

there, and also in Berkeley (California), London and Berlin. He became head of the Department of Zoology in Washington University and then in 1941 he went to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the year in which the first electron microscope for use in an academic biological laboratory was installed (now there are six such instruments in operation there). During recent years Prof. Schmitt has been working on the isolation of various protein molecules, using especially the giant nerve fibre of the squid. He is at present making studies of collagen in connexion with rheumatoid arthritis and the tanning of leather.

Physics at Newcastle: Prof. W. E. Curtis, F.R.S.

THE recent retirement of Prof. W. E. Curtis from the chair of physics at King's College (University of Dunham), Newcastle upon Tyne, marks the end of a thirty-year period of considerable expansion in the Department of Physics of which he has been director. After holding the posts of lecturer in the University of Sheffield and reader in King's College, London, he went to Newcastle, to what was then Armstrong College, in 1926, as successor to Prof. Henry Stroud. He at once set himself to organize research in the Department and soon had a school of students working in his own subject of spectroscopy, to which later other branches of research were added. The teaching staff on his arrival consisted of four lecturers, a number which has been more than doubled in the ensuing years, while a reader and a professor of theoretical physics have been added to the staff. Beside directing the Department, Prof. Curtis has taken an important part in the administration of the College, being for several years sub-rector. Throughout the First World War he served in the Royal Navy, and during the Second he was in the Ministry of Home Security and then in the Armament Research Department, being superintendent of applied explosives during 1943-45. His work in spectroscopy was recognized by his election to the Royal Society in 1934, and during 1950-52 he was president of the Institute of Physics. Though he has now retired from his chair, Prof. Curtis still has a number of scientific activities, and he is at present remaining in Newcastle.

Royal Society Antarctic Expedition

THE advance party of the Royal Society International Geophysical Year Antarctic Expedition will leave Southampton on November 22 in the M.V. *Tottan* (540 tons) and will prepare the installation of a scientific research station on the Antarctic mainland, on the shores of the Weddell Sea, south of the Falkland Islands. Conditions permitting, it is hoped to set up the station in the Vahsel Bay region (78° S., 35° W.), which is one of great scientific interest for geophysical studies, and, if successful, a further party, eighteen strong, consisting mainly of scientific research workers, will sail in a year's time to relieve the advance party and complete the Royal Society's Antarctic station for the International Geophysical Year (July 1957-December 1958). The station will be one of twenty-two international geophysical stations being set up on the Antarctic mainland by British Commonwealth countries, the United States, the U.S.S.R. and other countries. The advance party will be under the command of Surgeon Lieut.-Commander D. Dalgliesh and will consist of three scientific workers—an electronic engineer from the

Army, a radio-astronomer from Jodrell Bank (University of Manchester) and a meteorologist from the Meteorological Office—and six others. The pilot programme of scientific observations includes surface meteorological measurements, ionospheric research, auroral studies, measurements of atmospheric ozone and glaciological observations; among the scientific instruments will be an all-sky camera which will photograph the aurora australis. The chartering of the ship and the provision of all supplies has been done by the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey acting through the Crown Agents, on behalf of the Royal Society. The Royal Society has been associated with Arctic and Antarctic expeditions for nearly two centuries: in 1772, in association with the Admiralty, it instructed Captain Cook to "explore the high southern latitudes with a view to determining the existence of a great antarctic continent".

B.B.C. Colour Television Experiments

FOR some time past, the B.B.C. Research Department has been studying the technique of colour television, and recently a programme of experimental transmissions was started outside normal broadcasting hours. On October 20, Sir Harold Bishop, director of technical services, presented a special demonstration for the Press. This comprised the transmission over a closed circuit at the Alexandra Palace station, of still pictures, a short travel film and a number of 'live' camera shots, all of which were reproduced at the receiving end as attractive colour pictures. The technique used in this work is based on the American N.T.S.C. (National Television System Committee) adapted to the British 405-line definition and the normal bandwidth of black-and-white television in Britain. In this system, the red, green and blue components of a coloured picture are 'combined' into a pair of 'chrominance' signals, and a brightness or 'luminance' signal. The latter (luminance) signal can be made to give a compatible picture to a viewer possessing a black-and-white receiver; and the most important purpose of the present series of experimental transmissions is to determine whether this compatible reception—of a black-and-white picture from colour transmissions—is satisfactory. Viewers participating in these experiments are asked to report on any differences experienced in the sound and vision reproduction as compared with the normal reception of the regular black-and-white programmes. Sir Harold Bishop said that the results of these tests would be reported to the Postmaster General's Television Advisory Committee; but he thought it unlikely that a colour television service for Britain would be ready for at least three years.

British Museum (Natural History)

THE British Museum (Natural History) has purchased a new specimen of *Scelidosaurus*, a genus which is geologically the oldest armoured dinosaur. Up till now it has been known by one almost complete but somewhat distorted skeleton, already in the Museum, collected and prepared by James Harrison a century ago, and by a few isolated bones of a young *Scelidosaurus* more recently preserved in the Lyme Regis Museum. The latest acquisition was found about a year ago by Mr. J. F. Jackson, of Charmouth, a well-known collector of fossils. He discovered a large slab of Lower Liassic limestone which, on splitting, showed the bones of the hind leg, the hip