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Marine Biological Station at Bangor: Dr. F. Gross

DR. FABIUS GROSS, who has since 1937 been lecturer in experimental zoology in the University of Edinburgh, has been appointed director of the new Marine Biological Station to be erected on the Menai Strait at Bangor. The Station, while under the immediate control of the University College of North Wales, will be managed by a committee representing the biological departments of the constituent colleges of the University of Wales, and it is likely to become a vital link in the chain of British marine stations. Apart from its function in promoting educational facilities for the students of the University and others, it will conduct and encourage research, particularly in the almost unexplored field of marine microbiology, in which botanical and zoological studies meet. It will thus be in a position to make great contributions to fundamental knowledge as well as to the practical basis of fishery research, for there can be little doubt that the food-chains which ultimately produce our fish stocks have their biological origin in the microplankton.

Dr. Gross is eminently qualified to direct the work of the Station. His zoological studies in the University of Vienna under Profs. Storch, Versluys, Przibram and Joseph, and his researches there and in the Kaiser Wilhelm Institut für Biologie in Berlin, laid the foundation for experimental investigations of feeding, swimming movements, variation and regeneration in various aquatic invertebrates. Since he came to Britain in 1933, he has turned his attention particularly to culture methods for marine organisms, and this led to the war-time research, conducted by a team partly from the Department of Zoology in the University of Edinburgh and from Millport Marine Station, into the effect upon food-chains culminating in food fishes of the addition of inorganic nutrients to restricted sea areas. His extensive experience of British marine stations has been supplemented by large-scale plankton culture at the Oceanographic Institute at Göteborg in Sweden, and he has been invited to spend the present summer in collaborative work at the Oceanographical Laboratory at Woods Hole.

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Linnean Society of London

PROF. OTTO JAAG, of the Federal Technical High-school, Zurich, and Dr. David Fairchild, senior agricultural explorer to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, have been elected foreign members of the Linnean Society. Prof. Jaag is distinguished for his researches in limnology, and is editor of the *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Hydrologie*. Dr. Fairchild, now eighty years of age, is distinguished for his labours in botany in its relation to horticulture. He has introduced many thousands of useful and ornamental plants into the United States. As an author, in addition to his scientific papers, he has published five books dealing with his travels in search of plants.

Two new associates *honoris causa*, the list of whom has never exceeded twenty-five, have also been elected by the Linnean Society; they are Dr. Robert Lloyd Praeger, of Dublin, distinguished for his long and thorough work on the flora of Ireland, and for his monographs of *Sedum* and *Sempervivum*; and Dr. Arvid Hjalmar Uggla, of Uppsala, distinguished for his researches on the work, writings and life of Linnæus. Dr. Uggla is the secretary of the Svenska Linné-sällskapet and editor of that Society's

Arsskrift; and is at present working on a complete catalogue of the known manuscripts of Linnæus.

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Disk for the Isaac Newton Telescope

SIR HAROLD SPENCER JONES, Astronomer Royal, has recently spent three months in the United States, at the invitation of many American astronomers, in the course of which he visited most of the astronomical observatories, studying programmes of work and, in particular, the design and performance of large telescopes in connexion with the design, now under consideration, of the Isaac Newton reflector. During his visit he received the gift of a 98-in. 'Pyrex' glass disk for use in this telescope. The disk, which was cast before the War by the Corning Glass Co., was originally intended for use in a large reflector for the Michigan Observatory, a project which for various reasons was later abandoned. Its cost had been defrayed from the McGregor Fund. Judge Henry Hulbert, president of the Trustees of the McGregor Fund, informed the Astronomer Royal that the Trustees had unanimously resolved to make an outright gift of the disk, together with a 26½-in. disk for a secondary mirror and the central plug from the large disk, to the Royal Greenwich Observatory, for use in the Isaac Newton telescope. This generous gift, which has been gratefully accepted, should enable the telescope to be completed and brought into use some two or three years before it would otherwise have been possible. It is a symbol of the good-will on the part of the United States towards Great Britain, which the Astronomer Royal found everywhere in the course of his visit, and of the desire for close co-operation between the astronomers of the two countries.

Gamma-emitting Materials for Industry

A PRELIMINARY announcement has already been made by the Ministry of Supply on the sale of radioactive products for industrial radiography (see *Nature*, May 7, p. 717). A paper dealing with the supply and uses of radium and radon for industry is now being distributed by the Ministry to trade associations, professional institutes and research centres. Points of interest arising from this paper are the different physical properties of radium and radon. Though they both emit gamma-rays of identical quality, the radiation of the former is constant, whereas that of the latter has a half-life period of 3.8 days. This means that the effective life of radon is a little more than a week, but this is an advantage in, say, field-work where the loss of a capsule would not be serious, nor comparatively dangerous (in contrast to radium). The disadvantage of the variable strength of radon is further offset by the fact that, for equal intensities, it is of much smaller bulk than radium; hence, for radiographs of equal resolution, radon can be used much closer to the object under test, with a corresponding reduction in exposure-time. Radium may be obtained, on hire only and after notice of two months, for periods of not less than six months; capsules containing 50 mgm. and 250 mgm. are hired for £11 5s. and £56 5s. per year, with an additional fabrication and testing charge of £20 and £100, respectively. Radon is sold outright, typical costs being £15, £20 and £25 for sources of 250, 500 and 750 millicuries, respectively. Both materials can be obtained from the Radiochemical Centre, White Lion Road, Amersham, Bucks. Gamma-radiography requires skilled personnel for the handling of materials, interpretation of radiographs, etc., and, so far as is