

of Australia. Further, we understand that a representative of this Association was deputed to discuss this with the trustees of the British Museum this summer. When can we expect to hear the result of this discussion?

#### Research at Armstrong College

FROM Armstrong College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, we have received a report for 1935-36, somewhat belated, by the Standing Committee for Research. The importance of some of the work accomplished with the help of the Committee's small subventions (twenty-six grants amounting in the aggregate to £846) is well brought out in an eighteen-page summary prefixed to the individual reports of the recipients and list of publications. An obvious advantage of a fund such as that administered by the Committee, unappropriated in advance to specified fields, is that its administration compels representatives of different departments to take an interest in research in each other's fields, and this promotes inter-departmental collaboration in research, instances of which are cited in the report. Of the role of philosophy in the University, the Committee takes a liberal view, for it refers to works emanating from the College's Department of Philosophy as "original contributions towards the formation of that background of knowledge which forms, or should form, the background of university education".

#### American Documentation Institute

THE American Documentation Institute was incorporated at a meeting in Washington on March 13 as a corporation "not for profit" but for educational, literary and scientific purposes. The first objective of the new organization is to develop and apply the new technique of microphotography to library, scientific and other material. This national organization was foreseen as an outline of the documentation activities of Science Service when they commenced in July 1935. Bibliofilm Service has been conducted by Science Service in co-operation with the Library of the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a service to research workers, and in auxiliary publication through microfilm, leading academic and scientific journals have co-operated.

#### Cytological Technique

A SHORT but useful pamphlet giving an "Outline of Cytological Technique for Plant Breeders" is issued by the Imperial Bureau of Plant Genetics (1s. 6d.). Genetics and cytology have become so intimately interwoven in their results that every plant breeder needs to have some knowledge not only of chromosome investigations but also of the methods of cytology. The various techniques involved are sufficiently exacting if satisfactory results are to be obtained. This pamphlet gives an account of the paraffin method, the smear method and a short statement containing the essentials of technique in the use of the microscope, the methods being based mainly on the schedules in use at the John Innes Horticultural Institution, Merton.

#### Microscopy: the Quekett Microscopical Club

WATSON'S *Microscope Record* of May (No. 41), among other matter, contains an account by Mr. J. F. Stirling of the microscope used by John Dalton, now in the possession of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, and an article by the editor on the appropriate eyepiece to use with certain objectives. Two new species of Bdelloid Rotatoria are described by Mr. W. E. Garner in the *Journal of the Quekett Microscopical Club* of April (Ser. 3, 1, No. 7, p. 280). Mr. W. E. Watson Baker is the new president of the Quekett Club, which is holding its annual conversazione on October 12 in the rooms of the Royal Society at Burlington House.

#### Conference on Protection against Natural Disasters

THE first "Conférence internationale pour la protection contre les calamités naturelles" is to be held at the Paris Exhibition on September 13-17. The following titles of sections of the Conference indicate its scope: vulcanology and seismology, meteorology, zoology and epidemiology, economic and social crises (fires, famines), assurances. The organizers of the Conference are the Commission Française d'études des calamités, one of a dozen such national commissions which owe their existence to the initiative of the editorial board of the scientific periodical, *Matériaux pour l'étude des calamités*, established in 1924 by M. Raoul Montandon. In that year the Italian commission was formed. Its president is Giovanni Ciraiolo, who is also president of the Union internationale de secours founded by the League of Nations in 1927, when the French commission was formed. Later, similar bodies were established in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Switzerland. Others are in course of formation in Russia and Yugoslavia. The opening session will be presided over by the Under-Secretary of State for Scientific Researches and the closing session (to be followed by a reception at the Hôtel de Ville and a banquet) by the Minister for the Colonies. Admission to membership of the Conference involves payment of a fee of 100 francs, exclusive of the charge of 40 francs for participation in the banquet. Membership will carry the right of free entry to the Exhibition during the Conference. The address of the secretariat is: Laboratory of Applied Entomology, 45 bis, rue de Buffon, Paris, 5<sup>e</sup>. The secretariat will, if desired, reserve bedrooms for members.

#### Comet Finsler

PREDICTION for the place of Finsler's Comet for the next three weeks is given in Announcement Card No. 421 issued by Harvard College Observatory. The ephemeris is based on a parabolic orbit computed by Dr. A. D. Maxwell of the University of Michigan. The time of deduced perihelion passage is August 15.76946 U.T. This comet was discovered on July 4 last by Finsler at Zurich; it was then of the 7th magnitude. It is now possible to locate the comet with the naked eye. The following predicted positions at 0<sup>h</sup> U.T. show that the comet will pass 3° or 4°