

and of the tables, an account of the Ptolemaic planetary system and of the theory of the equatorium, a history of the equatorium, the linguistic analysis by Mr. R. M. Wilson, and a detailed discussion of the possible ascription to Chaucer. The production of the volume is of the high standard which is characteristic of the Cambridge University Press.

H. SPENCER JONES

THE PROBLEM OF RACE

The Colour Problem

A Study of Racial Relations. By Anthony H. Richmond. (Pelican Book No. A. 328.) Pp. 371. (Harmondsworth, Mddx.: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1955.) 3s. 6d.

An Essay on Racial Tension

By Philip Mason. Pp. ix+149. (London and New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1954.) 8s. 6d. net.

THE interest which has recently manifested itself in Great Britain in the problem of race shows signs of becoming steadily more widespread. This is evidenced by the publication of Mr. Richmond's book in the Pelican Series, which will no doubt sell in tens of thousands. The fact that it is also becoming deeper is also to be deduced from Mr. Mason's appointment as director of studies on race relations by the Royal Institute of International Affairs. The books that it has published, however, appear to show that there is not yet a great deal that can be said to an English audience on which remedial action can be based. The present endeavour is to present the facts and remove misconceptions.

Mr. Richmond gives us a comprehensive and scholarly survey, primarily from the historical and political point of view, of the patterns of race relations in South Africa, British Colonial Africa and the British West Indies, and in Great Britain itself, which brings together in a very useful form a large mass of information which would otherwise not be available to the general reader. It is presented cogently, and leads to the conclusion that "so-called 'white civilization' will only be preserved by sharing its fruits with non-Europeans, not by depriving them of its benefits". Mr. Mason's "Essay", on the other hand, is primarily directed towards summarizing the theories and conclusions both of politicians and of scientists, and he seeks to test the validity of their ideas by applying them to the situation in South Africa. The result might have been a work which could be regarded as complementary to Mr. Richmond's; unfortunately, however, Mr. Mason gives an impression that he is 'writing down' to a rather ignorant reader, lacking anything more than a conventional grammar school education, as a target to aim at. Even so, it would have been well if he had demonstrated more clearly that the subject of racial tension is a difficult one to grasp. The recent publications of Unesco show that a great deal of disagreement still exists among physical anthropologists and geneticists on the subject of race, and any glossing-over of this fact necessarily detracts from the value of a work in which the point of view of the scientist is discussed. The concept of race, as applied to human societies, is indeed a very shaky one, and this needs to be made plain.

Mr. Richmond and Mr. Mason agree on one important point, which is that the difficulties that

have arisen when representatives of different 'races' have been brought into close association with each other can only be dealt with by a slow process of amelioration or reform. "The elimination of prejudice," writes Mr. Richmond, "will almost certainly be a long and gradual process." This conclusion is echoed in Mr. Mason's statement that "there is no quick or easy way to knowledge, and it is only by knowledge, and by knowledge based on study, that any firm convictions can be reached. In spite of the urgency, plans for study must be made on the basis that thoroughness must come first and speed second". These are the final thoughts of a sociologist and a scholar, who share a concern for the welfare of mankind and an awareness of the rapidity with which events are now moving. But it must be asked whether these are really the last words that can be said on the subject. Social scientists, legislators, and administrators in the United States would probably reply that, given a firm grasp of the objectives that have to be attained, and a determination to attain a substantial proportion of them without delay, much can be achieved in the immediate future. The success with which the colour bar has been broken down in recent years in the District of Columbia, and the extent to which the educational system of the country is being successfully reorganized on an inter-racial basis as the result of the Supreme Court decision, provide evidence to justify this conclusion. There is much food for thought in this for the British citizen.

T. S. SIMEX

ELECTRIC AND MAGNETIC PROPERTIES OF THIN FILMS

Conductibilit  Electricit  des Lames M talliques Minces

Par Prof. A. Blanc-Lapierre et Prof. M. Perrot. (M morial des Sciences Physiques—Fascicule 57.) Pp. iii+96. (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1954.) 1100 francs.

Propri t  Magn tiques des Lames M talliques Minces

Par Prof. M. A. Colombani. (M morial des Sciences Physiques—Fascicule 58.) Pp. iii+78. (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1954.) 1000 francs.

THESE two small monographs may be regarded in a way as similar to the reviews published in England in *Progress in Physics*, except that they perhaps assume less knowledge on the reader's part.

Vol. 57 on the electrical properties of very thin metallic films is very well written, and the authors take great pains in discussing the advantages and disadvantages of known methods of preparing metal films for precise measurement. All interested in the way in which the electrical conductivity of thin films evolves following their preparation, the effects of temperature upon the conductivity, the variation of conductivity with field strength which is in effect the breakdown of Ohm's law, the physical structure of such films and the theoretical interpretation of their behaviour, will find much to interest them in this little volume.

Vol. 58, on the magnetic properties of very thin films, is also interesting, though one feels that the diagrams might have been produced with the same care as in the preceding monograph. Naturally,