

Scientific Research in U.S.A.

In his report for 1933, the president of the Carnegie Institution of Washington has directed attention to the difficulties which beset scientific research during periods of political uncertainty and retrenchment. "Periods of emergency give rise to shifting conditions which may tend to press toward extinction of research and research institutions through financial weakening, and because of emphasis on what may be considered essentials of life." But on the other hand, emergencies present tests of adequacy in research as a method and of the human value of specific ideas for the origin of which it is responsible. The president says it is difficult to visualise a situation in which we could retreat from the present position. "The needs of civilisation can never be met by a static condition in which the generations merely settle down to life at a particular level. One can assume that through coming ages the requirement for increased knowledge with new ideas and their bettered application will grow. Unusual constructive ability arising out of what is known as the scientific interpretation will have an increasingly important part in development and organization of society. The investigation process, both as a means of securing ideas and as a method for learning their application, will naturally and properly take its place as one of the most nearly indispensable of all activities upon which the future well-being of mankind depends."

Cave Exploration

Now that the formation of a central body devoted to spelæological research in Great Britain holds out the prospect of a more systematic promotion of this branch of scientific studies, it is interesting to note the progress made in other countries towards the attainment of a like object. An article by M. R. de Joly, president of the Spéléo-Club de France, in *La Nature* of August 1 rapidly surveys recent activities in cave exploration, but touches in greater detail on the explorations in France of his own organisation. The Spéléo-Club de France was founded so recently as 1930, largely through the enthusiasm of M. E. A. de Martel; but already its members have explored or visited no less than six hundred caves, mostly in the Basses-Alpes, and some presenting considerable difficulties of penetration and no little risk to the explorers. One of the most remarkable feats of cave exploration to which M. de Joly refers was that of the great cave at the foot of the Guadalupe Hills, New Mexico—an area of which the cave exploration is now attracting no little attention in archaeological circles in the United States in connexion with the association there of early man with a fauna now extinct. The cave of which M. de Joly writes, although discovered in 1901, was not systematically attacked until 1930, when a subvention from the *New York Times* made possible the organisation of an expedition of fifteen members to spend a fortnight underground. Notwithstanding difficulties of passage, no less than 51 km. were covered, including many chambers of enormous size. Another country which displays great activity in cave

exploration is Italy, thanks to official financial support and the enthusiasm and friendly rivalry of a large number of local societies. Three thousand caves have been recorded as explored; and the Italians also hold the record for depth of descent. The Italian caves, indeed, are the deepest known, twelve being more than 250 m. deep, and four more than 300 m., while the deepest of all, the Bus della Preta, near Verona, has a depth of 620 m.

The Rabbit Menace

WILD rabbits have become so numerous in many parts of England that considerable alarm has been expressed by farmers and in the public press at the damage done to crops, pastures and young trees. The University of London Animal Welfare Society has for some years made a special study of the subject. It has now taken a useful and timely step in reprinting in Great Britain, by permission of the New South Wales authorities, a brochure entitled "The Rabbit Menace in Australia in 1933 and the Way Out", by David G. Stead, formerly special rabbit menace commissioner to the Government of New South Wales. The booklet brings strong confirmation to the views previously promulgated by the Society to the effect that the wild rabbit, considered as stock, does not pay, since the damage done by it far exceeds the price received by the farmer; that the trapping industry increases the stock of rabbits instead of diminishing it, and that control of the rabbit-population can be most efficiently (as well as most humanely) carried out by the use of calcium cyanide or similar products yielding hydrocyanic acid gas. The Society has issued several other publications on the subject of rabbit-control.

Treatment of Anæmias

WE have received from Boots Pure Drug Co., Ltd., Nottingham, an illustrated booklet describing the different products issued by this firm for the treatment of the anæmias. 'Pepsac' is an active preparation of desiccated hog's stomach, which is given by mouth in pernicious anæmia: 'Hepostab' is an extract of liver specially prepared for intramuscular injection. It is suggested that treatment be commenced with 'Hepostab', especially if the case is a severe one, and continued from the fourth day onwards with 'Pepsac'. Each batch of 'Hepostab' is subjected to clinical trial before issue. Both preparations, and especially 'Pepsac', are of great value in the treatment of subacute combined degeneration of the spinal cord, the most severe complication of pernicious anæmia. Messrs. Boots also prepare liver extracts for oral administration, namely, compound fluid extract of liver—Boots, liquid extract of liver B.P., and dry extract of liver—Boots. For the treatment of secondary anæmias, 'Livron' is recommended: this is an extract of liver, yeast and malt with the addition of a full therapeutic dose of iron.

Medical Research in Egypt

WE have received the third annual report of the Research Institute and the Endemic Diseases