Museum, Exeter, and did excellent work in arranging the bird and mammal collections in that institute. Early in the War he met with an accident in the black-out which seriously injured one eye, and later he became almost totally blind. To a man of such active habits this was a terrible blow; but he bore it with great fortitude. On October 3 he died after an operation, at the age of seventy-six. In 1895 he married Annie, daughter of Captain John Seals, who survives him together with a son and a daughter.

N. B. KINNEAR

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Mr. W. E. Copleston, C.S.I., formerly chief conservator of forests, Bombay, on December 1.

Prof. René Maire, professor of botany in the University of Algiers, one of the twelve non-resident members of the Paris Academy of Sciences, on November 24, aged seventy-one.

Dr. Henry C. Williamson, formerly of the Fishery Board of Scotland, on December 9, aged seventy-eight.

NEWS and VIEWS

Geological Society: Awards for 1949

THE Council of the Geological Society has announced the following awards: *Wollaston Medal* to Dr. Norman L. Bowen, of the Geophysical Laboratory, Washington, in recognition of his eminent researches in quantitative experimental petrology and for his brilliant application of these and related studies in the elucidation of fundamental problems of petrogenesis. *Murchison Medal* to Mr. Tom Eastwood, lately assistant director of H.M. Geological Survey, for his long and distinguished work on the Geological Survey, especially in the realm of economic geology. *Lyell Medal* to Prof. S. J. Shand, for his outstanding contributions to the advancement of geology, embodied especially in his book on "Eruptive Rocks" and numerous published papers on the petrology of the felspathoidal rocks of South Africa, Canada and Scotland. *Wollaston Donation Fund* to Mr. G. A. Kellaway, in recognition of his work on the stratigraphy and structure of the Northamptonshire ironstone district and the Bristol–Somerset Coalfield. *Murchison Geological Fund* to Dr. H. Dighton Thomas for his researches in fossil corals, sponges and other invertebrates. A moiety of the *Lyell Geological Fund* to Dr. J. E. Hemingway for his studies of the stratigraphy, structure and sedimentary petrography of the Jurassic rocks of North-East Yorkshire; another moiety of the *Lyell Geological Fund* to Mr. J. Selwyn Turner for his contributions to Carboniferous stratigraphy and structural geology.

Food and Agriculture Organisation: Statistics Officer in the Far East

THE Economics and Statistics Division of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation has appointed Mr. C. P. G. J. Smit to be regional representative for statistics in Asia and the Far East. Mr. Smit, who has been with the Netherlands Government for twenty-one years, was formerly deputy director-general of statistics at the Central Office of Statistics, The Hague, and was responsible for all statistical work done in that Office, including work with agricultural statistics. He has also acted as chairman of the Standing Advisory Committee on Statistics of the Food and Agriculture Organisation since that Committee was set up in 1946. In his new appointment Mr. Smit will work at the Organisation's Central Office of Statistics in Bangkok, and there he will work with Governments of the region, assisting them on statistics problems, especially with regard to the 1950 world census of agriculture. He will also be responsible for some of the statistical work needed for the International Rice Commission.

Joseph von Mering (1849–1908)

JOSEPH FRIEDRICH FREIHERR VON MERING, who was born in Cologne a century ago on December 28, is remembered as a pioneer in the work on diabetes; his paper, with Oscar Minkowski, in the *Archiv für experimentelle Pathologie und Pharmakologie* (26, 371; 1890), reported the production of diabetes in a dog following extirpation of the pancreas. Four years previously, von Mering had produced experimental diabetes by means of phloridzin, and his interest in this condition was probably derived from his teacher, Kussmaul, who introduced the term 'acetonæmia' in diabetic coma, later named 'acidosis' by Naunyn. After obtaining his M.D. at Strassburg in 1874, von Mering became assistant to Richard von Krafft-Ebing and to Friedrich Jolly. Having worked with von Frerichs, Kussmaul and Hoppe-Seyler, he was appointed professor of medicine and laryngology at Halle in 1890, and in 1900 director of the Medizinische Klinik. Von Mering synthesized veronal, and his "Lehrbuch der Inneren Medizin" (1901) went through four editions before his death on January 5, 1908. A true aristocrat, approachable and kindly, vivacious, impulsive and quick-tempered, von Mering was eminently practical in his scientific outlook; for theories and hypotheses he had neither time nor talent.

Defence Services Research Facilities Committee of the Royal Society

IN many fields of scientific work the Defence Services in Great Britain possess equipment, knowledge and personnel which, if available, might be used for helping scientific researches unconnected with any Service objective. In some cases facilities of this kind have been provided for several years. In 1948 the Defence Services Research Facilities Committee was set up by the Royal Society not, as some have supposed, to offer scientific help to the Services, but to enlist the help of the Services on behalf of scientific workers. The terms of reference of the Committee are: "To consider proposals for the use of Service facilities and personnel for assisting scientific research, and to make recommendations to the Council of the Royal Society, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the Army Council, the Air Council and the Minister of Supply". To give an idea of the facilities which the Committee hoped would be available, the subjects dealt with by the five panels which were established to consider applications for help are as follows: (*A*) submarine gravity measurements, (*B*) surplus explosives, (*C*) magnetic survey, (*D*) aerial photography, (*E*) scientific expeditions.

