will be able to have samples taken at regular intervals for test purposes; the Ministry of Supply is providing facilities for testing such samples at a small riverside laboratory where Ministry of Supply scientific workers will themselves make sample tests and assist the Thames Conservancy.

Grants for Veterinary Education

THE University Grants Committee, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Department of Agriculture for Scotland have appointed an Inter-Departmental Committee to inquire into the financial needs of veterinary education in Great Britain and to make recommendations to the University Grants Committee, in respect of universities, and to the appropriate Agricultural Minister, in respect of other educational institutions, as to the application of any moneys provided by Parliament towards meeting these needs. The Committee is constituted as follows: Dr. A. E. Trueman (*chairman*), deputy chairman of the University Grants Committee; T. Dalling, director of the Veterinary Laboratories of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; H. W. Dawes, president of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons; Sir John Fryer, secretary of the Agricultural Research Council; Dr. Thomas Loveday, chairman of the Joint Advisory Committee on Agricultural Education; Prof. G. W. Pickering, professor of medicine in the University of London; J. N. Ritchie, deputy chief veterinary officer, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; W. L. Weipers, member of the boards of governors of the Royal (Dick) Veterinary College, Edinburgh, and of the Glasgow Veterinary College. The secretary to the Committee is Mr. E. Earnshaw Smith, of the University Grants Committee, 38 Belgrave Square, London, S.W.1. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Department of Agriculture for Scotland will each appoint an assessor to the Committee.

French Conference on Ageing of Population

THE French National Union for Prevention of Depopulation and the French National Demographic Institute are organising a three-day conference on scientific research on ageing in the population of France, to be held in Paris during April 22-24. The programme of the conference is comprehensive: it includes sections of (1) demography, (2) economic and (3) social aspects of the problem, (4) physiology, psychology and pathology of old age, (5) organisation of work and occupation for old people, (6) rejuvenation of population. The conference will not be an international one; all reports will be by French workers, and discussions will be in French. Although only a few foreign specialists in demography, social and economic sciences, and gerontology have been invited, specialists in these subjects can attend the conference without a special invitation and, provided they will speak in French, take part in discussions. The president of the Organisation Committee is M. F. Boverat, 217 rue de Faubourg St. Honoré, Paris, 8e.

International Conference on Large Electric Systems

AN International Conference on Large Electric Systems (C.I.G.R.E.) will be held in Paris during June 24-July 3. Matters relating to the British

delegation to the Conference are being dealt with by the British National Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. P. V. Hunter, at the offices of the British Electrical and Allied Industries Research Association. The official languages of the Conference will be English and French. Owing to the difficulties of accommodation, etc., intending delegates are requested to communicate with Mr. R. A. McMahon, Secretary, British National Committee, C.I.G.R.E., "Thorncroft Manor", Dorking Road, Leatherhead, as early as possible.

British Council Conference Grants

THE British Council has for some time had a small fund from which grants have been made in exceptional cases to permit foreign men of science (including agriculturists, engineers and medical men) to attend national or international conferences or meetings held in the United Kingdom. The principal grounds upon which such grants have been made are: (a) that the application has been received from the body convening the conference or meeting; (b) that the Science Committee of the British Council has supported the application; (c) that the foreign visitor would be unable to attend without assistance. The grants cover subsistence or part-subsistence in the United Kingdom during the period of the conference or meeting. Fares to and from the United Kingdom are not included. No grants are made in respect of secretarial or other organising expenses, or for entertainment of delegates or hire of premises. Conveners of conferences or meetings to be held in the fiscal year 1948-49 are advised that it is necessary that applications for assistance to foreign visitors should be received not later than a fortnight from the publication of this notice. All applications will be considered together, and conveners will be notified of the results by the end of February. It is improbable that more than a small proportion of applications can be met from the fund. Applications with full particulars (including reasons why financial support is considered necessary) should be addressed to the Administrator, Science Group, British Council, 3 Hanover Street, London, W.1.

