

remain under British control. The Chandos Committee proposed that the Government's 25-year loan should carry 4.5 per cent interest, but the Government has decided that interest on the loan should be at the rate for 25-year loans which is being charged by the Public Works Loan Board when the agreement is signed. At the present interest rate of 6.25 per cent, and assuming a total cost of £30 million, the grant would amount to some £3.25 million and the loan to £14.75 million. The statement met with some criticism in both Houses. In the House of Commons, Mr. Marples maintained that the Government was not putting up much risk capital, and that according to estimates of travel for the next ten years, by the end of ten years the taxpayer would be very well covered.

Lord Alexander of Hillsborough again asked for access to the report of the Chandos Committee and Lord Mills referred to an agreement to keep confidential the mass of technical and financial information contained in the report. Lord Lucas of Chilworth, however, while agreeing that there might perhaps be good technical reasons for not producing the report, suggested that the economic survey of the prospects of trans-Atlantic travel which enabled the Chandos Committee to formulate some of its proposals could be made available, and Lord Mills undertook to look into this possibility. The proposal is to be discussed further in both Houses, but dissatisfaction with the Government decision has already been expressed on the grounds that the decision appears to have been undertaken independently of the inquiry by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research into the shipbuilding industry, and that the report on that inquiry is also being kept secret. Incidentally, when speaking at the launching of the 9,000-ton *Clan Ferguson* on November 3, Mr. A. Cayzer, deputy chairman of the British and Commonwealth Shipping Company, suggested more research by British shipbuilders is necessary, and for that purpose smaller firms might need to amalgamate. A few large substantial companies could carry out research more easily and efficiently than a number of small units, and this applied particularly to the engine-makers.

Children's Interests in Science

To find out children's interests so that the content of a science syllabus could be devised, 141 boys and 142 girls aged eleven in St. Helens were asked to write down a list of questions in science which would interest them and which they would like to know more about. The director of education, N. F. Newbury, has summarized and analysed their replies in the summer edition of *Teaching Science*. Grouped under general headings, the topics dealt with most frequently were natural phenomena (1,186); the human body (753); how things work (718); animals other than humans (393); and in more specialized fields, floating (130); chemistry (130); light (85); inventors (48); magnetism (43). The questions occurring most frequently were of the type "How does an aeroplane fly?" (100), and "What is electricity and how is it made?"; while questions such as "Why do people die?" (27), and "What is gravity?" (29), were at the other end of the scale. There was only a limited interest on questions on space: 29 questions on rockets, 10 on satellites and flying saucers and 9 on space. Some questions quoted without comment were "How far up does gravity reach? A candle wants air, so why does it go out when you blow

it? Why does heat make things expand?" By their replies the children show clearly that, at this stage, they have little enthusiasm for orthodox Nature study, but are mainly concerned with themselves and their surroundings. At this age they tend also to ask similar questions.

Historic Books on Mining and Kindred Subjects

A COLLECTION of rare and historic books owned by Mr. Robert Annan is being exhibited during November 15–December 31 at the Science Museum, South Kensington. These books deal with mining, assaying and metallurgy, mining law and mineralogy. Although mining has a long history, written records are extremely scanty, and it was not until the early and mid-sixteenth century when the works of Agricola and others were published that technical records of mining and ancillary practices became generally available. In medieval times the German miner was pre-eminent, his methods of working the ore deposits and the later treatment of the ore being much superior to those employed elsewhere. It is not surprising, therefore, that many of the rare books in the exhibition are of German origin. Books published in other countries are also to be shown: of particular interest is Gabriel Plattes' "Discovery of Subterranean Treasure" of 1639, which, although having little technical merit, was the first work devoted entirely to mining to be printed in English. The oldest work on exhibition is "De Mineralibus" by Albertus Magnus (written about 1260) in the version printed at Padua about 1476 and later at Venice in 1495.

The Perkin Centenary Trust: Awards

THE Perkin Centenary Trust was established to commemorate William Henry Perkin's discovery of 'Mauveine' in 1856 and to promote technical education in all aspects of the manufacture and application of colouring matters. The Trustees offer the following awards for the academic year 1961–62: (1) *The Perkin Centenary Fellowship*, for one or two years for the purpose of higher study of any subject approved by the Trustees. Its value is £750 per annum with an additional grant of up to £100 per annum towards certain designated expenses, and is tenable, from October 1961, at any university, technical college or other institution approved by the Trustees. (2) *Two Perkin Centenary Scholarships*, each for two years, renewable at the discretion of the Trustees for one further year, to enable candidates employed in an industrial firm or other institution concerned with the manufacture or the application of colouring matters to receive an education at a university or technical college. Each award will have a value of £350 per annum. There is no means test, and a successful candidate is not debarred from receiving the whole or a part of his normal salary from his employers during his tenure of the scholarship. (3) *Perkin Centenary Trust Travel Grants*. Applications are invited from teachers concerned with the study of any aspect of the manufacture or the application of colouring matters at a university, technical college, or other institution. Preference will be given to applications from lecturers, senior lecturers and readers, or the equivalent grades in other institutions, wishing to gain experience at a similar institution or in industry overseas. Grants will be available towards the cost of travel and maintenance for periods, related to the purpose of