

having been provided, there is now room for about 550 undergraduates; at present there are 19 academic staff, 33 technical staff and 30 postgraduates. In its research activities the department, headed by Professor G. K. T. Conn, attempts to maintain a balance between the two approaches of solid state physics and upper atmosphere physics. Experiments in the latter are planned and evaluated in the building, but experimental observations are carried out at the Norman Lockyer Observatory at Sidmouth.

Fit to Drive?

If the present rate of motor accidents in Britain is maintained, more than half the children now born will be injured in road accidents during their lives, and one in fifty will be killed. These figures are disturbingly high, and it seems that medical conditions in drivers such as diabetes, epilepsy, defective eyesight and cardiac conditions are responsible for not more than one per cent of road accidents. This week the Medical Commission on Accident Prevention—formed in 1964 as a result of a request by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh—has published a report setting out the conditions likely to affect the safety of driving, and suggesting advice that can be given to patients suffering from these conditions. *Medical Aspects of Fitness to Drive Vehicles* (price 5s.) is the first of a series of reports published in the Accident Prevention Series.

Driving under the influence of drugs is one of the six offences for which a driver is automatically disqualified for a year. The effects of drugs on driving are, however, not easy to assess, because other factors such as fatigue, physical and mental disease, and variations between individuals have to be considered. There is also the question of overdoses and side-effects; for example, large doses of dexamphetamine ('Dexadrine') can result in abnormal behaviour which increases the accident risk to the driver and public, while small doses—if taken by a driver who is fatigued—can prevent him from falling asleep at the wheel.

In Britain, any person suffering from epileptic fits is prohibited from driving. As there are about 130,000 adult epileptics who are potential drivers, however, it is not surprising to find that some 15,000–20,000 epileptic individuals in this country do in fact drive. As the report points out, it is extremely difficult to estimate how many accidents are caused by epilepsy, although in 1967 Dr I. G. Norman found that of 44 accidents resulting from loss of consciousness 12 were associated with epilepsy. It has been suggested that the law should be relaxed so that driving licences can be granted to those epileptics who suffer attacks only during sleep, but so far there has been no official change in the present regulations.

Among other conditions mentioned in the report, patients who suffer from various serious heart complaints are advised not to drive, and drivers of heavy goods vehicles and public service vehicles, the report suggests, should be subject to stricter regulations on heart disease. Functions and mechanisms governed by the central nervous system are numerous and include vision, hearing and the control of movement. A satisfactory standard of visual acuity is, of course, essential for drivers, but the importance of hearing is less clearly defined. Neither is there a case for barring all drivers above a certain age, as the rate of physical

and mental decline varies greatly from one person to another. The report does suggest, however, that elderly people should be encouraged to seek medical advice annually from the age of seventy on their fitness to continue driving.

Physicist turns Curator

THE National Museum of Wales appears to have broken with convention by appointing Professor G. O. Jones, professor of physics at Queen Mary College, London, as its new director. Professor Jones takes over on December 1 from the retiring director, Dr Dilwyn John, who has built up a museum distinguished in many ways but notably for its art collection and schools service. A professor of physics may at first seem a slightly idiosyncratic choice for a director of a national museum, but Professor Jones is no ordinary professor of physics. He has published three novels—not science fiction—in the past ten years, is an amateur musician, and has organized an unusual art gallery at the physics department of Queen Mary College where young painters are invited to put on one-man exhibitions which change



Professor G. O. Jones.

about every six weeks. This must be unique in Britain although there is a similar enterprise in Moscow. As a young physicist, Professor Jones worked at Oxford during the war on the Tube Alloys project, the British contribution to the atomic bomb. In 1949 he moved to Queen Mary College as reader, where he has established low temperature physics research.

From all this one can only guess that the increasing burdens of administration in London and his continuing interests in the arts have prompted Professor Jones to make the clean break with physics and move to the museum. It would be true to character if the theme of his policy at the Welsh National Museum, which comprises the main museum of Cardiff, the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagans and two much smaller institutions, turns out to be making the museum a real centre for the Welsh community. That, of course, is the slogan of many museums nowadays and is clearly far easier said than done. But demography, at least, is on his side. About half the population of Wales lives within fifty miles of Cardiff and the museums.

Professor Jones makes no secret of the fact that he would rather have the winning poems of the Eisteddfod publicly read at the museum than to have cases displaying bardic regalia. Given his close associations with writers, scientists and musicians, to say nothing of the resurgence of Welsh nationalism, it should be no surprise to anyone if the National Museum becomes the scene of some lively teach-ins, lectures and concerts. For-

tunately, because the total grant made by the Government to the museum is a miserable £381,250, that should not cost much money.

