

that people will misinterpret the statistics in such a way as to assume that serious flooding cannot again occur for another decade. The truth is, however, that Professor Schofield is almost certainly correct in urging that steps should urgently be taken to contain the

Thames even if there may be room for doubt about the statistics on which his calculation of the frequency of flooding is based and even though there is no doubt that a line of sandbags along the river would be the most inelegant defence conceivable.

## Another Journal Proliferates

PLANS for increasing the volume of the scientific literature are now customarily regarded by scientists as offences against the proper conduct of business, which in turn implies that those seeking to increase the volume of the literature should offer some kind of explanation, excuse or even apology. Where the plan for publishing *Nature* three times a week is concerned (see page 1177), the freedom which the new scheme will provide for satisfying the original objectives of the journal is a sufficient explanation. To begin with, 101 years ago, *Nature* was at once a means of reporting the results of original research and a means of informing professional scientists about important developments in science—the publication of books, the proceedings of scientific societies and the doings (usually nefarious) of governments. A mere forty pages of text each week were usually enough to keep people properly informed. Over the years, however, the contradictions between these objectives have been made often painfully apparent by the growth of scientific activity. In the past few years, one of the most serious problems has been that of reconciling the interests of specialists that original work should be reported rigorously and in some detail with the interests of the general readers of the journal (mostly specialists in their own right) that much of *Nature* should be widely intelligible. One result has been that the demand for space for original research has complicated the task of providing a continuous and comprehensive record of what happens in and about science. Another has been that in the process of selecting a tiny proportion of original manuscripts from the flood arriving with every post, *Nature* has often seemed to its contributors to be arbitrary and even fickle in making decisions.

The new pattern of publication, to begin in the new year, should help to reduce these pressures in several important ways. First, there should be more room each week for original research, which will be distributed throughout the three editions. Second, there should be more room for news of important developments in science, especially at the weekend. Third, it will be possible to provide in the weekend journal information for non-specialists about a greater variety of original material appearing elsewhere, either in *Nature* or in other scientific journals. Fourth, it should be possible to broaden the scope of the weekend journal so as to deal with some important matters now unwillingly neglected. It would be wrong, however, to expect that the weekday editions of *Nature*—those published on Monday and Wednesday—will be ragbags into which are thrown reports of original

research which are too indigestible for a general readership. On the contrary, these editions will make it possible to report news which is in many ways too specialized to find its way into print at present as well as technical reviews of a kind which may seem especially appropriate in a journal which appears frequently and which can aim at being topical. In other words, although the weekend journal will have the broadest theme, the other two editions will be put together so as to make a journal which is pleasurable to read. This has always been one of the guiding principles of weekly journalism and of *Nature* and there is no intention that it should now be abandoned.

## 100 Years Ago



PROFESSOR HUXLEY'S presidential address is not his only outcome at Liverpool which it is our duty to chronicle—a duty which we perform with gratitude to him for his plain speaking. At the unveiling of Mr. Gladstone's statue on the 14th inst., Mr. Huxley, after referring to the Compulsory Education measure, which promises in time to rid us of our worse than Eastern degradation, as one of Mr. Gladstone's greatest achievements, added that if he might presume to give advice to a man so eminent as Mr. Gladstone—if he might ask him to raise to a still higher point the lustre which would hereafter surround his name in the annals of the country, it was that he should recollect there was more than one sort of learning, and that the one sort which was more particularly competent to cause the development of the great interests of the country, was that learning which we were in the habit of calling Science. That Mr. Gladstone was profoundly acquainted with literature, that he was an acute and elegant scholar, they all knew, but he suspected that the full importance for the practical interests of the country of developing what was known as Science was not quite so clear to the Prime Minister as it might be. But, seeing the great faculty of development which his past career had shown, he had no doubt that such a man would by-and-by see that if this great country was to become what it should be, he must not only put the means of education within the reach of every person in the land, but must take care that the education was of such a nature as to provide those persons with the knowledge which they could apply to their pursuits, and which would tend to make them understand best those laws under which the human family existed.

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