

be ways of reducing the cost per student. What is equally clear is that the financial pressure on the universities is already such as to raise serious concern as to their ability to deal adequately with their present responsibilities for teaching and research if the conditions that they are to offer their academic staff are not quickly improved.

That the Government has now decided to refer the question of university salaries to the National Incomes Committee shows that it has at last accepted the advice of the University Grants Committee as to the need for immediate increases in university salaries. The announcement on December 27 of an actual salary increase of £3.5 million a year from April 1, 1963, sufficient to provide an overall increase of 10 per cent, provides the universities with an important salary basis for recruitment. However, in the present circumstances, it is unlikely by itself to remove the existing dissatisfaction in view of the claims previously advanced by the Association of University Teachers, which has already protested to the chairman of the University Grants Committee.

INFORMATION U.S.S.R.

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An Authoritative Encyclopædia about the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Edited and Compiled by Robert Maxwell. Pp. xii+982 (illustrated). (Oxford, London, New York and Paris: Pergamon Press, 1962.) £10 net.

THIS is far more than a book—and one that ought to be in every library worth the name throughout the length and breadth of English-speaking lands. The *Great Soviet Encyclopædia* is a gigantic work of reference which can bear comparison with comparable encyclopædias in any country, and what Mr. Robert Maxwell and the Pergamon Press have done is to translate into English Volume 50 of the *Soviet Encyclopædia*—the volume which deals with the Soviet Union itself. What therefore is presented to the English-speaking world is the Russian world as seen and described by its own leading experts and as presented to its own people. It occupies 762 large quarto pages in double column, or much more than a million words, and, as if that were not enough, there follow 150 pages of statistics—the “U.S.S.R. in Figures, 1960”, which is translated directly from the Russian handbook with the same title. Two exhaustive indexes of names and topics occupy nearly a further hundred pages, and so complete a monumental tome of approximately a thousand pages.

Robert Maxwell is a remarkable young man—still under forty—of Czech origin, who speaks and reads fluently at least nine languages, including Russian. After a distinguished war career, underground and later commissioned and decorated in the field, he was with the British Foreign Office until in 1947 he set up the scientific publishing house, Pergamon Press, now one of the largest organizations of its kind in the world. Holding that knowledge is the key to better world understanding, he regards *Information U.S.S.R.* as the first of a series of reference books, each to be written by the leading experts of their own country, which will eventually cover the whole world.

Information U.S.S.R. has been produced with the cordial collaboration of the Government Scientific Publishing House which produces the *Soviet Encyclopædia*, and already it has been discussed in principle that comparable works, *Information Great Britain* and *Information U.S.A.*, might be published simultaneously in Russian and English. Mr. Maxwell is already alive to the major problem of encyclopædias—that they quickly get out of

date, and he plans annual or periodic supplements to keep them up to date.

Such a project staggers the imagination by its immensity, but what the Pergamon Press has already achieved in a dozen years of life leads one to believe that if anyone can see it through to fruition, that person is Mr. Maxwell. So much is at stake in a world rent by ‘cold wars’ that surely the effort deserves the fullest support: let every reader of this notice for a start make certain that his institution secures its copy of *Information U.S.S.R.*

To review the contents is an impossible task. If one dips into those sections covering one’s own fields of study one is struck by the excellence and smoothness of the translation. Russian names which are so frequently mangled in English are given their correct transliteration and diacritical marks; for example, what normally appears in English as the Tian Shan are given as Tyan’-Shan’ and Lwow as L’vov. One may object to anticlinoriums, but where rises and falls in the surface of the Palæozoic platform are designated anticlines and synclines one presumes this is the usage of the original. There are full references to the original literature, the works being given in Roman lettering, so that as with place-names one has a standard transliteration. Good tests of the adequacy of translation are afforded by the sections on soils and vegetation. Both are well done and it would be a severe critic who found serious fault. It is recognized that ‘taky’r’, ‘solonets’ and ‘solonchak’ are not to be translated, and one is introduced to ‘taky’rization’ quite naturally. Throughout ‘s’ is used in preference to ‘z’ (podsol, not podzol). We are also given permanently frozen subsoil (*merzlot*a). It should be noted that throughout the numerous maps and diagrams in the text and folding maps have been translated with equal care.

Section 15, “Science and Scientific Institutions”, occupies no less than 140 pages. Undoubtedly the impression one gets is that science is a monopoly of the Soviet Union and in the main of the Soviet régime; it is scarcely possible to find other than a Russian name mentioned. It is thus a record of Soviet scientific achievement as seen by themselves: the Western reader must be left to see where the whole fits into the world pattern. But this is what is given to the students in Russian universities and to the intelligent reading public: it is right that readers in English should see for themselves exactly what is being disseminated entirely without editorial comment or alteration. L. DUDLEY STAMP

A DRIFT BETWEEN CONTINENTS

Animal Geography

By Wilma George. Pp. vi+142. (London, Melbourne and Toronto: Heinemann Educational Books, Ltd., 1962.) 21s.

BOOKS on zoogeography are too few, too specialized or too inaccessible for a welcome to be withheld for one that “provides an introduction to the study of the distribution of animals . . . for those who are starting zoology at school and for those whose knowledge has progressed further but who require a brief survey of the subject”. This latest book, excellent in so many ways, could meet the needs of the second category of reader but might fail for the beginner since it demands almost specialist knowledge for easy reading or ready understanding.

Only the vertebrates are dealt with, and among these the mammals are used predominantly to illustrate the principles. The text is divided into four parts: “Present”, “Past”, “Past to Present”, and “Islands”. In the first, we are introduced to the use of maps and to the classification of mammals, down to families, and to the ‘thumb-nail’ pictures of mammals used as symbols throughout