

commercial application. A Sunday supplement article pictured a housewife opening a small closet off the kitchen and picking tomatoes from vines growing in water culture with the aid of electric lights, whilst a large chain of restaurants in New York City were credited with growing their own vegetables in basements. Actually, as the authors of this circular make clear, whilst very good yields may be obtained under glass from many crops grown in water cultures, with equal attention, similar or better crops may be grown in soil by methods which are more familiar to the amateur and professional grower.

#### Foam on the Dead Sea

A PECULIAR phenomenon often to be seen on the northern waters of the Dead Sea is that of arcs of foam, more or less semicircular, spreading out fan-wise from certain points of the west and east shores. The arcs seem to spread from the shores in early morning and often meet and even cross during the forenoon. These lines of foam often bear reeds and other vegetation debris that have reached the Dead Sea by inflowing rivers, and, at the seasons of migration, the foam may attract flocks of birds searching for food. Dr. D. Ashbel has recorded some of his observations on this phenomenon and offers an explanation (*Geog. Rev.*, Jan. 1938). The arcs originate from springs on the two shores, and they make discontinuities between bodies of water of different salinity and density. When the outflow of the springs is strong, the arc is frequently not smooth but zig-zag. This explanation contradicts the earlier one of Blanckenhorn that the lines of foam originate from warm water arising along lines of fault on the sea floor. That suggestion does not explain lack of replacement of the lines as each moves forward, which Dr. Ashbel thinks is due to the gentle winds that frequently blow from the land on to the sea during the night and early morning. These winds do not ruffle the water and so mixing does not occur. Gusty west winds such as often occur in the afternoon cause mixing and so the lines of discontinuity disappear.

#### The Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture

THE Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad is now the recognized centre for post-graduate training in tropical agriculture for the agricultural services of the Colonial Empire. The governing body in its latest report for the year ending August 31, 1938, record that 159 past students of the College have been appointed to the Colonial Agricultural Service and allied services, posts being now held in thirty different parts of the British Empire. The year under review was marked by the retirement of Sir Geoffrey Evans, who had filled the office of principal with much distinction since 1926, and who left the College with its function in the development of agriculture throughout the Colonial Empire firmly established, and with an international reputation as a centre of education and research. Mr. Odin Tom Faulkner, lately director of agriculture

in the Straits Settlements and adviser on agriculture in the Malay States, was appointed to succeed Sir Geoffrey Evans. During 1937-38 the work of the College proceeded on normal lines. Research was mainly concerned with problems relating to cacao, sugar, bananas and citrus fruits, and the cost of much of the work was met by contributions from firms connected with the appropriate industry. The governing body is anxious to raise a substantial endowment fund; but its hope that the grant of £32,000 made by the Carnegie Corporation in 1932 towards this object would be followed by contributions from British firms and others interested in tropical agriculture has yet to be realized. Capital is also required for the purchase of more land for the college farm, for additional laboratories and the reconstruction of the biological building.

#### The British Association: Engineering Section

AT the Dundee meeting of the British Association, 1939, the Engineering Section proposes to repeat the arrangement which proved so satisfactory during the meeting in Cambridge last year and to devote some time to the delivery of a number of short communications by junior engineers or research workers (under the age of thirty years). Each speaker will be allotted a total of 20-30 minutes, which may, at his option, include, say, ten minutes for very short discussion. It is hoped that each author will describe some item of special interest or novelty upon which he may be engaged. This innovation seems to us important as enabling the Association to know something of the work of younger men, and enabling those men to gain experience of summarizing their work and putting it forward for criticism without having to undertake the much more laborious task of preparing a paper of the stature necessary for a full meeting of one of the engineering institutions or of a scientific society. Although *Engineering* publishes *in extenso* the text of all main papers delivered to the Section, it is not proposed that these short papers should similarly be published. This arrangement seems desirable, partly because authors may be prepared to describe engineering work upon which they hope later to publish a full-scale paper, and partly because authors may not feel justified in preparing a text of the completeness which would be desirable if proper publication is to be made. Those wishing to submit such papers should communicate immediately with the recorder Wing-Commander T. R. Cave-Brown-Cave, University College, Southampton.

#### *Spectrochimica Acta*

THE first number of a publication under the above title will shortly be issued by Messrs. Julius Springer, Berlin, under the editorship of W. Gerlach and G. Scheibe, Munich; A. Gatterer, Vatican Observatory; R. Breckpot, Louvain; F. Twyman, London. It will deal solely with spectrochemical analysis, and a useful feature will be the publication of abstracts and reviews of books and articles on the subject. A number of authorities on the subject have agreed to collaborate, and those in the English-speaking

countries who have already consented to act in that capacity include Prof. A. Fowler, Prof. H. Dingle and Dr. S. Judd Lewis of London; and Prof. O. S. Duffendack, Prof. J. A. Harrison and Dr. Lester W. Strock of the United States. The first number of the journal will probably be published in May. The English editor will be pleased to receive papers in English on the subject, which should be addressed to: The Editor, *Spectrochimica Acta*, 98 St. Pancras Way, London, N.W.1.

