

suffer. By its use, owners of well-irrigated lands can increase the output of water from their wells. The 1935 prize has been awarded to R. S. L. Jai Chand Luthra, professor of botany, Punjab Agricultural College, Lyallpur, for his new method of treating wheat seed against the fungal disease called loose smut. The wheat seed to be treated is merely soaked in water at ordinary temperature for four hours during the morning of a day in summer. Thereafter the soaked grain is spread in the sunshine until it is thoroughly dried. Experience has shown that this treatment is effective in controlling the disease without damaging the germinating power of the seed. Entries for the next award should reach the Director of Agriculture, Punjab, Lahore, on or before December 31, 1938.

#### Aquarium Notes

THE *Aquarist and Pond-Keeper* of March-April 1937 (7, No. 7) contains a good article (to be continued) on the freshwater sunfishes (family Centrarchidæ) by A. Fraser Brunner. These fishes are natives of North American freshwaters, their nearest relatives being the perches. A key to all the species is given with notes, and a double-page illustration together with a coloured plate comprises most of the species which can be kept in aquaria. Among other interesting contributions is one entitled "The Ways of the Natterjack" by Eric Hardy. The author states that he finds no difficulty in obtaining specimens in early spring and late summer on the brackish slacks of the west Lancashire dunes below Southport, and others may be found at the Solway marshes, in the Prestatyn district of the Conway estuary, North Wales, at Hilbre Island in the Dee Estuary and on the Leasowe marshes of the West Cheshire coast. He has kept this toad successfully in indoor aquaria.

#### Birth-rate in the United States

THE birth-rate in the United States, based on returns from thirty-four of the forty-eight States and covering only the first nine months of 1936, was the lowest on record, according to a provisional report recently issued by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (*Med. Rec.*, Feb. 17). The death-rate was slightly higher than that of any year within the last five, so that the natural excess of the birth-rate over the death-rate fell to a minimum of about 5 per 1,000.

#### A Heidelberg Correction

WITH reference to the article in our issue of January 16, 1937, "University of Heidelberg and New Conceptions of Science", Dr. E. Wolf, Privatdozent of the University of Heidelberg, writes to us from the Biological Laboratories at Harvard University under date April 20, as follows: "I had already left Heidelberg in Fall of 1931 with the consent of the Minister of Education and that of the Faculty of Science, to accept an invitation from Harvard University. Since then I have been on a leave of absence from Heidelberg and I can assure you that I regard it always an honour to be a member of the Faculty of the University of Heidelberg".

#### Göttingen and the Massachusetts Institute

IN response to requests for information on the extent of the Institute's participation in the celebration on June 30 of the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of the University of Göttingen, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has issued the following statement: "Although the Massachusetts Institute of Technology will not send an official delegate from Cambridge to attend the celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of the University of Göttingen, the rector of the university has been notified that Werner T. Schuarte, a technology alumnus of the class of 1914, who lives in Germany, will represent the Institute as an academic courtesy to a university which during the past two centuries achieved world-wide renown through distinguished scholarship and notable contributions to the advancement of scientific knowledge. This action is not intended to condone changes in or restrictions placed upon German universities in recent years."

#### Canadian National Research Council Scholarships

WITH the view of encouraging postgraduate training in scientific research, chiefly in the graduate schools of Canadian universities, the National Research Council has awarded forty-seven scholarships for the year 1937-38. These include three fellowships of 700 dollars each, twelve studentships of 600 dollars and twenty-seven bursaries of 500 dollars, all of which will be held in departments of science at the universities. Five other scholarships, tenable in the National Research Laboratories at Ottawa, will enable the holders, all of whom have already done postgraduate research at the universities, to gain experience in the field of industrial research before engaging in commercial work. The awards show that chemistry in its various branches heads the list with twenty-five, physics comes next with twelve, followed by four in biology, two in genetics, and one each in botany, geology, mathematics and mechanical engineering. Applications were received from graduates of eighteen Canadian universities, and awards have been made which will enable the holders to work in the Universities of Dalhousie, Laval, McGill, Montreal, Queen's, Toronto, Western Ontario and Saskatchewan.

#### Congress of French Physiologists

THE eleventh Congress of French Physiologists will be held on June 7-9 at the Paris Faculty of Medicine under the presidency of Prof. Cardot, of the Lyons Faculty of Science. The principal subjects for discussion will be trophic sensibility, introduced by A. Pi Suner, professor of physiology at Barcelona; comparison of histological and biochemical data in ossification, introduced by Profs. Policard, of the Lyons Faculty of Medicine, and Roche, of the Faculty of Medicine at Marseilles, and exploration of organic functions by the electrical manifestations of their activity, by Prof. Ryart of the University of Brussels. Further information can be obtained from M. R. Gayet, Laboratoire de Physiologie Pathologique, 1 rue Lacretelle, Paris.