

thus the average value this year is £67 per ton. Australia and South Africa are now the chief customers for British chemical plant. Great Britain also imports chemical plant, and since there is increasing activity in the chemical industry, the amount of this has increased more than three-fold since 1935, though there are now signs of abatement. The average value per ton this year is £143. Most of the plant, which is generally of a highly specialized nature, has come from Germany. These figures give no indication of the activities of the British plant manufacturers in the home trade, but the same number of the *Industrial Chemist* seeks to remedy this by several pages of pictures of actual plant and new equipment which has been delivered this year, featured under the heading of "Progress".

Forest Products Research

THE report of the Forest Products Research Board for the year 1935 has been issued by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1936). The report includes the report of the director of the Research Laboratory at Princes Risborough for the same year. The Board itself met only once during the year, when various pieces of research work under investigation were considered, as also the possibility of establishing a sub-station of the Laboratory in Scotland. The Board noted with appreciation that there was direct evidence of interest by industries concerned in the manufacture of both wooden and fibre-board boxes, as well as by users of such boxes, of the facilities now available in the new box-testing laboratory. The investigations into the physical properties of timber which have a direct influence on its behaviour during seasoning and when in use have been advanced; and the results, it is considered, promise ultimately to be of material importance to architects and others engaged in industries dependent upon timber. As a result of visits to the Laboratory by many representatives of firms engaged in the manufacture of timber and timber goods, and instructors in building science or woodworking at various technical schools, some of whom have spent periods of varying lengths at the Laboratory, a new departure has been instituted. To minimize the interference with the routine work which such visits involved, a short educational course of one week's duration was given in September of which full advantage was taken.

An Alchemical Manuscript

IN a reprint from *Osiris* (2, 220; 1936), W. J. Wilson, of the Library of Congress, Washington, deals with a treatise copied by Arnaldus de Bruxella at Naples between 1473 and 1490, and purchased by Lehigh University, Pennsylvania, in 1881 for the price of ten dollars. It is a compendium of chemical and alchemical recipes of a type fairly well known through other manuscripts of similar date in Paris and elsewhere. Mr. Wilson gives an account of the contents of the manuscript with extracts, which are translated, and an index of names and technical

terms. He shows how its contents are related to other treatises, and deals in separate sections with the origin and development of alchemical tradition, the operations of alchemy, allegorical and mystical aspects of alchemy and its relations to magic and medicine. This commentary, which is the fruit of a careful study of texts and literature on the history of alchemy, is provided with an excellent bibliography and is of very considerable value in presenting an accurate and concise statement of the position of modern research into the origins of alchemy and early chemistry. The scholarly treatment is on a much higher level than many accounts in that it takes into consideration the Chinese and Indian sources, without which no modern study can be said to have any particular significance.

Decline in Malaria in Soviet Russia

AS the result of the energetic measures adopted by the Soviet authorities, the incidence of malaria in the U.S.S.R. has greatly declined. According to Prof. Sergiyev, head of the Malaria Department of the Commissariat of Health and director of the Central Tropical Institute, during the first six months of 1936 there was a drop of about 35 per cent in the number of malaria cases and of 40 per cent in the number of deaths from malaria as compared with the corresponding period of 1935. With the object of destroying the malaria-carrying mosquitoes, two and a half million infested areas were sprayed with oil, partly by aeroplanes. Mosquito netting was introduced into the badly infested areas. 100 motor-cars and 260 microscopes were supplied to the malaria stations. During the summer, 500 doctors and senior students took part in the anti-malarial campaign, which was carried on by 1,800 permanent malaria organizations.

Tropical Pathology and Microbiology

OWING to the increasing number of papers in the field of special pathology and microbiology hitherto published in the *Chinese Medical Journal*, which is primarily intended for clinical contributions, this material will now be published in a Supplement to the *Chinese Medical Journal*, of which the first number was issued last February. It forms a volume of the same size and format as the *Journal*, and contains 500 pages of text with 70 plates, and is published by the *Chinese Medical Journal*, Peiping, China, price 10s. The contents are divided into the three subjects: (1) pathology, (2) bacteriology and (3) parasitology. In addition, there is a valuable paper by R. J. C. Hoeppi on "Methods of Illustrating Scientific Papers", in which the apparatus for, and technique of, drawing, and the main processes now used for reproduction of illustrations, are described.

Museum Exhibits *de luxe*

AT last the limit of the nature-group method of exhibiting museum specimens seems to have been reached, for Science Service announces that Prof.

