

cidal potency seemed to be independent of the number of sulphur atoms in the polysulphide linkage. It was found that the addition of zinc sulphate and lime greatly increased the stability of disodium ethylene bisdithiocarbamate through the production of zinc ethylene bisdithiocarbamate, and this substance is now brought forward as the real fungicide.

#### Mushroom Research

SOME short, useful papers on mushroom pests and diseases are included in two recent numbers of the *M.G.A. Bulletin*, the organ of the Mushroom Growers' Association, Yaxley, Peterborough. A mushroom bed competitor, which is apparently *Corticium centrifugum*, is reported by Fred C. Atkins (No. 19; April 1950). In No. 20 (July 1950), B. D. Moreton contributes a well-illustrated account of mushroom pests. Sciarid, pharid and cecid flies are described, with measures of control, as are springtails, mites and minor pests. The roles of *Rhabditis* and *Ditylenchus* eelworms in mushroom beds are also discussed. C. L. Duddington has an interesting short paper, in the same number, on "Fungi that Trap Eelworms". Fifteen species of fungi are known to capture eelworms in sticky networks. *Trichothecium flagrans*, *Dactylella ellipospora* and *D. bembicoides* are described and figured in the paper. A separate publication on the tray system of growing mushrooms in Great Britain, by Fred C. Atkins, is also available from the Association (price 2s. 6d.).

#### Catalogue of Insecticides and Fungicides

THE Murphy Chemical Co., Ltd., Wheathampstead, Herts, has issued an informative catalogue of insecticides and fungicides for the nurseryman and mushroom grower. Apart from descriptions of the firm's products, which include a wide range of substances in modern use, short technical information is given on pests, diseases, procedure and materials. A separate booklet outlines a complete spraying programme for the control of pests and diseases of mushrooms.

#### Planets and Sunspots

DR. K. G. MELDAHL has made some supplementary remarks concerning his predictions of sunspots during the early portion of this year (see *Nature*, 165, 301; 1950). Eight drawings on his latest chart ("Tidal Forces in the Sun's Corona due to Planets", Part 2; Copenhagen: Berlinske Forlag) show the more important sunspots that he observed from January 18 to March 22, and he has a number of comments to make on these. The tidal force in the sun's corona this year was greater and of shorter duration than it was in 1938, and, as the configurations of the two inner planets were different in the two cases, a new field of inquiry appears to be opened up. It is pointed out that when the particles ejected by the sun cross the orbits of Mercury and Venus, if one or more of these planets happen to be in their path, they may suffer a certain amount of dissipation and reach the earth in diminished numbers. But if, as happened this year, these planets have moved a little to one side, the field being free from obstructions, the auroras will become more conspicuous, as they did during February of this year. These remarks are interesting for all who study sunspots and auroras, and observers of these phenomena may find important work in tracing the correlations between them and the planetary configurations.

#### Government Spending in Great Britain

IN a recent number of *Planning* (PEP, 16 Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W.1; 2s.) devoted to the subject of government spending, it is pointed out that in the present condition of the British economy there is no lack of claims on any increase of production which may be achieved. A continued increase of production, it had been hoped, would progressively relax the stresses of the present; but now greater defence expenditure may hinder the increase of production and will swallow up a part at least of whatever increase is achieved. A conflict of interests inevitably arises as between demands for increased personal consumption, greater industrial equipment and the expansion of certain social services. To some extent, the decisions must depend on judgment, and where there must be judgment there is room for dispute; there is, however, no point in arguing over matters of ascertainable fact. Planning decisions must be based on knowledge of the relevant facts; but at present the planning authorities lack this knowledge. The figures on government spending are not available in the most illuminating form; but the official statisticians have not attempted to provide a new classification, probably because of the nature of the records kept by government departments. This brochure by PEP suggests that the most practical course might be for the official statisticians to share the work with some of the universities. The lead, it is suggested, must come from the Civil Service, since the first step is the remodelling of the systems of accounting and recording in the various government departments.

#### Acta Argentina de Fisiologia y Fisiopatologia

THE work recorded in the first issue of *Acta Argentina de Fisiologia y Fisiopatologia* (1, No. 1; pp. 291; Córdoba: Universidad Nacional, July 1950) covers a wide field. Edited by a committee of which Prof. A. Oriol i Anguera is the director, the journal begins with a paper by A. Cardin on the mechanism compensating the postural tone of animals (dogs) from which the cerebellum has been removed, the author claiming that his experiments have revealed two different innervations which influence the postural tone of the limbs, one passing through the cerebellum and the other through the mesencephalon. The next four papers record work by L. Legresti on the redox potential. They deal with its electrometric determination *in vivo* and *in vitro*, the potential in the blood and its reduction by certain substances; the same author contributes, with O. E. Semino, a further paper on this subject. M. C. Pérez records his experimental work, with details of his surgical methods, on the production of intestinal occlusion in dogs. R. D. Zunino contributes an article on the vaginal cytology of a human case of sterility, the study of which indicates, he claims, a relation between prolongation of the menstrual cycle and the administration of oestrogen. R. A. Sauchelli discusses renal physiology and pathology in guinea pigs whose ureters or renal arteries or veins have been unilaterally or bilaterally occluded. A longer paper by Prof. R. A. Brandán considers the climate of the mountains of Córdoba and its effects on certain diseases, and Prof. A. Oriol i Anguera discusses personality and endocrinology. The same author contributes a shorter paper on renal physio-pathology and notes on the Eighteenth International Congress of Physiology, held this year in Copenhagen. The journal is well printed; but the reproduction of its