

book form his long and unique experience of the problems of floral morphology.

Radioactive Contamination in Laboratories

CONTAMINATION of the person or of laboratory areas and equipment is a problem of fundamental importance to those working with radioactive isotopes. Constant vigilance must be maintained not only to prevent contamination but also to contain its spread. Though the primary concern in this regard must always be the protection of workers in the area from health hazards of potentially dangerous radiations, the maintenance of uncontaminated equipment and laboratories is also important if precise and reliable results are to be obtained. Handbook 48 of the United States National Bureau of Standards, entitled "Control and Removal of Radioactive Contamination in Laboratories" (pp. 24; Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952; 15 cents), is, in spite of the considerable uncertainty regarding permissible radiation exposure-levels, a very useful handbook, and if the precautions listed are carefully carried out should greatly assist in minimizing the possibility of accidents involving radioactivity and the effects of such accidents as may occur. The handbook stresses that only persons who are properly instructed in procedures which will make their operations safe for themselves and others should be permitted to work with radioactive materials. This is particularly sound advice now that radioactive isotopes are in increasing use by industry, the medical profession and industrial and research laboratories. Permissible levels of contamination, in addition to decontamination procedures for the skin, clothing and bedding, laboratory tools and glassware, and specific materials used as surfaces of floors, work benches, hoods, etc., are dealt with in separate sections of the handbook. Emergency procedures in such cases as the outbreak of fire or a major spill of a radioactive solution are outlined, as well as general safety precautions. An appendix to the handbook in which decontaminating detergents and wetting agents are listed may be useful to chemists and United States citizens familiar with the trade names; but to the public generally the footnote "Most of the common household detergents, such as 'Tide', 'Dreft', etc., have been used successfully" is far more illuminating.

Calendar Reform

At a recent meeting at the House of Lords, called by Mr. J. Avery Joyce and presided over by Lord Merthyr, the British Section of the World Calendar Association, Inc., of New York, was formed, there being no similar body existing in Great Britain since the War. The aim of the Association is to introduce a new calendar on a world-wide scale, having a number of business and administrative advantages and removing some of the defects of the existing calendar. It is recognized that the adoption, if at all, must come through an international organization, the United Nations being the most appropriate; Unesco is already in favour of the reforms proposed. Many hundreds of modifications of the existing calendar have been proposed and examined from time to time; that proposed by the World Calendar Association makes all the quarters equal and all begin on a Sunday. Months all have the same number of working days, but actually have 31, 30 and 30 days in each quarter. All anniversaries fall on the same days of the week. The months actually begin on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday to achieve

the maximum benefit to business and administrative statistics. It follows that the proposed calendar is perpetual. The odd day in the year is taken as a public holiday before New Year's Day and is not counted. Likewise in leap years there would be an uncounted day in the summer. Correspondence for the British Section of the World Calendar Association should be addressed to 20 Buckingham Street, London, W.C.2.

The Buffalo

THE American bison or buffalo was once the most abundant hoofed animal in North America. It ranged from Pennsylvania to Oregon and from Mexico far into Canada in almost astronomical numbers. The native Indians depended on the animal for food and shelter, and their bows and arrows did not diminish its numbers. With the coming of the white man the buffalo was slaughtered for meat and sport and target practice, as well as to clear the plains for cattle. As settlers opened up the western prairies, the buffalo rapidly diminished in numbers. The last great herd was split in two when the first trans-continental railroad was completed, and soon it seemed that the buffalo was becoming extinct. In 1889 a census showed that, of the estimated original sixty million buffalo, there remained in the United States only 541. As a result of action by the New York Zoological Society, the American Bison Society and the United States Government, nucleus herds were established and protection was enforced. To-day the herd has been built up to 8,800 animals, and there is now hope that this fine animal may considerably increase in numbers ("The Unvanquished Buffalo", by Henry H. Collins, jun., Blue Heron Press).

Beit Memorial Fellowships for Medical Research

THE following elections to Beit Memorial fellowships have recently been made for medical research in particular fields at the places shown. *Fourth-Year Fellowship* (£700 a year): Dr. B. Cinader (formation of multiple antibodies to a single antigen and their properties), Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine, London. *Junior Fellowships* (£600 a year): A. G. Baikie (the place of biliverdin in hæmoglobin catabolism in man and laboratory animals), Department of Medicine, University and Royal Infirmary, Glasgow; K. Krnjevic (behaviour of nerve trunks), Physiology Laboratory, University of Edinburgh; Dr. L. Lorand (the constitution and function of 'fibrino-peptide' and isolation and characterization of the 'fibrin-stabilizing factor'), Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine, London; R. M. S. Smellie (biosynthesis and function of the nucleic acids in animal tissues), Biochemistry Department, University of Glasgow; and Dr. Winifred M. Watkins (biochemical studies in the field of the human blood groups), Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine, London.

1851 Exhibition Awards for 1952

THE Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 has announced the award of senior studentships for 1952, worth £600-650 a year for two years. The four recipients, who have all elected to work at the University of Cambridge, will be doing research as follows: Dr. J. B. Armitage (Manchester), organic chemistry; R. L. Martin (Melbourne and Cambridge), inorganic chemistry; K. F. Smith (Cambridge), nuclear physics; and Dr. D. M. Vowles (Bristol and Oxford), zoology.