The Defence Services have been most co-operative; the following examples illustrate the scope of the

help which they have already given. The Admiralty provided a submarine on two occasions for gravity observations at sea, and lent a kite balloon and personnel for research on the feeding habits of swifts. The War Office lent equipment to a geological expedition to Spitsbergen. The Air Ministry provided: a helicopter fitted with a large net for collecting insects, photographic cover for an archæological expedition to Tripolitania, flying-boats of Coastal Command for two flights to observe the breeding grounds of seals and sea-birds, six cameras to the International Committee for Bird Preservation for use in a wildfowl census, and a considerable number of aerial photographs of specific areas required by men of science from time to time; in addition, arrangements were made for the Royal Air Force to fly photographic plates at high altitudes in connexion with cosmic-ray research. In another instance, the co-operation of the Ministry of Supply was obtained in the development of an airborne magnetometer. Men of science wishing to submit proposals for consideration by the Committee should communicate their suggestions to the Assistant Secretary of the Royal Society, Burlington House, London, W.1.

25-Inch Telescope Disk for the University of Michigan

A LARGE telescope disk for the University of Michigan has just been completed by Chance Brothers, Ltd., of Smethwick, Birmingham. Now that work is finished on the moulding and annealing of the disk, which is of dense flint optical glass, 25 inches in diameter and almost 4 inches at its thickest edge, it will be dispatched to the Perkin Elmer Corporation in the United States, where it will be ground and polished for use in the objective of a new Schmidt-type telescope now being built for the University of Michigan by the Warner Swasey Co. of Cleveland, Ohio. The sequence of operations necessary for the production of this disk occupied eight months. A special melting of glass of the required composition to give the necessary refractive index was rendered homogeneous by stirring and then cast into a large block weighing about half a ton. The surfaces of the block were polished to detect any portions containing defects. Finally, a portion weighing about 250 lb. (approximately a quarter) was selected, heated to softening point and moulded to the required circular shape. The surfaces of the moulded disk were then polished for further inspection; after which it was annealed in an electric furnace, this operation taking four weeks. Finally, the disk was tested in the Chance Laboratories, first on an interferometer to prove the perfection of optical homogeneity, and, finally, in polarized light to detect any abnormal mechanical stresses which might affect its performance. A second disk, similar to the one described, is also being manufactured for the Warner Swasey Co. It is of interest to note that Messrs. Chance Brothers are now celebrating the hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of their foundation.

Exhibition of Physics Instruments in Paris

THE annual exhibitions of scientific instruments held in London by the Physical Society are well known, and the printed catalogues of these exhibitions, containing as they do a wealth of information which is handy for reference and not easily accessible in any other form, have proved most useful to many research workers and institutions, even many years after the particular exhibitions of which they form a record. The annual exhibitions of scientific instruments and materials of the Société Française de Physique deserve to be equally well known. The 1949 exhibition was held at the Sorbonne (University of Paris) during June 4–9, and for the first time a detailed printed and illustrated catalogue of the exhibits was issued. To those who were unable to visit the exhibition this catalogue should prove valuable as an introduction and guide to the resources and state of development of the research institutions and instrument manufacturers in France. Of the 200 pages of the catalogue, 137 are devoted to descriptions of the apparatus exhibited by the eighty-five different exhibitors, and forty to advertisements. As is explained by P. Jacquinot, general-secretary of the Société, in the introduction to the catalogue, the usual troubles in compiling the catalogue were experienced, and the descriptions given of the various pieces of apparatus vary in length from just a brief title, which conveys almost nothing to the reader, to detailed technical expositions of construction and method of use. However, even a brief glance through the pages of the catalogue is sufficient to assure the reader of the diversity and high standard of the apparatus exhibited. Further, the excellent alphabetical indexes with which the catalogue is provided afford easy reference to any piece of apparatus or to its manufacturer.

Air Transport and Insects of Agricultural Importance

CONSIDERABLE attention has been given in recent years to the risk of spreading disease-carrying insects by the agency of air transport. Almost no consideration has been given to the possible introduction of new agricultural pests by the same means, although the development of new routes and the short time taken to traverse great distances are unquestionably adding greatly to the risk of such invasions. The Commonwealth Institute of Entomology has recently published a small pamphlet (pp. 12, price 1*s.* 6*d.*) on this subject by Dr. W. A. L. David. Up to the present time, although many disastrous introductions have occurred both in Europe and in the United States within the past fifty years, there has been no authenticated case of air transport having been responsible. But insects of many kinds are found surviving in aircraft, and the danger will increase. Tolerably efficient methods of freeing aircraft of flies and mosquitoes are being worked out; but these are certainly not lethal to more resistant insects—even when they are properly applied. Perhaps the deposition of a lasting film of insecticide is the most promising line of development. Some modifications in the planning of the interior of aircraft could reduce the number of lurking places for insects and thereby make disinfestation easier.

Flightless Birds of New Zealand

IN Dominion Museum Bulletin, No. 15, Mr. W. R. B. Oliver has summed up the available information concerning that remarkable group of flightless birds, the moas, some of great size, that formerly inhabited New Zealand and parts of Australia, but have all vanished, being only known to us through their remains. It appears that the birds, unable to fly, were liable to get engulfed in bogs, in which marshes their bones have been preserved, often in surprising numbers. It is to such remains that we owe our knowledge, though the birds must have survived up to comparatively recent times, because Maori camp