the Council on a non-profit-making basis. All inquiries, and offers of help in abstracting (especially from those with a knowledge of Russian), should be addressed to the Editorial Offices, *International Abstracts of Biological Sciences*, Pergamon Press, Ltd., 4–5 Fitzroy Square, London, W.1.

British Museum (Natural History)

More than two hundred years ago Hans Sloane bequeathed his famous collection representing all branches of natural history, as well as manuscripts, coins and antiquities, to the nation. From this collection, the Cotton Library and the Harley collection of manuscripts, grew the British Museum. Before the Museum was a century old it had grown so big that the removal of the Natural History Departments to another site was inevitable; in 1881 the British Museum (Natural History) was opened to the public. To-day the Museum has nearly four acres of gallery space in which exhibits are set out in a form which makes nonsense of the dry-as-dust aura so often attributed to museums. A short guide to the exhibition galleries has recently been published (pp. vi+30. London: British Museum (Natural History), 1957. 1*s*. 6*d*.), which not only helps the visitor to find his way around the Museum but also helps him to see how the Trustees are constantly changing the Museum's face to meet changing conditions. In the Central Hall, for example, preparations are now being made for a series of exhibits to explain evolution. In the Mineral Gallery and Balcony a special exhibition in connexion with the current antarctic expeditions and the International Geophysical Year shows examples of rocks collected by earlier antarctic expeditions; conditions of life and work in the antarctic are also illustrated.

Science in Burma

Part of the Four-Year Plan for Education in Burma is a scheme for the improvement of science teaching. This includes the formation of science clubs to stimulate out-of-school interest and the preparation of exhibitions for schools. Science advisers who run clubs in three high-schools, two in Rangoon and one in Taunggye, have recently received gifts from the Asia Foundation in the United States of radio transmitters and receivers, model telephones, model steam engines, instruments to measure humidity and astronomical charts. The gifts were received by U. Kaung, director of education in Burma. Encouragement in setting up the science clubs has been given by members of the Unesco Technical Assistance team in Burma.

Sheffield Interchange Organization

At the recent annual general meeting of the Sheffield Interchange Organization (SINTO), which is responsible for the pooling of scientific literature in the Sheffield area, it was reported that a recent survey had revealed 4,500 files of scientific journals in the thirty-nine co-operating libraries, covering 2,500 separate titles. Members agreed to amalgamate some of the duplicated files so as to save space and binding costs. Three new research bibliographies were produced during 1956–57 by the Science and Commerce Department of the Sheffield City Libraries. These were No. 62, "The CO_2 Process"; No. 63, "The Strength of Single Metal Crystals"; and No. 64, "Ceramic Tools". Use made of the interlending facilities continues to increase, and last year members lent to each other 3,272 items. While the Science and Commerce Department continues to lend most of these publications, research and institutional libraries in Sheffield lent 886 items compared with 559 items in the previous year.

Morphology and Cytology of Linseed Autotetraploids

Induced autotetraploids of three strains of linseed, *Linum usitatissimum* L., have been studied by K. K. Pandey (*Lloydia*, 19, 245; 1956) to observe their comparative morphological and cytogenetical behaviour. Considerable differences in the fibre bundles of diploid and tetraploid strains were noted, the latter being commercially inferior. A conspicuous difference in reciprocal crosses of tetraploids is thought to be due to the incompatible genetical constitution of the female parent. Crosses between $2n$ and $4n$ plants showed that they were highly incompatible. This is of great economic significance as it ensures the purity of the tetraploid strains. In cytological studies about 47 per cent of the tetraploid plants were found to be aneuploids. In studies of meiosis, various irregularities were observed. Of the aneuploids, only 58-chromosome plants produced a few seeds. Among the factors considered to be jointly responsible for sterility in tetraploid linseed were meiotic abnormalities in pollen mother cells, failure of embryo-sacs (70 per cent) to attain a fully mature, 8-nucleate stage at fertilization, presumed defective anther dehiscence (about 10 per cent) which makes self-pollination difficult, failure of the apparently fertile pollen grains to germinate, and abnormalities in a large proportion of the pollen tubes, many of which burst or aborted during their way down the style.

International Lunar Society

For many years amateur astronomers have been interested in selenographical studies, and many astronomical societies have lunar sections. The International Lunar Society was founded in 1956 with the object of co-ordinating the work of lunar observers. Dr. H. P. Wilkins is the first president of the new Society. A journal, *Revista de la Sociedad Lunar Internacional* (International Lunar Society, Secretary, Prof. Antonio Paluzie-Borrell, Diputacion 337, Barcelona), is to be published at intervals of six months. The first issue, which appeared in March, contains five articles on various aspects of selenography. The articles in the *Revista* are in English, with summaries in French, German and Spanish.

"Regard the Earth"

Schools, and secondary school pupils in particular, will be especially indebted to Dr. R. Fraser and to the Science Club for the inexpensive but excellent and comprehensive account of the International Geophysical Year which has been published under the title "Regard the Earth" (Pp. 24. London: Science Club, 5 Great James Street, W.C.1, 1957. 2*s*. 6*d*.). The International Geophysical Year began on July 1 and will last for eighteen months. During this time scientists from some fifty-five nations will be engaged in a great co-operative enterprise to make an extensive and complex exploration of man's environment, of the Earth's atmosphere, crust and core. The work has been divided into ten main sections: meteorology, oceanography, glaciology, ionospheric physics, geo-