

### *Journal of Chemical Physics*

THE first number of the new American *Journal of Chemical Physics*, which is published by the American Institute of Physics and has an editorial board comprising the leading American chemists and physicists, contains a number of important papers. In a brief editorial introduction, Prof. H. C. Urey, the managing editor, states that the journal caters for an increasing number of investigators who are working on subjects on the border-line between physics and chemistry, who have a broad knowledge of both sciences and are using methods of investigation which belong neither to classical chemistry nor to traditional physics. The papers in the new journal, which has an attractive format and is well printed in double-column pages, include contributions by Langmuir on an extension of the phase rule for adsorption, by Debye on the mass of electrolytic ions, by G. N. Lewis on the chemical bond, by Harkins and Jackson on a spectroscopic study of the decomposition and synthesis of organic compounds by electrical discharges, by Pauling on helium molecule ions, and several other important communications on physics and physical chemistry. It is clear that a high standard has been set in the new journal, and although the multiplicity of chemical and physico-chemical journals, especially in Germany and the United States, presents a serious economic problem to scientific institutions, the *Journal of Chemical Physics* should be welcomed as an authoritative medium for the publication of work which is interesting both to chemists and physicists.

### World Petroleum Congress

A WORLD Petroleum Congress, organised by the Institution of Petroleum Technologists, is to be held in London on July 19-25. Membership is open to all persons connected with, and interested in, the petroleum industry, at a nominal fee of 10s. It is proposed to hold the sessions of the Congress at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, South Kensington, and the scope of activities on this occasion includes the reading of various technical papers, a private view of the International Oil Industry's Exhibition, exhibition of films illustrating the petroleum industry and sundry social arrangements. Foreign delegates from all important oil-producing countries are being invited and the Congress will offer an excellent opportunity for the interchange of ideas, both technical and economical. Broadly speaking, the technical programme will embrace four main sections of the industry, geological, engineering, refining and chemical, and standardisation. From the preliminary announcements available, it would seem that this Congress, by its purpose and very wide appeal, will be one of the most important international functions affecting the petroleum industry which has been held for many years, and it is a matter of gratification that, on this occasion, it has both a British sponsorship and setting.

### Atoms, Molecules and the Atmosphere

FOR his presidential address before the Royal Meteorological Society, on February 15, Prof.

S. Chapman took as his subject, "Atoms, Molecules and the Atmosphere". While the molecular constitution of air can be ignored in considering most meteorological problems of the lower atmosphere, it is of great importance for the phenomena of the upper atmosphere. The remarkable advances made in recent years in our knowledge of the intimate constitution of matter bear closely on many problems of upper-atmospheric physics. For this reason a broad summary of modern views on atomic and molecular structure was given, bearing on their states of excitation, ionisation, and dissociation, on the spectra that they emit, and on the effects of impacts between particles of various kinds, electrons, atoms, molecules and ions. Brief mention was made of some atmospheric phenomena in which such considerations are of importance—the spectra of the aurora, and of absorption bands produced by oxygen, ozone, and water; the dissociation of oxygen in the upper atmosphere; and the ionisation of the upper air.

### Gypsy Art in Russia

AFTER a period of eclipse following the revolution, the characteristic music of the Russian Gypsies has been revived on lines, it is claimed, more in accordance with its distinctive racial peculiarities than were the Russianised music and singing of the town Gypsies popular under the Tsarist regime. According to an account by M. A. Barannikov (*J. Gypsy Lore Soc.*, ser. 3, vol. 13, pts. 3-4) of Russian gypsy singers of to-day, the Ethnographical Department of the Russian Museum, Leningrad, has formed a gypsy choir selected from both town and nomad Gypsies, of which the repertoire includes all types of gypsy music from the traditional songs of the nomads—in the original form in which they had never been sung by the choirs of town Gypsies—to the Tsigane settings of modern music. Performances have been given in the State Theatre of the Ethnographical Department, of which the object is the preservation, study and presentation of the folk dances, songs and music of the various races under Soviet rule, such as, for example, the peoples of the Caucasus and the Ukraine and even, on occasion, of Turkestan. A similar gypsy studio is now attached to the State Theatre of Moscow.

### Progress of Birth Control

THE second annual report, for 1931-32, of the National Birth Control Association has been issued by the Committee. The work of the Association has proceeded vigorously and has been stimulated by the general economic distress in Great Britain. Speakers on the subject of birth control have been supplied for meetings of various organisations. The Birth Control Investigation Committee is incorporated with the Association and investigations on spermaticides, contraceptive appliances, and statistics of birth control have been pursued. Local authorities to the number of 47 have decided to provide birth control advice within the terms of the Ministry of Health Circular No. 1208 of 1931. Terms of membership of the Association may be obtained from the Secretary, 26 Eccleston Street, London, S.W.1.