

some time about the supply of reference compounds for work on steroid metabolism. Difficulties have been felt particularly since the introduction of paper chromatography. A few compounds have already been made available through the National Institute for Medical Research, and arrangements are now being made to supply a wider range of steroids. The reference steroids, particularly hormone metabolites, will be provided to recognized laboratories as standards for paper chromatography, colour reactions, infra-red measurements, and mixed melting-points; also, in some cases, as standards for new methods of determination in urine and blood. The preparation of this reference collection has begun, with the help of generous gifts of steroids from industrial firms in Great Britain and overseas. The following firms have contributed materials: British Drug Houses, London; CIBA A.G., Basel; Glaxo Laboratories, Ltd., Greenford, Middlesex; Merck and Co., Inc., Rahway, N.J.; Organon N.V., Oss, Holland; Organon Laboratories, Ltd., London; Parke, Davis and Co., Detroit, Michigan; Syntex S.A., Mexico; G. D. Searle and Co., Chicago, Illinois. Further details and lists of the materials at present available can be obtained from the Medical Research Council, 38 Old Queen Street, London, S.W.1. Requests for materials not listed, and suggestions for other steroids to be added to the collection, should be submitted to Dr. W. Klyne (Postgraduate Medical School, Ducane Road, London, W.12), who is organizing the preparation of the collection. Attempts will be made to find a source or to prepare small quantities of other materials if possible. If workers have other materials which they would be willing to put into the common pool, this would enable the scheme to progress more rapidly. Offers of such materials should be sent to Dr. Klyne. A similar scheme for the provision of reference steroids is already in operation in the United States under the auspices of the United States Pharmacopoeial Convention. It is hoped that it may be possible to arrange for the exchange of samples between the two schemes.

Solar Phenomena recorded at Kodaikanal Observatory

BULLETIN Nos. 132 and 134 of the Kodaikanal Observatory embody the results of observations of prominences made at the Observatory during the year 1950. Supplementary data computed from photographs supplied by Meudon and Mt. Wilson Observatories for those days on which Kodaikanal had imperfect or no observations have been included in the bulletins. In addition to the prominences results, the results of magnetic observations made at the Observatory are included in each half-yearly Bulletin, starting with Part 2 of No. 132. The Magnetic Observatory was restarted in January 1949 as part of the post-war development programme of Kodaikanal Observatory, and this was due to the growing importance of geomagnetic observations in relation to solar phenomena and also to the proximity of Kodaikanal to the magnetic equator. Bulletin No. 133 gives the results of a statistical study of the sunspots observed at Kodaikanal during 1903-50, and compares the scheme of sunspot classification suggested by Cortie (*Astrophys. J.*, 13, 1901; and also *Mem. Brit. Astro. Assoc.*, 23, 1921), and Waldmeier's scheme (*Quart. Bull. Sol. Act.*, No. 77; 1947). A discussion of the relative merits of the two schemes leads to the conclusion that, in the absence

of necessary arrangements for routine daily observations of the magnetic polarity of sunspots, and the necessity to adopt a scheme of visual classification which covers all the types met with in day-to-day observations (and this conforms to the usually observed life-cycle of the majority of sunspot groups and can be used unambiguously in daily work), Waldmeier's classification is more satisfactory.

The Pacific Islander and Modern Commerce

UNDER the title "The Pacific Islander and Modern Commerce", the South Pacific Commission has issued as Technical Paper No. 54 (pp. 29. Noumea, New Caledonia: South Pacific Commission, 1954; 2s.) a report by V. D. Stace, based on field investigations in Fiji, American and Western Samoa, Papua and New Guinea, including New Britain and New Ireland, Netherlands New Guinea and New Caledonia, during July-October 1952, on the current situation and needs of the indigenous people of the region. The most urgent problem is to deal effectively with the growing desire of these people to participate more effectively in the modern world. The chief conclusions of the investigation are that while improved credit and banking facilities could promote the economic welfare of the indigenous people, at the present stage of their economic and social development, technical and administrative assistance is much more urgently needed. In promoting economic development, the main requirements are incentives, organization and practical education. Village co-operative systems, which modify and rationalize but do not discard the basic elements of the traditional communal methods of organizing production in the Pacific Islands, are more valuable than methods and facilities developed to meet the needs of environments where individualism is the rule and not the exception.

Ethnobotany of Gilbert Islands

PROF. KATHARINE LUOMALA, anthropologist in the University of Hawaii, has written in some detail on the ethnobotany of the Gilbert Islands (*Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bull.*, 213, pp. 1-129, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1953). This report affords a useful collation of the available but scattered information about plants of the Gilbert Islands (Micronesia), with special reference to the ethnobotanical aspect in Tabiteuea, based on the author's own observations. The paper gives a general description of the Gilbert group, in terms of location, population, geographical features, climate, domestic plants and animals, etc., and then proceeds to a survey of the sources of botanical information relating to the whole archipelago. Finally, two annotated check lists of plants of the Gilbert Islands are presented: the first groups the plants by families—a comparatively small list; the second list, which occupies some seventy pages, deals alphabetically by local name with all known plants, some of these still awaiting formal botanical identification and naming.

Coryndon Memorial Museum: Report for 1953

THE annual report of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, for 1953 (pp. 26+2 plates; from the Museum, Nairobi; 1954; 1s.), emphasizes the large amount of cultural activity which can be undertaken by an energetic curator and staff, even in a state of emergency. A fall in income from door receipts has been offset by an increase in certain grants. It is also recorded that the curator, Dr.