

while keeping them firmly in their place. This brings us back once again to the problem of science and Government, and Political and Economic Planning believes that the present British generation is well equipped to deal with this task providing the problem is fairly faced. The real difficulty is that inbred political prejudices and ideas on all sides still hinder the development of our technological capacity and the use of scientific methods and ideas in administration. New concepts and patterns commanding intellectual and moral allegiance are emerging much more slowly than either political party is discarding its obsolete ideas and prejudices and in this respect there is little to choose between them. Equally serious is the acute shortage of trusted and experienced guides of first-class national calibre.

While the broadsheet points to this lack, it is not entirely pessimistic and points to a number of indications of increasing independent thought and action as a healthy sign for the future. Moreover, in conclusion, it emphasizes that both thought and policy must extend to international affairs for Britain's future can only be understood and assured as we recognize both the changes in her position in the world and the problems and opportunities which confront alike in regard to the developing nations and to the world generally. On defence the situation calls for thorough advanced study and for the preparation of plans for the redeployment of effort and adjustment of policies so as to exploit it to the best advantage. Greater emphasis will be involved on scientific and technological, educational and cultural as well as economic international limits. While military and related diplomatic and Governmental activities overseas may be cut back accordingly, this should be accompanied by a more serious effort to make available picked men for United Nations agencies and task forces.

There stands out from all this the growing importance of the Department of Technical Co-operation, which should undoubtedly acquire full Cabinet status in the near future. Likewise, the importance and nature of the contribution which the social sciences are likely to make ridicules the proposal to separate the proposed Committee of Inquiry under Lord Heyworth into research into the social sciences from the Minister for Science within whose sphere it so clearly lies, though it is equally demonstrable that some of his other responsibilities should be transferred to others. As a challenge to thought the broadsheet is as stimulating as Prof. Denbigh's book and Dr. Lilley's address, and all three are welcome aids to the critical examination by scientists and technologists, as well as by others, of the claims which British political parties are now advancing regarding the ways in which they propose to utilize science in promoting Britain's welfare in the 'sixties and 'seventies.

WEATHER AND THE LIVING ORGANISM

Biometeorology

Proceedings of the Second International Bioclimatological Congress held at The Royal Society of Medicine, London, 4-10 September 1960 organized by "The International Society of Biometeorology". Edited by S. W. Tromp. Pp. xxxii+687. (London and New York: Pergamon Press, 1962.) 140s.

IN an age when it is becoming more and more important that there should be an efficient exchange of ideas between scientists of different countries and between scientists of different disciplines, there are times when it

is permissible to doubt whether large international meetings are the best means of bringing this about. Anyone attending such meetings runs a risk of suffering from mental indigestion; there is too little time to discuss too many papers on too many aspects of the subject. Without a doubt the most rewarding conversations are those which arise informally outside the conference hall. This is not meant to imply that the papers presented at such meetings are not worthy of consideration; in fact, in many cases the very reverse is true, but the pressures of time and space make adequate assessment well-nigh impossible. Adequate and timely publication of the more important papers is therefore essential, and it is for this reason that a volume of the proceedings of the second International Bioclimatological Congress, organized by the International Society of Biometeorology and held in London in 1960, is warmly to be welcomed.

Biometeorology, the title of the publication, covers a very wide scientific field and is increasingly attracting the attention of numerous research workers, including biologists, meteorologists, and medical authorities. More than 500 such scientists from 44 countries attended the London meeting. For inclusion in the present volume, the editors have selected the contributions which, in their opinion, are most likely to lead to the better understanding of the relationship between weather and climate and the living organism: man, animals and plants. About 70 such papers have been included together with reports of the chairmen of working groups on specialized subjects; a small but helpful index is also added.

It is worthy of comment that more than half the contributions deal with the effect of climate on man, including the effects of high altitudes and the problems involved in the modified climates of buildings. This is a praiseworthy aspect of the work of the Society because there often arises the feeling that more progress is being made in relation to plants and animals than with respect to human beings; such a state of affairs is only to be expected as it is far easier to conduct experiments on stationary plants or on animals under limited controls than on the somewhat more intractable human.

As the papers were originally prepared for the 1960 meeting and refer to work done in advance of that date, it cannot be said that the volume contains any startling innovations. Indeed, it is difficult to select individual papers for comment from such a wide field, but the session on meteorological-pathological forecasting showed the promise of a new useful advance in practical applications of scientific research. Increased knowledge now makes it possible, in certain cases, to foresee disease attacks. The influence of weather is discussed in three contributions; P. M. A. Bourke dealing with plant diseases and pests, M. Crawford with livestock diseases, and F. Sargent and D. S. Zaharko on medical-meteorological forecasting. The future of weather reports and forecasts may well be towards the inclusion of the interpretation of the effects of such weather, and in so doing, increase enormously their value to the community.

Dr. S. W. Tromp, the secretary-general of the International Society of Biometeorology, and his collaborators are to be congratulated on the immense amount of work that has gone into the preparation of this volume. The price, inevitably high, is probably beyond the reach of most private purses, but as a reference book in a library or research station, the convenience of having so many contributions between one set of covers is bound to be appreciated and would save many hours of search, so that the cost would soon be saved.

The general style of presentation is attractive, but it is to be regretted that in the copy reviewed there were eight blank pages, two of which may not have been meant to contain any printing but the remainder played havoc with the papers on ionization of the air—a state of affairs which should not occur in a publication of this type and price.

L. P. SMITH