New Fellows

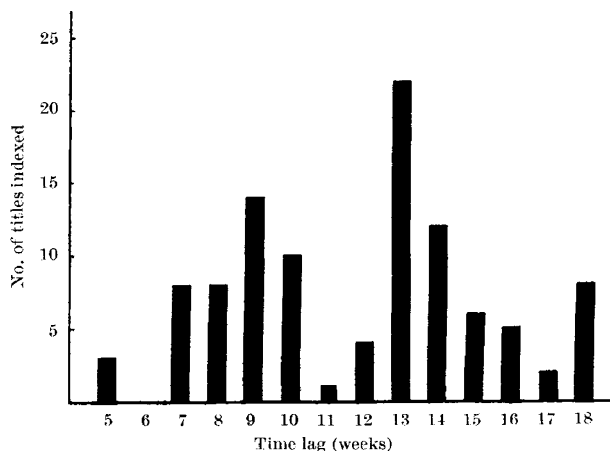
THE Royal Society has continued its policy of electing technologists to the fellowship, although the list of elections of March 21 includes fewer people from industry than last year, when the policy was introduced. This year's list also contains several people who have been active in recent well publicized developments, notably in astronomy and medicine. The list of elections of March 21 is as follows:

E. S. Anderson, director, Central Enteric Reference Laboratory and Bureau, London; L. C. Bateman, chairman, Malayan Rubber Fund Board, and controller of Rubber Research, Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur; D. E. Broadbent, director, MRC Applied Psychology Research Unit, Cambridge; G. R. Burbidge, professor of astrophysics, University of California at San Diego; B. D. Burns, director, Division of Pharmacology, National Institute for Medical Research, London; R. C. Cookson, professor of chemistry, University of Southampton; D. P. Craig, professor of physical chemistry, Australian National University; D. J. Crisp, professor of marine biology, and director of the Marine Sciences Laboratory, University College of North Wales; J. Dyson, superintendent, Division of Optical Metrology, National Physical Laboratory, Teddington; E. Eastwood, director of research, English Electric Group, London; Sir G. R. Edwards, managing director, British Aircraft Corporation Ltd, Weybridge; T. W. Goodwin, professor of biochemistry, University of Liverpool; H. Harris, professor of pathology, University of Oxford; R. N. Haszeldine, professor of chemistry and head of Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Technology, University of Manchester; A. Hewish, lecturer in physics, University of Cambridge; I. M. James, reader in mathematics, University of Oxford; D. S. Jones, professor of mathematics, University of Dundee; A. D. Lees, principal scientific officer, ARC Unit of Insect Physiology, Imperial College Research Station, Silwood; P. L. Mollison, professor of haematology, Wright-Fleming Institute, St Mary's Hospital, University of London; D. H. Northcote, reader in biochemistry, University of Cambridge; P. S. Nutman, head of Department of Soil Microbiology, Rothamsted Experimental Station; D. W. Pashley, assistant director, Tube Investments Research Laboratory, Saffron Walden; O. M. Phillips, professor of geophysical mechanics, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore; D. Rees, professor of pure mathematics, University of Exeter; F. D. Richardson, professor of extraction metallurgy, Imperial College, London; M. G. P. Stoker, professor of virology, Institute of Virology, University of Glasgow, and honorary director of MRC Unit for Experimental Virus Research; J. C. Swallow, senior principal scientific officer, National Institute of Oceanography, Godalming; Sir G. Taylor, director, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; R. G. West, lecturer in botany, University of Cambridge; D. T. N. Williamson, technical director, Molins Machine Company Ltd, London; J. T. Wilson, professor of geophysics and director of the Institute of Earth Sciences, University of Toronto; M. F. A. Woodruff, professor of surgical

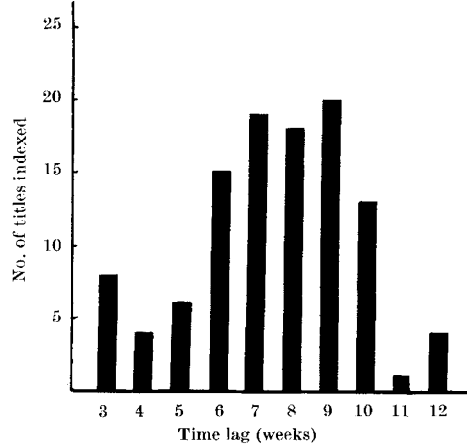
science and director of the Nuffield Transplantation Surgery Unit, University of Edinburgh.

Quick Indexes

A SURVEY on two abstract journals reported in *Nature* last November (216, 737; 1967) showed that physicists have to wait on average just under five months for abstracts to appear after the publication of the original paper. *Nuclear Science Abstracts*, published in the United States, was slightly quicker in this respect than the British *Physics Abstracts*. Indexing journals which list only titles of papers are usually thought to be quicker than abstract journals in keeping readers up to date. To see just how much quicker indexing journals are, a *Nature* correspondent has made a survey of the time lag in two journals, *British Technology Index* (published monthly by the Library Association in London), and the *Applied Science and Technology Index* (also monthly, published in New York by H. W. Wilson). The July 1967 issues were taken in each case; *BTI* appeared on August 16 and *ASTI* on August 9 in Britain. An allowance of two weeks was made to compensate for the postal delay in *ASTI*, which has to be sent from the United States. Just over 100 titles were taken at random from each of the journals. The time-lag in weeks is shown in the bar charts.



(Applied Science and Technology Index)



(British Technology Index)

As expected, the results show that these two indexing journals are much quicker than the abstracting