

It was agreed that these meetings should take place in different parts of the Commonwealth, and this policy was inaugurated in July 1949 with a conference at Halifax, Nova Scotia, arranged in conjunction with the annual meeting of the National Conference of Canadian Universities. The second such conference is being held, with the generous support of the Nuffield Foundation, in New Zealand this year, when eighteen senior university executive heads drawn from all Commonwealth countries will attend. It opens at Wairakei on July 31 with a meeting of the executive council of the Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth (which, in conjunction with the authorities of the University of New Zealand, is convening the conference). Sessions will also take place at Auckland, Dunedin, Christchurch and Wellington, where the conference will end on August 21. The opportunity is being taken by the delegates to visit the various university centres in New Zealand, and, so far as possible, those in Australia also. The conference will be presided over by Prof. I. A. Gordon, vice-chancellor of the University of New Zealand, who is the chairman for this year of the Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth. The secretarial arrangements are in the hands of Dr. J. F. Foster, secretary of the Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth, and of Mr. I. F. McKenzie, registrar of the University of New Zealand.

#### International Committee for the Study of Clays

AN International Committee for the Study of Clays (Comité International pour l'Étude des Argiles) has been formed with the aim of grouping specialists in the study of clays, from whatever angle, in different countries. In particular the Committee intends to collect a full documentation on the results and methods of clay studies; to promote contacts between specialists in such studies; to organise conferences from time to time, in which questions relevant to clay studies will be discussed, aiding specialists to compare their results; and to unify their methods of description. The Committee will help to bring about exchanges of reference samples between research workers, and will try to define the terminology and methods used in the scientific study of clay. Several national committees for clay studies have already been formed, notably in Belgium, France, Great Britain and Sweden. The International Committee consists of a maximum of two members per country. An executive sub-committee was recently appointed in London made up of four persons: *Chairman*, S. Henin (France); *Secretary*, M. Lepingle (Belgium); *Members*, R. E. Grim (United States), and D. M. C. MacEwan (Great Britain). A meeting of the full Committee is to be held in Amsterdam during the forthcoming International Congress of Soil Science (July 24–August 1), when plans for its future activities will be discussed. Those who have suggestions to make regarding the work of the Committee should write, as early as possible, to one of the British representatives: Dr. D. M. C. MacEwan, of Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden, Herts, or Dr. G. W. Brindley, of the Department of Physics, University of Leeds.

#### Distribution of Classes of Students in British Universities

AN interesting analysis has been made by Political and Economic Planning in its latest Broadsheet

(No. 310) of the geographical, educational and social origins of a group of full-time students entering six university institutions in England and Wales for the first time in the academic year 1947–48. Except in respect of age, the differences between the ex-Service men and those leaving school are not important; but a distinction must first be made between those students whose homes are in Great Britain and those from overseas. Overseas students mainly tend to enter the old institutions of international repute, two out of three Commonwealth and five of every nine foreign students entering Oxford, Cambridge, London and Edinburgh; the latter were mainly men and had mostly already completed a degree course in their own country. Except for Oxford and Cambridge, most British universities draw their students mainly from their own locality. At an ancient university sampled under the name 'Camford', a college of the University of London and a university college, a noticeable proportion of students come from other universities; but, whereas at 'Camford' nearly half the total entry of men students came from fee-charging schools, and from a relatively small number of schools, elsewhere the proportion of students from fee-charging schools was small, and few local authority schools sent more than one or two pupils to any one institution. The student from a local-authority school is, however, coming to occupy a more important place in the older universities, and the modern universities are beginning to receive a substantial number of entrants from fee-charging schools, ranging from 50 to 87 per cent in the faculties of arts and of science, while in medicine and law the entrants from fee-charging schools are relatively more important. As regards social origins, the children of manual workers are under-represented at all the British universities, but particularly at Oxford and Cambridge. Women students tend to come from higher social groups than their male colleagues, and social classes are represented more evenly at the University of Wales and the Scottish universities than at the English universities, Oxford and Cambridge being still largely the preserve of the professional classes.

#### Supply of Very Thin Copper Foil

LIMITED supplies of very thin copper foil from a pilot plant are now available from N. M. Rothschild and Sons, of the Royal Mint Refinery, 19 Royal Mint Street, London, E.1. The foil can be supplied in sheets up to 30 in. by 5 in. in area and down to 0.00012 in. in thickness. At a later stage, when the full-scale plant is in production, it is anticipated that lengths of several hundred feet will be available. The chemical composition of the copper foil conforms to electrolytic standard, and its electrical conductivity is 95 per cent of the International Annealed Copper Standard minimum. The foil, which has one side polished, can be supplied with platings of various metals on one or both sides.

#### National Research Council of Canada: Merck Fellowships

THE National Research Council of Canada has awarded the following five Merck postdoctoral fellowships in the natural sciences for the year 1950–51: Dr. D. A. I. Goring, of the Department of Physical Chemistry, McGill University, for the continuation of his research in colloid science under Prof. F. J. W. Roughton, at the University of