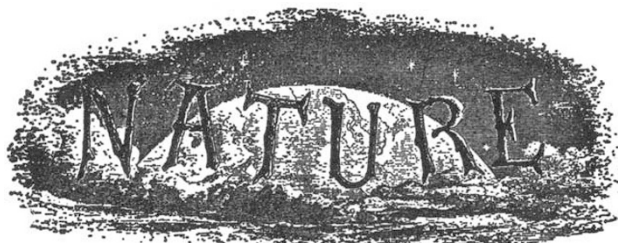


students of chemistry that industry is less likely to provide challenging opportunities for advancement than popular legend would suggest is exaggerated. To be sure, those already at work find their will to contribute to the commercial success of their enterprises frustrated, but it is not entirely clear whether these complaints arise from the unfamiliarity of work to those recently accustomed to academic life or from defects in the way in which industry itself is organized. In reality, the committee recognizes, the chemical industry is unusual among British industry in its willingness to support teaching programmes at universities, schemes for the encouragement of research and even relationships between undergraduates and potential employers. Whether it is sensible that there should be a standing committee of chemistry professors and representatives of the Chemical Industry's Association is another matter—this sounds too much like too much bureaucracy. But there is something to be said for some means by which university chemistry departments and the potential users of their product could work out the reform of chemistry teaching at British universities which the Eaborn committee has avoided.

100 Years Ago



NATURAL SCIENCE AT OXFORD

THE progress which Natural Science has made at Oxford within the last few years has far exceeded the anticipations of even the most sanguine of its promoters. It is but ten years ago that the New Museum was opened, and not much longer since the School of Natural Science was founded. Since then, year by year, the interest shown in these studies has steadily augmented, the number of undergraduates attending the University College Science Lectures has augmented in proportion as the number of these lectures has increased, and the School of Natural Science has become recognised as on a par with the other three great schools of Philosophy, Mathematics, and Law and Modern History. This has been chiefly brought about by the high standard of excellence required by the examiners in this school. When the position taken by Natural Science at a university which has commonly been condemned for neglecting this very subject, is fully recognised outside its own walls, there can be no doubt but that a far greater number than at present will come up to Oxford to pursue their science studies there. Hence it may not be here out of place to give as briefly as possible a short *résumé* of the opportunities held out to Natural Science students at Oxford, in the way of university and college lectures and the various scientific museums and libraries, as well as to notice the numerous rewards and honours which are open to all such students. To do this completely would far exceed the limits of this article, so that what follows must only be taken as a sort of index, as accurate as possible, to a subject, the details of which can be obtained by writing to the tutors of the various colleges mentioned.

From *Nature*, 3, 170, December 29, 1870.

OLD WORLD

RESEARCH POLICY

Another Fresh Look

THE Council for Scientific Policy has embarked on a study of the pattern of expenditure in civil research, supported by the Department of Education and Science, and of the arrangements which at present exist for carrying out this work. For this purpose, the council has set up a working group under its chairman, Professor F. S. Dainton. The group is to examine the structure of the research councils and the relationship between them as well as the functions of the University Grants Committee in relation to research and the work of other public bodies and government departments with interests in civilian research and development.

The working group has been set up by the CSP on its own initiative and will provide advice to the Secretary of State for Education and Science, Mrs Margaret Thatcher. Typical of, although not prominent among, the questions to be considered is whether the Agricultural Research Council should continue in its present relationship with the Department of Education and Science or whether, alternatively, some of its functions and interests should be transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. (The notion that something along these lines should be done has for a long time been cherished in some Whitehall offices.) In this sense, the Council for Scientific Policy's working group will be complementary to the review of government policy on all kinds of research and development entrusted to Lord Jellicoe. Although the starting point for much of the CSP's work will be an attempt to establish criteria for assessing the social value of particular activities in research and development, so that the report may deal with matters such as research policy in fields such as telecommunications and transport, Lord Jellicoe's study will cover defence research as well. By all accounts, the CSP study may be complete within three months, in which case it should be well timed to play a part in the larger review of research and development policy to be expected later in 1971.

CHEMISTRY

No Formula for Change

by our Education Correspondent

A SORRY tale of a declining proportion of the most able students being attracted to university chemistry courses and of poor prospects for chemists in the job market is told in a report published this week by the Royal Institute of Chemistry. Based on a four-year study conducted by a committee under the chairmanship of Professor Colin Eaborn, professor of chemistry at the University of Sussex (report of the *Committee of Enquiry into the Relationship between University Courses in Chemistry and the Needs of Industry*, Royal Institute of Chemistry, £2), the report shows that chemistry departments are accepting about 80 per cent of the candidates who apply. Bearing in mind that about 20 per cent of all candidates who apply to universities through the Universities Central Council on Admissions fail to achieve the minimum entrance qualification of two A-level passes, this finding suggests