Coats Fellowships at Glasgow

MESSRS. J. AND P. COATS, LTD., have provided funds for a research fellowship in chemistry or physics (excluding nuclear physics), tenable for two years, of the annual value of £300 and a supplement of £50 to cover research expenses. The Coats Fellowship will normally be awarded to a candidate with at least one year's experience in research work. It will be held in the University of Glasgow, but is open to graduates in science of any British university. The selection board will consist of the professors in the Departments of Chemistry and Natural Philosophy. A Coats Fellowship, similar in general conditions to that instituted at the University of Glasgow, is being offered to the Royal Technical College, Glasgow.

Biography of Sir Joseph Barcroft

PROF. K. J. FRANKLIN, Department of Physiology, Medical College of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Charterhouse Square, London, E.C.1, has been entrusted by Lady Barcroft and Prof. Henry Barcroft with the preparation of a biography of the late Sir Joseph Barcroft. He accordingly invites the co-operation of Sir Joseph's numerous friends and colleagues; he does not ask, at this stage, for specific

information on particular aspects of Sir Joseph's life or work, but for general comments, such as mode of treatment, anecdotes, etc. Full acknowledgment will be made in any consequent publication, and it is assumed by Prof. Franklin that, should he be prevented from writing the biography, the material may be passed on to an alternative author chosen by Lady Barcroft and her son. Communications should be sent to Prof. Franklin at the address above by April 30 next.

The Night Sky in February

NEW moon occurs on Feb. 10d. 03h. 02m., U.T., and full moon on Feb. 24d. 17h. 16m. The following conjunctions with the moon take place: Feb. 5d. 06h., Jupiter 3° N.; Feb. 11d. 06h., Mercury 8° N.; Feb. 13d. 12h., Venus 3° N.; Feb. 23d. 13h., Saturn 4° S.; Feb. 24d. 02h., Mars 0-6° S. During the first part of the month, Mercury is an evening star, setting at 18h. 20m. and 17h. 58m. on Feb. 1 and 14 respectively, and is in inferior conjunction on Feb. 20. At the end of the month it rises about three-quarters of an hour before the sun but will not be an easy object to observe. Venus, stellar magnitude about -3.5, is conspicuous in the western sky and sets at 20h., 20h. 40m. and 21h. 30m. at the beginning, middle and end of the month respectively—several hours after sunset. Mars, in the constellation of Leo, rises in the early evening hours and can be seen throughout the night. Jupiter does not rise until the early morning hours—4h. 47m. and 3h. 18m. on Feb. 1 and 29 respectively; but as the planet does not attain an altitude greater than 16° in the latitude of Greenwich, it is not very favourably placed for observation. Saturn, in the constellation of Leo, rises in the early evening hours and can be seen throughout most of the night. The planet is in opposition on Feb. 9. Occultations of stars brighter than magnitude 6 are as follows: Feb. 18d. 18h. 37-7m., ν Taur. (*D*); Feb. 18d. 19h. 05.3m., 72 Taur. (*D*); Feb. 20d. 00h. 49-9m., 125 Taur. (*D*); Feb. 26d. 23h. 02-6m., γ Virg. *m* (*D*); Feb. 26d. 23h. 29-7m., γ Virg. *m* (*R*); *D* and *R* refer to disappearance and reappearance, respectively, and the latitude and longitude of Greenwich are assumed. In addition to these occultations of stars, Mars is occulted by the moon on Feb. 24d. 01h. 58-9m., reappearing at 02h. 45-4m.

Announcements

SIR EDWARD MELLANBY will deliver the Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins Memorial Lecture of the Chemical Society at the Society's rooms on February 19 at 7.30 p.m.

A SERIES of five lectures on aspects of atomic energy has been arranged by the London Branch of the Atomic Scientists' Association. The lectures will be given in the lecture hall of the Royal Society of Arts, John Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.2, at 7 p.m. on alternate Fridays, beginning February 6. Tickets (2s. 6d. for one lecture; 10s. for the series) can be obtained from Dr. L. E. C. Hughes, 15 Avenue House, Allitsen Road, St. John's Wood, N.W.8.

AN exhibition of War Office teaching aids, under the title "The Better Chance", will be open during February 3-11 in the Imperial Institute, South Kensington, London, S.W.7. This is an augmented version of the exhibition held at Eltham Palace on September 15 (*Nature*, 160, 411; 1947). It is open to the public.