

Země Krásná (The Beautiful Earth)

By J. K. Říha. Pp. 376. (Třebechovice, Czechoslovakia: A. Dedourek, 1948.) 540 crowns.

THE sub-title of this remarkable book states that it is "about Nature, civilisation and planning". The author is not only an architect and an engineer, but he also possesses a deep knowledge of the biological sciences and he has attempted to apply this knowledge in town and country planning. Moreover, Mr. Říha has searched old records to find out whether man had in the past attempted to co-operate with Nature in developing civilization.

It appears that in modern times, or at least in the last hundred and fifty years, the production of plant foodstuffs has increased fourfold in Bohemia. Potatoes and cereals have completely changed mankind's living conditions and made possible the extraordinary progress that is usually attributed to technology, though the author emphasizes the part played by biology in this development. He refers to an area in south Bohemia, north of Třeboň, that was converted from useless marshland to useful productivity as early as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Ponds and canals (one thirty-five miles long) were made, and the drained land cultivated and used to rear cattle and horses. In the eighteenth century, English influence led to the laying out of tasteful parks both here and elsewhere in Central Europe. This brings the author to his contention that modern civilization is not antagonistic to Nature and indeed succeeds best when planning is directed towards harmonizing the two. The work of the country architect should take account of climate, soil and biological laws so that a community fits naturally into its surroundings.

Other features of this nicely bound folio book, well printed on art paper, are the many fine photographs by the author and his scientific friends, and the 6,000 word summaries in Russian, French and English.

J. G. F. D.

Faune de France

47: Hyménoptères tenthredoïdes. Par Lucien Berland. (Fédération française des Sociétés de Sciences naturelles: Office central de faunistique.) Pp. 496. (Paris: Paul Lechevalier, 1947.) 1500 francs.

THIS volume, the most recent in the Faune de France series, is well up to the standard of its predecessors. M. Lucien Berland is the author of the volumes on the Vespoidea and has placed hymenopterists further in his debt in having written the present monograph. Under the term Tenthredoïdes he includes not only the sawflies but also all other members of the Symphyta or Phytophaga, as they are variously known. As in other volumes in the series, illustrations are a special feature—whole insects figuring very largely and often accompanied by sketches of structural details, while larvae are illustrated where necessary. Under each species will be found its chief synonyms, followed by a description of its external characters, the main facts regarding its habits, and its distribution in France and also in other countries. Diagnostic keys to both genera and species are particularly clear and easy to follow. Taking the book as a whole, it will also prove helpful to students of the British members of the Symphyta. At the end there is a tabular synopsis of larval characters in the different families and a list of species wherein parthenogenesis, in one form or another, is known to occur. This is followed by an enumeration of those species known to be injurious

to cultivated plants and, finally, a catalogue of host plants and the species feeding upon them. This latter, it may be added, will be found particularly useful by many workers.

Birds on the Wing

By John Barlee. Pp. 128. (London and Glasgow: Wm. Collins, Sons and Co., Ltd., 1947.) 12s. 6d. net.

Birds of Malaysia

By Jean Delacour. (Pacific World Series.) Pp. xvi+382. (New York: The Macmillan Company; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1947.) 25s. net.

The Birds of Brewery Creek

By the Rt. Hon. Malcolm Macdonald. Pp. x+334+23 plates. (London, Toronto and New York: Oxford University Press, 1947.) 21s. net.

BIRD books come and continue to come, being for the most part very excellent, and the three here considered are well up to standard. In "Birds on the Wing", we are shown a number of fine snapshots accompanied by excellent notes from the camera and notebook of one of our younger naturalists. "Birds of Malaysia" is of different type, for in it Captain Delacour gives us a handbook to the birds of the interesting islands of Java, Sumatra and Borneo, the Malaya Peninsula, etc., with their wealth of bird life. Here are found such ornithological gems as the giant argus and Bulwer's wattled pheasants, the great hornbills, many sunbirds and so on. This volume with its excellent line drawings is a most helpful guide to them all. The third book, "The Birds of Brewery Creek", is of yet another type, though as good in its different way. In it Mr. Macdonald, High Commissioner for the United Kingdom to Canada, tells of his observations on birds in Brewery Creek, near Ottawa, and a very joyous record it is. The illustrations are from photographs and some of them are in colour, an especially excellent one being that of a snowy owl.

FRANCES PITT

The Annual Register

A Review of Public Events at Home and Abroad for the Year 1947. Edited by Ivison S. Macadam, assisted by Hugh Latimer. Pp. xii+568. (London, New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1948.) 42s. net.

FOR the first time in its hundred and eighty-nine years of publication, this volume has been compiled with the aid of an advisory board. The selection of the board has been entrusted to five organisations concerned with the subjects covered by the annual review. These are the English Association, the Arts Council of Great Britain, the British Association, the Royal Institute of International Affairs and the Royal Historical Society. These bodies have chosen the contributors. The "Year in Science", running to more than twenty pages, gives a wide and readable survey of the year's work and is an improvement on the articles of previous years. There is little change, however, in the general arrangement. The greater part of the volume is a review of the history of the United Kingdom, the British Commonwealth and foreign countries. Then follows a chronicle of events and reviews of literature, art, science, finance, industry, trade and law. A number of public documents include the Anglo-French Treaty, and those terms of the Yalta, Teheran and Potsdam agreements which remained secret until 1947. The volume is full, comprehensive and impartial and remains, as always, an indispensable survey of human affairs.