mount a photographic exhibition on man and nature, which will tour Britain asking people what they are prepared to do to obtain the environment they want. Tate and Lyle's Mr Cube will appear on four million sugar bags urging respect for the countryside, and Mobil, together with the Automobile Association, is to distribute disposable litter bags from two thousand petrol stations.

The British voluntary bodies concerned with conservation, preservation, amenity, recreation and so on have come together in the Committee for Environmental Conservation, and will be responsible for a thousand events during the year. At its inaugural meeting on November 26, the committee decided that its first activity would be to survey water supply in its widest aspect, including pollution—a big problem for conservation year—and sources of supply and usage.

The instigators of all this effort—in Britain the Countryside in 1970 organization—will be looking anxiously at their results at the end of next year, for they are planning for United Nations world conferences in 1971 and 1972, and are apparently looking forward to a world conservation year.

OCTOGENARIAN BOTANIST

Plant Anatomist Extraordinary

from our Botany Correspondent

HUNGARY's senior botanist, Professor Pál Greguss, who was eighty on December 12, still lectures regularly and works in his laboratory at the University of Szeged, although he retired from the chair of botany in 1965. His principal scientific interest is now xylotomy—the study of the anatomy of thin sections of wood. In this he has gained an international reputation, largely through a series of books which began to appear in 1955.

Palaeobotanists, archaeologists and hard pressed plant anatomists who must identify plant specimens on the basis of small pieces of stem, have need of guides such as Professor Greguss's *Identification of the Living Gymnosperms on the Basis of Xylotomy* or his book on the anatomy of the European hardwoods. With these it is often possible to identify the family and genus to

which a piece of wood belongs, and sometimes even the species, by looking at thin sections of the specimen under the microscope.

Professor Greguss is also well known for his xylotomical investigations of fossil plants, and in 1967 and 1969 he published books on the fossil gymnosperms and angiosperms of Hungary. Before turning to xylotomy he wrote, in 1935, an introduction to genetics, which was the first such treatment of genetics in Hungary.

EXHIBITIONS

Physics in Paris

from our Paris Correspondent

Paris, December 8

THE president of the French Society of Physics has expressed the wish that the physics exhibition held from December 8 to 13 should help to make physics more attractive and interesting. It is unlikely, however, that his hopes will be fulfilled: although in the past, efforts have been made to present fairly spectacular experiments, this year the exhibition concentrated mostly on professional physics and showed little concern for aesthetics. Early visitors, on the day that the Minister of Research, Mr Ortol, opened the exhibition seemed on the whole to be rather disappointed.

There was little foreign participation: no Japanese and few American displays. (One American remarked that he found the exhibition uninteresting and would not go again.) Mintech's display, however, held plenty of interest, especially for those interested in superconductors. The French exhibitors, however, seemed either to have neglected superconductors or to have received insufficient reward for their efforts. But the French contribution was strong on optics, notably spectroscopy. Some visitors explained this lack of balance by recalling that the previous Délégué Général à la Recherche Scientifique, Mr Maréchal, and the previous Directeur du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Mr Jaquinot, both worked in optics. Another gap in the French contributions was the absence of the Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales and the Centre National des Télécommunications. The Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique, almost the only organization to have made an effort to exhibit its wares attractively, also had one of the few French displays that placed the accent on automation and data processing.

The Compagnie Générale d'Electricité (CGE) had a spectacularly successful exhibit demonstrating the use of lasers. And it also took the risk of drawing attention to its research on fuel cells, which seems to have given trouble to its laboratories and the government organizations which support them. The holographic network developed by the firm of Jobin and Yvon aroused some interest. Air Liquide-Philip showed some good cryogenics material which, oddly enough, is only now coming onto the market although the laboratory work was completed several years ago.

Impressions after a first visit are of an average sort of exhibition, incongruous in lay-out and with no surprises or special features. Of course, since the government brought in its financial restrictions at the end of the summer, French laboratories have ceased to be a very good market for manufacturers. The

Professor Pál Greguss.