A. A. Allen, of Cornell University, has constructed two life-groups of birds, in which by a combination of sound films and ingeniously contrived electrically driven mechanisms, the birds sing and go through natural, life-like movements. For example, in the group showing a nesting site of ruffed grouse, the turning of a switch causes the male to move his head and utter his characteristic hissing note, while the female moves to her nest and covers her eggs, and at the same time thrushes and song-sparrows in the trees and bushes sing, an owl hoots, a woodpecker calls and dives into its nesting hole, and a wedge of wild-geese honks as it flies away. These exhibits must be a revelation to the person who has not the opportunity or the flair for field observation, and, with Prof. Allen's assistance, the arm-chair naturalist will soon be able to record his impressions of life in the wilds from a museum exhibit.

Honey Research at Rothamsted

THE Agricultural Research Council has recently made a substantial grant to Rothamsted to permit beekeeping researches there to be broadened to include the investigation of various problems connected with honey. The appointment of Dr. C. R. Marshall to undertake this work has been approved, and Dr. Marshall has now taken up his duties. In view of the fact that beekeepers during the past three years have contributed towards the cost of the brood disease investigations, the Government is bearing the whole cost of this new work. The researches on honey will be physico-chemical in nature, and directed towards certain practical problems of quality and processing that affect the honey producer. Such problems are the granulation of honey, rapidity of granulation, texture of grain, 'frosting', etc., and fermentation. Dr. Marshall recently obtained the degree of Ph.D. at the University of Birmingham, where he has been working on chemical problems connected with the structure of mucilages.

International Congress on Testing Materials

THE next International Congress of the International Association for Testing Materials will be held in London on April 19-24, under the presidency of Sir William Bragg (see NATURE of October 24, p. 717). More than two hundred papers are promised from authorities in twenty different countries. The Congress will be divided into the following groups: metals (behaviour of metals as dependent upon temperature, particularly in regard to high temperatures; progress of metallography; light metals and their alloys; wear and machinability); inorganic materials (concrete and reinforced concrete; erosion and corrosion of natural and artificial stone; ceramic materials); organic materials (textiles; wood cellulose; timber preservation; ageing of organic materials; colours and varnishes); subjects of general importance (relation between results of laboratory tests and behaviour in use and service; bearing of recent advances in physics and chemistry on the knowledge of materials; properties of materials for the thermal and acoustic insulation of buildings).

Further information can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary of the Congress, K. Headlam-Morley, 28 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

Exhibition of Scientific Instruments

IN connexion with the twenty-seventh annual Exhibition of Scientific Instruments and Apparatus to be held at the Imperial College of Science on January 5-7, the usual well-produced and substantial descriptive catalogue of exhibits has been prepared (Physical Society, 1 Lowther Gardens, Exhibition Road, S.W.7). Trade exhibits are separated from the Research and Educational Section: apparatus and instruments being exhibited for the first time are indicated by an asterisk. Reference is facilitated by the full list of contents and an index to the Trade Section. The Exhibition is open on January 5 (2.30-9), January 6 (2-4 for members only; 4-9) and January 7 (2.30-9); admission is by ticket obtainable from the secretary of the Physical Society. Evening discourses are being given at 7.45 on January 5 by Sir James Swinburne on electrical measurements in the 'eighties, and on January 6 by Dr. Harry Moore on the influence of industrial research on the development of scientific instruments.

Announcements

THE Electrodepositors' Technical Society has decided to sponsor an International Conference on Electrodeposition to be held in London on March 3-4. The provisional programme includes discussions on electrodeposition practice abroad, electrodeposition of base metals, properties of electrodeposits and electrodeposition of precious metals. Further information can be obtained from the Hon. Conference Secretary, Mr. H. Wynne-Williams, 12A Raleigh House, Larkhall Estate, London, S.W.8.

IN connexion with the Electric Illumination Exhibition now being held at the Science Museum (see NATURE of December 19, p. 1046, and December 26, p. 1107), a series of six lectures has been arranged to be given in the lecture theatre of the Museum at 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 12, and thence on Mondays commencing January 18. Admission will be by ticket obtainable from the Secretary, Science Museum, London, S.W.7.

OWING to the conditions in Spain, the eleventh International Congress of Psychology which was to have been held in Madrid (see NATURE of July 4, p. 24) will be held in Paris. So far as possible, the programme will be the same as that previously arranged for the proposed meeting in Madrid. The Paris Congress will be held on July 25-31, under the presidency of Prof. Pierre Janet, formerly professor of psychology in the Collège de France. Further information can be obtained from M. Henri Pieron, Laboratoire de Psychologie de la Sorbonne, Paris 5.

THE announcements of forthcoming appointments will appear in future at the end of each issue (see p. 42).