

Russian Institute of Scientific Information

A NEW Institute, to be known as the Russian Institute of Scientific Information, has been established in the U.S.S.R. for the systematic supply of information from home and foreign sources relating to scientific and technical progress (*Vestnik Akad. Nauk*, 10, 92; 1952). Its main purposes, as specified by the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, are: beginning with 1953 to publish an abstracting journal thoroughly covering world literature in mathematics, physical and chemical sciences, and from 1954 to extend its work to deal with biology, geology, geography and technology (engineering); to compile and publish reference books and bibliographies; to compile subject (thematic) reviews on developments in individual branches of science and technology in the U.S.S.R. and abroad; and to undertake translations and duplicating (photostating, etc.) work of journal articles as required by national institutions and industrial concerns. Three main divisions have been constituted as follows: scientific information work and editing of abstracts (referata); industrial publication; and administrative, etc. The Director of the new Institute, who is appointed by the Academy Presidium, is D. Yu. Panova.

Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Discovery of the Raman Effect

A MEETING of the members of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science was held on March 7 in the premises of the Association at Jadavpur to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the discovery of the Raman effect; Prof. M. N. Saha was in the chair. The sequence of events leading to the discovery of the Raman effect on February 28, 1928, was first narrated briefly by Prof. S. C. Sirkar, with the help of slides and demonstrations. Prof. Saha then pointed out that the discovery was one of the most important in science of this century and that not only the Association but also the whole of India took pride in the fact that such a discovery was made in the laboratories of the Association. A resolution congratulating Prof. C. V. Raman on the anniversary was passed and forwarded to him.

The United Nations Organization

Two recent publications by the United Nations Organization have been designed to direct popular attention to the activities of the Organization. The first, "Looking at the United Nations", gives a pictorial cross-section of the United Nations up to the end of 1951. Although only a brief sampling of the 34,000 pictures in the photo library of the United Nations Department of Public Information, they cover most of the important activities of the Organization during the past six years. The second, "United Nations in Pictures", has been compiled from picture features which have appeared in recent issues of the *United Nations Bulletin*. The picture stories in the booklet are grouped under general subject-headings including peace, security, economic progress, social advancement, the work for subject peoples and the development of international law. Copies of both booklets may be obtained from H.M. Stationery Office, London.

The Gannet in New Zealand

APPARENT changes in the gannet population of New Zealand led to a desire that a census be taken to ascertain past population trends and to provide a

basis for discussion of future changes. In 1946-47 the Ornithological Society of New Zealand adopted the gannet census as a project for co-operative study during the 1946-47 breeding season, and C. A. Fleming and K. A. Wodzicki were appointed organizers of the survey. They have now prepared a paper giving details of the census project and a summary of available data on the past history of the gannetries (*Notornis*, 5, No. 2; October 1952). The paper shows that there has been a general increase in the New Zealand gannet population during the past century. The reason for the suggested increase in total population cannot be stated. The Maoris used young gannets as food; but this was probably on a small scale. During the nineteenth century, Maori use of gannets became negligible. The gannet was protected in the Animal Protection Amendment Act, 1910. The effect of legal protection cannot have been great for there was no habitual use of gannets as bait by fishermen, or as food, before the Act was passed. There is no record of destruction on a large scale. The use of gannet guano on a commercial scale was once contemplated; but it has never been taken regularly in large quantities. A little guano is still removed from some gannetries; but there is no evidence that this affects the success of breeding. The change in man's influence on gannets is not enough to account for their increase in New Zealand. The apparent trend is perhaps due to fundamental changes in the ecology of the sea, possibly of a cyclic nature.

Seasoning Behaviour of Indian Timbers

In *Indian Forest Bulletin*, No. 154 (new series), M. A. Rehman, of the Wood Seasoning Branch of the Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun, discusses "The Seasoning Behaviour of Indian Timbers" (Part 1; pp. 5+1 plate; Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1952; 8 annas or 9d.). In the days before the Research Institute came into being at Dehra Dun, seasoning of timber was practically unknown. Green timber from the forests, by the time it reached the market, may have become air-seasoned to a small extent, but usually not sufficiently to withstand the trying conditions of the climate in the variety of species now used in wood-work. A considerable amount of data on the air- and kiln-seasoning properties of Indian woods has been collected by the Wood Seasoning Branch during the past thirty-five years in the experiments carried on at Dehra Dun, as well as in the field in other parts of the country. Systematic accounts of the results of most of the air-drying tests have been published from time to time, but little information has so far been published by the Institute on kiln-drying studies. The object of this publication and subsequent parts is to assemble all the available information on air- and kiln-drying timbers of important Indian timber trees. The importance of adopting proper methods of seasoning wood before use is emphasized. The advantages of seasoning are discussed. The air and kiln seasoning of fir is described, and the kiln-drying schedule recommended for 1-in. planks of fir and for several other light hardwoods suitable for packing-cases is given.

Fossil Mammals of Africa

Two further papers based upon material collected by the British-Kenya Miocene Expedition have appeared in the series "Fossil Mammals of Africa", published by the British Museum (Natural History).