

to use the relevant experiments for a quantitative determination of the density of energy-levels of nuclei. While occupied with this work, he has found time to develop quantitatively a method for the extraction of the beam from a cyclotron. This method has led to spectacular success on the Liverpool machine. Earlier in his career, he made interesting contributions to abstract field theory. Dr. LeCouteur's flexibility should be of great value in his new post and should help to start a new school of theoretical physics in Canberra.

Benjamin Franklin's Purse

IN connexion with the 250th anniversary of the birth of Benjamin Franklin (1706-90), the Department of Mineralogy of the British Museum (Natural History) is exhibiting the asbestos purse sold by Franklin to Sir Hans Sloane in 1725. The purse came into the collections of the British Museum at the time of its foundation in 1753, on the death of Sir Hans Sloane. It had lain unrecognized for many years and was identified in 1938. On his arrival in Britain, Franklin worked for some time as a compositor and sought to augment his income by the sale of some 'curiosities' which he had brought with him from America. One of these, the asbestos purse, is referred to by Franklin in his autobiography, and also in a letter to Sir Hans Sloane, now preserved in the British Museum. The purse represents perhaps the earliest specimen of asbestos from North America to reach Great Britain.

European Organization for Nuclear Research

At a recent meeting in Geneva of the Council of the European Organization for Nuclear Research, a number of measures were approved. Two of these refer to a scheme of guest professorships whereby prominent workers are invited to spend a year in Geneva helping the research teams there: Prof. G. C. Wick, an Italian physicist at present at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, has been nominated for the guest professorship in theoretical physics and will act as leader of the Theoretical Group in Geneva; and Prof. W. K. H. Panofsky, director of the High-Energy Physics Laboratory of Stanford University, California, for the guest professorship in experimental physics. The estimates for the financial year 1956 and the capital investment programme for the period 1952-60 were approved by the Council. The budgetary contributions for 1956 have been fixed at about 34 million Swiss francs as compared with a figure of 25 millions for 1955. This year will be a period of great activity, and will involve a general move to the site at Meyrin, the installation of the laboratories and workshops, and the development of the scientific programme in relation to experiments with the machines. The staff will increase by about 40 per cent. By the end of 1960 the Organization will probably have spent about 197 million Swiss francs. Previous estimates were lower, but unforeseen problems were met in connexion with the stability of the foundations for the proton synchrotron; staff needs have also increased, and by 1960 about five hundred will be required. At the meeting of the Council the following officers were elected: *President*, Sir Ben Lockspeiser (United Kingdom); *Vice-Presidents*, M. Jacques de Bourbon-Busset (France) and Prof. Ivar Waller (Sweden); *Chairman of the Finance Committee*, M. Jean Willems (Belgium); *Additional Members of the Committee of Council*, Dr. Antonio

Pennetta (Italy) and Prof. Paul Scherrer (Switzerland).

The Organization is planning to hold a symposium on high-energy physics in Geneva during June 11-23. The first week will be devoted to novel features in the design and techniques of high-energy accelerators, and this will be followed by papers and discussions on special experimental techniques (for example, bubble chambers) and new contributions to π -meson physics. Further information can be obtained from the Organization at Case postale 25, Geneva, 15-Aéroport.

Radiation Monitoring Service in Britain

THE National Physical Laboratory radiation monitoring service, started for hospital staffs in 1942 at the request of the Ministry of Health, and extended in the following year to cover industrial workers, has grown steadily to the point where some 50,000 films are issued annually. In 1953 a new organization, the Radiological Protection Service, was set up under the joint auspices of the Ministry of Health and of the Medical Research Council to deal with general aspects of protection against ionizing radiations. This organization has now taken over the N.P.L. service. Initially the service will be operated by the Radiological Protection Service in a similar manner to that adopted by the National Physical Laboratory. The fee will be the same and also the procedure for supplying films and issuing reports. Inquiries should be addressed to the Director of the Service, Mr. W. Binks, at Downs Nursery Hospital, Cotswold Road, Sutton, Surrey (Telephone No. VIGilant 1329). The Service is also prepared to give advice on radiological hazards in general, and on the necessary protection measures for new installations involving such hazards. Future plans include the development of techniques for measuring accumulated radioactivity in the bodies of radiological workers.

U.S. Agricultural Research Institute

At the fourth annual meeting, held during October 17-18 in Washington, D.C., of the Agricultural Research Institute of the United States National Academy of Sciences and the National Research Council, the following officers were installed: *President*, Walter C. Dutton (Dow Chemical Co.); *Vice-President*, Max T. Goebel (E. I. DuPont de Nemours and Co., Inc.); and *Secretary*, Norman F. Kennedy (Corn Industries Research Foundation). The meeting included a paper on the strategy of research, by A. G. Norman, an address on the farmer and the future, by Ervin L. Peterson (U.S. Department of Agriculture), and a symposium on corn in the American economy; the proceedings will be issued shortly. The Agricultural Research Institute is composed of two types of members, those that pay subscription and those that do not, the former being industrial organizations and the latter scientific societies, agricultural experimental stations and Federal agencies. It is designed to foster the promotion of co-operative research that will ensure the best long-term uses of agricultural resources for the national welfare, and for this purpose it is affiliated with the Agricultural Board of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Research Council.

New Zealand Forestry Research

SOME reorganization has taken place in forestry research in New Zealand, and the publication of *Forest Research Notes* and of *Forest Products Research*