

plants garden, experimental garden, ornamental section, landscape section, lily pools, fern houses, orchidarium and nursery. The temperature and humidity are being manipulated in the fern houses and orchidarium by artificial fountains and green cover. A variety of species is being introduced in the different sections. The institution is establishing exchange relations for seeds and plants, and it may be possible in the near future to publish an inventory of the seed and plant material available. Gifts of seeds and plants will be welcomed by the Director, Central Botanical Laboratory, Allahabad, India.

Efficiency of Indexing Systems

THE report on the first stage of an investigation into the comparative efficiency of indexing systems issued in September 1960 (see *Nature*, 188, 276; 1960) has now been followed by an interim report on the test programme briefly outlined in that earlier report (Aslib Cranfield Research Project: *Interim Report on the Test Programme of an Investigation into the Comparative Efficiency of Indexing Systems*. (An investigation supported by a grant to Aslib by the National Science Foundation.) By Cyril W. Cleverdon. Pp. iii + 84. (Cranfield: College of Aeronautics, 1960.) 8s. 6d.). For this programme more than 1,400 questions were received, from which 400 were selected for the first round of testing, about half relating to aerodynamics. Although the test programme is still incomplete and the clerical analysis of such testing as has been done is unfinished, the general level of the four indexing systems is of particular interest and possible surprise. There also appeared to be only a small difference between the success of the postings for the short time of 2 min. as against the relatively long time of 16 min. Comment is also made on the ability of a relatively inexperienced person to index with an efficiency equal to that of the other more experienced members of the staff. Comments on the general level of efficiency are in this report based solely on finding the same document, and indicate that technical staff were able to use the indexes as efficiently as the project staff, the only significant difference being with the alphabetical subject catalogue. Technical staff with no previous experience got on surprisingly well with the Universal Decimal Classification, but in regard to the facet system opinion is provisionally expressed that the chain index and single order approach were a severe handicap and that use of the schedules in a more conventional manner would have given more satisfactory results. Both the project staff and technical searchers found the uniterm system relatively simple to use.

Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine

THE joint annual report of the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine and the Carmichael Hospital for Tropical Diseases for 1958-59 contains a full record of the work of the scientific staff of the many departments. A number of matters of outstanding importance are referred to. Among these was the breeding of a strain of black mice by the crossing of white and ordinary mice; these were used for transmission of human leprosy bacilli, with promising results. A new experimental device has been evolved for research on amoebiasis. In an attempt to produce better vaccine for cholera, it is recorded that formalin, in a suitable concentration, appeared to preserve antigenicity better than other chemical or physical

agents. In the field of virus research, an interesting observation has been made. While the vaccinia virus was invariably found to be lethal to infant mice inoculated intracerebrally, the variola virus was found to survive in the brain of mice for a prolonged period without producing any pathogenic effect. Intensive work continued on the haemoglobinopathy syndrome, yielding results of considerable interest.

Medical Aspects of the Kariba Dam

A SPECIAL supplement of the *Central African Journal of Medicine* describes medical aspects of the Kariba Hydro-Electric Scheme (6, No. 10; October 1960). The paper has been prepared by Dr. M. H. Webster, formerly chief medical officer to the Federal Power Board, Kariba, who outlines the measures taken to deal with the health problems of the Kariba scheme stemming from the following factors: the topographical and meteorological features of the site; the nature of the undertaking; the importation of African workers in large numbers and at high speed from many parts of Central Africa; the importation of large numbers of European operatives who could be expected to have little or no immunity to the specific disease risks likely to be encountered and, indeed, as it turned out, little or no experience of tropical conditions. One of the first undertakings of the Board was a campaign, carried out from the air and on the ground, against the tsetse fly and mosquitoes which infested the area. As soon as possible an adequate hospital was built, but its modern equipment and comprehensive facilities would have been of little use without the skill and devotion of its staff. In a foreword, Sir Duncan Anderson, chairman of the Federal Power Board, states his belief that the study will prove a valuable source of information and guidance to all engineers and administrators who are concerned with the planning of great projects in the remote corners of the Earth.

The Quelea

IN many regions of Africa the quelea bird has always been a threat to agriculture, causing damage to crops, especially sorghum, millet, rice and other small-grained cereals. The economic losses have increased considerably during the past fifteen years or so, and to-day, in many African countries, more especially those of West Africa, all attempts to raise output are doomed to failure unless methods for the effective control of these birds are jointly elaborated and simultaneously applied. This was the problem before the symposium arranged by the Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa South of the Sahara, held at Bamako during May 17-21 (*Science Afrique*, 21; July 1960). The agenda covered three main points: a review of progress achieved in control techniques—chemical, physical and biological means of destruction of roosts and breeding colonies; co-ordination at regional and interterritorial level—co-ordination concerning local migrations, ringing campaigns, direct exchanges of information on biology and control between neighbouring territories; control of birds other than quelea presenting a threat to crops. The participants were also called on to consider the possibility of developing joint action in Africa to combat this natural scourge. In their recommendations, they pointed out that progress in quelea control must depend on adequate financial means to apply really effective measures. The meeting also stressed the importance of direct exchanges of