

the United States with their advanced technologies and the absence of malaria can manage without DDT, but whether many poorer parts of the world can yet do so is another question. The World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations will continue to recommend that where suitable substitutes are not available DDT should continue in use.

STEEL

Refurbishing Old Dreams

BRITAIN'S steel industry may not be too sure where it is going, but at least it can now see where it has come from. The iron and steel gallery at the Science Museum was reopened last week after eighteen months, and traces the history of the iron and steel industry from prehistoric times, including in its sweep the manufacture of Eskimo knives from meteor iron and the latest in basic oxygen steelmaking processes.

Refurbished at a cost of more than £20,000, the gallery includes several new historical exhibits, many of which have long been hidden in the reserve collections. The new setting is resplendent with modern stainless steel.

The gallery is now an attractive but logical display. There are models of the original Bessemer process of 1856 and models of modern steel plant. Giant photographs of the Firth of Forth steel bridge of 1883 and of the steel rails laid at Derby in 1857 adorn the walls, and a giant Bessemer converter, installed at Barrow-in-Furness in 1864, dominates the entrance to the exhibition. Various manufacturing processes from wire stretching to centrifugal casting are also on display, while part of one wall is black with the giant size of two open hearth furnaces side by side, a model man dutifully in attendance.

The museum also has plans to re-display its metallurgy section, the new sections to link with the gleaming iron and steel gallery.

METEOROLOGY

Watch Unkept

THE prospect that the World Weather Watch will be delayed by lack of trained staff was one of the points made by Dr B. J. Mason, director general of the UK Meteorological Office, during the sixth annual Aslib lecture last week. The prospect now is that the first stage of the programme, consisting of the establishment of meteorological stations around the world, will not be completed until 1975, two years later than originally planned. This immediate objective, intended to improve the quality of meteorological observations from parts of the world in which meteorological stations are thinly scattered, would have

required the World Meteorological Organization to foster the establishment of 40 new meteorological stations and to improve the equipment at a further 70 stations. According to Dr Mason, the chief difficulty so far has been to find staff to run some of the outlandish stations, particularly those in developing countries.

The world-wide communications system is, by contrast, well advanced and Dr Mason thinks it should be largely operational by the end of this year. Ultimately, the World Weather Watch calls for a world-wide network of meteorological stations not more than 500 kilometres apart on land and not more than 1,000 kilometres apart at sea. When it is complete, the network should bring about a remarkable improvement in the quality of weather forecasting. Dr Mason was also cheerful about the prospects for the Global Atmospheric Research Programme (see *Nature*, 233, 382; 1971). The plan to make a detailed study of 1,000 kilometres square off the west coast of Africa is well advanced, and the team of scientists likely to be involved is being assembled at the Meteorological Office in Bracknell. That exercise, Dr Mason said, would be a necessary foundation for the success of the First Global Observing Year planned for 1976. Plainly, however, it is more difficult to provide a timetable for that component of the Global Atmospheric Research Programme which aims at providing numerical weather forecasts. At Bracknell, they are now working with a ten layer model, but it remains to be seen whether this will be a sufficient improvement on previous more simple models to make weather forecasting an objective science.

EDUCATION

Comprehensive Schools

A REPORT which debunks some of the popular myths of comprehensive education was published recently. The report, *A Critical Appraisal of Comprehensive Education* (NFER, £3.25), is the third part of a trilogy commissioned by the Department of Education and Science at a cost of £180,000 to seek out the truth about comprehensive education.

Among the educational dragons that this report purports to slay are the belief that high fliers are held back by their slower classmates in comprehensive education (they are not), that comprehensives cannot supply good sixth form courses (they can, even when they have more than their fair share of less able pupils), and that large schools isolate children (they do not).

The 240-page report took two years to hatch, and its principal conclusions

are based on a detailed study of 12 comprehensive schools in selected parts of England and Wales. 2,270 pupils and 504 teachers were involved, and the study is the largest in-depth study of comprehensive schools yet undertaken.

There is little doubt that the findings of the National Foundation for Educational Research will not quieten the fervid opposition to comprehensives in some parts of Britain, but the foundation's findings, because they are the result of detailed study, may well have real significance, although the foundation itself is the first to point out that the results cannot be taken as representative of comprehensive schools as a whole.

Not that everything in the comprehensive garden is rosy. The report has some unpleasant findings about pupil/teacher ratios. Pupils taking CSE courses get fewer teacher resources than more able children, or, for that matter, than less able children, which, as the report points out, can "hardly encourage these average pupils to continue their formal education". Equally the report declares that whereas no more middle class children are found in upper streams than their ability would warrant, 25 per cent of working class children were in the wrong stream and a greater proportion of these were underplaced than middle class children.

Comparing the standards of the sixth forms in the schools studied to the national average, the report concludes that their sixth form records were average or above, but that their examination records were average or below. The report adds, however, that given the characteristics of the pupils at the twelve schools, their "examination standards appear satisfactory". Strangely, the report has remarkably little to say about university and college entrance.

Aharon Katchalsky Memorial Fellowship

SEVERAL expressions of support for this scheme have been received from *Nature* readers. The Weizmann Institute itself is now working out practical arrangements. It is intended to form an international committee and further details will be announced after a symposium linked with Katchalsky's work due to be held at Rehovot next week.

In the meantime, those wishing to contribute to the fund which will eventually be established in Israel should send contributions to the Secretary, Weizmann Institute Foundation, Rex House, 4 Regent Street, London SW1.