#### University Co-operation

THE recently published report of the Executive Council of the Universities Bureau of the British Empire announces preliminary steps towards bringing about an informal conference between some of the heads of universities in the United States of America and those of universities in the British Empire. In the course of a trans-Atlantic tour undertaken last spring, primarily with the object of cultivating helpful relations with the Canadian universities, the secretary of the Bureau got into touch with the presidents of Harvard and Yale, the president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the director of the Institute of International Education, and discussed with them the possibility of a visit to England of some of the heads of universities in the United States in 1941, when the sixth quinquennial congress of the Universities of the British Empire will be held in Manchester.

#### Announcements

THE Secretary of State for Air, Sir Kingsley Wood, on the recommendation of the Director of Medical Services, Royal Air Force, has appointed the following standing committee to investigate and advise him on the medical aspects of all matters concerning personnel which might affect safety and efficiency in flying: Sir Edward Mellanby (chairman), Prof. F. C. Bartlett, Mr. E. A. Carmichael, Mr. C. S. Hallpike, Dr. B. H. C. Matthews, Sir John Parsons and Prof. L. J. Witts. The representatives of the Air Ministry on the Committee will be Air Vice-Marshal A. V. J. Richardson, director of Medical Services, and Air Commodore H. E. Whittingham.

THE following have been elected officers of the Physical Society for the year ending March 1940: *President*, Prof. Allan Ferguson; *Vice-Presidents*, Prof. G. I. Finch, Dr. Ezer Griffiths, Dr. L. Harts-horn, Mr. R. W. Paul; *Hon. Secretaries*, Mr. J. H. Awbery, Dr. W. Jevons; *Hon. Foreign Secretary*, Prof. O. W. Richardson; *Hon. Treasurer*, Dr. C. C. Paterson; *Hon. Librarian*, Dr. J. H. Brinkworth.

THE following have been elected officers of the Geological Society of London for the ensuing year: *President*, Prof. H. H. Swinnerton; *Vice-Presidents*, Dr. E. B. Bailey, Prof. W. G. Fearnside, Prof. O. T. Jones, and Prof. C. E. Tilley; *Secretaries*, Dr. L. Hawkes and Prof. W. B. R. King; *Foreign Secretary*, Sir Arthur Smith Woodward; *Treasurer*, Mr. F. N. Ashcroft.

THE following have been elected officers of the Quekett Microscopical Club for the ensuing year: *President*, W. E. Watson Baker; *Vice-Presidents*, H. G. Brown, C. H. Caffyn, D. J. Scourfield, P. K. Sartory; *Hon. Treasurer*, Dr. C. L. Odam; *Secretary*, Miss C. Arnold; *Reporter*, A. Morley Jones; *Curator*, C. J. Sidwell; *Assistant Curator*, W. F. Reeve; *Librarian*, H. C. G. Best; *Editor*, W. P. Sollis.

THE following appointments and promotions have recently been made in the Colonial Service: A. J. Hans, veterinary officer, Kenya; Dr. S. E. Piercy, veterinary research officer, Kenya; Dr. R. B. McConnell, assistant field geologist, Tanganyika Territory; P. A. Loizides, agricultural chemist, Cyprus; R. J. Lathbury, senior plant breeder, Agricultural Department, Kenya; R. G. H. Wilshaw, senior chemist (soils), Malayan Agricultural Service; H. G. Pudney, senior inspector of produce, Agricultural Department, Nigeria.

THE Leslie Dana Gold Medal awarded annually by the Association for Research in Ophthalmology and the St. Louis Society for the Blind was recently presented to Prof. Ellice M. Alger for his contributions to ophthalmology during the last thirty years and his work as a teacher. For many years he had been professor of clinical ophthalmology at the New York Postgraduate Medical School.

A CONFERENCE and working demonstration on "Pure Fruit Juices and Syrup" will be held at the Long Ashton Research Station of the Department of Agriculture and Horticulture, University of Bristol, on March 23. Further information can be obtained from the Director, Research Station, Long Ashton, near Bristol.

THE French Association for the Advancement of Science will meet this year at Liège on July 17-22, under the presidency of Prof. C. Fabry, director of the Optical Institute, Paris. The local committee for the meeting is under the chairmanship of Prof. Dehalu, of the University of Liège.

A FLEMISH Academy of Medicine, consisting of six sections, has recently been founded at Brussels.

THE fifth International Congress for First Aid will be held at Zurich and St. Moritz on July 23-28.

THE eighteenth Congress of the German Association for Microbiology will be held in Vienna on March 27-30. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary, Prof. Wohlfeil, Führerstrasse 2, Berlin, N.15.

REPRESENTATIVES of thirty-five countries will attend the tenth International Congress of Military Medicine and Pharmacy, which is to be held at Washington on May 7-15. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary-General of the Congress, Army Medical Library, Washington, D.C.