NEWS and VIEWS

International List of Cosmic Ray Research Establishments

THE cosmic ray committee of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics decided at the Cracow meeting in 1947 to draw up and distribute a list, with all useful details, of laboratories and research establishments in which cosmic ray investigations are carried out. In particular, the list was to include those establishments which are willing to receive foreign workers either as students, advanced workers or visitors. The first list, admittedly incomplete, has recently been issued. It has been drawn up from answers to a questionnaire which asked for details of the geographical situation, climate, transport facilities, size, equipment, staffing, and technical facilities of the institution; of the type of cosmic ray work undertaken; and of the number and standard of foreign workers welcome. Replies, in French or English, were received from Brussels, Rio de Janeiro, Shanghai, Copenhagen, twelve institutions in the United States, eight in France, three in Great Britain (the Universities of Bristol, Manchester and London), Budapest, Dublin, Italy, Mexico, Amsterdam, Switzerland and Prague. The collection of information given in the replies is not only most valuable to those working on cosmic rays, but also is probably unique in that it would not be possible in Great Britain to find elsewhere such detailed information about even the British institutions. The University of Manchester, for example, has, in addition to eighteen on the teaching staff, fifty-four research workers engaged in theoretical and experimental physics, and has three 10-ton magnets and five cloud chambers; it insists on the English language and sterling currency, notes its climate is damp, and says that it has good railway connexions with London and most British cities. Of course, the United States laboratories are well equipped; but it may be still surprising to many to learn that the Brookhaven National Laboratory in Long Island, New York, has a personnel of fifteen hundred, of whom two hundred hold scientific qualifications, an available lead supply of 500 tons, a large nuclear reactor, a cyclotron, a Van de Graaff generator, and will eventually have a 3-billion (*sic*) volt proton accelerator.

Bohemian National Museum (1818–1948)

THE Bohemian National Museum has recently published (1949) an illustrated survey of its history and its departments and their scientific significance under the title "Národní Museum 1818–1948". Undoubtedly the Museum played a great part in developing the study of the sciences in the Czech lands during the past century, and the extensive zoological, botanical, mineralogical, archæological and other collections, acquired gradually over more than a century, still provide useful material for original investigations. The Museum owed its origin to a few enlightened nobles, particularly the distinguished botanist and palæontologist, Count Kaspar Sternberg, who presented private collections, books and other objects which formed the basis of the present collection. Until 1885, when the spacious and imposing edifice was erected at the top of St. Wenceslas Square, the exhibits were kept in private houses. At first they were displayed in Count Sternberg's palace; later they were transferred to a house vacated by Count Nostic, where they remained for about fifty years. The present curators of the twelve sections describe the various collections and their contemporary interest; attention is directed to some unique specimens, for example, the remarkable Ordovician trilobite, the salvaged remains of Haenke's specimens collected in the Pacific Isles and in South America, and some other indigenous and exotic species worthy of note. Despite dispersal and disarrangement, bomb damage and other difficulties caused by the Second World War and occupation, most of the scientific material is again on display and freely available to students. Through its quarterly journal the Museum at one time published original papers that would not otherwise have been printed. The Museum Society also arranged the publication of monographs and treatises that have since become classics in Czech science.

History of the Biochemical Society

CONSIDERING the world-wide interest in biochemistry to-day, it is interesting to recall that the origins of the Biochemical Society go back no farther than 1911. Largely through the initiative of the late J. Addyman Gardner, and of Prof. R. H. A. Plimmer, a meeting of those who might be interested was convened for January 21 of that year at University College, London; this led to the formation first of a Biochemical Club, and after a few months to the Biochemical Society. For the benefit of present and future members, Prof. Plimmer has set down, in a pamphlet entitled "The History of the Biochemical Society, 1911–1949" (pp. 24+4 plates; Cambridge: at the University Press, 1949; 2*s*. 6*d*. net), his recollections of those early days and the squabbles which attended the change over from a Club to a Society, and the acquisition by the latter of the *Biochemical Journal* from the late Prof. B. Moore. Pithy and brief, the pamphlet is a model of its kind.

Human Physiology in Schools

THE latest educational paper produced by the British Social Hygiene Council is concerned with human physiology as a practical subject in schools and has been prepared by Richard Palmer. Mr. Palmer has demonstrated his ability to relate biological subjects to ordinary everyday life in his successful broadcasts to schools. In this paper he again shows that costly apparatus is not always necessary to teach a practical subject, and that, although the experiments suggested are so simple that some of them last less than a minute, they may, in fact, be better remembered than those performed with elaborate apparatus because they obviously concern the children themselves. It might be expected that experiments with the senses give Mr. Palmer most scope for ingenuity, although he also includes useful sections on the circulatory and nervous sections. Students are encouraged to supplement the experimental work suggested by the examination of dissections, skeletons and the keeping of living mammals. Copies of the paper, which contains a well-thought-out book list, may be obtained from the British Social Hygiene Council, Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London, price 1*s*. 1*d*.

Bibliography of Science in Latin America

THE Conference of Latin-American Scientific Experts, convened in Montevideo during September 1948 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific