

Parliament in Britain

ON December 15, Mr. A. Crosland said that approximately 20,050 places in faculties in science and technology were taken up in universities and colleges of advanced technology in October 1964 and 24,341 in October 1965. In addition, 3,760 students were admitted in the 1965-66 academic year to full-time and "sandwich" degree courses in science and technology in technical colleges. The reports of the Universities Central Council on Admissions indicated that, in the field covered by their scheme, 1,500 fewer students in science and technology were admitted in 1964 than the institutions had forecast, and that in 1965 admissions differed only marginally from the estimate, although in pure science the number was 430 below the estimate.

IN reply to a question on December 12, Mr. G. Roberts said that 3,109 suitably qualified candidates applied for Science Research Council studentships to start in October 1966; 2,763 were offered awards. There had been a progressive increase in the number of awards made by the council during the past few years, but the council was responsible for only about half the total awards for postgraduate study.

IN a written answer in the House of Commons on December 12, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. J. Callaghan, stated that Sir William Fisher had been appointed chairman of the Decimal Currency Board and Lord Erroll deputy chairman. The board's functions would be (1) to examine in detail the problems of the changeover, including consultation as appropriate with interested parties; (2) to promote the speedy and efficient transition to the use of a decimal currency; (3) to organize a programme of guidance to the public; and (4) to examine any claims for com-

pensation (within the Government's broad policy on the subject) and to make recommendations.

IN written answers in the House of Commons on December 15, Mr. G. Roberts stated that 384 students who qualified for first degrees and 515 graduates awarded higher degrees in 1964-65 were known to have taken permanent employment overseas. These figures exclude graduates in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science, and overseas students returning to their own country. The average recurrent expenditure by universities per undergraduate was estimated in 1964-65 as £630 per annum.

IN reply to a question in the House of Commons on December 13, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Power, Dr. J. Bray, gave details of ten current research contracts, totalling about £53,000, placed with universities or colleges of advanced technology. This did not include contracts placed by the nationalized industries which last year numbered 138, totalling about £25,000.

Announcements

THE sixth Biennial International Conference of the West African Science Association will be held in the University of Abidjan during March 20-25. The conference is open to all those interested in the advancement of science in West Africa, and papers will be presented within the following four sections: Physical Sciences and Mathematics, Earth Sciences, Biological Sciences, and Social Sciences. Further information can be obtained from Dr. J. A. Braun, General Secretary, Association Scientifique de Côte d'Ivoire, BP.4322, Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

ERRATUM. In an article in *Nature*, 212, 499 (1966) entitled "Direct Measurement of a Biphotonic Photo-ionization in Liquid Solution" by Herschel S. Pilloff and A. C. Albrecht, the reference numbers in the ninth line should be 2-4 and not 3-5.

THE NIGHT SKY IN JANUARY

All times are in Universal Time

MOON		CONJUNCTIONS WITH THE MOON	
New Moon	10d 18h	Venus	12d 00h, 4° N.
Full Moon	26d 07h	Mars	03d 19h, 0.4° S. 31d 21h, 1° N.
		Jupiter	25d 18h, 4° S.
		Saturn	15d 23h, 2° N.

PLANETS

Name	Times of rising (R) and setting (S) during the month				Mag.	D _g (10 ⁴ miles)	Zodiacal position
	R/S	Beginning	Middle	End			
Mercury	S		Unfavourable	17h 25m	-0.9	132	Sagittarius
Venus	S	Unfavourable	17h 40m	18h 30m	-3.3	150	Capricornus
Mars	R	00h 30m	00h 10m	23h 40m	+0.9	119	Virgo
Jupiter	R, R, S	17h 40m	16h 30m	7h 25m	-2.2	398	Cancer
Saturn	S	22h 40m	21h 50m	21h 00m	+1.4	926	Aquarius

D_g is the distance of planet from the Earth on the 15th of the month.

OCCULTATIONS OF STARS BRIGHTER THAN MAGNITUDE +6 AT GREENWICH

Star	R/D	Time	Mag.
o Psc	D	18d 18h 46m	4.5

(D, disappearance; R, reappearance)

METEORS

Name	Active period	Date of maximum	Radiant	Remarks
Quadrantids	3d-5d	4d 01h	R.A. 232° Dec +50°	Favourable

OTHER PHENOMENA

20d 05h Jupiter at opposition